

NEWS & VIEWS



228 AUTUMN 2022



Wedding in York Minster
The Pye Hill & District Male Voice Choir



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Crawford's Corner

Publications Officer - Bob Swallow



Welcome to the last News & Views of 2022. Children are back in school, teenagers are setting out into their new lives in universities and colleges. At the same time we set out in a new life under a new king after we mourn the passing of a lovely lady and servant of her people. We tend to think of the autumn as drawing towards the end of the year but for many it is the beginning of a new time in their lives. May we all set forth with confidence and faith that we can do well.

In this issue of News & views we see much evidence that choirs are now meeting freely and working hard to produce great concerts, enjoy singing and try to grow their choirs. May that long continue.

Just a word about our website.

www.nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk

We recently passed responsibility of the website to Pete Carlyon and he is keen to help you to make the best use of it. You will find Pete's contact details on the back of this magazine and you can send to him press releases and lists of things for sale or things you are keen to pass on to other choirs. News & Views is only available three times a year but the website is there 24/7 so please make use of it.

It is unusual to get two articles from one choir to go into News & Views so how much more unusual to have two choirs sending two articles. It shows that choirs are getting busy again. Go and see what The Pye Hill & District Male Voice Choir and Bestwood Male Voice Choir are doing.

In this issue there is a word search as well as the usual crossword and sudoku. People who know about magazines may work out why I do this occasionally, enough said.

If you look carefully you might spot Pye Hill & District Male Voice Choir again with Carlton and Sandiacre Male Voice Choirs. My, aren't they busy.

Cor Meibion Colwyn have much to say about 'Fifty Busy Years' and Glasgow Phoenix never let me down when it comes to news. On page 25 there is a Tale of Two Choirs showing that amalgamating is so much better than risking coming to an end.

OK stop reading my ramblings and get started on the good stuff. Enjoy the rest of the year, have a great Christmas and see you again in 2023

Chairman's Chat

NAC Chairman - Brenda Wilkinson



These past few days have been a whirlwind of emotions. I received a copy of the magazine so I could prepare my Chairman's Chat and I was over-

whelmed with the enthusiasm of choirs now the shackles of the pandemic have just about totally loosened and also with the generosity of said choirs of staging concerts so the proceeds can be donated to various charities when they haven't been able to generate monies for themselves for almost two years. As I was reading the input, the very sad news of our Queen's death was announced. She dedicated her whole life to our country, and I'm sure I speak for all of you that this constant in our lives will

be sadly missed and our thoughts and prayers go to her family.

In my role of Membership Officer I have seen a substantial number of choirs who have decided to disband because they felt they couldn't recover from the enforced lockdown, so I asked Tim Knight to produce an article for the magazine which I hope might inspire you to think outside the box if you have run out of ideas of how to recruit more choristers, promote your concerts and excite your audiences. He has spoken about these subjects at a number of our conferences, and has also written books on the subjects, and there are choirs out there who are thankful that he did because they are still singing.

I'm sure that the choirs' stories in this edition of the magazine will help you

to see that there are many ways of getting back on track and ensuring a great future for yourselves.

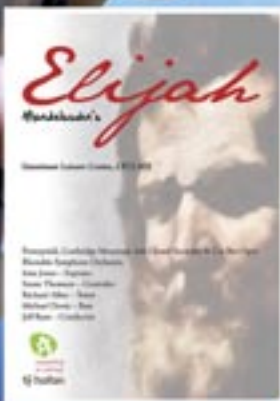
The two conferences we have held since we came out of lockdown were well attended and the second one saw a good increase in delegate numbers and we are hoping that that upward trend will continue when we rock up at Taunton next Spring. Our guest speaker is someone who hasn't been to us before, but I'm sure he will enjoy meeting us, as we will him. Our centre spread gives you all the information you need to book for the weekend. If you haven't attended one of our weekends before, please do give it a try. You will meet up with fellow choir members from most corners of the country and will make more friends.

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Returning to regular practice

Pye Hill & District Male Voice Choir - Midlands East– Malcolm Hill



Like all choirs, the Pye Hill & District Male Voice Choir, has been severely affected by the Covid Pandemic. For a long time, it was restricted to practice by internet zoom sessions and all its arranged concerts had to be cancelled.

Returning to regular practice in the summer of 2021, it was decided that the choir would take its time before singing again in concert and to rebuild its confidence.

On 19 March 2022, the choir performed in concert as part of an Arts Festival in the grounds of Erewash Museum, Ilkeston, which it greatly enjoyed. This was followed by a full concert on 26 March at the choir's base at the Dale Club, Jacksdale,

which was very well attended. Then came a highly successful twice re-arranged tour to Devon with concerts held at Brixham and Paignton Parish Churches, raising £725.00 for this year's Poppy Appeal.

The highlight of the year was singing as part of a mass choir at York Minster on 14 May for the wedding of its President, Jason Darnell. This was an experience never to be forgotten and it gave all choir members a significant lift to receive many generous comments, including from choristers who sing in the Minster Choir.

The choir sang at a further wedding on 28 May for a choir member's daughter, Lindsay Braithwait, at St. Martin's Church, Alfreton.

All of the choir's concerts this year are dedicated to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in celebration of her Platinum Jubilee. It was fitting that the choir's last concert on 4 June was held at Maple Mews Sheltered Housing Complex, Alfreton, to celebrate this occasion and the choir was very happy to share in a celebration tea that followed.

So to the future after seven engagements in quick succession. Immediately, two choir parties for life celebrations where the opportunity to sing will no doubt not be missed, then to an eagerly awaited joint concert with Carlton and Sandiacre Male Voice choirs on 30 July at St. Paul's Church, Daybrook, in aid of the East Midlands Air Ambulance, with concerts continuing to build for the autumn and winter and 2023.

The Pye Hill & District Male Voice Choir is seeking to recruit male choristers for all choir parts, especially bass and top tenor. A warm welcome awaits you to join the choir at rehearsal on Monday evenings at the Dale Club Jacksdale, at 7:30.

Further information can be obtained from Malcolm Hill on 01773 602743 or the choir's website:

www.pyehillmvc.co.uk

Wedding in York Minster

Pye Hill & District Male Voice Choir – Midlands East - Malcolm Hill

The choir was privileged to sing at the wedding of the choir's President, Jason Darnell, to Rachel Wass at York Minster on Saturday 14 May 2022 as part of a massed choir, consisting of the York based choir the 'Ebor Singers', which includes some members of the Minster choir, 'Cantorum' and talented choristers and friends drawn from other choirs that Jason has association with.

It was a day never to be forgotten in the history of the Pye Hill & District Male Voice Choir who continue to have new experiences, even though they were formed as long ago as 1903.

The massed choir sang *God is gone up* by Gerald Finzi at the beginning of the service and *Let all the world in every corner sing* (Antiphon) by Ralph Vaughan Williams at the end of the ceremony. The

service also included the rousing hymns *All Creatures Of Our God And King* and *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling* and *We Pledge To One Another* to the tune of Thaxted. The Ebor Singers also sang a setting of *O Love That Will Not Let Me Go*, composed by Jason.

It difficult to describe the wonderful sound of so many accomplished singers both in the choir and audience joined to-

gether in harmony, aided by the outstanding acoustics of York Minster. A once in a lifetime experience never to be forgotten!

The service was conducted by the Revd Canon Michael Smith, Acting Dean.

Benjamin Morris expertly played the newly restored Minster organ.

As everyone left the Minster, they were greeted by the sound of the Minster bells and the day continued at a reception held at the Poppleton Centre, York, where all family, friends and choirs and partners were invited.

Jason Darnell is the son of the Pye Hill & District Male Voice Choir's distinguished



Musical Director, Linda Darnell.

The day was such a happy event to experience that the singing continued on the coach on the return journey home, not wanting the day to end.

The Pye Hill and District Male Voice Choir, practice at the Dale Club, Jacksdale on Monday evenings from 7.30 other than bank holiday Mondays and are always seeking new members. A warm welcome awaits you. Visit the choir's website for further information

<http://www.pyehillmvc.co.uk/>

Platinum Jubilee

Thurnscoe Harmonic Male Voice Choir - Yorkshire South - John Keating



Mrs Irene Hill

I'm sure that all our wonderful choirs have been celebrating her majesty Queen Elizabeth II's platinum jubilee at many and varied venues around the UK and beyond.

