

BURTON BRADSTOCK FESTIVAL OF MUSIC AND ART

Autumn Newsletter 2023

Jenny Malyon, Chair of the Festival Committee, shares her gratitude for the success of this year's Festival

I hope you were able to enjoy the 2023 Festival as much as I did. It was our first full week festival since the pandemic and incorporated all the features of earlier years. We were so pleased to welcome Flats and Sharps, who should have been with us in the year that was cancelled. On Tuesday we were treated to a stunning evening of jazz with Zoe Francis and Jim Mullen. All our usual family of musicians were with us and a few new faces as well. The weather was kind, the music amazing and the audience happy it seemed. What more can you ask of a summer festival?

I would like to thank and pay tribute to the simply fantastic team that help put it all together. A lot of villagers do a great deal of work to make the festival happen. Behind the scenes there is an incredible amount of preparation, and all the volunteers do a great job and bring the whole magical thing together.

In this newsletter some of the volunteers have explained a bit about what they do with their teams of helpers. I would like to include this feature over a few editions of the newsletter so that you can all see what we do, and maybe there might be something you would like to get involved in. We are always ready to welcome a new team member to help share the load.

We also are grateful to the villagers who accommodate the musicians during the week of the festival. Perhaps this is something you might be able to assist us with, if you have a spare bedroom we could fill for a few days. Please do contact me if there is anything you would like to know, something you could offer to do or any interest you might want to share.

Remember the Trustees AGM on Tuesday 21st November in the Village Hall at 7pm. Come and join us for a glass of wine and meet the Trustees. I hope to see you there.

Jenny Malyon

Chair of the Festival Committee

Annual General Meeting

**Tuesday 21 November at 7.00pm
At Burton Bradstock Village Hall**

Hats off to them!

Artistic Director David Juritz celebrates Milos and Anja's wedding in Serbia

It was a complete delight to welcome Anja Petkovic (aka Mrs Milivojević) to Burton in August. Ever since his first visit, Burton has been a really significant part of Milos's life and Anja was thrilled to be invited to this small village she had heard so much about.



In September it was their turn to invite us to Serbia to celebrate their 'proper' wedding. Most of our tango quintet arrived a couple of days before the big day giving us time to wander around Belgrade before Milos picked us up for the two hour drive to his home town of Kragujevac.

After the warmest of welcomes from Milos's parents and family we soon found ourselves comparing plum brandy made by Milos and Anja's respective

grandfathers. After a couple of shots I thought both were bloody marvellous. Just as well because plum brandy was to feature large over the next few days.

By this stage we'd been joined by Janet Whitaker and Harriet and Meg, Milos's partners in the trio Kosmos, for a lovely meal cooked by Milos's mum. All accompanied by more plum brandy.



Next morning plum brandy was waiting on the breakfast table, after which we made a trip into town. David Gordon and I searched in vain for sun hats but the only ones we found were vetoed by our other halves.



Julian Piper, leader of the Music and Art Festival Heavy Gang, explains why the Festival's heavy lifting is as unmissable as the performances

Burton Bradstock is fortunate in having lots of residents who, for various reasons, are able to volunteer their assistance when required. These folk spring into action for the two fetes, for working parties and in mid-August for the Festival as hosts, cooks, removals teams, administrators, stewards, and a variety of other roles. Throughout the year, groups of volunteers serve on committees and as trustees planning the events. The so called 'Heavy Gang' (a name relating to their tasks rather than their weight) is made up of some folk who have been associated with the Festival for several years but the numbers have swelled thanks to a number of newcomers who have joined in willingly. Without them, the Festival could not function but much of their work is done behind the scenes in preparing for the main events and then restoring order afterwards.

In earlier years, many of the tasks involved in preparing for the Festival were carried out over a couple of days, but, through negotiation and planning, now take place over a longer period for which we are very grateful as we have time to recover in between sessions!

We begin by transporting the art display stands from their store at Manor Farm and erecting them in the Village Hall on the Thursday prior to the start of the display. The following day, a group constructs the Festival's marquee in the space behind the hall ready to function as a dining room for the musicians whilst another team moves the 60 chairs from the Rectory shed to the church.

But the main effort takes place on Saturday morning when the church is transformed into a performance arena. Some of the normal furniture is lifted and moved out of the way. Stage sections, carefully reconstructed by Chris Sundt from wood salvaged from the pre-pandemic model which had deteriorated badly, are brought down from storage elsewhere in the Village ready to be linked up to form the performing area.

Meanwhile, the new wooden lighting gantry, built this year by Roger Ashman to replace the unsatisfactory metal one which took up valuable stage space, is slotted into position above the stage and connected up to provide illumination for the musicians. A special ramp is attached to one of the stage sections to allow the piano to be moved onto it ready for the tuner to arrive. Others are engaged in moving chairs and yet another team has the task of attaching seat labels to match up with the numbers on tickets. The cooks provide teas and coffees and, this year for the first time, delicious bacon butties to refuel the Gang. By lunchtime, thanks to a lot of hard work, everything is ready.

Sunday's effort is focused on the Rectory Garden, moving yet more chairs out of storage and erecting gazebos for the performers. Our friends in Shipton Gorge arrive early in the morning with their two marquees which provide the space for serving teas. The Gang also support our wonderful team of cooks by continually washing up the cutlery and crockery to keep supplies ready for the customers who are enjoying the musicians' performances as they arrive in readiness for the week. The chairs are returned to the store only to reappear in time for the lunch which follows the lunchtime concert during the week.

