

Arts & Entertainment Editor
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Whiddon Autumn Festival offers world class music to all



CORVUS CONSORT © IZZY ROMILLY

Access to the arts matters. It levels the playing field so that all of us can enjoy enrichment experiences, regardless of our different backgrounds. Last month's inaugural Whiddon Autumn Festival offered free tickets to both the under 25s and those on Universal Credit. This commitment to inclusivity is just one of many admirable features of the new addition to Devon's cultural calendar.

Along with a group of friends, I attended a concert of unaccompanied choral music in Chagford Church on September 11th.

"How on earth are you going to review this performance?" asked one of my companions afterwards, "It was flawless."

And indeed it was! I'm not prone to gushing, but truly, it's hats off to festival director Freddie Crowley and his captivating Corvus Consort. This was life-enhancing stuff. The bright young things charmed us all with their unaccompanied natural voices, voluptuous sound, and committed performances. The heady selection of music took the audience on a journey through sixteenth century Spain, behind the walls of an Italian convent, deep

into the tranquility of the British countryside, and far up into the starry heavens. Freddie Crowley's introductions to the pieces combined unaffected ease with erudition. Still only in his mid-twenties, he is already developing a distinctive style, particularly in the way he holds silences, creating exquisite tension and release.

The concert also featured the world premiere of Harry Baker's Stone Universe, a setting of a poem by prolific Dartmoor poet John Powls. This was gorgeously atmospheric music in which the ancient granite rocks strewn across Dartmoor were compared to constellations in a stone universe. Listening to this musical evocation of Dartmoor granite whilst actually sitting within a mediaeval Dartmoor granite church added enormously to its impact – an accomplished work for such a young composer.

The entire evening was relaxed, unhurried, and welcoming. The fresh young voices of the Corvus Consort reverberated around the Church of St Michael the Archangel bathing us in the rich sound-worlds of five centuries of European music. It felt as if we were part of something new and different arising from within this beautiful corner of rural Devon.

Creativity Through Nature

Acclaimed watercolour artist Ann Blockley exhorts all of us to 'go outside and play', to paint freely using foraged, recycled and natural materials in a fun no-pressure way. These activities nurture our creativity, inspire us, and replenish our energy.

Her latest book, *Creativity Through Nature*, tells the story of her personal and artistic 'sea change'. Writing the book and developing the ideas behind it led to her moving home from the Cotswolds to the 'wild, untidy magic of Devon'.

Ann says: "Quite recently, I thought I had reached the end of the road as an artist, I sought solace in the natural world. This led not only to a different way of doing art but to a different way of being. There is still enchantment and magic in the world below the layers of twenty-first century problems. All of us can find new creativity through connecting to nature."

Ann Blockley is an internationally successful, award-winning artist, a member of the Royal Institute of Painters in Watercolour, the Society



ANN BLOCKLEY IN HER DEVON STUDIO

of Women Artists and the Arborealists (a group of contemporary professional artists who create art inspired by trees, woodlands and forests.)

Her studio near Modbury is open to visitors for the first time as part of the South Hams Art Trail. (Venue 8)

South Hams Arts Forum Arts Trail
16th – 31st October 2021
39 artists across the South Hams exhibiting in homes, studios, galleries, hotels and pubs.
Visit shaf.org.uk for full details.

Hallowe'en Entertainments

Hallowe'en is the traditional Celtic new year, also known as Samhain, a time when the spirits of the dead, as well as the fairies are said to be able to gatecrash the world of us mere mortals.

It's definitely worth celebrating autumn's last hurrah, before we begin the descent into the dark of winter. Here's a varied selection of the local entertainments on offer:

PUMPKIN FEST



Strawberry Fields Farm Shop, Lifton, PL16 ODE
25th October – 31st, from 9.00am
Pick your own pumpkins from ten acres of pumpkin fields. Also: pumpkin carving, Magic Martin entertaining all day, and a pumpkin maize maze. Make your way around the maze while keeping a look out for witchcraft and wizardry, creepy crawlies and pesky ghosts. Tickets: Pumpkin Fest £2.50 (pumpkins not included) Maize Maze £4.00 if bought in conjunction with a Pumpkin Fest Ticket www.strawberryfieldslifton.co.uk

HALLOWE'EN ACTIVITY DAY

Museum of Dartmoor Life, Okehampton, EX20 1HQ
Saturday, 30th October, 11:00 – 15:00
Come along and discover the delights of Dartmoor, search for piskies, listen to some spooky storytelling, make something to take home in the creepy craft area as well as other Hallowe'en activities.
FREE! www.devonmuseums.net/Hallowe-en-Activity-Day/Events

UNDERGROUND PUMPKIN HUNT

Kents Cavern, Torquay, TQ1 2JF
23rd October – 31st

Bring your little witches, wizards, ghosts and ghouls to Kents Cavern and head into the mysterious underground world of the caves to find the hidden pumpkins. If you spot them all, you can claim your Hallowe'en prize. Get up close to weird and wonderful stalactites and come face to face with the bones of your Devon forebears. Activities are included in the cave admission price. Adults £13.00, Children £12.00 www.kents-cavern.co.uk

SPOOKY STORY WALK AND AFTERNOON TEA

Gidleigh Park, Chagford, TQ13 8HH
Wednesday, 27th October,
2.00 – 5.00pm

Enjoy a walk around the grounds of Gidleigh Park with a storyteller who will entertain you with tales of ghosts and ghouls. Return to the hotel for a full afternoon tea in the cosy drawing room. Family Ticket: £100 (up to 2 adults and 2 children) www.gidleigh.co.uk/events-diary

GUILTY PLEASURES HALLOWE'EN EXTRAVAGANZA

The Barrel House Ballroom, 59a High Street, Totnes, TQ9 5PB

Saturday, 30th October, 8.00pm
Pop-fuelled madness and mayhem with a horror twist. This is a place where everyone is welcome. It's irreverent, unapologetic and fun. Tickets: £7.00 from www.barrelhousetotnes.co.uk

HALLOWE'EN TALES PUB TRAIL

Meet at Exeter Central Station
Saturday, 30th October, 6.30pm

Stroll from pub to pub to hear strange tales and drink a dram as Hallowe'en draws close. A folk tale tour with a twist, walking the old paths of tavern to tavern.

Tales to keep the devil at bay and invite in the old spirits of heart and hearth. Tickets: £5.98 from www.eventbrite.co.uk (Search for 'Hallowe'en Tales Pub Trail by The Old Wyvern')

BOOS IN A BARN

Saturday 30th October, 7.30pm
Higher Bughill Farm, Plympton, PL7 5EW

Hallowe'en charity event in aid of Young Lives vs Cancer. Live music, charity raffle and fun prizes for best costumes. Well stocked licensed bar and food wagon serving hot food. All welcome (under 16s must be accompanied by an adult). Tickets: £5.98 – £11.37 from www.eventbrite.co.uk (Search for 'Boos in a Barn')

HALLOWE'EN BARN CINEMA FILM SCREENING OF HOCUS POCUS

Ullacombe Farm Café and Shop, Bovey Tracey TQ139LL
31st October, 6.00pm

Bring your blankets, comfy seats or rough it out farm-style on bales of hay and snuggle up to watch the family favourite in the barn cinema.

Tickets: £6.32 from www.eventbrite.co.uk (Search for 'Hallowe'en Barn Cinema').