

**YATE CHORAL SOCIETY ANNOUNCE THE DEATH OF THEIR CONDUCTOR,
MR GEOFF WICKHAM B.E.M**

It is with great sadness that we announce the unexpected death of our conductor, Mr Geoff Wickham B.E.M, pictured here.

Geoff led the choir for over 50 years and we held a grand Gala concert in 2022 to celebrated his 50th anniversary with the choir. Geoff was an accomplished musician running other choirs and working with the Operatic society in Bristol as well. It was for all these



years of work in the Bristol music scene that he was awarded the British Empire medal in 2021 for services to music in Bristol.

Geoff was also a gifted composer, and his most recent work was “Life on a North Devon Farm” which was dedicated to his wife, Hazel, who sadly died in 2019. This piece was the highlight of the 50th anniversary concert.

Geoff studied conducting with George Hurst, Michael Rose and Louis Halsey, and has been Conductor of Yate Choral Society for 50 years. He was also Musical Director for 14 years of Bristol Catholic Players for productions of Gilbert and Sullivan's operas. As Conductor of Bristol Cathedral Choir School Choral Society for the past 10 years he has conducted them in concerts in Krakow, Dubrovnik and Budapest. He has also enjoyed conducting them when they have joined with other choirs to form a 200-strong choir in the Cathedral. He has conducted many musicals for Bristol Musical Comedy Club and Mercury Players such as "Camelot", "Sweet Charity", "A Little Night Music" and "Mack and Mabel". He has written choral pieces, musicals, and incidental music for the stage. Although as a teacher he was always heavily involved in school music, he was Head of Chemistry at Queen Elizabeth's Hospital School, Bristol and part-author of a science textbook.

Geoff has left a big gap in the hearts of the choir members and also a big gap for the choir itself as we now seek a versatile musician to take on Geoff's role of conducting the choir, planning our concerts programmes and organising and conducting an orchestra for our main choral works. While we continue the search for Geoff's successor the choir plans for a charity concert in May led by one of our gifted members, Carol Cook, who is planning a programme of classical and light music for this concert, the proceeds of which will go to a charity to be chosen by Geoff's daughters.