

THE NATIONAL PUBLICATION FOR ALL CHORISTERS

# NEWS & VIEWS

217

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHOIRS

AUTUMN 2018

## CONFERENCE 2019

Booking forms inside

## WILLIAM FORREST

Glasgow Phoenix

60 years a stalwart



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## Crawford's Corner



*As I write this the day is a typical autumn day with over-cast skies and a chill in the air. It is time to put on a fleece or a heavier coat and*

*try to forget the heat of the summer that is past.*

Choirs are returning from summer breaks and getting ready for the new season with gala concerts, celebrations and joint concerts with other choirs, bands and soloists. I wish you every success and great enjoyment as reward for your labours.

Do not forget to send me reports of your concerts with photographs of course. This magazine is nothing without the stories you send me and I am sure all the member choirs draw encouragement and ideas from all the things you do.

I suppose I should not be surprised by the number of choirs who send me the reports of their anniversary celebrations, after all my own choir, The Orpheus Male Voice Choir of Grimsby & Cleethorpes, will be celebrating its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary in the coming year.

When I was putting this issue together I was struggling to find a suitable image to go on the front cover. It was fortunate that Glasgow Phoenix sent me two images of



William Forrest who has been a stalwart of their choir for 60 years. Unfortunately the images were of too low a resolution to be of use. A request for better ones brought images that were only a little better but the suggestion that 'Bill' might end up on the front cover encouraged them to dig out images of a resolution that would work.

Since I started putting pictures on the front cover I have always seemed to have a choice of photographs to use. This time it was a near thing. Please think of this when you are sorting the photographs to send me.

What sort of images can you send? Well, I suppose the most likely ones are, like Bill's, the image of a choir member, an MD conducting or a soloist performing. I have received some images that immediately shouted 'Put me on the front'. Above are a few which really stood out.

So, come on, find me some fantastic images that I am forced to put on the front of your News & Views.

## And, Finally,

In the last month or so, I have had a number of emails telling me of the concerts that you had planned for September. They are of no use to me at all. I forward them to the Webmaster so that they can go in forthcoming events on the website.

I write this to try and persuade you that **IF** you want to tell people about what you are going to be doing, you have to tell me early.

This issue comes out at the beginning of October and I needed stuff for it by 31 August. If you want people to know what you are doing in September then I need to know by the end of April so that I can put it into the Summer issue which comes out in June

## Tell me 6 months early

*Crawford*

## Chairman's Chat



*Welcome to the autumn edition of News & Views. After basking in the sunshine and heat of this summer it is refreshing to return to more normal temperatures as we enter our busiest season of choral singing.*

Many of your interesting and varied reports appear in this issue demonstrating a wide range of choral experiences. As our membership continues to grow we look forward to receiving even more reports.

Preparations are nearing completion for our next conference in Stoke on Trent which promises to be a very exciting and enjoyable event with top class speakers

and a gala concert in the Victoria Hall, Hanley. Full details and a booking form are in this issue. You will also see that preparations are well under way for conference in our centenary year 2020. This will be a special year for the NAC and further information of plans and activities will follow in subsequent editions. Why not give it a try and attend conference next year for what will be a friendly and very enjoyable event. It will give you the opportunity to make new friends and contacts in other choirs in a relaxing and inspiring environment.

This will be the last issue in 2018 so may I wish you all very early best wishes for the festive season. Please keep sending in reports of your choir's activities and achievements, and enjoy your future concerts.

**John Croft**  
NAC Chairman

## OFFICERS' MEETINGS

**13 November**

Twin Oaks Hotel, Palterton

**15 January 2019**

Twin Oaks Hotel, Palterton

## MEMBERS' OPEN FORUMS

**26 January 2019**

Twin Oaks Hotel, Palterton



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Now where to find a new MD?*

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# EVENTS



**Last date for submissions for Issue 218  
SPRING 2018 - 31 December**

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## Musings on email adventures...



As NAC General Secretary it is part of my job to communicate with all choir correspondents about meetings for them to attend, especially when it comes to

the AGM, when I am legally obliged to get in touch with them all and also the Member Open Forum meetings, when we would really like attendance from as many people as possible.

The quickest, easiest and cheapest way to contact the correspondents is by email. I know that there are about 40 choirs of the over 750 currently in membership which do not have email or internet capabilities, and that's fine, I will use the postal system to get in touch with them but the rest of the choirs say they have email addresses. So in all innocence I put together a MailChimp email about the MOF meeting on 30 June – not an easy thing to do at the best of times – and sent it on its merry way to 707 choirs.

Or did I?

Statistics are wonderful things, and MailChimp tells me more about what happened to my email than Google or Yahoo ever could, so I know that of the 707 addresses I sent it to 46 immediately bounced. That's 46 choirs which have not bothered to keep their email addresses up to date. Three addressees chose not to hear from us again and unsubscribed from our emails. Why? Are they no longer the rep for their choir? In which case why has nobody told us and given us the correct contact details?

So 661 emails were delivered to the correct addresses. I should therefore have received 661 replies, but no. Sadly, to date (27 June, bearing in mind that the meeting is on 30 June) MailChimp says that only 407 people have bothered to open the email and read it. 254 emails are lying unopened in inboxes – or more likely in Spam boxes, having been filtered out. Therefore we know that 303 choirs have not received, or not bothered with, my email. (254+46+3, for those who wonder where I got that figure from.)

OK, so there are possibly 404 attendees at our meeting. But no again. I have to give credit where it is due – I am receiving

many more apologies for non-attendance now than we ever used to get in the past, so at least choir correspondents are realising that some kind of action has to be taken. Thank you to the people who do take time to tell me that they cannot attend; I appreciate you getting in touch. We would rather you came to the meeting, but we do know that other events, particularly concerts, take precedence.

At the time of writing I have received 30 apologies for absence and only two confirmations of attendance. I will make the point that the National Officers hold meetings for the benefit of the member choirs, not for their own benefit, but this article is about emails so I will move along...

Thus of the 707 emails I sent out, and by the date of the meeting, I estimate I will have received about 35 replies. Not very good, is it, when you consider the figures?

What to do about it? Several things:

1. Check that we have the correct contact details for the choir correspondent, including the exact email address. Note that under the new General Data Protection Rules it is your responsibility to keep these details up to date.
2. Ensure that my email address [general.secretary@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk](mailto:general.secretary@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk) is in your address list, so that my emails don't get sidetracked into your Spam folder.
3. Keep an eye on meeting dates, which are shown in News & Views and on the website, and put them in your diary well ahead of time. Then watch for my emails confirming dates, times, and venues. If you don't receive one, email me to ask for the details – it's not against the rules!
4. When you do get emails, please answer them straight away, even if it is only to say that you have to ask somebody to attend the meetings. We've all done it – you're busy, so you will come back and think about that email later, only 'later' somehow never arrives, and the date of the meeting passes before you remember you ought to have replied.