I thought some may be interested to hear of a magnificent achievement of one of our members.

Some long serving members of the choral organisation will recognise the name, Mrs Irene Hill, married to the late Mr Eric Hill. Those that do not will probably recognise her from the photographs.

In April 2022, Irene was presented with a certificate of service, a wonderful bouquet of flowers and a gold pendant of a treble clef on a gold chain.

This was all to honour her for the 70 years she has been official accompanist to our choir.

Irene joined the choir in 1952 as a young schoolgirl taking piano lessons with the late great Miss Noble in Thurnscoe and organ lessons in the chapel with Miss Smith, then the accompanist to the choir, her father being the conductor. Shortly after, Mary Smith took over from her father as conductor and Irene became a member and official accompanist to the choir. Thurnscoe Harmonic have always rehearsed twice weekly and although, over the years, there have been several assistant accompanists, she has always done the bulk of the accompaniment.

Her beloved husband Eric passed away in January 2004 and was himself a long serving member and official of the choir serving as both secretary and treasurer.

In the photos Irene is being presented with the certificate by our president, Mr Michael McGrey, with 56 years' service, flowers presented by our new chairman, Mr Ian Dowlman, with 16 years' service

and the gold pendant and chain, again by our president.

All choristers value their accompanists because it's not just someone who can play the piano, it is so much more to be able to accompany a choir to the standards required and we are very proud and pleased we have one of the best.

So Irene, from every one of our members, past and present, thank you for your platinum service.



The MUIS Project 2021-2022

Snowdown Male Voice Choir - Thames South - Peter Whibley

The Starting Point

This project was a development of our 'Grow & Prosper' initiative triggered in 2017. The choir knew that the tradition of making music in the home and in the community was rapidly dying so needed to take action. So, in late 2020, a group of members was set up to devise a project aimed at men who had no experience of singing and as a result had little confidence about singing in public.

The Grand Plan

The group of eight choir members talked with many other choirs who had exactly the same concerns and some of whom had already taken action. The group realised that the best initiative that they heard about could be very well adapted to Snowdown's circumstances. Apart from the reality of the problem faced by Snowdown they knew that -

- The impact that making music has on physical and mental health is not well known.
- There is a high incidence of mental health difficulties in East Kent.
- Snowdown has a long and successful history of raising money for charity.

The best solution stared the group in the face - challenge inexperienced singers to raise money for charity in return for 8 free singing lessons and the opportunity to impress their families and friends by taking part as the 'MUIS' Choir in a Gala Concert.' Maybe, afterwards, they would like to join a real choir!

The charity chosen - because it's probably the one that's best known to men - was Prostate Cancer UK. This charity fights the battle against a condition known to most families and indeed to the members of Snowdown MVC.

The Objectives

For public consumption the two main objectives of the project were said to be -

- Raising a shedload of money for Prostate Cancer UK.
- Making the project a very enjoyable one-off experience for the volunteers.

Moving On

From January 2021 the organisers met monthly - by the dreaded Zoom! Right from the off the group was strongly supported by all our Front Team members who provided really constructive ideas about bringing together men with unknown ability to form a choir after only 8 rehearsals.

The group quickly adopted a team structure with each member carrying a specific responsibility. It wasn't fully appreciated at first that at different stages of the project different skills would be needed; fortunately, by sheer chance, this motley group of choristers just happened to have the right individuals with the right skill-sets at the right times.

Strokes of Luck

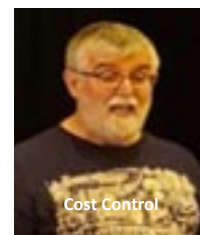
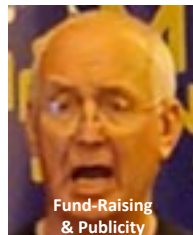
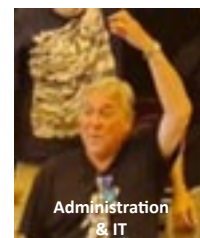
Two bits of luck came along at a very early stage. Firstly, Dover District Council has a strong commitment to supporting local communities and a member of the council staff provided a wealth of advice about raising money. Secondly, it transpired that all our local councils have concerns about the incidence of mental health difficulties in the area so showed great interest in helping to fund our project. One commercial organisation also expressed strong support. Within months sufficient grants were made to cover the substantial running costs. This gave the budget a sound footing as well as giving the organisers the confidence to plough on and activate the full plan.

The Outcomes

The project came to a head with a sold-out Gala Concert on 16 July 2022 which proved to be a very special event, possibly unique in the history of our choir. Clearly, the full impact upon the future of Snowdown will not become known for some time although the figures that are to hand at the time of writing this article speak for themselves -

Initial enquiries from potential volunteers for the 'MUIS' Choir	148
Volunteers turning up at Welcome Evening	60
MUIS singers appearing in Gala Concert	68
Other Snowdown choristers assisting with organisation	10
Snowdown choristers appearing in Gala Concert	25 (3 were ill)
Snowdown wives, partners, relatives assisting	14
Gala Concert tickets sold	600 (sell-out)
Raised for Prostate Cancer UK through sponsorship	£30.9k (inc. Gift Aid & still rising)
Additional profits from Gala Concert	£5.5k (still being calculated)
Direct donations to Prostate Cancer UK	£375.00
Possible total donation to be made to Prostate Cancer UK	£37k (provisional)
MUIS singers attending one Snowdown taster session	27

SUPPORTING **PROSTATE CANCER UK**



SNOWDOWN ORGANISERS

David Davis, Peter Hare, John Mathews, Neil Martin, David Rance, Michael Schlamm, Peter Whibley. With huge support from the Front Team; Chris Price, Richard Ansell, Gerard Ahern & Aileen Dickson.

20 years of singing

Hartlepool Ladies Choir – North East – Sue Stead



eral Joint concerts with HMVC (including a trip to Germany to sing together). Alongside these have been the community fundraising concerts for charities and good causes and, of course, the choir's own annual concerts.

The Covid pandemic and subsequent lockdown challenged every choir in the country, but HLC decided it was not going to be their demise. Not to be defeated, their usual Thursday rehearsals were replaced with online Zoom rehearsals, music theory lessons, social events with online quizzes and even a Christmas party, with carols, songs, silly hats, wine and nibbles - all on Zoom! The committee and MD worked tirelessly to make sure members stayed in touch with each other through their social media page, emails and messages - hence the survival of the choir.

Despite a few members deciding not to return, HLC continues to grow. New members are being added regularly, the concert diary is open and social events are being planned – including a birthday party! In celebration of their birthday, their annual concert on 7 October will be made up of their 'top 15' pieces, as voted for by choir members and entitled 'Our Favourite Sings'.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY HARTLEPOOL LADIES CHOIR!

In 2002, whilst on an exchange trip to Germany with their husbands, a few wives of Hartlepool Male Voice Choir (HMVC) members decided to get together to sing, initially under the direction of John Holmes but soon after taken on by David Gibson (MD for HMVC). From these very humble beginnings, Hartlepool Ladies Choir (HLC) was formed and has not only grown in number, but in confidence and ability and continues to go from strength to strength.

Singing in four part harmony, the choir has built up an extensive repertoire of songs,

including songs from the shows, popular chart songs, classical, gospel, sacred, jazz, folk songs and more. A typical concert will provide a wide variety of songs to suit any audience.

Over the years, Hartlepool Ladies Choir have been fortunate enough to have taken part in many prestigious concerts: The Festival of Brass and Voice for Cancer Research UK at the Royal Albert Hall; NEAC Group 7 Choral Spectaculars at The Sage Gateshead; charity concerts with The Band of The Brigade of Gurkhas and The British Army Band Catterick and sev-

150 years Unbroken Service

Ashington & District Male Voice Choir - North East - Bob Brind



Chairman Bob Brind presenting long service awards to George Wade, Bill Wade and Eric Prytherch.

As Ashington & District MVC was founded 106 years ago we have no founder members but at the recent Annual Concert members recognized the services of three gents who between them have nearly 150 years of unbroken service.

Current President, George Wade joined in October 1973 to be followed by his brother Bill five years later which was at the same time as Eric Prytherch. Eric is still a strong member of the bass line whilst George enjoys 'social singing' at rehearsals. Unfortunately, Bill has had a few problems but is still hoping to sing again. It's this dedication that has inspired others to work hard and bring the choir back to the performance levels which were being achieved before our enforced two-year lock down.

