



# Journeys & Belonging

Bob Chilcott: *The Voyage*

Cecilia McDowall: *Everyday*

*Wonders: The Girl From Aleppo*

Stephen Paulus: *The Road Home*

Conductor: Joe Tobin

Piano: Steve Bowey

Violin: Yuliia Chetverhova

Saturday 28th June 2025, 7:30pm

St Nicolas Church, Newbury

# Newbury Choral Society



Chair: Liz Wallace  
Treasurer: Nat Smith  
Secretary: Tracy Smith  
Concert Manager: Mike Barthorpe

Rehearsal accompanist: Steve Bowey

Newbury Choral Society is a non-auditioned choir with a history of over 130 years of bringing a high standard of music to the area. The establishment of a permanent group of singers must have met an urgent need in the town as the Society attracted more than one hundred members for the first concert in 1885. Conducted by the choirmaster and organist of Newbury's St Nicolas Church, John Shepherd Liddle, the choir made a good impression on the *Newbury Weekly News* critic who wrote that 'the execution of the choruses reflected great credit upon the members of the Society and their conductor'.

Since that first concert we have continued to perform a wide and varied repertoire, from the great choral works of Bach, Handel and Vaughan Williams to pieces by more recent composers Tavener, Britten and Karl Jenkins. In its second century the choir's conductors have included Jonathan Finney, Robert Barsby, Leo Hussain and its first female Musical Director Janet Lincé. Cathal Garvey held the position from December 2009 until September 2022. From January 2023 NCS's music director has been Joe Tobin.

You can find out more about Newbury Choral Society, its history and forthcoming events, at [www.newburychoral.org.uk](http://www.newburychoral.org.uk).

If you are interested in joining us, please contact our secretary through the website. We rehearse on Monday evenings at the Methodist Church Hall, Newbury, from 7.30pm to 9.30pm. We ask that you are able to read music but not necessarily to sight-read. You will receive a warm welcome.

# The Programme

## *The Journey* (Bob Chilcott)

1. Setting Sail
2. My Father's Boat
3. What we did on our holiday
4. Crossing the Equator
5. The Shipping Forecast
6. The Fortunate Isles
7. Cup and Saucer
8. Sailing By
9. Boatsong

## **Interval**

Jess Norton Raybould - Emily Hall: *Befalling*

Laura Martin – Bock: *Far from the home I love*

Dring: *A bay in Anglesey*

*Everyday Wonders: The Girl From Aleppo* (Cecilia McDowall)

1. Orphans of the World
2. Thousands milling at the border (The Journey)
3. I'd never seen the sea before
4. A lost tribe pushed from border to border
5. Everyday Wonders

*The Road Home* (Stephen Paulus)

Please visit [www.newburychoral.org.uk/Feedback](http://www.newburychoral.org.uk/Feedback) to tell us about your experience of our performance.

## Programme Notes

Newbury Choral Society is presenting an interesting and unusual programme of contemporary works by some of the most skilled composers of choral music working today. Bob Chilcott's *The Voyage* and Cecilia McDowall's *Everyday Wonders: The Girl from Aleppo* both deal with contemporary issues through music, exploring loneliness, connectedness and struggle in different and innovative ways. American Stephen Paulus composed a wide variety of works, both sacred and secular, choral and orchestral. He contributes *The Road Home*, based on an American folk tune and frequently performed since its 2001 premiere in Minnesota.

Bob Chilcott has been involved with choral music throughout his life and has been guest conductor of choirs in over thirty countries. His work shows great variety of style and genre and includes numerous sacred pieces. *The Voyage* is one of many collaborations by Chilcott and writer Charles Bennett, who said of his text, "The concept of loneliness is abstract and negative, so I thought about the opposite – connectedness, and wrote eight or ten songs that together make a whole. On one level, *The Voyage* is about our journey through life, and on another level it is about connectedness and needing other people". The work was commissioned by Age UK Oxfordshire.