After a busy week of art displays and concerts, the Gang swing into action again to reverse the process. On Saturday, the church is restored to its normal state (with more bacon butties to keep us going) and on Sunday the art displays and the marquee are dismantled with everything returned to its rightful place for storage.

Why do we all do it? The banter and camaraderie certainly demonstrate that we all enjoy working together – there's plenty of laughter! The bacon butties are a great incentive. But primarily, we recognize how fortunate we are to have such talented and experienced artists (both painters and musicians) who are prepared to come to our Village and share their enthusiasm with us each year for our enjoyment. Long may it continue and we hope to have sufficient men and women to provide the 'Heavy Gang' to enable it to happen. Come and join us!

Julian Piper (julian@jipiper.co.uk)

Karen Venn, who runs the Festival's social media accounts, reports on this year's activity

I have been enjoying helping the Festival with social media since 2018. The opportunity arose after a chat with Bill Cain who was, at the time, Chair of the Festival Committee and a near neighbour.

We have had many pleasurable interactions over the past 5 years. For example, we have engaged with BBC Radio 3, initially via Twitter (now X) which led to a mention of our Festival on Essential Classics by Ian Skelly. We have linked up with many of the performing musicians to add some background information to the programme (as well as publicising other events that they are involved with) and have been able to answer questions raised by people considering attending concerts. All truly social, enjoyable engagement.

Up until now, we have used X (formerly Twitter) and Facebook, mainly. Engagement via social media has been steadily growing for us. This year, 2023, our Festival Facebook posts appeared in over 6,500 people's feeds during the 4 weeks around the main August Festival, giving us a wonderful chance to be noticed by a large group of people with absolutely no cost to us at all. We achieved these figures due to the large number of people who engaged with us, particularly the musicians who have their own large band of loyal fans. Almost 2,000 people interacted with our posts by either clicking on a link to find more information, or by liking or sharing our news.

Kate Shemilt's high quality photographs were especially effective in attracting attention to some of our newposts this year—we are always aware that there is intense competition on social media so the first hurdle is to get people to notice our posts amongst the clamour. This year, we gained 24 Facebook Followers, resulting in a total of 522 dedicated people - many thanks to all of you who have added us to your Facebook feeds to ensure you are up to date with our latest news. For those who haven't and would still like to, you can open [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com) on the Internet and search for Burton Bradstock Festival of Music and Art. In doing so, you will ensure that we reach even more people which in turn helps us to be more effective and thereby keeping costs down.

You can also find us on X (formerly Twitter) as @BradstockFest. Really glad to be able to use this newsletter to thank everyone who has engaged with our posts and shared them with their friends and relevant local interest pages, too. We are looking at other interesting ways to engage with our audiences so do look out for more information. We're very much looking forward to keeping in touch with you all throughout the year!

Art Exhibition review 2023

'An Oasis of Calm' is how the Art Exhibition was referred to by a visitor who had just escaped from the frenetic organisation of the Music preparations in the Church. The perfection of the display and overall ambience is down to the attention to detail and general harassment from our Art Committee chairman, Wendy Hart.

Our new treasurer, Valerie Ellis, was kept busy shepherding the stewards handling the cashless transactions and ensuring that payments were correct. This turned out to be a full-time job for the ever present Val.

Valerie took over the treasury job from Liz Orza who is still a mainstay of the Art Committee and dispenses wise advice, like an elder statesman, to the rest of us when we come up with impractical ideas. Incidentally we are always looking for new committee members to share our enthusiasm for and assist us with the Art Exhibition.

Moira Hazel from Broadmayne entered two framed paintings both of which exceeded our price and size guidelines. This caused us some consternation. Should we tell the artist and ask her to remove them? As it was, we hung them at the back of the hall and let it be. Both her paintings sold at the end of the exhibition and Moira Hazel became our best-selling artist by a considerable margin!

Other artists who sold well were Caroline Barnes with her ceramics collections, Carolyn Lyness, one of whose paintings was used for this year's poster, and Barbara Green's distinctive colourful art. Elm House Studio also had an outstanding pottery exhibition this year.

As always, a big thank you to the heavy gang for setting up the structure of our exhibition. Their numbers were severely depleted by covid during the week and we were left with a handful of hearties to dismantle it all at the end.

Wendy Hart, Liz Orza, Meg Tebbs, Valerie Ellis, Sue Britton and myself are looking forward to 2024 and creating next year's Art Exhibition.

Harry Lenthall Berry

And thank you to our Sponsors and Friends, and a call to any who would like to join them

Dear Friends,

First a massive thank you for your support which is invaluable to keeping our festival special.

The festival works on a number of levels. Some of these are on show, like the sale of tickets, the quality of the music or the magic of performance in the Church. Others are not so visible, but without them the festival could not continue. Ticket sales alone will never be enough to pay and continue to provide the quality of music and art that has made our Village Festival so remarkable. To bridge the gap we seek local business support and look to members of the public to help sponsor individual concerts, banners or events. If you would like to hear more about how sponsorship can help us, or know people or businesses that would be interested, please contact Alan Weston (alan.weston6@gmail.com).

And, finally, a heart-felt thank you to all Friends of the Festival. It was wonderful to be able to welcome you to the Festival of Music and Art again, back to the usual full week. Your donations, and enthusiastic support for the Festival, underpin its continued success, and provide significant financial support, ensuring the festival can continue to attract the world-class musicians we so enjoy hearing perform.

We look forward to a Festival with a full programme in 2024, and to your continued support.

Friends are invited to the AGM at 7pm on Tuesday November 21st 2023 in the village hall. Light refreshments will be served.