Ashington Male Voice Choir was the orig-

inal name and, as Ashington was also known as the largest pit village, it's not surprising that there has been a considerable mining influence throughout its history. It was in the mid 50s when two other local choirs disbanded that the Ashington Choir absorbed the memberships and the title of Ashington & District MVC with a very large membership, something that it will be difficult to achieve again in the future, but we can always hope. The choir rehearses in the Stakeford and Bomarsund Welfare Centre which itself was one of the many welfare centres developed for the community in the Northumberland Mine Field and which were supported by both the industry and the miners themselves. Like most community organisations, ADMVC lost some of its stalwarts for various reasons during the pandemic but on resumption for every

loss, a new member came along and with 31 we're now just above the 2020 total. It's also fortunate that some of recruits come with considerable choral experience.

ADMVC had built a varied schedule of concerts for each year with many being for community and charitable organisations who were able to raise funds to help them. Unfortunately, and with like situations throughout the country, some of these failed to survive the pandemic. Work is now being done to re-develop the concert schedule and a couple of new events have been organised which will give help to identified charities. The choir has successfully performed two of its own promotions since coming together again.

A Christmas Concert in December saw a sell-out of tickets for its Saturday afternoon performance which naturally involved the audience in many Christmas favourites. There was then another month's lock down causing some delay to preparation for the early summer concert. No long-term ill effects and it was decided to link our Summer Concert to the Platinum Jubilee celebrations. A popular decision with another excellent audience and with support from the Sir James Knott Trust, a memorable celebration with the church being decked in Union Jacks and the audience joining in the patriotic songs creating a local 'Last Night of the Proms'. The presentations to the gents mentioned above added something very special to the occasion.

ADMVC now looks forward to building its strength both in membership and programme and hopes that the name will still be flying around many more generations.

Appledore Singers Are Back!

Appledore Singers - Devon - Vivien Zussman

After 18 months of enforced inactivity, we assembled for rehearsals last September, raring to go. It was as if we'd never been away. To sing festive music for our traditional 'Charity Christmas Concert' is always such a tonic, and how good it was to don our sparkly uniforms again and perform to an appreciative, live audience!

In March we were invited to sing as part of the concert season at St John the Baptist church in Witheridge, a lovely historic church in the heart of Devon farming country with superb acoustics. The concert proved to be very enjoyable for choir and audience alike. Apart from anything else it was warm, as the heating had been left on for us. As with orchestral players, we need to feel comfortable when we sing; not too warm and certainly not cold.

In June we were invited to sing in a joint concert with another local choir, the 'Carry On Choir' at St Mary's Church, Bideford. This was in aid of Admiral Dementia



nurses at North Devon District Hospital. Each choir sang separately, in their contrasting styles, then for the finale we came together for an arrangement of Coldplay's *Fix You*. St Mary's is a large church, and it was packed. It's always good to sing in front of a large audience – their enthusiastic reaction was really uplifting, and the

concert raised £2000 for the charity.

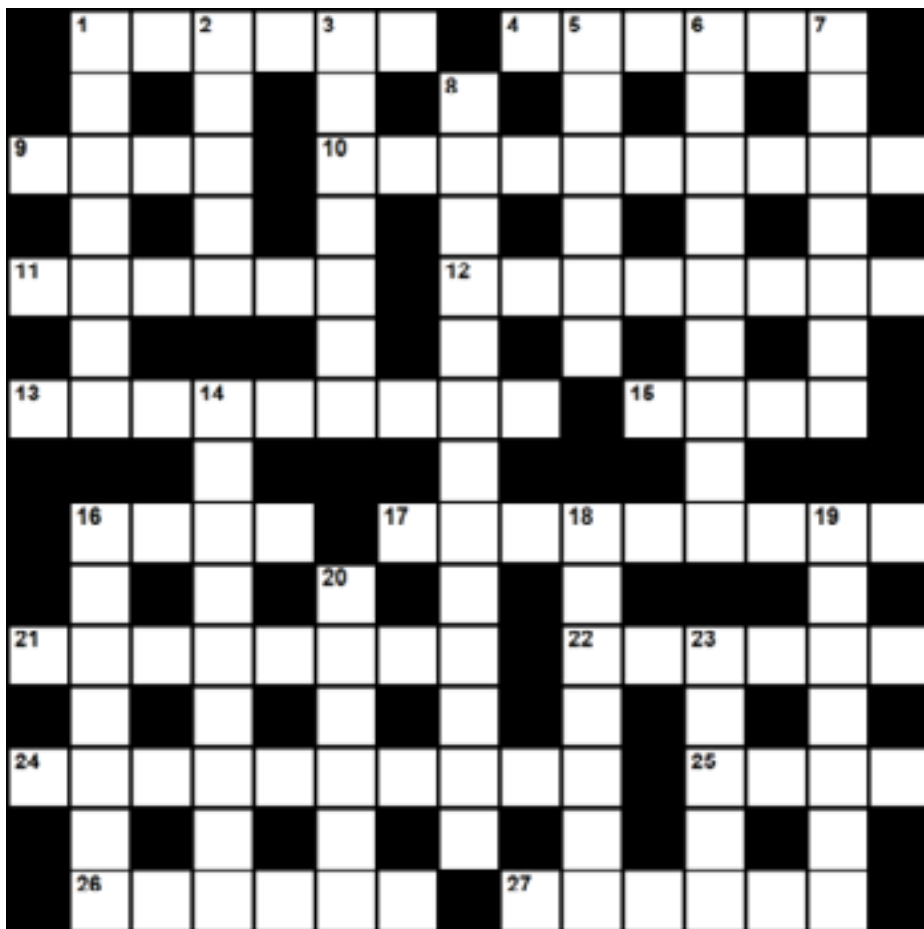
For our Summer concert in early July, we had a well-rehearsed repertoire of songs old and new and, to finish with, a medley from 'South Pacific', which the audience was invited to join in with. This item was led by the 'Pips' our six-voice ensemble, who usually have their own 'slot' in our concerts. As a member of the Pips myself, I can tell you that finishing the final choral number, then dashing behind stage to get dressed as Hula girls, complete with strategically placed scallop shells (stuck to a t-shirt, I hasten to add) grass skirts and garlands was a feat in itself for us.

Everyone was gobsmacked when the curtains opened, and that was before we'd even started to perform the dance routines that had been choreographed to accompany each of the numbers! What was a real joy, though, was to hear the audience singing, and what an ovation the whole choir received at the end.

So ended our first season after lockdown and we all felt it was a success. Yes, we had to contend with Covid throughout the year, but the majority of members were able to participate, and had a thoroughly good sing.



PUZZLE PAGE



Across

- 1 Japanese male entertainer (6)
- 4 Eric Burden for one (6)
- 9 Almighty (4)
- 10 No commoner fish (10)
- 11 A relic carelessly became
a cream puff (6)
- 12 All of it (8)
- 13 Flower of all colours (4-5)
- 15 Caesar thought it better than
Quintilis (4)
- 16 Put on the dressed hairy coat of a
mammal, it might rain heavily (4)
- 17 Handy cure becomes a persistent
calling out (3,3,3)
- 21 No time at all (4,4)
- 22 Well well (6)
- 24 A payment for a redesigned minaret
etc (10)
- 25 Expressing doubt (4)
- 26 Breathe out (6)
- 27 Makes changes (6)

Down

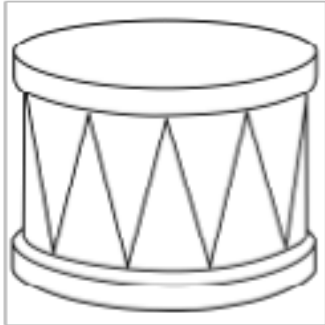

- 1 Potato dumpling (7)
- 2 South Asian republic full of people (5)
- 3 Negligible amount or foolish person (7)
- 5 Subtle difference (6)
- 6 Lurid monk in a muddle delivers
circular liquid (4,5)
- 7 Drawn-out (7)
- 8 Initially part of US capital? (6,7)
- 14 Resembling the colour of an egg yolk (9)
- 16 Go before and move ahead (7)
- 18 Tasty balls and ouso (7)
- 19 Capreolus again (3,4)
- 20 Unborn child of late anyhow (6)
- 23 Given cards (5)