The narrative of *Everyday Wonders: The Girl from Aleppo* uses interesting musical effects, such as stamps, body slaps and rhythmic speech to tell the story of Nujeen Mustafa, a Kurdish teenager with cerebral palsy. Fleeing her home with her sister, she escaped being engulfed by war and ended her journey in Europe. Her biography, *The Girl from Aleppo*, forms the basis of an inspirational tale with text by Kevin Crossley-Holland, used by McDowall to construct a cantata of five sections. The composer's note observes that "it is a journey of hope and extraordinary fortitude against all odds". It was first performed in 2018, commissioned by the National Children's Choir of Great Britain for its 20th anniversary.

# *The Voyage*

Bob Chilcott

## **1 Setting Sail**

Alone on the beach at midnight  
I found a boat, and wondered what it  
might take to make it float.

In the boat with my blood  
for the mast and sail, my hand the  
rudder, my spine  
the wooden keel.

In the waves at my feet  
I could open a door,  
and cross the sea to where  
I'd never been before.

The stars above my head  
became an arrow pointing me out  
from the beach  
towards tomorrow.

The beat of my heart was a tide  
which rose up the beach, and the  
moon was the pulse of a lighthouse  
just out of reach.

And I knew I would sail that boat  
towards the light.  
To where I wasn't alone on the beach  
at midnight.

## **2 My Father's Boat**

Chorus:  
Dip your brush and begin  
with aquamarine for the sea,  
then paint the sky with night  
and come for a sail with me.

Now and again I remember  
the boats we made together my father  
and me.  
I recall the smell of glue  
and all the pieces laid out on the table.

We put them together slowly  
like steps in a dance we found it hard  
to learn.

We read the instructions so often  
I heard them in my head as I went to  
sleep.

And all I am asking now  
is a bit of help with putting myself  
together.  
I know it won't be easy,  
but if we take things gently we'll be  
fine.

All the instructions are gone now  
and some of the pieces missing but  
even so,  
I think I can still dance  
over the dark waves with you as my  
partner.

### 3 What we did on our holiday

What we did on our holiday was sit on  
a bench as the sun  
melted ice cream down our fingers.

And what we did on our holiday was  
fly a kite that grew smaller till it hit a  
cloud.

And what we did on our holiday was  
build a castle

whose walls would never fall till the  
tide came in.

And what we did on our holiday was  
splash each other with water  
tasting like tears till a towel came  
along.

We fell asleep to the sound of waves in  
our heads,  
we dreamt of an ice-cream castle, and  
that's what we did on our holiday.

### 4 Crossing the Equator

The day you cross the equator for the  
first time  
you're summoned to the Court of  
Neptune –  
a series of strange tasks awaits  
before you become a Shellback or 'Son  
of the Deep'.

And whenever I get to the top of the  
stair  
and forget what I'm there for, when I  
lose my keys,  
or become confused

I tell myself: I'm only crossing the  
equator.

And when I lost my step and fell  
overboard  
and saw my life go sailing off without  
me,  
I knew in the end it was either sink or  
swim.

King Neptune, remember me now your  
trusty servant,  
throw me a lifeline soon O Merciful  
Majesty,  
save me from sharks and crabs and the  
storms of life.

### 5 The Shipping Forecast

Chorus:  
Dogger, Fisher, German Bight,  
steer me safely through the night.  
Gale Force Nine and Storm Force Ten,  
let me see dry land again. -----

As a child I always knew when a storm  
was coming.  
I hid myself away,  
and watched the cups and saucers  
flying round; -----

the plates come smashing down in  
smithereens.

Sometimes at night I felt the floor  
heave up.

I crouched into a ball.

I shuddered as we broke through  
stubborn ice;

I thought the house might sink but it  
never did.

And so when a storm approaches now,

I batten down the hatches,  
except it's me who steers the house  
through rain and wind and ice towards  
the morning.

Stick with me now, we'll get through  
this together.

Listen to the shipping forecast.