Thank you for reading this far – and I look forward to receiving many more replies to my emails and to seeing many more of you at our meetings in the future.

*Celia Johns*

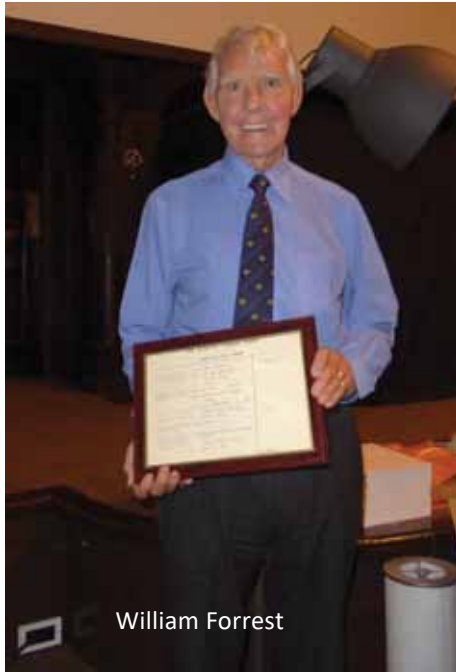
## The Glasgow Phoenix Choir Scotland West

Conductor and Director of Music – Marilyn J Smith, MBE, LRAM

*Glasgow Phoenix Choir's last three concerts of the 2017-18 season saw us visiting the counties of Argyll, Lanarkshire and Ayrshire. (Oh, the glamour.) The choir performed three great concerts in lovely, welcoming places, each raising money for special causes. I can unashamedly praise the choir's performance on each occasion as, following surgery, I had to sit in as an audience member. It's a great experience to sit out and realise what a special group of singers you belong to. I only hope we're as good when I sing, too!*

Just before the end of the season, at our AGM, the choir learned that Bob Chilcott had agreed to become our Honorary President. I should imagine that most choirs are familiar with Mr Chilcott's music, both as composer and arranger, so our delight at his acceptance of the honour will be obvious to all who know his music. We look forward to a long and happy association.

In addition, the choir honoured two long serving choir members by offering them the position of Honorary Vice-president, reserved for past presidents or members whose service to the choir goes above and beyond the call of choral duty. Anne MacDonald has been a choir member for 25 years and held the post of choir secretary for a number of years until the end of the 2016-17 season. In addition, she has worked hard as a member of the social committee and has been involved in organising and preparing our annual choir dinner during all of the period of her membership. The second member to be honoured is Lesley Ferguson, whose blood group might as well be GPC. Lesley has a long-standing family association with the choir and has been a member herself for over 30 years – though you wouldn't think it to look at her. For the last 18 years, Lesley has served as treasurer and has, amazingly, managed to retain her sanity throughout while doing an excellent job for the choir. Having decided that she'd done her time, Lesley has handed over the reins to our new treasurer, Murray Milligan. We were delighted to offer Anne and Lesley this special honour in gratitude for all their hard work.



William Forrest

As we begin our new season, we also have the opportunity to look back to 1958, when we were joined by a young tenor called William Forrest. For the last 60 years, Bill has been a stalwart choir member under several conductors and accompanists, fulfilling the roles of chorister, soloist, choir vice-president, president and now, as our archivist. Bill has some amazing stories, which he's willing to share at the drop of

a hat. In honour of his service, the choir made a presentation to Bill and his lovely wife, Clarice, during our first rehearsal of the 2018-19 season. A more formal presentation will take place in our concert in Glasgow Royal Concert Hall in December, but, in the meantime, we gave him a glass 'wave' bearing the choir motto and his membership dates, his original application to join the choir, framed, a special cake and flowers for Clarice. There then followed a most enjoyable cheese and wine celebration.

And so to the new season itself. Between now and the end of 2018 we have a week-end tour and 10 concert dates, including the launch of two postcard CDs, in our diaries. We'll be learning new music, revising old favourites and, yes, we'll be fetching out the carols - see how I've avoided actually mentioning Christmas? It will, I am sure, be hard work but great fun, as always.

*Anne Kay  
Publicity Officer*

## MUSICAL COMMENTS

Refrain means don't do it. A refrain in music is the part you better not try to sing.

When a singer sings, he stirs up the air and makes it hit any passing eardrums. But if he is good, he knows how to keep it from hurting.

Music sung by two people at the same time is called a duel.

I know what a sextet is but I had rather not say.

Caruso was at first an Italian. Then someone heard his voice and said he would go a long way. And so he came to America.

Most authorities agree that music of antiquity was written long ago.

A virtuoso is a musician with really high morals.

## SING BARBERSHOP

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BABS provides educational grants to develop an interest in harmony singing and performance. Also it provides financial support and resources to its member clubs for the running of Learn to Sing courses. Over 350 of these free courses have been run across the country, each one designed to encourage individuals to get involved with singing as part of their leisure activities.

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A representative group of Côr Meibion De Cymru (The South Wales Male Choir) choristers took part in the Fred. Olsen "Fjords, Mountains and Glaciers" cruise in August of 2016 on board MS *Black Watch*.

The choir thrilled fellow passengers with two formal concerts (in addition to many more sporadic outbursts of song) as the *Black Watch* travelled from Harwich in mid-August to three ports in Norway and through some of its most picturesque fjords.

The cruise was blessed with excellent weather and the party responded accordingly. Both of the "formal" concerts aboard *Black Watch* were performed to

full capacity audiences and the delighted fellow passengers gave the choir a standing ovation at the end of each concert.

The whole tour party was most impressed, not only by the standards of service that they received whilst on board *Black Watch*, but also the polite, efficient and cheerful manner of the friendly staff. Choir vice-president Phil Howells thanked Captain Danielsen and his team for making the cruise on his "Happy Ship" such an enjoyable and memorable experience.

*Barri Hurford, Choir Compere, South Wales Male Voice choir.*

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Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines

# Here we go again!

## *The Fairburn Singers on tour - July 2018*

Never mind "Mamma Mia, Here we go again", it was "Fairburn Singers, Here we go Again"! On Friday 20 July 2018, 35 members of the choir (the Fairburn Singers) and almost 60 friends, families and "groupies" boarded two coaches and headed off to Liverpool to meet our ship, the MV *Black Watch*, another pride of the Fred Olsen line. This time our destination was the Scottish Highlands and Islands on another 5 night adventure. This trip had been a whole year in the planning and had been highly anticipated by those of us who cruised last year, as well as those who were embarking on their first trip.

As we settled down to our first meal on board, we felt it only right that we regale our fellow passengers with a rendition of one of our favourite songs from our repertoire, "One Voice" and so a flash mob ensued before a single morsel passed our lips. It was well received and we spotted many a teary eye as we resumed our seats and got on with the very pleasurable pastime of tasting the excellent food served for our delectation.

