

Hyfrydol



No. 124

St Swithun's Choir e-newsletter

September 2024

This month

We have two Evensong services this month, one at home on Saturday 14 September, and the second at St James' King Street in the city on Wednesday evening 25 September. Both services will feature the same *Canticles*, by John Ireland, the same anthem, *How lovely are Thy dwellings*, by Brahms, and the same introit and vesper.



August

Our annual Celebration of Psalms went off very well. This was the third such event; the brain-child of organist Peter Hamilton. He has modelled them on a week-long celebration he attended some years ago in Adelaide. Chants, anthems, hymns and spoken word all come together in the program, all firmly based on the Old Testament book of the Psalms.

We should perhaps make special mention of the contributions of Eleanor Gilkes who sang English pianist and composer Samuel Liddle's *How lovely are Thy dwellings* (Psalm 84) and Paul Green who chanted the verses to Psalm 100 while we and the congregation sang the antiphon. Eleanor's recently shattered ankle had no deleterious affect on her voice. Thank you to each of you for your special contributions.



Our next overseas visit, New Zealand, September 2025



Invitations have been received from three Cathedrals in New Zealand; Auckland, Wellington and Nelson. Planning has begun for a choir trip, aiming to arrive in Auckland on or about Thursday 18 September 2025 and conclude after breakfast on Monday 6 October 2025.

We shall sing the morning Eucharist service and the afternoon Evensong in Holy Trinity Cathedral, Auckland, on Sunday 21 September.

We shall put on a lunchtime concert in Wellington's Cathedral of St Paul on Friday 26 September, and sing two services there on Sunday 28 September.

Similarly, we shall put on a concert in Christ Church Cathedral, Nelson, on Friday 3 October, and sing two services on the following Sunday, 5 October.

It might be time to check the expiry date on your passport. We shall shortly be inviting expressions of interest from choristers and friends of the choir.

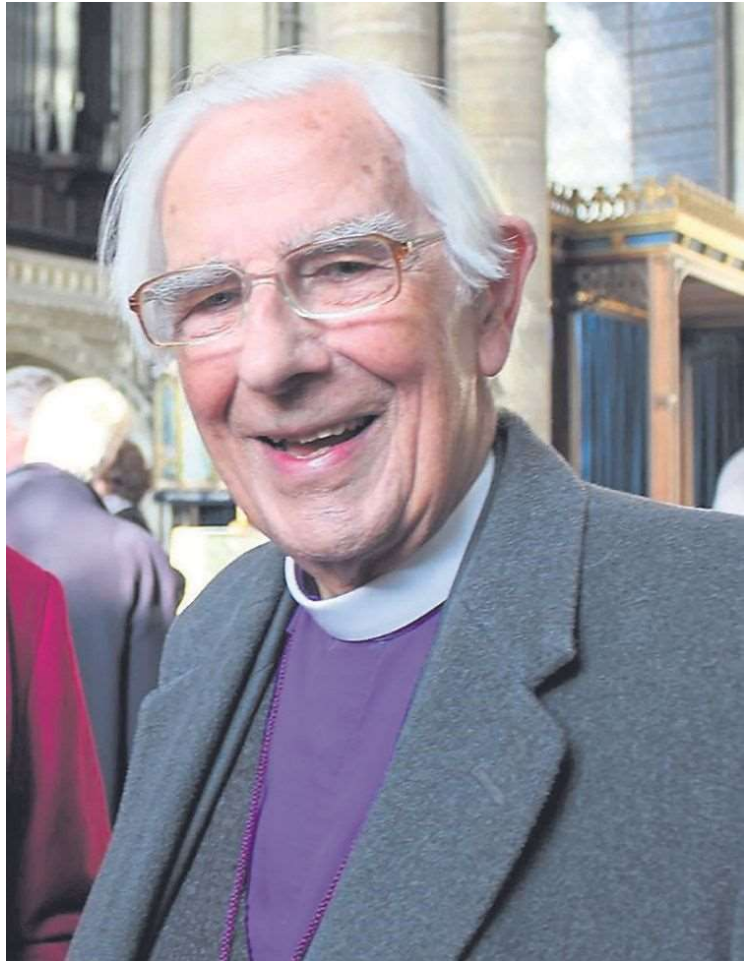


The Right Rev Timothy Dudley-Smith OBE FRSCM (26 December 1926 – 12 August 2024)

For a man who claimed to be unable to sing or write music, Timothy Dudley-Smith, the former suffragan bishop of Thetford, who has died aged 97, left a considerable legacy to Anglican churches in more than 450 hymns, composed over more than 60 years.