Pick up the broken pieces and start  
afresh.

It's all plain sailing after a storm.

## 6 The Fortunate Isles

I've been to the Fortunate Isles,  
and what I remember most,  
is a curious thing which takes place  
once a year.

In clothes that do not fit,  
clothes that are most unsuitable,  
old people go to the playgrounds and  
take them over.

Like swallows they swing through the  
air, and spin on giddy roundabouts,  
or slip down sleek slides with a gleeful  
shriek.

But then a terrible thing, a terrible  
thing happened:

the old went right on playing and  
would not stop.

And as they laughed and played, their  
bodies grew small as children,  
and no one could make them do what  
they were told.

Their children watched them play,  
children who looked like adults,  
and told them: be careful and stop it  
and don't touch that!

I've been to the Fortunate Isles  
where the old are young forever  
and laughter is bright as sunshine after  
rain.

## 7 Cup and Saucer

Whenever I'm a saucer you're my cup.  
Whenever you are down  
I'll lift you up.

If I'm a blunted knife  
you'll be my fork.  
If you were an empty sky  
I'd be the lark.

I'm a dark tunnel you're the light.  
When you've been left behind  
I'll see you right.

If ever I'm too cold  
you keep me warm.  
If ever you are stormy  
I'll be calm.

[repeat]

## 8 Sailing By

Chorus:

This is a prayer for space.  
This is a prayer for ease.  
This is a prayer for grace.  
This is a prayer for peace.

In a time of calm we mend our  
tattered sails, fix a leaky tap,  
sing a sleepy lullaby to a seagull sailing  
by.

In a time of calm we rest upon the  
waves and take our ease,  
one white cloud in a blue sky is a  
seagull sailing by.

In a time of calm we wait for the wind  
to blow both hard and cold,  
then over the waves we'll fly  
like a seagull sailing by.

In a time of calm we watch the  
moonlight gleam on a millpond sea,  
hear the desolate cry of a seagull  
sailing by.

## 9 Boatsong

I am the mast: a tree among the  
waves,  
I hold the sail where once I held my  
leaves.  
O mast we promise now we'll stand  
like you –  
tall and straight and true.

O compass we promise now to hold on  
tight to all that's true and right.

This is the ship to hold us safe and dry  
above the waves, beneath the open  
sky.

O ship our promise meets in you  
tonight as we voyage towards the  
light.

I am the compass: look at me and  
know the true direction you must  
surely go.

# Interval

Jess Norton Raybould

**Emily Hall: *Befalling***

Laura Martin

**Bock: *Far from the home I love***

**Dring: *A bay in Anglesey***

## ***Everyday Wonders: The Girl from Aleppo***

Cecilia McDowall

### **1 Orphans of the World**

Chorale

This wreath of words is what we have,  
And flowers of song all we can give.

Singing sorrow but singing tomorrow.  
Singing the song of life itself.

The scent of rosewater, hookah pipes,  
Pistachios. That's how Aleppo used to  
be.

Dust, rubble. Every window broken.  
Aleppo, Aleppo... like a ghost town.

Nujeen. Nujeen.

New life. That's me!

But I can't walk, can't balance.

My two legs have lives of their own.

Plaster, braces, operations.

I'm stuck forever on tiptoes.

I often dream about being an  
astronaut.

Floating in space, your legs don't  
matter.

We Kurds: orphans of the world.

My mother, father, my siblings.

All ten of us in three rooms.

TV was my school, TV was my friend. I  
learned

Soap-opera English by watching TV.

Shelling, looting, hammering,  
bombing.

We knew we had to leave.

Just me, my sister Nasrine, and my  
wheelchair.  
Sometimes sisters can be as sweet as  
birds.

Chorale  
Remember me? Remember.  
I'm not a baby, not a girl, not a boy.  
I'm just a number, an obstacle.  
I'm on the wrong side.  
Remember. Remember me?