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SOLUTIONS
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Instrument Word Search

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I	U	X	L	I	T	Z	H	R	O	V	K	I	T	N	W	C			C	X	R
T	A	O	R	N	E	B	V	H	V	H	B	N	V	M	Y	T	B	Z	I		
A	F	P	S	A	I	I	L	E	H	P	R	G	Z	P	P	W	T	D	M		
R	C	H	A	N	T	E	R	L	D	E	A	G	A	N	I	G	H	Z	W	B	
B	Q	O	Z	S	G	T	J	K	J	M	L	U	L	Y	Q	X	O	K	J	A	
V	I	N	A	U	N	M	L	B	M	L	T	I	J	A	L	C	G	N	T	N	
Q	J	E	B	Y	Z	D	G	E	F	Y	O	T	H	M	A	K	F	J	G	X	
P	I	B	C	O	R	N	F	L	S	R	S	A	O	A	O	T	D	E	J	E	
C	I	C	Z	V	V	B	I	L	S	E	A	R	N	H	S	O	N	K	O	B	
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- | | | | | |
|----------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Alto sax | Bell | Bin | Bugelhorn | Chanter |
| Clarsach | Deagan | Drum | Electric guitar | Electronic organ |
| Fife | Gong | Lyre | Mandolin | Marimba |
| Moog | Oboe | Pibcorn | Pipe | Rattle |
| Shawm | Tenor saxophone | Twelve string guitar | Vina | Yamaha |

New Album Launch

Mevagissey Male Choir - Cornwall - Mike Tate

The choir has launched its long-awaited new album, their first since their Christmas CD in 2016. Aptly entitled 'We Rise Again', after the long enforced Covid break, it comprises 11 of the choir's most recent and popular songs, including their 11-minute *Back to the '60s' medley*.

Most of the tracks were laid down shortly before the pandemic but only in the past few weeks has it been possible to apply the finishing touches, enabling the album to be available for the 4th and 5th of the choir's Summer Quay Concerts in Mevagissey Harbour.

The CD marks the end of an era for the choir, whose Musical Director, Graham Willcocks, stepped down in the spring after 26 years. A new MD is currently being sought for the choir, which has emerged from the pandemic with more

1	<i>Back to the '60s (Medley)</i> Arr: Alan Simmons	11:28
2	<i>California Dreaming</i> John & Michelle Phillips, Arr: G. Churcher	4:44
3	<i>You Are So Beautiful/Wind Beneath My Wings</i> B. Preston & B. Fisher, Arr: Greg Gilpin	3:08
4	<i>The Way We Were</i> Alan & Marilyn Bergman & Marvin Hamlisch, Arr: Gavin Arch	2:16
5	<i>We Rise Again</i> Liam Doherty, Arr: Stephen Smith	3:13
6	<i>Let The River Run</i> Carly Simon, Arr: Chad Wernick	3:40
7	<i>Tears In Heaven</i> Eric Clapton & Will Jennings, Arr: Dorian Kelly	3:40
8	<i>Tell My Father</i> Jack Murphy & Frank Wildhorn, Arr: Andrew Ramsey	3:53
9	<i>Mr Blue Sky</i> Jeff Lynne, Arr: Peter Goring	4:00
10	<i>Every Time I Feel The Spirit</i> Tina Turner, Arr: Derek Jones	2:16
11	<i>Au Fond Du Temple Saint</i> Arr: Jeffrey Howard	4:19



than 40 singing members, a full concert programme going forward and a 50th anniversary to look forward to in 2024.

'We Rise Again' can be purchased by logging on to the 'Buy Our CDs' page on the choir's website:

www.meva-choir.co.uk

CDs are priced at £10 each (plus P&P for those outside the UK) but it is possible to download a copy for just £5. Individual tracks can be downloaded for £1 each.

Contact: Mike Tate 07730 68324

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f t i

The Future Depends...

Tim Knight - composer, conductor, mentor, singing holiday leader, author and sheet music publisher

The future depends on what you do today, so said Mahatma Gandhi, and there is so much wisdom in that little quote that its worth considering in many walks of life.

Over the last couple of years there can hardly have been anyone left untouched by the pandemic, by the stop start of lockdowns and the lack of the normal rhythm and beat of everyday life, not only in people's work patterns and home life but also in the choral world, but working on the basis that every red light eventually turns green, I have looked at the return from the pandemic as being a source of opportunity, a time to reflect on what choirs should return to and what should now be reconsidered in the light of our changed and still uncertain times.

Some choirs will have returned smaller in size, recruitment has now become ever more important, some audiences have not returned, some venues (both rehearsal and performance) have closed their doors and amidst all this, the cost of living has risen so much that attending concerts or even paying subscriptions to societies and groups have come under scrutiny and have been cancelled.

This is reflected in the microcosmos community that is the amateur choral world and some choirs have seen bank balances dwindle and others have unfortunately had to close their doors completely, and of course behind every choir there are music publishers, professional musicians, venues, typesetters, composers, arrangers, in fact a whole army of people connected with the music trade that make the wheels turn.

Have we entered the vortex of doom, or are we now in the land of milk and honey....

Well, if you know me, you will know that I don't visit the vortex of doom if at all possible, I can see fresh green roots everywhere, I see for example that the NAC has managed to put on its conferences and keep communicating with its members, I see the irrepressible Mat Wright and his young peoples' choirs in Barnsley going from strength to strength, I have seen my own choirs return and restart their touring schedules and I see



fresh new choral composers producing new and exciting music which reinforces my belief that the choral world is reinventing itself, forward planning, thinking about and shaping the future.

There is a wheel of success, buy new repertoire that keeps your concerts fresh which encourages more people to come, which results in more ticket sales, which mean you can buy new repertoire to repeat the process and keep turning the wheel!

But back to the original quote, the future depends on what you do today, and here choirs are faced with a choice, it's a spectrum from doing nothing (and therefore nothing will change) or really looking to the future, remembering that committees of choirs are only Trustees for the time they are in office and that they must shape the choir on their watch to be ready for the future – to hand over their choirs in better shape and more relevant to the times we live in – to the new generation of committee members.

Buy a man a wonderful pair of new slippers and he will continue to use the worn out ones with holes in the toes, - because they are comfortable, he has lived with them a long time, they 'suit him' – in choral terms, maybe some hard hitting questions need asking, why do we sing what we sing? because we like it is often the reply, but that needs turning on its head, freshening up our repertoire so that it reflects the times we live in, making it relevant to the listener

– this helps to seek out new audiences, where do we sing? in a cold church where no one particularly wants to be, - again maybe we should be more proactive in going to the people rather than just expecting them to come to us.

Partnerships with other Arts organisations that involve young people, or even involve cross Arts events (for example Music and Dance) attract funding and indeed audiences! – New audiences – and some of those exposed to choral music will become singers maybe in your choir, or maybe in someone else's choir, every choir needs new members and should be on the lookout for them all the time, and partnerships mean getting involved with other NAC choirs in your area and beyond, sharing ideas, building bridges, holding concert performances, (and in the afterglow down the pub talking about your choir's future) and in turn strengthening the NAC so it has the power to represent you in the choral world at large.

Look to this day for it is life says the old text, yes this is life as it is today, but if the pandemic has shown us anything, it has shown us that life can change in a second, and we need to be planning, forward thinking, creating a vision which we can turn into reality, don't let others tell you what you can't do!

Set about looking at what you would like to do, in my opinion Musical Directors must have a vision for the next 5 years of their choir, what music, where shall we sing, what competitions shall we enter, shall we record, the answers to these questions are exciting, and excitement and enthusiasm are infectious and lead to change – nobody likes change but rather we make the changes we want or we have the changes we don't want forced upon us.

My door is always open to choirs that would like an earnest discussion about their future, over the years with my books I have travelled to many choirs and some have gone on to revitalise themselves and undertake amazing projects, some have heard but not listened, 'we have tried it all before and nothing works' they say, but as the more enlightened know, every failure is just one step on the road to success!

96th Annual General Meeting 34th Annual Conference Weekend 24-26 March 2023

Having just compiled the proposed timeline and booking forms for conference 2023 at the Holiday Inn Taunton it occurs to me how quickly time passes by. It doesn't seem long ago that we were in Kendal.