Not all of those in the pews may recognise his name – compared, say, to Charles Wesley, the 18th-century divine who bequeathed more than 4,000 – but they will certainly have sung his words. *Tell Out, My Soul the Greatness of the Lord*, written in 1961, has been published more than 190 times, is present in at least 220 modern hymn books and is sung across the English-speaking Anglican and Episcopalian world. *Lord for the Years Your Love Has Kept and Guided*, composed in 1967, is regularly sung at celebrations and anniversaries, including Queen Elizabeth II’s golden jubilee.

Yet Dudley-Smith, who gave his career to the conservative evangelical wing of the Church of England, was modest about his gifts: “I am totally unmusical. I can’t sing in tune and often change key without knowing it,” he said. “Hymn writing has been a most enriching and entirely unexpected gift.”



What he did have, however, was a keen sense of poetry and, accordingly, an understanding of metre and rhythm, all underpinned by biblical study. This made his hymns both traditional sounding, even old-fashioned, and rousingly singable, so that they did not descend into the vacuous triteness of many “happy clappy” modern hymns.

The music his words are sung to comes from long established melodies: *Tell Out, My Soul*, based on a translation of the *Magnificat*, the words of the Virgin Mary in St Luke’s gospel, is sung to the tune *Woodlands* by the early 20th-century composer Walter Greatorex. The poet John Betjeman said it is “one of the very few new hymns really to establish themselves in recent years”.

Dudley-Smith was born in Manchester, the son of Arthur, a prep school teacher, and his wife, Phyllis. Arthur, who died when Timothy was 11, instilled in him an early love of English poetry, and traditional poets such as AE Housman, Walter de la Mare and Alfred, Lord Tennyson, then TS Eliot and Philip Larkin.

He was educated at Tonbridge public school, studied mathematics at Pembroke College, Cambridge, and, inspired by the works of CS Lewis, he then trained for ordination at Ridley Hall, Cambridge. He was ordained in 1950 and joined the university’s mission – youth club – in Bermondsey, south-east London.

While there, he took boys from the mission to hear the American evangelist Billy Graham at his famously influential first visit to the UK in 1954. Originally coming to London for a month, Graham filled the Harringay stadium for three months, and had a stirring effect on British evangelicals including Dudley-Smith. The following year he became editorial secretary of the Evangelical Alliance and then editor of its new magazine, *Crusade*. From there Dudley-Smith worked for the Church Pastoral Aid Society as general secretary before becoming archdeacon of Norwich and then, for 10 years (1981-91), suffragan bishop of Thetford in the same diocese.

Stephen Bates (The Guardian)



Locus iste, Anton Bruckner

This month, we mark the 200th anniversary of Anton Bruckner's birth. He was born in Ansfelden (then a village, now almost a suburb of Linz, Austria) on 4 September 1824.

Our introit at the two Evensong services we shall sing this month will be his *Locus iste*.

Bruckner composed the motet for unaccompanied SATB choir in 1869 for the dedication of the votive chapel at the New Cathedral in Linz.

He had a strong connection to the Old Cathedral of Linz, where he had been the organist from 1855 to 1868. The foundation stone of the New Cathedral was laid in 1862; by 1869 only the Votive Chapel had been finished. It was dedicated in August of that year.



The New Cathedral



The Votive Chapel

The whole building was not completed until 1924. With room for 20,000 people, it is the largest, but not the highest, church in Austria. The originally-planned, higher spire was not approved, because in Austria-Hungary at the time, no building was allowed to be taller than the south tower of St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna. The New Cathedral is two meters shorter than the Viennese cathedral.

The text of *Locus iste* is based on the Biblical story of Jacob's Ladder in Genesis.

Genesis 28:10-17

¹⁰Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Harran. ¹¹When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. ¹²He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. ¹³There above it stood the Lord, and he said: "I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. ¹⁴Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. ¹⁵I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

¹⁶When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it." ¹⁷He was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven."