## **2 Thousands milling at the border (The Journey)**

Thousands milling at the border.  
Suitcases.  
Bundles. Refugees — nothing!  
We sold heirlooms. Family homes.

One man said he sold his kidney.  
We raised money to buy life jackets,  
A place on a dinghy, freedom.

## **3 I'd never seen the sea before**

I'd never seen the sea before,  
The mist, the spray. How beautiful it  
is!  
Our phones we tied inside party  
balloons  
To keep them dry on the crossing.

Of course I can't swim. I've never been  
in water.  
None of us could swim. I became  
Poseidon.  
That dove pebble a little Afghan boy  
Gave me: I held it for luck  
Between my awkward fingers.

## **4 A lost tribe pushed from border to border**

A lost tribe pushed from border to  
border.  
Stampeding for a bus, swarming across  
fields.  
In the camps children drew pictures  
With coloured pencils: a flower bright  
as blood.  
The guards lobbed food at us —  
Lawyers, doctors, Professors,  
businessmen.

We aren't animals.  
The jerking, the jolting, the pain, the  
pain.  
And Nasrine always pushing, pushing.  
Greece, Macedonia, Serbia, Hungary,  
Croatia, Slovenia, Austria...  
'Please, Germany? Where is  
Germany?'  
The policeman smiled.  
'Wilkommen! Welcome to Germany!'

## 5 Everyday Wonders

My head, my heart. Skipping and singing.

What delights me are everyday wonders:

People talking to me because I'm smiling.

My head, my heart. Skipping and singing.

My pink-and-blue rucksack, red subject folders.

Sometimes in my dreams I make friends...

The animals at the zoo, some are as weird

As I am. A smiling refugee. Am I an alien?

Laugh as long as you breathe.

Love as long as you live.

These are my favourite sayings.

Happy frogs croaking, summer rain falling,

Even the ducks seemed to welcome me.

A chance to brush my teeth in the morning.

Everything on time, all the strict rules, Waking early, my first ever morning at school,

My head, my heart. Skipping and singing.

Nujeen. Nujeen. New life. That's me.

Chorale

This wreath of words is our choice.

These flowers of song, they are our voice.

Singing sorrow, singing tomorrow, singing tomorrow.

Singing the song of life itself.

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## *The Road Home*

Stephen Paulus

Tell me, where is the road I can call my own

That I left, that I lost

So long ago

All these years I have wandered

Oh, when will I know

There's a way, there's a road

That will lead me home.

After wind, after rain

When the dark is done

As I wake from a dream

In the gold of day

Through the air there's a calling

From far away

There's a voice I can hear

That will lead me home.

Rise up, follow me

Come away, is the call

With the love in your heart

As the only song

There is no such beauty

As where you belong

Rise up, follow me

I will lead you home.

## Joe Tobin – Musical Director



Joe joined us as our Musical Director at the beginning of 2023. He is an accomplished conductor, composer, singer and musical scholar based in central London, who has performed alongside ensembles such as I Fagiolini, the Royal Academy of Music Chamber Choir, and the Cambridge Fundraising Choir. He is currently the

Director of Music of Newbury Choral Society, Conductor of Peshurst Choral Society, Director of Music at St Thomas of Canterbury church, Brentwood, and Founder and Musical Director of the professional choir, the Lerion Consort.

He graduated with a first class honours degree from the University of York. Continuing into postgraduate education, Joe studied Choral Conducting at the Royal Academy of Music under the tutelage of Patrick Russill. He graduated in 2021 and was awarded a master's degree with distinction, additionally receiving the Sir Thomas Armstrong Choral Leadership Prize and Irene Burcher Prize from the Academy.

In London Joe has worked professionally as a conductor with many choirs including Ingatestone, Brentwood and Woking choral societies, Royal Academy of Music Chamber Choir, Choir of the London Oratory, Cambridge Fundraising Choir, Herts County Youth Choir, The Harborough Singers, Hanover Choir, Imperial College Chamber Choir, The Birkbeck University Choir, North Herts Guild of Singers, and St John of Jerusalem Festival Chorus, as well conducting the BBC Singers in masterclass and concert. He was previously conductor of the Children's International Voices of Enfield and Interim Director of Music at St Laurence church, Catford.