This publication of News and Views has this resumé of my work over the past few months and the booking forms and proposed timeline included.

I am pleased to be able to report that our guest speaker next year will be Edward-Rhys Harry who will take the three seminar spots on Saturday of the conference with my friend Dr Douglas Coombes filling our Sunday morning seminar spot.

The Holiday Inn at Taunton is very easy to find on exit 25 of the M5 motorway. It is well signposted but a word of advice. The Holiday Inn EXPRESS is the first building when leaving the junction roundabout. The Holiday Inn where we will be staying



is the second building along. The hotel is quite modern in appearance and comfortable and spacious. The rooms have lift access to all floors. I have reserved assistance rooms for any of our delegates needing this facility. The standard of food presentation is very good and service throughout the hotel is friendly and helpful. Conference will be held in the function rooms within the hotel where we will be joined by several trade stands offering a wide range of items appropriate to our delegates and their choirs.

Our conference concert will be organised by our lead choir, Glastonbury Male Voice Choir. It is an auspicious occasion for them as they are celebrating their centenary next year. The concert is to be held at the Tacci Morris Arts Centre in Monkton Heathfield, a short distance from the hotel. I will arrange coach transport to the concert for everyone. Glastonbury MVC will be joined by the Kentwood Show Choir and Cantabile.

Edward-Rhys Harry

Edward-Rhys Harry is a conductor who has over 25 years' experience of directing singing ensembles in educational, community and professional contexts. He has directed singing festivals in many countries across the globe and believes passionately that singing in choirs can and does change lives for the better.

He is director of Coro Optimum Ltd, a training, support and mentoring programme for conductors of all ages and remains in demand as a choral conductor and clinician. He holds undergraduate and postgraduate degrees from the Uni-



versity of Bangor, University of West London (LCM), Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and his PhD was in composi-

tion at the University of Aberdeen.

Dr Harry is a member of the Royal Society of Musicians and a Fellow of the Royal Society of the Arts. In 2021 he was awarded the Glanville Jones Award for Outstanding Contribution to Music in Wales by the Welsh Music Guild. He is the representative for Wales on the board of directors and trustees of the UK's largest leisure time community, Making Music.





National Association of Choirs

Joining the Nation in Choral Singing

National Conference Booking Form 1 24 - 26 March 2023

Taunton Holiday Inn Hotel
Deane Gate Avenue, Taunton, TA1 2UA

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, evening meal, refreshments and free admission to Saturday evening concert
per person **£230**

Cancellations after this date will incur a charge of 50% of the total fee payable
Substitute guests will be welcome

Day Delegates

Payment in full when booking (non-refundable)

Please circle requirements

Day delegate fee including refreshments and lunch **£40**

Evening meal Saturday add £25.00

Concert ticket Saturday add £15.00

Friday Gala Dinner add £35.00

Deposit of £70 with booking form Balance by 1 February 2023

Reminders will be sent

Room Type - single double twin

Please circle your requirements

Amount submitted £_____

Please return your completed forms and deposits to the address below

Payment method - tick the appropriate box

Paying by cheque

Cheques should be made payable to
The National Association of Choirs

Please return your completed forms and deposits
to the address below

Paying by BACS

You may pay by BACS (please indicate BACS on form)
Pay to **National Association of Choirs**

Sort code 30 94 19 - Account no 30254060
Reference: Conference.

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

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

01283 569677 or 07939012458

cliveandpatlawton@btinternet.com



National Conference Booking Form 2 24 - 26 March 2023

Taunton Holiday Inn Hotel
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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

Please return your completed forms and deposits to
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01283 569677 or 07939012458 cliveandpatlawton@btinternet.com



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National Association of Choirs

Joining the Nation in Choral Singing

National Conference Timetable 24 - 26 March 2023

Taunton Holiday Inn Hotel

Deane Gate Avenue, Taunton, TA1 2UA

Friday 24 March 2023

2.00	Delegates arrive, register at reception and collect delegate pack
3.00	National officers meeting
3.30-5.00	Come and Sing with Celia Johns and Karl Harper
7.30	Reception National Officers and guests
7.30	Delegates and guests assemble for dinner
8.00	Dinner is served- 3 courses with wine
9.30	After dinner entertainment
12.00	Bar closes

Saturday 25 March 2023

7.00	Access to trade stands to set up
7.00 - 9.30	Breakfast in main dining room
9.30 - 10.45	Seminar 1 - Edward-Rhys Harry
10.45 - 11.15	Coffee and trade stand viewing
11.15 - 12.30	Seminar 2 - Edward-Rhys Harry
12.30 - 1.30	Trade stand presentations 6 x 10 minute presentations from trade stands present at conference
1.30 - 2.45	Lunch and trade stand viewing (Lunch included in full delegate package)
2.45 - 4.00	Seminar 3 - Edward-Rhys Harry
5.15	Early evening meal 2 Courses
6.45	Coach Leaves hotel for concert
7.30	Concert
10.00 Approx	Following concert, light refreshments will be provided back at the hotel
12.00	Bar closes

Sunday 26 March 2023

7.00 to 9.30	Breakfast (For those delegates wishing to attend local churches, details will be available at hotel reception)
9.30 - 10.30	Seminar 4 - Dr Douglas Coombes
10.30 - 11.00	Coffee and trade stand viewing
11.00 - 11.30	Annual General Meeting
11.30 - 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)

Extra night's stay.

The Holiday Inn Group offer reduced rates on a regular basis. For our delegates to obtain the best rates I advise you to book and pay for extra night's stay directly with the hotel. Telephone number 03333209354 The conference fee of £230 includes the Friday 24 and Saturday 25 March within the package.

Three Choir Appeal £1,160 for Air Ambulance

Carlton, Sandiacre and Pye Hill & District Male Voice Choirs - Midlands East – Malcolm Hill

Carlton, Sandiacre and Pye Hill & District Male Voice Choirs joined forces to raise money for the vital services provided by the Derbyshire, Leicester, Rutland, Warwickshire and Northamptonshire Air Ambulance in a concert held on Saturday 30 July 2022, at St. Paul's Church, Daybrook, Nottingham. The money raised will also be used to support the Children's Air Ambulance nationally.

All three well-known and long-standing choirs performed several of their diverse range of songs, representing all genres of music, from traditional male voice choir favourites to songs from the shows, gospel, pop and contemporary music – something for everyone! The choirs were led by their respective Musical Directors, Ian Watts, Stuart Graham and Linda Darnell. The concert ended in the choirs joining



forces to both sensitively and powerfully perform classic male voice 'anthems', culminating in *American Trilogy*, accompanied by the impressive Ian Watts on the church organ, lifting the roof! All performances were enhanced by the wonderful acoustics of St Paul's Church who also gave its facilities free to support the charity.

Entry to the concert was free to the public with voluntary donations collected by representatives of the Air Ambulance. The concert was deliberately organised not to

restrict anyone from attending, irrespective of their means and recognising the financial pressure many people are experiencing at present, leaving it to individuals to give what they could afford, without any obligation. The fact that £1,160 was raised for the Air Ambulance without ticket sales is testament to the following of the combined choirs and the generosity of the public who filled the church to capacity.

Several ovations were received during the concert for all three choirs' individual performances and a standing ovation from the audience was received at the end of concert.

All three choirs are constantly looking to recruit new members and you will receive a warm welcome if you wish to join any of the male voice choirs who took part in the concert. Further details are available on

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50 busy years

Cor Meibion Colwyn – Wales N/Cheshire W – Charles Cooksley

The choir celebrates its 50th Anniversary in 2022 since its foundation in November 1972. Except for the pandemic period, Cor Meibion Colwyn has sung in a wide range of concerts every year, including tours to Cumbria, Ireland, Scotland, Belgium, Germany, Spain, Malta and Canada. In 2020 we gave a couple of performances in January and February 2020, then from March 2020 sang for 18 months of zoom rehearsals, led by our Musical Director Owain Gethin Davies. We were only permitted to sing at large public performances in both November and December 2021.

Recruitment continues to be a regular concern in UK and abroad for many years and we don't claim to know the answers. In contrast there are also some entirely new choirs, some fairly new male and SATB choirs linked with rugby clubs and some SATB choirs now expanding to about 100 voices. For what it's worth, below are



Philadelphia Girls Choir

some of our own recent experiences. Generally, a lot can be gained if choirs in all categories and locations exchange ideas, experiences and contacts.