Our first concert on board was scheduled to take place at 3pm on Saturday 21 July, and after a short rehearsal and a change into our "uniform" black, we re-assembled at the entrance to the Neptune Lounge, where we were delighted

to find nearly every seat taken. We wowed our audience with our 45 minute set, which included excerpts from Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat, a medley from Phantom of the Opera and a Tribute to Queen.

This time our programme for our second concert included a medley from South Pacific, an accompanied version of "One Voice" and one of our choir favourites, "When the Saints go Marching in". We finished with a rendition of "You'll Never Walk Alone", a nod to the several Liverpoolians we had encountered during our time on board, and this resulted in a standing ovation, for which we were overwhelmed and delighted.

And so, another cruise had come to an end. It had been yet another unqualified success, everyone had had a fabulous time and Captain Danielsen and his fantastic crew had done us, and the Fred Olsen line, proud once again. *MV Black Watch*, you may be the smallest ship in the fleet, but you looked after the Fairburn Singers and their friends and families in true Norwegian style, so thank you, from us all, and we hope we will all be reunited very soon.

**Sally Whittingham**  
Choir Secretary

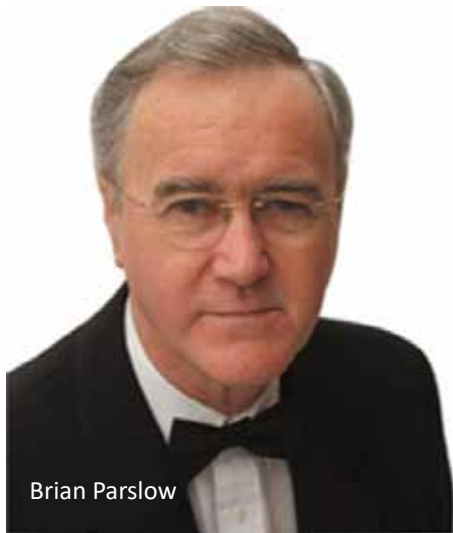


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## Dursley Male Voice Choir South West

### DMVC MOURNS LOSS OF STALWART CHORISTER

*Dursley Male Voice Choir, currently commemorating its 40<sup>th</sup> year since inception, (see News & Views Summer Issue), has had its anniversary celebrations very much tempered by the recent death of its Deputy Musical Director, Brian Parslow.*



Brian Parslow

Brian, passed away peacefully in the Gloucester Royal Hospital in the early hours of Thursday, 25 July, after a long illness. He joined Dursley Male Voice Choir 39 years ago in April 1979. Brought up in South Wales, Brian was steeped in the tradition of choral singing from a very early age. Starting as a boy soprano with the 1951 'Festival of Britain' Choir at the Coliseum, Aberdare, he graduated to both solo singing and touring halls and working men's clubs in the South Wales valleys as part of an 'a cappella' group.

He was a qualified electrician working for the CEGB, and with his wife and two sons he moved to Gloucestershire in 1967 to take up employment at Oldbury Power Station. On retirement he assumed a part-time post at Leyhill Open Prison.

After a twelve-year break from public singing, as mentioned earlier, Brian joined the Dursley Male Voice Choir in 1979, shortly after its very first concert. He quickly became the Choir Librarian, responsible for the acquisition of music and curating the choir's repertoire, and retained that post until very recently, when ill health finally forced him to stand down. Originally a very fine baritone, Brian transferred to and became a stalwart of the bass section a few years ago.

Brian was a devotee of the classic stand-

ard performers such as Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett and Vic Damone, to the extent that he travelled to New York with his wife to see live performances. He was the choir's 'go to' soloist for many years and his performances were the highlight of many Annual and Christmas concerts.

Ten years ago, in 2007, Brian progressed to become the choir's Deputy Musical Director, often conducting the choir during rehearsals or at concerts in the absence of the Principal Musical Director, Barrie Cooper, and he held that position until his death. He is pictured here conducting the choir during its tour to Ireland in 2015.

An enthusiastic rugby supporter, and a proud Welshman, he regularly attended rugby internationals at the Millenium Stadium, and before that, at Cardiff Arms Park. He was a keen social singer and the organiser of many of the choir's 'afterglow' sessions performed after concerts throughout the country and on tours overseas.

Brian passed away the day after his 78<sup>th</sup> birthday, and in recognition of his contribution over 39 years his passing was marked by the choir with a minute's silence followed by an emotional rendition of one of his favourite pieces, the famous Welsh hymn *Gwahoddiaid*.

*Stan Unwin*

## Kidderminster Valentines Midland South West

### 30 GLORIOUS YEARS

*1988 saw the birth of the Kidderminster Valentines Choir under the direction of Pam Cunningham. She created a small choir of wives and partners of Kidderminster Male Choir, who wanted to add their voices to the choir circuit, and so the choir began.*

The choir's reputation, due to an excep-

tional balance of harmonies, genre and performance grew very quickly and today there are 68 members, all of whom are proud to call themselves Kidderminster Valentines.

Everyone who knew Pam had their lives touched by her love and interpretation of music and were greatly saddened by her death. Her legacy, however, is being continued and enhanced by classically trained Jane Richardson who took up her appointment as Musical Director in 2014, ably assisted by the choir's talented accompanist, composer and lyricist Morfudd Sinclair.

The Kidderminster Valentines love to travel and enjoy regular five-day concert tours visiting towns and cities not only throughout this country but also across Europe. Linking with other choirs produces new friendships and bonds, the opportunity for ongoing return visits, and is a wonderful way to experience new sights and sounds.

To celebrate our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary we invited Kidderminster Male Choir to join us in Kidderminster Town Hall, the venue at which we first appeared in concert. The evening was a resounding success with both choirs receiving standing ovations. The packed audience were delighted to be invited to join in with the Valentines to sing *Hakuna Mataka* from the Lion King, entering into the spirit of the song with tremendous enthusiasm. They were also captivated with the Male Choir's rendition of *What Shall We Do With The Drunken Sailor*, which became more hilarious as the song progressed, showing the men's adept skill at portraying inebriated sailors. (I have it on good authority that they spent many hours in the local pub perfecting their performance.)

The audience was later entertained with the Valentines' version of *The Alto's Lament*, the last line of the song being greatly



Kidderminster Valentines

enhanced when the Altos whipped out their yellow dusters to polish their Heavenly Harps.

For the concert finale 100 choristers joined in harmony to perform *Just Keep Believing*, a new anthem composed by Moffudd Sinclair, our accompanist. The piece received a rapturous applause and is now a very popular addition to our current repertoire.

To commemorate our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary each chorister was presented with a silver and pearl brooch in the form of a treble clef. These were worn with great pride on our scarlet jackets and were much admired.

After the concert we enjoyed a traditional afterglow accompanied by a wonderful buffet provided by the ladies of the choir. The impromptu singing and jollity which followed was the perfect end to a very memorable concert. A concert which had brought great pleasure, not only to the audience, but also to both participating choirs.

A feeling to cherish and an evening to remember.