## Steve Bowey – Piano and Accompanist



Steve studied organ and piano from an early age, playing the organ regularly at St Francis and St Andrew's churches in Coulsdon. After gaining an engineering degree from Salford University he moved to Newbury to work for Vodafone.

In 1991 Steve was appointed accompanist of the Cromwell Singers and later became their Musical Director. From 1992, he was Director of Music at St Mary's Church, Shaw-cum-Donnington and regularly worked with other local choirs, including the Douai Choral Society, the Downland Chorale, the RSCM Southern Cathedral Singers, Berkshire Maestros youth choirs and Worcester College Oxford.

In 2006 Steve joined the Royal College of Organists and in July the following year took the examination for Associate (ARCO) for which he was awarded the Limpus prize for performance, as well as the Sowerbutts and Samuel Baker prizes. After further study, he was awarded the Fellowship Diploma (FRCO) in January 2011.

His current musical commitments include teaching organ, piano, and music theory. He is Director of Music at St Mary's Shaw-cum-Donnington, organist at Cheam School and regularly gives solo organ recitals including one at Worcester Cathedral in 2018.

Steve is currently the regular accompanist for Newbury Choral Society and The Cecilia Consort and also enjoys working with many other choirs in Newbury and the surrounding area.

## Yuliia Chetverhova – Violinist



Yuliia Chetverhova is a Ukrainian violinist known for her expressive style and versatility across solo, chamber, and orchestral music. She is a graduate of the Ukrainian Tchaikovsky Academy of Music, where she earned both her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in violin performance under the guidance of Professors Taras Yaropud and Serhiy Shott, graduating in 2018. During her time in Ukraine, Yuliia became a Laureate of several international competitions and gained

extensive professional experience performing with ensembles such as the Kyiv Soloists chamber orchestra, Metropolis orchestra, and Kyiv Symphony and Pops Orchestra. She also gave numerous chamber music performances at prestigious venues in Kyiv.

Yuliia has continued to develop her career internationally. She has appeared as a trialist with the English National Opera, and was recently added to the list of extras for the London Mozart Players.

Yuliia currently performs regularly with the Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra as a sessional violinist. In 2022–23, she was selected as an Instrumental Ambassador for the Nicola Benedetti Foundation, a role that reflects not only her commitment to performance but to musical outreach and education.

## NCS Choral Scholars

Our new choral scholarship initiative is a very exciting opportunity to support young musicians in Newbury. By offering this support, the choir will not only contribute to the growth and development of choral music but also strengthen ties with the local arts community and educational institutions. Choral Scholarship schemes like these have proved hugely beneficial in recent years, and the choir is proud to have this opportunity to invest in the future of the choir and the Newbury arts scene.



### Laura Martin Soprano Choral Scholar

As part of her music degree at York, she sang in The 24 with Robert Hollingworth for two years and particularly enjoyed the range of repertoire that they sang. She also sang with Vox a capella choir, Animas chamber choir and performed with CHMS, the musical theatre society at York.

She had singing lessons with Susan Young, and achieved a first in her performance module 'Acting Through Song'. She achieved high 2:1s in her end of year recitals and enjoyed a module called 'Singing Monteverdi' with Robert Hollingworth.

She really enjoys choral singing, and hopes to continue developing her skills, with the scholarship being the perfect opportunity for her to do so. She has been able to develop her one-to-a-part singing, as well as getting a taste of professional singing. She achieved a distinction in her Grade 8 ABRSM singing in 2021 and from the ages 11-18 sang with Berkshire Youth Choirs.