We have welcomed 10 new choristers in 2022 to date and there are now 60 choristers. Cor Meibion Colwyn has been exceptionally fortunate in 2020 in securing the services and commitment of our musical director, who has introduced new music and his own new

arrangements. Some other factors that have influenced our development may be that there are many people wanting to come out for a new activity post pandemic and some people have moved into the area in the last 2 years. The choir has gained interest and recruits from performing in charity and Christmas concerts. Locally the choir has been known to remain active. Our impression is that the choir likes to keep busy with

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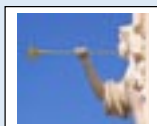
A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square, The Lambeth Walk, Knees up Mother Brown amongst many others.



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new events at least once a month. Before the pandemic, we also recruited choristers from those who attended some large public events at which we sing.

2022 is a catch-up year for many choirs, charities, organisations and individuals and we are no exception.

This resulted in more than usual numbers of concerts, weddings, charities wanting fundraising events and tours delayed by the pandemic. Llandudno is one of the UK major resorts. We are singing in some much-delayed weddings that were booked as long ago as 2019 and January 2020.

In April we sang in Fair for Ukraine as a part of a programme of events and many other performers at Bodelwyddan. The fair raised around £3500 for vital urgent work of the DEC Disasters Emergency Committee. In May 2022 Llandudno we were part of a special concert to recognise the immense work, dedication and care by NHS workers, carers and Emergency Services and to commemorate all those affected by the pandemic. Principal soloists were award winning Erin Gwyn Rossington soprano (International singer of the future at Llangollen 2019) and Tomos Bohana tenor. Other concerts included on 4 June, a Platinum Jubilee concert and on 18 June at Wirksworth, Derbyshire in aid of the Air Ambulance and Derby Hospital. On 20 June we very pleased to host the River City chorale from Sacramento, California. Their repertoire included some of the UK and USA classical repertoire and folk and popular song from USA and UK.



On 25 June we sang in Venue Cymru Llandudno to around 1100 conference members of the Trefoil Guild (all former Girl Guides). A Cerdd dant (sometimes called Penillion) duo provided the uniquely Welsh singing genre. Cor Meibion Colwyn sang 12 songs, while two of our own tenors John Roberts and Alf Gladman sang solo items. Tom Jones our 2nd tenor was the link with the conference concert which was entitled A Taste of Wales. Perhaps because of his name, a special request was *Delilah* (non PC? but in great demand) for all the conference who sang along lustily (twice) and waved scarves.

Probably the greatest highlight of our year was the superb Philadelphia Girls Choir, whom we were delighted to host and sing with on 19 July in Llandudno. The girls are 12-18 years of age and are auditioned for four separate sections. They travel internationally and their repertoire is the most international and multilingual that we have heard. The repertoire and languages ranged from Hungarian *Lajos Bardo*, Zulu *Amavolovolo* Malay *Ikan kekek, Cunnla*, Torres Straits Islands (Aborigine), English (USA composers) and in English translation Welsh songs *Suo Gan* and *Dechrau Eto* plus *Hen wlad fy nhadau* in Welsh with us and audience. The Zulu song was danced and sung. The video of this song has attracted the interest of an NAC ladies choir. A very graceful dance in the Malay song was especially memorable too. They were in Llandudno for the two hottest days of the year. Earlier they had sung in a church in Cardiff and with the Mountain Ash Rugby Choir. After Llandudno they travelled to Edinburgh and Glasgow where they sang with the Glasgow Youth Choir.

We are now continuing with a series of further concerts in Llandudno, Betws y Coed, Colwyn Bay and elsewhere.

We welcome new members and enquiries. For further details contact

charles@colwyn.plus.com,

www.cormeibioncolwyn.co.uk

Platinum Concert Rehearsal Guest

Bestwood Male Voice Choir – Midlands East – Peter Fletcher



Jeneba Kanneh-Mason & Vanessa Lata arche with the choir

The choir was delighted to welcome Jeneba Kanneh-Mason to its rehearsal on Tuesday evening, 26 July, as it continued preparations for its 2022 Platinum Concert.

Jeneba will make a special guest appearance at the choir's Platinum Concert at the Albert Hall, Nottingham on Sunday 9 October at 3.00. Nineteen year old Jeneba holds the Victoria Robey Scholarship to the Royal College of Music, studying piano

with Vanessa Lata arche. She was a Keyboard Category Finalist in BBC Young Musician 2018, winner of the Murs du Son Prize at the Lagny-Sur-Marne International Piano Competition in France in 2014 and The Nottingham Young Musician 2013. Jeneba has played numerous concerts in England, Wales, Paris and the Caribbean as a recital and concerto soloist and as a chamber musician. Other highlights

include recitals at Wigmore Hall, Draper's Hall and the Academy of Saint Martin in the Fields.

This year Jeneba will also undertake tours of Australia, New Zealand, USA, Antigua



and Barbuda with the rest of the famous and extremely talented Kanneh-Mason family.

Tickets for the Platinum Concert, which also features Carlton MVC and Mansfield & District MVC, are priced at £12 for adults and £5.00 for 16 and under, available from Colin on 07889 987819 or

www.bestwoodmvc.uk/tickets_request.

Delayed Cheque Handover

Bestwood Male Voice Choir - Midlands East - Peter Fletcher



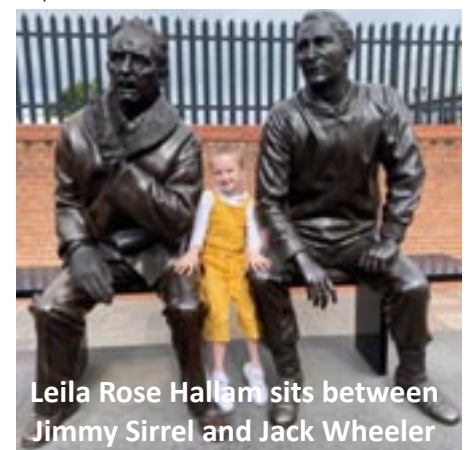
The choir was delighted to finally hand over a cheque for £1,300 to Leila Rose Hallam's parents, Matt and Kirsty Hallam on August Bank Holiday Monday at the Notts County Ground, where Matt is the Head Groundsman.

The funds were raised at a Bestwood MVC concert, with the guest choir Rolls Royce Ladies, back in March 2022 at Hucknall Central Methodist Church. Seven-year-old

Leila is suffering from rhabdomyosarcoma, a rare life threatening children's cancer and the funds were to help towards a £20,000 target to take Leila to Disneyland. However, this target was soon passed and so Leila's parents decided to donate any additional money to the Rhabdomyosarcoma Clinical Trial, via the Alice's Arc charity. The trial is aimed at funding innovative research in to finding a cure and less harsh treatments for the childhood cancer.

The delay in presenting the cheque was largely due to co-ordinating everyone to be present and also working around Leila's ongoing treatment. However, as can be seen from the photographs, it came at a time when Leila was responding well to her treatment and was enjoying the well-deserved attention.

Holding the cheque were Peter Fletcher, Bestwood MVC Publicity Officer and Gary Hallam (no relation), Concert Secretary. Also present were Leila, Matt, Kirsty, Bestwood MVC President John Pritchard, Chairman Colin Pursglove and Secretary Bryce Clare.



Leila Rose Hallam sits between Jimmy Sirrel and Jack Wheeler

A New Choir is Born

Vauxhall Luton Male Voice Choir - North Thames – Dave Sage



This is a *Tale of Two Choirs* and, to an extent, the after effects of the Coronavirus pandemic which had serious repercussions on the choir fraternity. The Vauxhall Male Voice Choir and the Luton Male Voice Choir are both Luton-based and have successfully operated in the same locale over many years.

They are now proud to announce they have amalgamated into a single entity—the Vauxhall Luton Male Voice Choir. The formal date of the merger was 15 June 2022. The photo shows the choristers on this historic evening as they met for the inaugural weekly practice session of the new choir.

Born in 1943 as a respite from war work, the Vauxhall Motors Male Voice Choir, in only a few years, had gained quite a reputation locally and broadcast to our forces on radio. Of the seven choirs flourishing in Luton during that period, it is the only survivor to this day. With the welcome support of Vauxhall Motors it grew to a choir of over seventy choristers during the 1970s entering and winning several competitions.