**Doreen Harkins & Sue Strong**

## Lanchester Male Voice Choir North East

*The Lanchester Male Voice Choir (LMVC) of County Durham joined the NAC last year, its fiftieth anniversary year. The choir was formed and held its first practice on 26 June 1967 following interest shown by a few men-folk of the village. The first Annual Concert was held in the Lanchester Methodist Church in September 1968 with 28 members present.*



LMVC remains a vibrant and 'healthy' group with a current strength of 28 members, most of whom can be seen in the photograph taken recently at the fiftieth Annual Concert, in the same church, on 6 July. We hold seven or eight concerts annually in support of local groups and charities and for our Patrons, without whose financial support life would be tough.

John Wills (87), one of our founder members, has been a member throughout. The picture shows him with a presentation in recognition of his 25 years as Chairman, shortly after he stepped down.

LMVC looks forward to a further 50 years of success as a principal local choir and as a member of the NAC.

**Stuart Eaton  
Chairman**

## Voices in Harmony Midlands South West

*12 May 2018 dawned with a mixture of excitement and mounting adrenalin amongst the members of Voices in Harmony (VIH), the Cradley Heath based SATB choir of some 70 voices. It was the keenly anticipated 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary concert to be held in Dudley Town Hall in the presence of local dignitaries and an audience of around 800.*

For this special occasion VIH had invited three local renowned choirs to join them on stage - The Gentlemen Songsters (GS), Viva Musica (VM) and Colla Voce (CV) - the whole evening being compèred by TV and stage personality Don Maclean.

As the concert got underway, any fears or misgivings quickly faded as The Gentlemen Songsters and Viva Musica launched the first half of the programme with *Morte Christe*, followed by GS in their inimitable style with two Rogers & Hammerstein numbers. Other items included *Fields Of*

*Gold, Bring Him Home* and the two choirs closed the first half with a rousing rendition of *Rhythm Of Life*.

The second half featured Voices in Harmony and Colla Voce, two differently structured choirs yet combining seamlessly for the Bee Gees's song *Words and The Ground*. Colla Voce's excellent set included *Wings Of The Morning* (Rutter) and *Total Praise*. Voices in Harmony's main contribution included outstanding renditions of *Bohemian Rhapsody*, *The Majesty And Glory Of Your Name*, finishing the whole concert with *Phantom Of The Opera*.

Special mention must be made of the accompanying pianists Hilary Bradley (VIH), Callum Alger (CV), Andrew Biggs (VM and Neil Bolton (GS). Paul Edwards added superbly to *Bohemian Rhapsody* with guitar playing à la Brian May.

Don Maclean had the audience in stitches with jokes and anecdotes centred around Birmingham and the Black Country, yet ably steering the programme through the evening.

The whole evening was in support of Mary Stevens Hospice, a local and well-respected facility for those suffering from terminal illness,

VIH's Musical Director since its formation 21 years ago, Stephen Bradley said, 'the event was a total success after months of planning. Each choir was in good form but VIH, as the host choir, certainly rose to the occasion and I was immensely proud of our performance.' VIH's Chairman John Heeley added, 'The evening was a vivid rainbow covering a whole spectrum of musical pieces, beautifully performed in each individual choir's style.'

[Website www.vihchoir.org](http://www.vihchoir.org)

**Robert Snaitth  
Assistant Musical Director**



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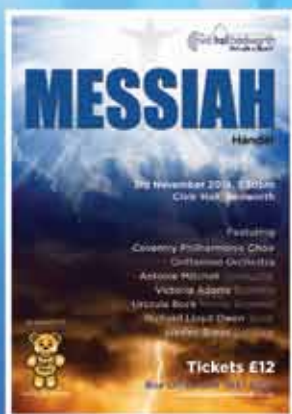


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# 91st Annual General Meeting 31st Annual Conference Weekend 5-7 April 2019

## Conference Coordinator



*The Moat House Hotel Festival Park near Hanley has been booked for the event. The hotel has more than adequate facilities for the conference, having free parking, large reception area*

*for delegates to be greeted on arrival and issued with their delegate packs. There is a very large hall where a theatre style seating area will be constructed for the seminars with room for trade stands to be arranged around the forum. The room will be first used for our Gala dinner on the Friday evening and then transformed overnight for the Saturday and Sunday conference.*



Thoughts for 2019 are that we try a somewhat different approach, in that instead of having one main speaker for the conference, we have several speakers having one or two seminars each.

Subjects we are considering for these seminars are the benefit of music in both physical and mental health conditions. Doctor John Addison will be addressing these issues.

Secondly a speaker to talk about maintaining and increasing chorister numbers in choirs and attracting younger members to



join and go on to have active roles in choir organisations.

Thirdly a speaker who will talk about the benefits of music in mental health and homelessness and the effect they actually have on communities.

Our fourth and fifth slots will be given to musical enjoyment headed by our good friend Dr Douglas Coombes. Singing is what we do and I think it is important to have some on both conference days.

Saturday evening will see us depart the hotel by coach for the Victoria Hall Hanley where several choirs from the North Staffordshire area will entertain us. The organising choir will be the Audley Male Voice Choir with their musical director, Sue Hallam.

Stoke on Trent is Pottery country and local potteries are still turning out exquisite wares. There will be the opportunity to extend your stay in the hotel while you explore Wedgwood, Moorcroft, and other pottery manufacturers in the area, all of which have visitor centres and factory shops. Extra nights can be booked through the NAC at special rates.

*Clive Lawton*

## Conference 2020 Blackburn.

My first approach in setting the scene for 2020 was to seek local knowledge. Already aware that two choirs in the East Lancashire area were founder members of the association I made contact with Eric Beardsworth, Chair of Colne Orpheus Glee Union. He suggested we meet in Blackburn to look at a possible hotel and concert venue. Following several hours trawling the web I came to the conclusion that one hotel stood out as the most likely venue for the conference and one concert venue as large enough for our needs.

### The Hotel.

The Dunkenhalgh Mercure 4 star hotel is 500 yards off the M65 motorway at Blackburn and is more than adequate for our needs. All rooms are on suite in an annex with no steps, and lifts to the three floors. Assistance rooms have walk-in wet-rooms. All conference rooms are on the same level. There is a swimming pool and jacuzzi, both included in our package. There is free parking for 500 cars. The hotel is a former manor house set in spacious parkland.

### Concert Venue.

The King George's Hall in central Black-



burn is the venue for our conference concert where several choirs will perform in the beautiful thousand seat auditorium. Tickets will be available from the hall online and the hall will deal with advertising of the concert. Seating is pre-bookable and all seats can be chosen from the seating plan when booking.

Colne Orpheus Glee Union heads up the list of choirs as organising choir. Nelson Arion Glee Union, Nelson Civic Ladies choir, Blackburn People's Choir and a children's choir will also perform..

I am grateful to Eric for his local knowledge and enthusiasm for this venture which is in the Associations Centenary Year. I am sure the concert will be a resounding success and pay tribute to two choirs whose founder members had the foresight to introduce an association which has lasted a century and now has more than 750 member choirs.