Laura has loved the time that she has spent with Newbury Choral Society and is excited to share everything that they have been working on this term



## Jess Norton Raybould Alto Choral Scholar

Jess read music at Durham University, where she managed the University Chamber Choir and had a Choral Scholarship at Durham Cathedral. She completed her Masters in Music in 2023, receiving the Ramsay-Burn and Palatinate Awards. Since graduating, she has started to grow a portfolio career as a singer and conductor in Oxford and the South-East. She has launched her own vocal ensemble, *æftersang*, which has an exciting season of new works and experiences coming soon!

When she's not on the Great Western Railway, or spouting odd analogies for choral music, she sings at The Queen's College, Oxford. She has enjoyed the opportunities working with Newbury Choral Society.

### West Berkshire Action for Refugees



West Berkshire Action for Refugees supports refugees and asylum seekers who are seeking safety from their war torn homelands. We assist in learning English and in their journeys to find work and to build a new life.

Newbury Choral Society is proud to provide support. To find out more please ask the representatives here tonight.

## NCS members singing in tonight's performance

<b>SOPRANOS</b>		<b>ALTOS</b>	
S1	S2	A1	A2
Marion Croxford	Rebecca Berger	Gayle Ashby	Katharine Andrews
Charmaine Dennis	Rachel Bowey	Hillary Banks	Margaret Baker
Luci Galer	Rebecca Couzens	Judith Denny	Denise Barthorpe
Janet Freer	Monica Huddie	Sinead Hall	Julia Bowsher
Mary Stagg	Murrie Jackson	Judith Hobdell	Helen Cook
Fenisia Stopher	Chris Letham	Mary Lawler	Penny Daly
	Beverley Lewis	Emma Moscow	Nicola Foster
	Laura Martin	Sarah Palmer	Lynette Harper
	Lynne Moore	Georgina Seaman	Jenny Hayward
	Sarah South	Nat Smith	Mavis Hughesdon
		Tracy Smith	Ceinwen Lally
		Jenny Stewart	Rebecca Mathis
		Ann Turner	Emma Moffatt
		Liz Wallace	Jess Norton Raybould
			Sally Sinclair
			Harriet Smailes
<b>TENORS</b>		<b>BASSES</b>	
T1	T2	B1	B2
Matthew Evans	Mike Barthorpe	Philip Bann	David Bomgardner
Nick Hobdell	Derek Harwood	John Garbutt	David Craig
David Taylor	Neil Rendall	Paul High	Peter Dann
Jeremy Wright	Tom Moffatt	John Stewart	John Karperien
		Andrew Swainston	Richard Moore
			Barrie Seaman

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# Dates for the diary

**Saturday 29th November 2025, 7:30pm, St Nicolas Church**  
Advent Concert

Bach: *Christmas Oratorio*

**Saturday 28th March 2026, 7:30pm, St Nicolas Church**  
NCS Spring Season Concert

**Saturday 27th June 2026, 7:30pm, Douai Abbey**  
NCS Summer Season Concert

**Saturday 19th December 2026, 7:30pm, St Nicolas Church**  
NCS Winter Season Concert

Programmes printed by



**PRINT SERVICES**  
NEWBURY COLLEGE

The Cromwell Singers invite you to  
**Remember...**



**3pm Saturday 5th July 2025**  
**Church of St. Mary the Virgin**  
**Church Lane, Chieveley RG20 8UT**

**This concert is supporting**



**Tickets £10 adults, free for under 18s**  
**Tickets can be ordered from**  
***thecromwellsingers@gmail.com* or from choir members**

**There will be a retiring collection and raffle**



NEWBURY  
**Choral**  
SOCIETY

Winter Season 2025

# NCS Advent Concert

## Bach: *Christmas Oratorio*

Conductor: Joe Tobin

Organ: Steve Bowey

Professional Soloists & Orchestra

Saturday 29th November 2025, 7:30pm

St Nicolas Church, Newbury

**Tickets £15, under 16s £5, available online  
at [www.newburychoral.org.uk](http://www.newburychoral.org.uk) and from  
choir members**