During the 1980s it sang with famous massed military bands in the regular pageants held at the Luton Football Ground. During the 1970s the choir membership was opened to singers other than Vauxhall employees provided they belonged to the Vauxhall Recreational Club and in 2007

the choir became a stand-alone entity. For the last 20 years the choir has sung mainly for enjoyment and charitable causes.

The Luton Male Voice Choir was formed in 1993 by a small group of enthusiasts led by Musical Director, Mr Ken Hone, with the objective of promoting male voice singing for personal and public pleasure and benefit. Since that time thanks to the dedication of members and Ken, it has gone from strength to strength, having grown into an entertaining and an accomplished choir. Throughout the years the choir has raised many thousands of pounds for local charities and promoted the good name of Luton throughout the country by supporting charitable events as far afield as Norfolk, Yorkshire and Eastbourne.

What brought about the idea of amalgamation? Firstly, as the choirs emerged from the two years plus of Covid restrictions, both found themselves well down on chorister numbers. The reduction in size was not uniform across sections resulting in imbalance in the choir choral presentation. Some songs, previously favourites of the choirs, did not sound as good and, sometimes, could not be offered at all. Search for new members proved fairly fruitless – the few available singers were being shared with other types of choir.

The second reason was finance - reductions in membership numbers, and hence subscriptions, causes significant monetary problems to the running of a choir. Couple this with difficulties in re-starting the previous level of concert bookings after the long-enforced break led both choirs to dwindling ready funds.

The concept of merging two choirs suffering these symptoms is an ideal solution and the new choir was formed with enthusiasm. There was no room for the suggestion of 'us and them' in the new choir – it is all the 'new us' resulting in a forty-strong contented body of men fulfilled in singing together. Those various and peculiar traditions that build up and make a choir over the years are there to be shared with your new comrades and the best retained for posterity.

2023 is particularly significant as the year represents the eightieth anniversary of the Vauxhall choir and the thirtieth anniversary of the Luton choir. We all agree this be a year in which to hold a celebration of these notable occasions of our respective choirs' achievements. An exciting problem to solve - planning has now started!



A fond farewell to Sam Nickels

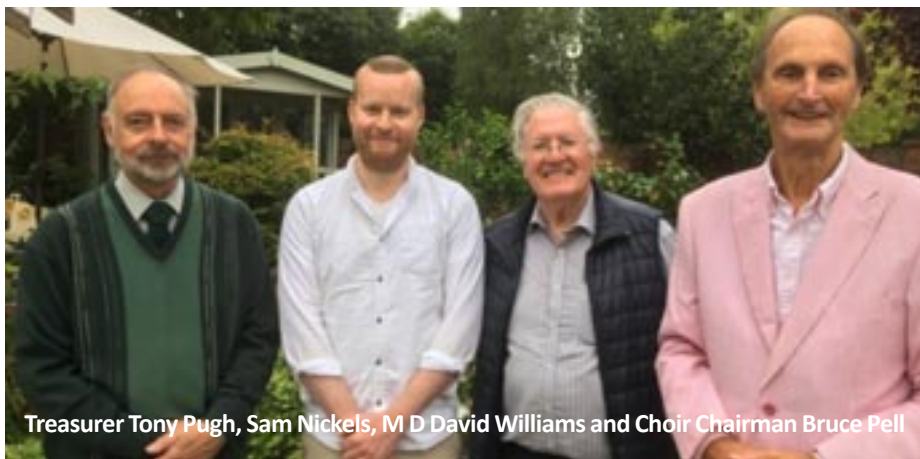
Exeter Police and Community Choir – Devon – Bruce Pell

The choir held a fond farewell garden party for their young accompanist Sam Nickels, who has taken a contract with another choir to further his career.

Sam's praises were sung by both Musical Director David Williams and Chairman Bruce Pell. MD David said Sam, who has been with the choir for nearly seven years, had been a brilliant accompanist and helped the choir considerably in its quest to maintain high standards.

Chairman Bruce endorsed the remarks and said Sam had been a popular figure and would be sadly missed. He then presented a cheque for £150.00 as a mark of the choir's appreciation.

Sam graduated from the Birmingham Conservatoire in 2009, where he studied with the Irish pianist and composer Philip Martin. While in Birmingham he accompanied dance classes at The Royal Ballet School, worked with several choirs and often accompanied other musicians in recitals, fes-



Treasurer Tony Pugh, Sam Nickels, M D David Williams and Choir Chairman Bruce Pell

tivals, master classes and competitions.

In returning to his hometown of Exeter, he continued with his lifelong passion for accompanying. In 2011 he made a fleeting TV appearance while playing with the Military Wives Choir as they sang Abba's "Thank you for the Music" to choirmaster and TV presenter Gareth Malone; following this he has performed with the Lymph-

stone Military Wives Choir for the Queen during her jubilee visit in 2012 and other high profile events around the UK.

** Exeter Police and Community Choir have a number of spare red blazers - a colour favoured by many male voice choirs - in various sizes. If you are interested, please contact with details: Bruce Pell by email - bpassoc@btinternet.com

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New M D Nicola Hunt.

Sonara Singers - East Midlands - Anne Eaton – chair

Sonara Singers are pleased and excited to announce the appointment of their new Musical Director Nicola Hunt.

Sonara Singers is an all ladies choir based in Somercotes, Derbyshire. We have been singing for many years but, like most choirs, have had an enforced break due to covid.

We are back singing, albeit with slightly reduced numbers. Our singing voices are getting back to normal, and we all hope that we will soon be back to full strength with Nicki's input and support.

Nicki is a passionate and professional musician with 20 years experience. This was evident during her audition and interview. She has worked with world class musicians and has performed in top venues across Europe.



Nicki's aim with Sonara Singers is to provide inspiring and well balanced rehearsal sessions, planned with linear progression

and clear goals in order to achieve an excellent and rewarding outcome for each choir member, and the choir as a whole.

Nicki has an excellent ethos of self development, continuing her own learning through many and varied platforms, an ethos which will have tangible effects and benefits for our choir.

She is keen to explore new challenges, embracing and improving Sonara's established and current repertoire and introducing new challenges. The choir and its committee are excited about our future, and look forward to Nicki's input, energy and enthusiasm.

Welcome Nicki.

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Grimsby and Cleethorpes Ladies Choir

CHOIR EQUIPMENT FOR SALE

It is with great sadness that, following a recent EGM, the members of Grimsby and Cleethorpes Ladies Choir took the unanimous decision to close. Consequently, we have a number of items for sale, now surplus to our requirements, which may be of interest to other choirs.

We have a Casio Privia PX160 electric piano, with stand and a wheeled carrying case. Instruction book, leads and pedal are included in the price of **£320**.

It is in excellent condition, being used mainly for away concerts, rather than regular rehearsals.

We also have a Roland Cube CM30 powered speaker/amplifier, complete with leads, at **£100**.

There are small quantities of new sheet music available, both SSA and some SATB, at give-away prices from **20p** a copy.

A full list of music and further details of all the items, are available on our website or from Lesley Hewitson on 01472 591668

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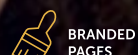
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Where did I put my Valium?

The Glasgow Phoenix Choir - Scotland West - Anne Kay

**Conductor and Director of Music –
Cameron Murdoch**

Here we are again, having just started our 72nd season on 22 August. We're always so glad to be back, even if it means the end of summer – not that, in Scotland, that always makes a big difference. Things we're looking forward to – a busy start to the season; things we're not looking forward to quite so much – re-auditions. Actually, we all know they make perfect sense for a variety of reasons. Most importantly, our conductor has realised that some imbalance has crept in and that some people may not be in quite the right section – I know that I can now sing second bass, for example, but that's because I have a summer cold... honestly! In recent years, we've had quite a number of changes of membership with a good crop of new members and the sad loss of some longer-term members, for different reasons; the numbers are a bit out of kilter in the various sections, too; and, lastly, Cameron has not had the opportunity to hear each individual voice and wants to put that right. So, there may be some changes ahead, but we'll welcome them because we know it will help improve the choir. Now, where did I put my Valium?