# National Association of Choirs

Joining the Nation in Choral Singing

## National Conference Booking Form 1 5-7 April 2019

The Moat House Hotel, Etruria Hall, Festival Way, Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire ST1 5BQ

### Conference Costs

#### Full Conference Stay

The price quoted is **per person for the whole conference**

There are no single room supplements

Price per person for whole conference includes admission to all lectures

two nights bed breakfast and evening meal

refreshments and free admission to Saturday evening concert

per person **£230**

Stay an extra night - Single £95 BB - Double/Twin (two persons) £115 BB

#### Day Delegate (Saturday)

Please circle requirements

Refreshments and lunch included £40.00

Evening meal Saturday add £25.00

Concert ticket Saturday add £10.00

Gala Dinner add £35.00

### Payments

#### Full Conference Stay

Deposit of £70 (non-refundable) by 30 November 2018, balance by 28 February 2019

**Final payment reminders will be sent**

#### Day delegates

Payment in full when booking (non-refundable)

Amount Submitted £ \_\_\_\_\_

Please return your completed forms and deposits to the address below

**Extra nights can be booked both before and/or after the conference through the NAC at a favourable rate. If you wish extra nights to be arranged for you please add a note to the booking form and I will book these on your behalf**

You must inform us in writing of any cancellation by 1 March 2019  
(Cancellations after this date will incur a charge of 50% of the total fee payable)

Substitute guests will be welcome

Cheques should be made payable to the National Association of Choirs

THE PERSONAL DETAILS OF EACH DELEGATE MUST BE ENTERED ON FORM 2

**Please return your completed forms and deposits to**

**Clive Lawton - Conference Coordinator, 20 Arthur's Court, Stretton, Burton upon Trent Staffordshire DE13 0GS**

**01283 569677 or 07939012458**

**conference.coordinator@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk**



Reg'd. Charity No. 1014630

# National Association of Choirs

*Joining the Nation in Choral Singing*

## National Conference Booking Form 2 5-7 April 2019

The Moat House Hotel, Etruria Hall, Festival Way. Stoke on Trent. Staffordshire ST1 5BQ

The event is open to all who wish to attend on payment of the appropriate charges

### Guest 1

Title Mr/Mrs/Miss.....

First Name.....

Surname.....

Address.....

.....Post Code.....

Telephone Home.....Mobile.....

Email Address.....

Special Requirements

Diet [type].....

Disability [wheelchair user/handrails required etc.].....

NAC group.....

Choir Name.....

### Guest 2

Title Mr/Mrs/Miss.....

First Name.....

Surname.....

Address.....

.....Post Code.....

Telephone Home.....Mobile.....

Email Address.....

Special Requirements

Diet [type].....

Disability [wheelchair user/handrails required etc.].....

NAC group.....

Choir Name.....

**PLEASE PHOTOCOPY THIS FORM FOR MORE GUESTS IF REQUIRED**

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**01283 569677 or 07939012458 conference.coordinator@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk**



# National Association of Choirs

*Joining the Nation in Choral Singing*

## National Conference Provisional Timetable 5-7 April 2019

The Moat House Hotel, Etruria Hall, Festival Way, Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire ST1 5BQ

### Friday 5 April

On Arrival enter your car registration number into the pad at reception to gain free car parking for your stay.

- 2.00 Delegates arrive, register and collect delegate pack
- 4.00 National Officers' meeting
- 4.30-6.00 Come and Sing with Celia Johns and Karl Harper
- 7.30 Delegates and guests assemble for dinner
- 7.30 Reception National Officers and guests
- 8.00 Dinner is served
- 9.30 After dinner entertainment provided
- 12.00 Bar closes

### Saturday 6 April

- 7.00 Access to trade stands to set up
- 7.30-9.00 Breakfast in main dining room
- 9.00-10.00 Seminar 1 Dr John Addison MBChB - Health Benefits of singing and the sense of belonging which being a chorister within a choir generates
- 10.0-10.30 Coffee and trade stand viewing
- 10.30-11.00 Annual General Meeting
- 11.00-12.00 Seminar 2 Tim Knight - How to keep your choir alive. How to attract new members and encourage them to take on roles within the choir
- 12.00-1.00 Trade stand presentations (Five 10 minute presentations from trade stands present at conference)
- 1.00-2.00 Lunch and trade stand viewing (Lunch included in full delegate package)
- 2.00-3.00 Seminar 3 Mental Health and Homelessness - How music can help?
- 3.00-3.30 Coffee and trade stand viewing
- 3.30-4.30 Seminar 4 Dr Douglas Coombes will exercise your vocal capabilities in an enjoyable hour of singing pieces of music from many genres
- 5.00 Two course dinner in main dining room
- 6.30 Coaches leave for the Victoria Hall, Hanley
- 7.30 Concert at the Victoria Hall, Hanley
- 10.00 approx Following concert, light refreshments will be provided back at the hotel
- 12.00 Bar closes

### Sunday 7 April

- 7.30-9.30 Breakfast  
For those delegates wishing to attend local churches, details will be available at hotel reception
- 9.30-10.30 Seminar 5 Dr Douglas Coombes continues his seminar of music and singing
- 10.30-11.00 Coffee and trade stand viewing
- 11.00-1.00 Members Open Forum
- 1.00 Conference closes (Lunch available in dining room at members' own expense)
- 1.00 National Officers' debrief meeting (guillotined after one hour)



## Three Valleys Male Voice Choir

### Thames North Group

Saturday 2 June was Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 65<sup>th</sup> Coronation Anniversary and the Three Valleys Male Voice Choir were on hand at the Church of St Mary Magdalen, on the Queen's estate at Sandringham, to celebrate the occasion and entertain the visitors to the Church. They held two sessions over the lunchtime to packed audiences with a wide variety of songs, along with their good friends, professional classical musicians Roland Gallery & Alicia Dines. 'It was a wonderful privilege to be allowed to sing in the Queen's Church when only a few weeks ago had stood the Royal Family', said choir secretary Nigel Thomas. Publicity Officer David Thwaites said he felt rather grand sitting in the Queen's pew.

The choir's chairman, Jim Paull, sent a letter of congratulations to Her Majesty and received a letter of thanks via the Queen's secretary at Buckingham Palace.

Next year this talented choir will be celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, since it was formed by Tony Moore whilst working as community worker at Waltham Abbey Community Centre.

This Choir is going from strength to strength under the baton of their conductor Virginia Firnberg, providing wonderful entertainment with their public concerts for local charities and private visits to day-centres and elderly persons' homes.

Their music is 'very easy on the ear', very varied and colourful. Follow its journey on their website: [www.3valleymvc.org.uk](http://www.3valleymvc.org.uk) or get the latest news on Facebook.