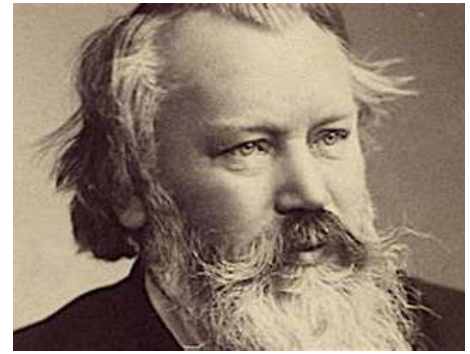
The Latin text, *Locus iste a Deo factus est*, now forms part of the Roman Catholic Mass for the anniversary of the dedication of a church. It is the "gradual" which comes between the readings of the Epistle and the Gospel. Bruckner composed his music to match the rhythm of the Latin words. The Latin text is: *Locus iste a Deo factus est, inaestimabile sacramentum, irreprehensibilis est*. A reasonably literal English translation is: *This place is made by God, a priceless sacrament; it is without reproach*. We sing Bruckner's composition in English, to a "translation" by John Rutter, as follows: *This is God's house, a temple he has made; O holy covenant beyond all telling, worthy of his glorious name*. While not exactly reflecting the message of the original text, Rutter has given us an English text that fits the rhythm of Bruckner's music very well, and thus the rhythm of the Latin text as well.



How lovely are Thy dwellings

The anthem for our two Evensong services this month is Brahms' *How lovely are Thy dwellings*.

By 1861 Johannes Brahms is believed to have completed two movements of what he called a cantata of mourning, a work begun in memory of his friend and colleague Robert Schumann, who had died in 1856. When his mother died in February 1865, Brahms was determined to finish the piece he had started. He completed four additional movements by the summer of 1866. Later revisions ultimately resulted in a total of seven movements.



A German Requiem, Op. 45, premiered in an initial form in December 1867, in Vienna. Revisions led to an expanded work first heard in Leipzig, Germany on February 18, 1869. It represents Brahms's most ambitious vocal music.

Typical requiems are settings of the Roman Catholic mass for the dead (missa pro defunctis). Brahms, a Lutheran Protestant, took a different approach. Rejecting the usual Latin texts, he chose his own verses from reformer Martin Luther's German translation of the Bible, selecting New and Old Testament passages that would not only mourn the dead but also comfort the living.

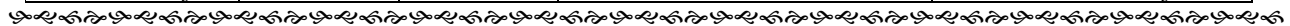
Of the seven movements, four are set for chorus and orchestra. The other three include vocal soloists: a soprano in the fifth movement and a baritone in the third and sixth movements. Brahms' requiem, unlike those of Verdi or Mozart, is utterly devoid of fire and brimstone, instead highlighting the comfort to be found in God and in the afterlife. The best-known of the movements, the chorus "Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen" (*How lovely are your dwelling places*, from Psalm 84), occurs exactly midway through the work.

Brittanica



Choir Calendar for 2024

Day	Date	Time	Location	Service/activity
Saturday	14 Sep	5 pm	Swiz	Evensong
Wednesday	25 Sep	6 pm	St James, King Street, Sydney	Evensong
Saturday	26 Oct	7:30 pm	Swiz	Foundation Gala Concert
Saturday	30 Nov	5 pm	Swiz	Advent Evensong
Monday	9 Dec	12:30 pm?	RNSH?	Carols
Sunday	22 Dec	9 am	Swiz	Lessons & carols
Tuesday	24 Dec	10 pm	Swiz	Christmas Eve
Wednesday	25 Dec	8:30 am	Swiz	Christmas Day



THE SWIZ CULTURAL FOUNDATION
An outreach of St Swithun's Anglican Church Pymble

Gala Concert

7PM
SATURDAY 26TH OCTOBER 2024

Haydn - Nelson Mass & Mendelssohn - Elijah (Excerpts)

Featuring
St Swithun's Choir | Willoughby Singers
with Special Soloists & Instrumentalists

Tickets \$45.50 (all inclusive) with light supper after the concert
St Swithun's Church Cnr Telegraph & Merrivale Rd, Pymble

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