Between now and Christmas, we have a very busy time with three concerts in October, one in November and, currently, FIVE in December. As usual, we'll be visiting a range of venues and are excited about returning to some of our favourite haunts, particularly the ones with all the good home-bakers. It would be interesting to know if other choirs are quite as fixated on food as we are. We are thinking of set-



Donald Burgess
A wicked wee glint in his eye

ting up awards for the best edibles and naming them in honour of the Scottish charities' regulator - so, I present the OSCRs. The winners are for Best film: The Empire Biscuit Strikes Back; Best screenplay: Victor/Victoria Sponge; Best actor in a roll: Kevin Bacon-buttie; Best actress: Gingerbread Rogers; Best song: You're the Scone that I Want. Well, maybe not.

Our final concert of this part of the season will take place in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall on 16 December when we'll have special guests, the amazing Whitburn Band and the youngsters of the Glasgow Schools' Choir, whose conductor is our very own Cameron Murdoch. We're very excited to have both with us and are particularly pleased to welcome a new, young choir. Part of our mission statement is the encouragement of choral singing, and, to that end, we usually have a youth choir

when singing at the concert hall, which is a great experience for them as well as for us and our audience.

As is, sadly, often the case in a choir with many older members, we suffered the loss of a well-loved singer just before the start of the summer holidays. Donald Burgess was a man for whom the phrase 'a gentleman and a scholar' might truly have been coined. He was the kindest of men, with a welcoming smile and he always had a wicked wee glint in his eye. Donald was a member of our tenor section for an amazing 47 years and he had also served as president of the choir.

He spoke many languages (seven that we knew of), which he also taught, and he was the first port of call when we encountered mysterious, new words or needed assistance with the pronunciation of unfamiliar languages; it sometimes seemed like he knew everything. In addition, Donald was a superlative performer of the spoken word – he could make a shopping list sound like a voyage of delight – and he shared his talent during many a Burns' Supper over the years. (The first time I felt I fully understood exactly what was going on in *Tam O'Shanter* was on hearing Donald's rendition.) And, if that wasn't enough, we always knew when summer was with us when Donald arrived at rehearsals with batches of his wild raspberry jam, which he generously sold to raise funds for the choir. He will be very greatly missed, and the choir's sincerest condolences go out to his lovely wife, Frances, and their three children and grand-children.



How do you make a bandstand?

Take away their chairs.



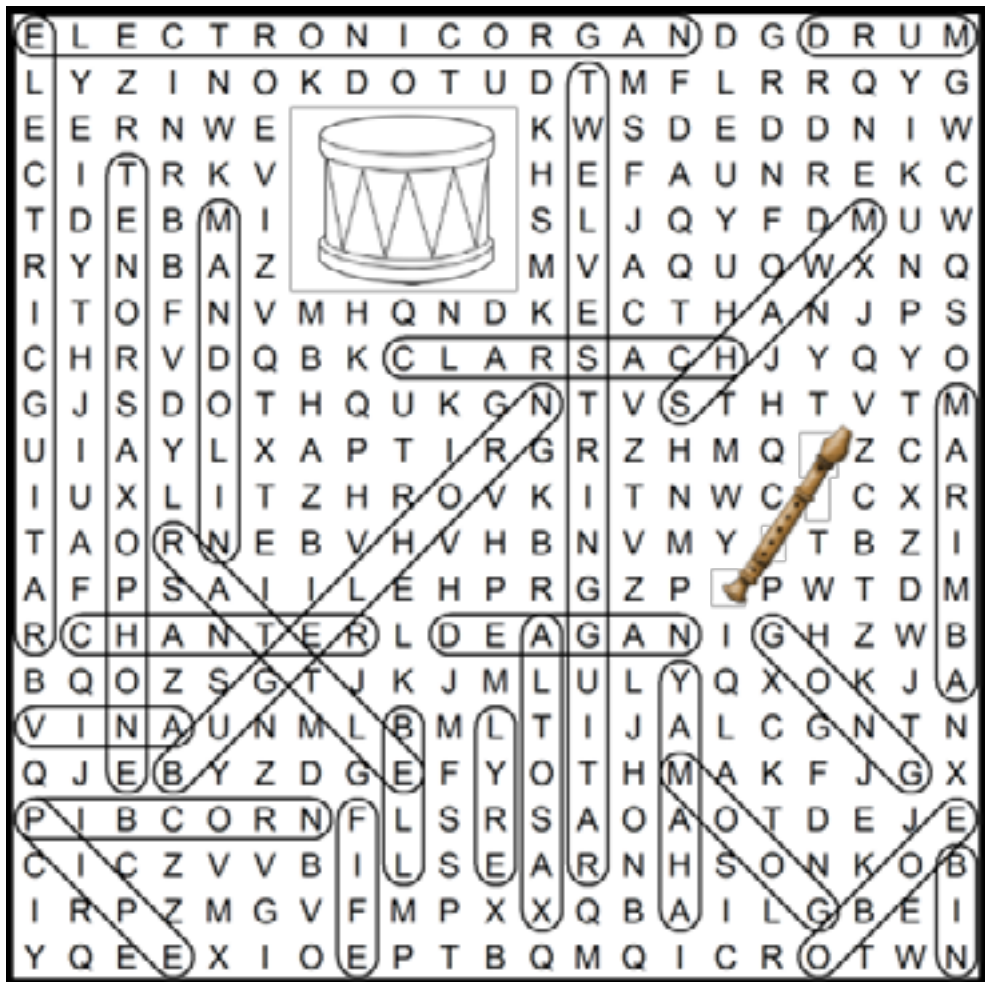
How many composers does it take to change a light bulb?

Just one, but it takes 4 movements.



What type of music are balloons afraid of?

Pop music.





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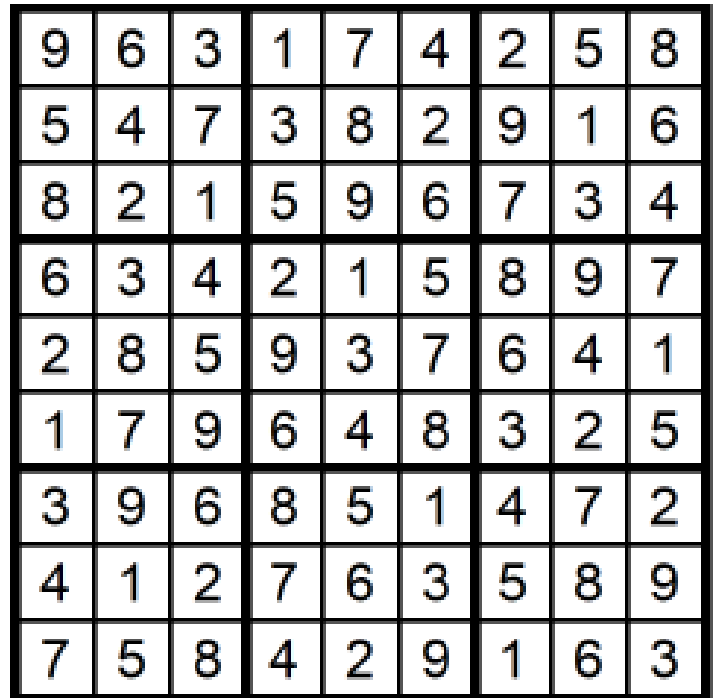
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HOW I LIKE TO RECEIVE ARTICLES

The first thing is to send your article **attached** to
(not in the body of) an email to

publications.officer@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk

‘Wow! that is a long email address’, I hear you say. Yes it is but you will find that once it’s in your computer you can just start to type it and your computer will offer to finish it for you.

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. I’m afraid I also have a thing about exclamation marks. I allow one per article. Anymore I remove.

KEEP IT SIMPLE!

PHOTOGRAPHS

Send me pictures as high resolution .jpegs of 1mb or more, minimum 300 dpi.

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 the NAC group your choir is in.
- Tell me who has written it.
- Write your article.
- Quotes use single speech marks (same key as @ but without the shift).
- Dates do not include st nd rd or th
- Abbreviations do not have full stops.
- Song titles are shown in italics.
- Please 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’

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Officer Meetings

Most Officer Meetings will be held using Zoom

17 November in Blackburn

10 January 2023

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Saturday 28 January 2023 (Zoom)

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Closing dates for submissions to News & Views

Spring Issue - 31 December

Summer Issue - 30 April

Autumn Issue - 31 August