**Tony Moore**  
Concert Manager



## Tideswell Male Voice Choir

### Yorkshire South

#### Lessons Learned.

*The choir has been going for over 60 years, deep in the Peak District, drawing members from old quarrying and lead-mining villages who team with bikers and hikers in summer. I've been President since 2012 and my husband sings in the bass section. A series of disputes with the MD during 2016 led to his being voted out; then, to its surprise, the Choir found itself in a 5 day Employment Tribunal. The saga offers a series of lessons for all choirs.*

The choir had enjoyed considerable success with this MD. Concerts got more ambitious, spectacular and costly; soloists were engaged, first one or two, then eventually up to 9 or 10... with the choir relegated to the back.

The four big 2016 concerts were a 'new production' of *Les Misérables*. You've guessed it, the choir did not have permission. Or for the 14 *Les Mis* tracks on a CD cut in 2014. It was only my intervention with Cameron

Mackintosh that let the concerts continue, though the CDs had to be withdrawn. Complaints arose as revenues stagnated and membership dropped off to about half what it had been. What had happened to the community nature of the choir?

It had always been understood that the MD and accompanist were suppliers, and that they were self-employed. An old-fashioned attitude that said, 'no contracts' prevailed, as if that would be protection against claims. Oh, dear.

Because the Employment Tribunal Judge ruled, much to everyone's surprise, the Musical Director WAS an employee.

What had happened was this: back in January 2011, the committee wanted to ensure that 'Our MD, working as hard as he does, deserves a higher level of remuneration.' They could of course have simply upped his fees; instead they agreed that 'our aim should be to pay him the equivalent of at least £15,000 in Salary and expenses. The Choir would aspire to achieve a level of £15,000 remuneration (salary and expenses) by 2013 or earlier if possible.' The remainder of the discussion was about how to raise the money. The paragraph in the minutes was even headed, 'Alternative ways of remunerating Musical Director.'

By early 2013 he was being paid monthly by standing order, and invoices ceased. Later emails referred to his 'salary plus expenses' as though this was just a turn of phrase; it isn't. And that was that. An employment had been created, even though nobody on the committee (including several experienced business people and two accountants) realised it, then or later. Even though the MD described himself as self-employed everywhere we looked and paid tax and NICs as such. And even though in the accounts the remuneration was always described as 'Fees.' Didn't matter.

With employees you must have a Grievance and Disciplinary Procedure. Without one, you don't have a leg to stand on. So, the Judge pointed out, after the CamMack problems, a disciplinary hearing should have been held; but there was no such mechanism. If there were worries about the costs of concerts, the same applied, as it did with grumbles leading to members leaving. In a Tribunal the former employee can ask, 'Did anyone make a formal complaint?' and must get an answer: Yes or No. And, however PC this may seem, in a disciplinary hearing the case must be formally put, and the individual given the opportunity to put questions, not just to answer them.



Three Valleys MVC



Tideswell Male Voice Choir

It is no defence that this isn't how things are done in Tideswell – members preferred not to voice complaints, they just left. Once you have an employee, you must have, and implement, the correct procedure under long-standing law. And your constitution means what it says. If your choir is governed by committee, then it must meet regularly and take responsibility. 'It's no good saying there wasn't a committee if you refused to serve on it,' the Judge said tartly.

The original remedy sought was over £22,000 but that was reduced by the Judge to £8,674, in part as a result of the claimant's behaviour. It was higher because of his age – there's a 50% hike on compensation for anyone over 41.

The Judge, helpfully, made it clear that peculiar circumstances applied in the case of TMVC and should not apply to other choirs. We were grateful for the presence of the General Secretary of NAC, Celia Johns, who attended every day. But we got ticked off roundly by the Judge for having handled matters incorrectly; that included our declining an invitation from ACAS to attend a hearing, assuming we had no case to answer. ACAS is not optional, it was made clear, it's virtually compulsory. In effect, we used the Tribunal for the criticisms which should have been aired and dealt with while the MD was in post. Perhaps if we had, things might have been resolved to mutual satisfaction, instead of ending in a big row.

So here are a few lessons learned, which I hope may be of use to other choirs.

- Your MD and accompanist (and anyone else supplying you with a service) must have a written contract. No invoice, no payment. Never use the word 'salary' or similar words in any documents. Don't make regular payments without documentary evidence of the work undertaken.
- Your minutes matter. They are legal documents. Years from now, that sloppy language can lead you into trouble (we now have a paid committee clerk). It's no excuse if you've lost or mislaid them either.
- You need a disciplinary and grievance procedure – disputes can arise from any cause, and in these litigious times you can find yourselves facing a claim, from suppliers, volunteers, the public, or within the choir. Health & safety, disability, racism, bullying, proxy voting.... If the document lies on a shelf gathering dust and is never needed, count yourself fortunate.
- Your constitution matters too. It should be a source of pride and honour to serve as an officer of your choir. But as common sense, don't leave everything to your MD, or the Chairman or Secretary: share tasks. That way you're not too dependent on one person, and you'll have an effective and resilient skill set.
- Ask for help. NAC is an excellent source. There is free legal advice, though it is difficult to access in a hurry (in our case it wouldn't have made much difference, once that employ-

ment situation had been created. And it was months before we located any useful paperwork for our defence. But you may be luckier).

- Stay in touch with other choirs. We were a bit isolated in our lovely National Park; perhaps had we known then, what we know now, we would have acted differently. You'll be seeing more of us in future.

**Edwina Currie**  
**President TMVC**

Views expressed are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect the policy, or opinions of the National Association of Choirs.

### Tamar Valley Male Voice Choir Cornwall

*The choir is delighted to announce that its Director of music, Rosemary Cole BEM, has been recognised in the 2018 Queen's Birthday Honours List with the award of a British Empire Medal for services to singing and the performing arts*



Rosemary Cole BEM

*in the South West.*

Rosemary was the main instigator in forming the choir in 2006 with just 9 members. Now having around 40 members and largely due to her hard work and talents the choir has a very full programme of successful concerts which includes the traditional male voice repertoire and modern compositions both sacred and secular.

**Geoff Gunning**

## City Of Truro Male Voice Choir Cornwall

*In 2016, City of Truro Male Choir appointed Russell Pascoe to be their Music Director. Since his arrival and due much to his recruiting prowess, the Choir has gained over twenty new members of all ages and is going from strength to strength.*

Russell was born in Cornwall and educated at Helston School and Bristol University, where he studied composition with Derek Bourgeois. In 1987 he founded the Cornwall Youth Chamber Choir and was awarded the Gorsedd prize. He also worked with the Cornwall Male Voice Choir, Duchy Opera and ran five school based choirs including the popular 'Cousin Jacks' choir for boys at Richard Lander School in Truro.

As a composer, Russell has had his music performed from Finland to Mexico and has produced music in most genres: opera, orchestral, chamber and choral. He has taught composition for the South West Music School and in 2000 was nominated as one of Classic FM's Music Teachers of the Year. He was runner-up in the South West Teacher of the Year 2004 and was made a Bard of the Cornish Gorsedd in 2000.



