

East Cornwall Bach Choir presents  
**Handel's *MESSIAH***  
– a Singing Workshop Day  
and Performance

**Workshop 11.0 am – 5.30 pm,  
Public Performance 7.0 pm  
Saturday 3rd March 2012  
Liskeard Methodist Church**

**Soloists:**

**Helen McHale** (soprano)  
**Penny Schroeter** (contralto)  
**John Hobbs** (bass baritone)  
**Jonathan Delbridge** (organ)

**East Cornwall Bach Choir - and Friends!**

**Paul Ellis** (conductor)

East Cornwall Bach Choir's annual Singing Day and Concert this year is devoted to the best loved of all oratorios, and the most popular choral work in the whole classical repertoire.

Isn't Handel's *Messiah* a big undertaking for a single day?

Yes, but we shall be concentrating mainly on Part 2 (the Passion of Christ) and Part 3 (the Resurrection and ultimate triumph), while also touching on Part 1 (the prophecies and the birth of Jesus).

Equally important, most of those singing in the chorus will already be familiar with some, much, or even all of the music.

So if you've sung this wonderful work before, but a long time ago;  
or if you haven't had much experience of choral singing but would like to gain some more; or if you can read music, but lack the confidence to join a

regular choir - in all these cases, this Singing Day could be just what you need... It might even change your life!

### Prices, Tickets & meal arrangements

**Singing Day: £12, students £8, plus music hire £1 if required**  
**Performance: £5 at the door**

Application forms (for choral singers) are available online from the ECBC website: [www.ecbc.co.uk](http://www.ecbc.co.uk), from ECBC members, or by phoning Sharon on 01752 846102.

Registration begins in the Church Hall at 10.0 am, when coffee will be available and hired scores can be picked up.

You are welcome to use the Church Hall to eat your sandwiches between 1.0 and 2.0 – tea & coffee provided (or to go elsewhere).

Between 5.0 pm and the public performance at 7.0, light suppers are available at the Seasons Café or the Fat Frog Bistro (£6.50 per person excluding drinks, bookable in advance).

### Venue

Liskeard Methodist Church, Barn Street, Liskeard PL14 4BG

### Our conductor - Paul Ellis

Paul Ellis studied at Manchester University and the Royal Northern College of Music. He is well known as an organ recitalist, has worked with many choirs and choral groups, and is currently Director of Music at Sherborne Abbey. Paul has been East Cornwall Bach Choir's Musical Director since 2004.

### The Composer

Georg Friedrich Händel was born in 1685 in Halle (Germany). Showing exceptional early talent, he learned his trade playing violin in the Hamburg opera orchestra and became an accomplished recitalist on the harpsichord and organ. After travelling and performing in Italy he became director of music to the Prince Elector of Hanover, soon to become King of England. Handel moved to England, settled happily in London, and took English nationality, changing the spelling of his name to George Frideric Handel. His large musical output ranged from instrumental and orchestral music, via

songs and anthems, to larger scale works – to begin with mainly operas on Italian texts, but later a whole series of oratorios. A musical historian writes: “It is still *Messiah* that we think of first when Handel’s name is mentioned, and rightly so; for it was with this work that a German composer of partly Italian training established the English form called oratorio as a household word”. In his sixties Handel’s health began to fail, and he later lost his sight. When he died in 1759, at the age of 74, he was buried in Westminster Abbey with the highest honours, amid general mourning.

### The Music

*Messiah* was composed to a text (based on the Bible) presented to Handel in 1741 by a wealthy literary amateur, Charles Jenners. Handel was so excited by the task that he completed the score in 24 days, and the first performance was given, to great acclaim, in Dublin (April 1742). *Messiah* was, and remains, a highly original work.

Unlike most oratorios it ignores the customary dramatic or narrative line, and concentrates instead on a set of central Christian events and beliefs – the promise of a Messiah and the birth of Christ (Part 1); the sufferings and death of Christ (Part 2); and the ultimate heavenly triumph of Christ (Part 3). Despite this abstract-sounding structure, the music is bursting with life, filled with musical pictures, especially of light and darkness, and offers tremendous contrasts of massive and delicate sounds. Handel has been justly described as one of the most skilful writers for chorus who has ever lived, and Haydn’s tribute was “He is the master of us all.” At the first London performance (1743) King George II, carried away by the grandeur and excitement of the *Hallelujah Chorus*, rose spontaneously to his feet (followed necessarily by everyone else present). Handel was much gratified by such reactions to his work, but remarked with some humility on a performance of his greatest oratorio: “I should be sorry if I only entertained them – I wish to make them better.”

Nigel Cooper, for ECBC

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