

**making
music**

Billericay Choral Society

Registered Charity No. 271059

Conductor: Philip Prior

Soprano

Maren Barton, Sue Bateman, Morag Bennett, Sue Crease,
Pat Davis, Brenda Dixon, Stephanie Edwards,
Joy Kempson, Maria Nordset, Sandra Sharp,
Debbie Sweet, Jeanne Wiggins

Alto

Christine Bland, Pam Cottrell, Maureen Hart,
Maggie Kingston, Margaret Nicholls, Rachel Orford,
Liz Read, Marie Rosen, Katy Thrasher, Gytha Washington

Tenor

David Bateman, Nigel Bennett, Tony Crease,
Martin Mason

Bass

Tony Barker, Keith Miller, John Spriggs, David Young

This evening we are pleased to welcome Philip Prior to the conductor's rostrum and Ashley Thompson to the organ.

John Henry Maunder 1858-1920

Born at Chelsea, the son of a carpenter, he attended the Royal Academy of Music. He began his career as a theatre composer, but later specialized in sacred music for the Anglican Church becoming an author and composer, as well as a musician. He was organist at several churches in South London. He wrote church anthems, cantatas, several carols, tunes for around 30 hymns, songs and ballads, services and canticles, two operettas, and six instrumentals, his best known cantata being "Olivet to Calvary".

Forthcoming Events

Spring Concert

Sunday 6 April 2025 3:30pm
Billericay Methodist Church
with John Stainer's "The Crucifixion"

Summer Concert

Saturday 28 June 2025
Billericay Methodist Church
Afternoon tea with songs from musicals

Autumn Concert

Saturday 22 November 2025
New Rickstones Academy, Witham
Carl Jenkins "The Armed Man" in collaboration with
Maldon and Witham choral societies

Keep in touch and buy your tickets from
www.billericaychoral.co.uk

Billericay Choral Society is a choir of about forty members. We rehearse at the Methodist Church, Western Road on Tuesday evenings.

Members are drawn from all ranges of backgrounds and experience. We welcome all singers. If you are a lapsed singer or just starting out then we would love to see you. There is no audition just come with plenty of enthusiasm and a willingness to come to rehearsals regularly and well-prepared!

In November 2025 Billericay, Witham and Maldon Choral Societies will combine to present a joint concert at New Rickstones Academy, Witham for a performance of Carl Jenkins "The Armed Man"



Billericay Choral Society

Philip Prior *conductor*
Alastair Merry *baritone*
John Pierce *tenor*
Ashley Thompson *organ*

Bethlehem

JH Maunder



Tuesday 10 December 2024 8pm
Emmanuel Church, Billericay

Alastair Merry - *baritone*

Alastair studied music at Worcester College, Oxford, became a lay clerk at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, and went on to study singing with Laura Sarti at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

He has sung several solo operatic roles including the Count in the Marriage of Figaro, Sid in Albert Herring, The Forester in Rusalka and Dancairo in Carmen.

As a professional chorister, Alastair has sung with the choruses of English and Welsh National Operas in over 20 productions, as well as covering and performing a small role in WNO's production of Moses und Aaron. Additionally, Alastair has worked with the BBC Singers, Netherlands Radio Choir and Opera Rara – work which involved multiple radio broadcasts, recordings, and concert performances including at the BBC Proms.

Alastair is also an active oratorio soloist and recitalist, having performed many works including, most recently, Durufle's Requiem, Handel's Messiah, and Vaughan Williams' Five Mystical Songs. He is also a professional Choirman of the Temple Church, London singing twice-weekly services during term time, and appearing in concerts, tours, recordings, and broadcasts with the choir.

John Pierce - *tenor*

John, local piano and singing teacher living in Billericay, is originally from Holywell. North Wales.

John studied at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester and continued his advanced training at the National Opera Studio in London, supported by the Welsh National Opera. He represented Wales at the Cardiff Singer of the World in 2011. John has performed at many of the UK's leading Opera Houses and concert venues and has won many competitions and scholarships; these include Young Welsh Singer, Welsh Singer of the Year, the Prince of Wales scholarship, the Susan Chilcott Scholarship, the Countess of Munster scholarship, and the prestigious Elizabeth Harwood Memorial Prize.

Career highlights include performing for the late Queen Elizabeth and Duke of Edinburgh at Buckingham Palace during a reception for Young People in the Performing Arts and performing for HRH Prince Charles to celebrate his 50th year of being the Prince of Wales. In 2018 John was invited to perform at the Water Rats Ball at the Grosvenor Hotel alongside Alfie Boe, Michael Ball, Katherine Jenkins and Rick Wakeman.

Bethlehem

Carol: O little Town of Bethlehem

Part 1 : The Shepherds' Gifts

A beautiful starlit night on the plains of Bethlehem. A little shepherd boy is tending his sheep. On the far side of the plain other shepherds can be indistinctly seen, surrounded by their flocks.

Glory to God in the highest, glory to God,
and on earth peace, good will toward men.

Only a little village, of reputation small;
Of beauty little claiming, of greatness naught at all
And yet within its borders, as ancient seers foretell
Is born the destined ruler, of faithless Israel.

Only a little Infant, a weak and helpless Child;
Now lying in a manger, the hay around Him piled
and yet the child so helpless, by virtue of His grace,
Is He, the mighty Saviour, the Saviour of our race.

Let us now go even unto Bethlehem
and see this thing which is come to pass,
which the Lord hath made known unto us,

Rest we secure from danger, on Him depend;
He, Who will be for ever Saviour and Friend
The Sun has risen, let us seek pastures new;
Where He doth lead, we follow our shepherd true
Come faithful flock, no longer aught we hear;
Darkness hath passed for ever, the day is here
The Sun has risen, the day is here.

Carol: While Shepherds watched their flocks

Part 2 : The Kings' Gifts

An old well in the desert at night. Balthasar is resting with his train.

Across the desert we are come, from eastern lands afar;
The power that calls us from our home, doth guide us by a star.
We know not how; we know not where, the guiding star will lead;
We only know we shall find there, the one true light indeed.

Forgive us not O star so bright until our journey's done
But guide us whence you take your light, O guide us to your Sun.
Forsake us not O star so bright, across the desert we are come
From eastern lands afar; the power that calls us from our home
Doth guide us by a star.

We know not how; we know not where, the guiding star will lead;
We only know we shall find there, the one true light indeed

Carol: As with gladness men of old

Part 3 : Our Gift

Before the Inn at Bethlehem

O softly let us tread, a reverent silence keeping;
Perchance upon His manger bed the little one is sleeping.
But can it be that here doth lie
Within this stable lowly
He before whom the angels cry their "Holy, Holy, Holy"
Who for our sakes comes down from heaven
A free salvation bringing
As son to earthly mother given
(I think I hear her singing).

Here we offer and present unto Thee
O Lord ourselves our souls and our bodies
And although we be unworthy through our manifold sins
To offer unto Thee any sacrifice
Yet we beseech thee to accept this our bounden duty and service
Not weighing our merits but pardoning our offences.

Come to the manger all that are weary
Come to the manger ye that seek peace
Come to the manger be not so fearful
From sins that are scarlet
He will release.

Highways and byways, let them all hear it
Highways and byways, loud the cry raise;
Highways and byways, never be resting
Till all the world sings the child Saviour's praise
Hallelujah. Amen.

**Carols: O come, all ye faithful
Hark the Herald Angels sing**