City of Truro Male Voice Choir

Since his appointment as Music Director for Truro's Male Voice Choir, Russell has led the choir in numerous concerts throughout Cornwall, including the Cornwall Music Festival, where the choir was awarded a Distinction.

Russell says, 'As a proud Cornishman, it is a great honour to conduct City of Truro Male Choir – a choir in the heart of Cornwall. It is a great opportunity forge a community of singers and to let them enjoy singing in

concerts and purely for fun in pubs! It is fantastic that we have been able to engage so many new members of varied ages'.

The choir practices at All Saints Church, Highertown, Truro on Thursday nights at 7.30. They offer a friendly and supportive environment in which to enjoy singing. Our website and Facebook page show us in action.

*Harry Haward*

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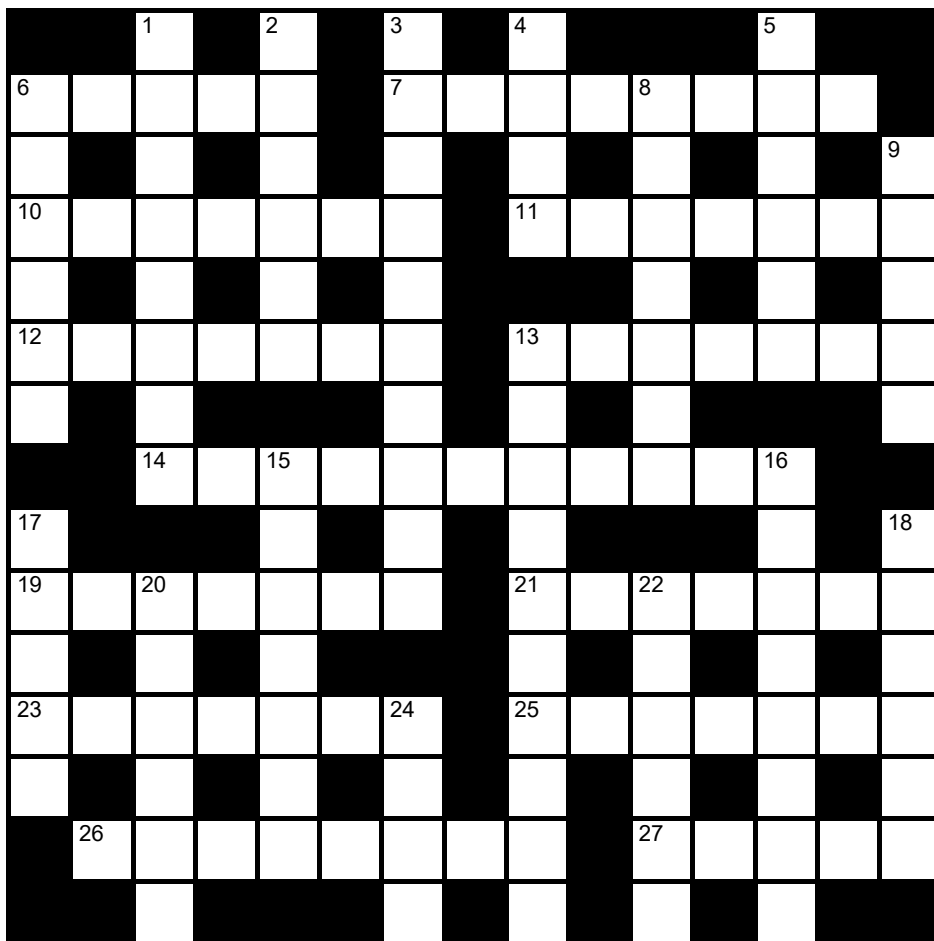
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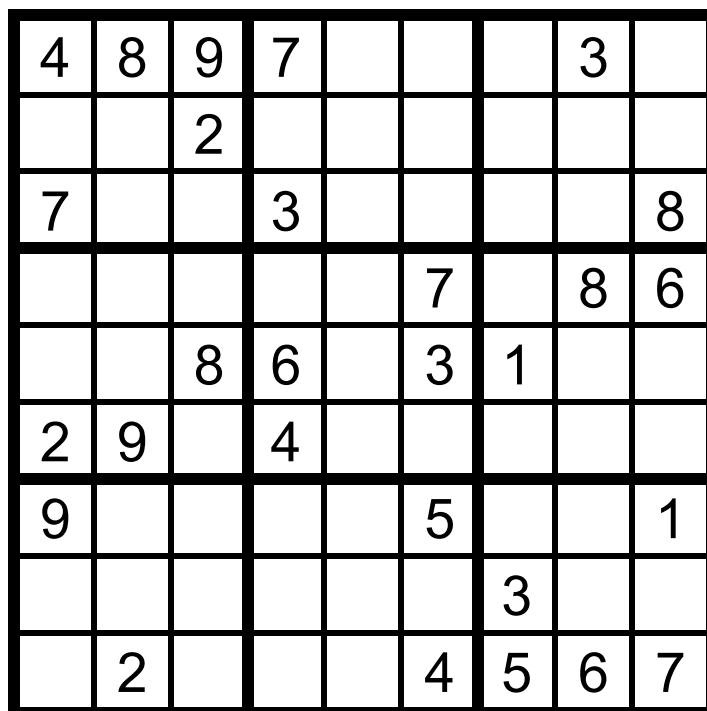
**Across**

- 6 Spare nails circling amphitheatre (5)
- 7 Over the country (8)
- 10 Alfresco (4-3)
- 11 Sounds like a man container (7)
- 12 Bewildered I dreamt I could let in again (7)
- 13 Has no effect on me (7)
- 14 A group of people (11)
- 19 Dull foe foolishly filled with sadness (7)
- 21 Pure ice curiously devoted to sensuous enjoyment (7)
- 23 Some science and purgatives (7)
- 25 French call a challenge perhaps (4,3)
- 26 Choral (8)
- 27 Burnished and glossy (5)

**Down**

- 1 Sweet river in Guyana (8)
- 2 Incendiary liquid inside place name EEC (6)
- 3 Crucial nit dubiously not tending to find errors (10)
- 4 Small part a mite scattered (4)
- 5 Ducks may play in water (6)
- 6 A plank on the ship (6)
- 8 I'm a giro form of Japanese art (7)
- 9 A kiss ten thousand becomes a motto (5)
- 13 a dish to see through (5,5)
- 15 Not really hard (7)
- 16 Dysfunction doubtfully resinous (8)
- 17 Adopt improve (5)
- 18 Watchman takes the dye out of dysentery (6)
- 20 Discontinue (6)
- 22 Resolute about sit-ins (6)
- 24 Scratch a narrow fissure (4)

## S U D O K U



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## Sonara Singers

### Midlands East

An all-female non-auditioning choir, we pride ourselves on performing, to the highest possible standards, a wide repertoire of pieces at a variety of venues, ranging from village halls to the Painted Hall at Chatsworth House.

Formed from 'a good idea' in 1936, Sonara Singers began life as the Alfreton Ladies Choir, changing its name more recently to reflect the fact that we are now an excellent group of ladies, whose ages range from the 20s to the 80s, all of whom simply enjoy singing. We meet every Monday evening at the Post Mill Centre, South Noranton with the choir made up of ladies from Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire.

What hasn't changed is that we love to sing, for fun and enjoyment, but also for more serious reasons of raising money for charities. A recent concert (March 2018) with Andy Quinn, who shot to fame in 'Michael McIntyre's Unexpected star' has raised a considerable sum for a cancer charity.

Our Musical Director, Liz Moulder, and pianist, Teresa Mills, make an amazing partnership, introducing new songs and leading the ladies through an extensive repertoire. Liz has been with the choir since 1989 and has done a sterling (and stirring) job in developing the vocal techniques of the ladies and so developing a wide repertoire of songs, ranging from classical, to musicals and contemporary and modern songs. Examples of the current song list include *Bohemian Rhapsody* (Queen), *Sing a song of sixpence*, edited by Michael Diack, *America* from West Side Story and including very entertaining additions from choir members, *Remember Me* by Bob Chilcott, and *Can you feel the love tonight?* from the Lion King.

The choir prides itself in memorising all songs so that no music is used at performances, something our audiences regularly comment on, telling us that it enhances the quality of the singing and the overall performance.

2018 will see the choir delivering 12 concerts, spread throughout the counties of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire and beyond. Sonara will undertake a performance in October to raise money for 'Hearing dogs



for the deaf' and this event will see the choir performing a varied song list including songs and recitals chosen to commemorate the ending of the First World War. In November the ladies will host a visiting male voice choir from Leigh on Sea.

To conclude we would like to tell you of an imminent post available within Sonara Singers: Liz, our MD has decided to retire after almost 30 years with the choir so we will need a dynamic and developmental musical director to take over the baton. The formal advert for this post will appear in the Spring edition of News and Views in February 2019, so this is a 'heads up' for you to watch this space.

Please do not hesitate to contact myself, Angela Bacon (secretary) or Lorna Brooks (chair) if you would like to know more.

Anne Eaton 07521 979435 [anne.eaton.ae@gmail.com](mailto:anne.eaton.ae@gmail.com)

Angela Bacon 07811 891112 [angela.bacon@kbacon.co.uk](mailto:angela.bacon@kbacon.co.uk)

Lorna Brooks 01773 811650 [lorna.brooks@sky.com](mailto:lorna.brooks@sky.com)

**Anne Eaton**  
**Vice Chair & Membership Secretary**

### Sonara Singers

#### Derbyshire

Due to an impending retirement, Sonara Singers (all ladies choir) will be looking to recruit a new Musical director / conductor for mid 2019. If you feel you would like the challenge and are suitably qualified or experienced, more information can be obtained from Lorna Brooks on 01773 811650 [lorna.brooks@sky.com](mailto:lorna.brooks@sky.com)

(a full advert will appear in the February edition of News And Views.



## Forthcoming Events

Events between this issue of News & Views and the next are in greater detail. The rest give only concert title, date, venue and contact. As the event date comes nearer they will be shown in more detail. Let us know when your events are happening so that we can let everyone know.

Send your event to

[publications.officer@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk](mailto:publications.officer@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk)

### November

#### Christmas Concert with Thanet Male Voice Choir

Saturday 24 November 2018

Venue: **Holy Trinity Church, Cliftonville, Margate, Kent**

Time: 2.30

Start your Christmas celebrations early with Thanet Male Voice Choir

Details and ticket prices from Martin Howard, Publicity Manager, at [aitch46.mh@gmail.com](mailto:aitch46.mh@gmail.com)

### December

#### Charity Christmas Concert with Thanet Male Voice Choir and friends

Sunday 9 December 2018

Venue: **Holy Trinity Church, Broadstairs, Kent**

Time: 2.30

Thanet MVC will be singing with Upton Junior School Choir and the Proteus Brass Ensemble in this Christmas concert. Proceeds to charity.

Details and ticket prices from Martin Howard, Publicity Manager, Thanet MVC, at [aitch46.mh@gmail.com](mailto:aitch46.mh@gmail.com)



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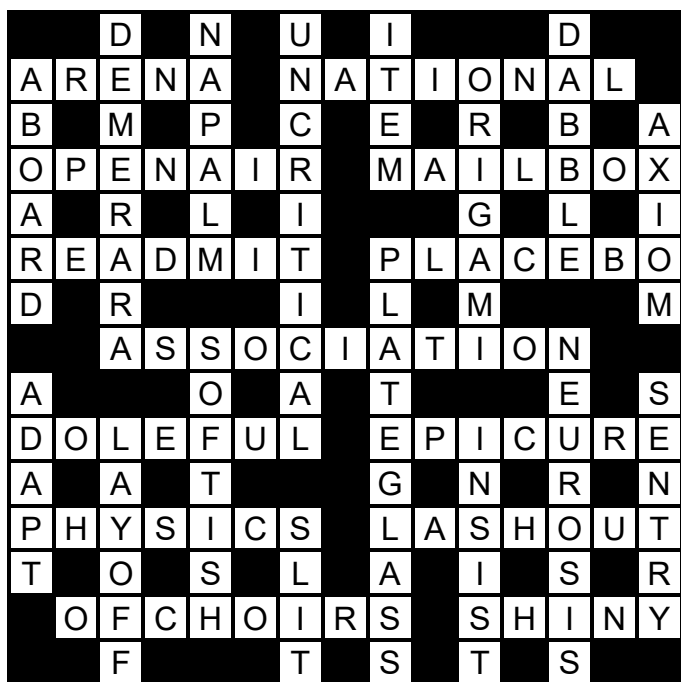
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Many of our contributors love to show their prowess by sending in wonderful finished articles with **coloured** headlines, five different fonts and many **underlinings**, *italics* and **bold** bits. Then, of course, I have to spend time taking them all out before I can set their article up the way you will see it in the magazine. **KEEP IT SIMPLE!**

### HOUSE STYLE

We use Calibri 10pt in News & Views. (If you don't have this, don't worry I can soon change the one you use.)

Set your paragraphs to single space with no spacing before or after paragraphs.

Start with the name of your choir.

Then say the NAC group your choir is in.

Write your article.

Say who has written it.

Quotes use single speech marks (same key as @ but without the shift).

Dates do not include <sup>st</sup> <sup>nd</sup> <sup>rd</sup> or <sup>th</sup>

Abbreviations do not have full stops.

Song titles are shown in *italics*.

Do not put photos in the text.

Don't use am or pm in times.

Unless the word 'choir' is part of a title it should **NOT** have a capital letter.

Your choir is singular so 'the choir is' not 'the choir are'.

Send me pictures as high res .jpegs of between 1 and 5Mb or more, minimum 300 dpi.

Attach them to an email.

If this is hard to understand then ring me and I'll talk you through it.

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