

# NEWS & VIEWS

223 CHRISTMAS / NEW YEAR 2020/1



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# Crawford's Corner

## Publications Officer - Bob Swallow



Welcome to our Christmas and New Year issue of 'News & Views'.

It is unusual because we don't normally do a Christmas and New Year issue. But then this year what is normal? The Officers decided that we should try to produce a paper issue of News & Views by the end of the year. This issue contains all the content that was in issue 222 which was published virtually on the NAC website and also any new material sent in later in the year.

The Officers have added other bits and pieces. It is great to have a piece from our President and also to have some music reviews from our Music Review Officer.

Sadly there are a couple of contributions about important members that we have lost this year. I am sure their choirs will miss them greatly. We also hear from our Membership Officer of choirs who are disbanding and we have to wonder if this is because this year has been so difficult for

all of us to meet and sing with our choirs.

It is good to hear from choirs who are determined to keep on singing and the ways that they are coming up with to meet in musical fellowship though they can't be face to face. During this Christmas season it is even more saddening that at a time when we would be having extra rehearsals and a number of performances in a short period of time, we are able to do so little effectively.

You will notice that I have included a Wordsearch in this issue. This is for two reasons. First, I thought it might give you something more to do once you have finished the crossword and the Sudoku and second, because it fills a space where I haven't enough material. You may not know but these magazines have to be produced in sets of four pages. This issue has 24 pages. Until just recently it had 20 pages but a bit more material came in and I needed to fill another four pages. One of the hardest things I have to do is suddenly to find that I have filled 17 or 21 pages and have to find what I can fill up to make 20 or 24 pages. This is, of course when the

jokes or quizzes or cartoons appear.

I am thinking like mad at this moment because I need to fill the rest of this page. John Croft sends me his Chairman's Chat and then I have to fill the rest of the space because that's what fills this page.

OK I give up. Stay safe and send in anything you can for the Summer issue, closing date 30 April.



# Chairman's Chat

## NAC Chairman - John Croft



Welcome to this Christmas 2020 edition of News & Views in these difficult and strange times. I hope you are all keeping well and safe. We have not been able to celebrate our Centenary Year as

planned due to this terrible virus and so these things have been moved forward into next year and beyond.

We have managed to hold our officers meetings and our AGM via Zoom; this may

become our route for holding Open Forums in 2021. While we are all unable to rehearse as normal it is important that we keep singing however we can. Once again Zoom has enabled us to carry out virtual rehearsals with varying degrees of success. They are not perfect by any means but they do keep us singing and in regular touch with our friends in the choir and should speed up our return to concert-standard singing once this is all over.

This pandemic has hit the finances of businesses, individuals, and choirs in particular; in order to help you we have halved

the NAC membership rate for 2021 as agreed at the AGM. We want to help the businesses who advertise with us as well so please use them if you plan any purchases in the near future.

On behalf of the officers may I wish you as good a Christmas as you can manage whilst keeping safe and a wish that we can all return to normality as soon as possible in the New Year.

Best Wishes.



# Presidential Piece

## NAC President - Ronald Corp



I hope you are surviving this lock-down. We are told that there is light at the end of the tunnel, so let us hope that is true.

I have to say I am slightly fearful that larger gatherings will still not be allowed which might make it hard for larger choirs to get together.

I am trying to imagine a rehearsal where everyone stays six feet apart. That might mean that you could not sit close to the friend who always sings the right notes; perhaps it would improve our sight reading!

Then there is the possibility that we are 'released' in age brackets which might have a serious effect on choir attendance. But I sincerely hope something is resolved by September when we will want to start again as term begins.

I hope in the meantime you are finding ways of being together, even perhaps singing as you watch each other on Zoom or some other gathering facility. There are technical problems to overcome, but it is possible to meet and follow instructions from your Musical Director and sing along, but with the mute button on!

I have successfully run sessions with the Highgate Choral Society, and we

had over 100 people online last Monday. We have learnt some new short works this way as well as singing some old favourites. Our sessions also mean that we can see each other, and we can set up chat groups as well.

This crisis has made us all aware that music is such an important part not just of our lives but of everyone's. You cannot stop musicians being creative and you perhaps will have seen all sorts of YouTube clips of music making by professionals as well as amateurs.

The arts are a vital part of who we are, and music is the one universal art; an art form that touches us all.

Please keep the choral flame burning, keep safe and stay well.

---

# Keep on singing

## Membership Officer - Brenda Wilkinson



As we enter our sixth week in lockdown, there has been very little activity in our choral world so the summer

edition of News & Views will be presented in a very different manner.

We usually hear what our choirs have been doing, proposing to do etc, but we can't even forward-plan properly. Nevertheless, we are producing a magazine for you.

It has been fascinating seeing how choirs are keeping in touch with their members whether it be through WhatsApp groups, newsletters, emails or Facebook pages. Choirs are suppor-

ting each other in unique and caring ways. And, of course, there is the homework that is being set, new music to learn all with support from your MD!

On that point, can I clarify that it is all right to record parts to help your choristers learn the music as long as they are on a secure site, protected by a password and that all choir members have the original music copies in their possession. Also, choirs' AGMs can be postponed to 2021 so there is no need to worry on that score.

Also, should anything happen to cause a choir to contact our insurers, rest assured they are still working on our behalf and will help wherever they can.

It may be many weeks until we can all meet again to sing together. In the meantime, stay in touch with each other, with choirs that you know and have performed with.

Share your stories and your experiences in these very strange times. Then, when we can get together, recreate the sound that is uniquely yours, rearrange concerts that have had to be cancelled and start to enjoy the comradeship and friendship which is so special to each choir.

In the meantime, continue to sing whether it be with the many singing apps that are appearing, or with Gareth Malone or with your rehearsal 'tapes' or in the shower. Keep using your voice and stay safe!

# Review of Pieces from Ian Higginson

Music Review Officer - Karl Harper



## ***Fear No More the Heat of the Sun***

Solo or unison Song

A wonderful lyric line with captivating rhythmic and melodic changes.

This composer knows how to write a melody which is memorable and assists the singer(s) in interpreting the lyrics.

This melody really matches the sad and comforting words of Shakespeare.

The whole is then supported by a lilting and flowing accompaniment which gently carries the song to its sad but inevitable conclusion.

## ***Balulalow***

I am completing this review as we move into advent and have obtained Ian's SATB

arrangement of Balulalow which has a beautiful line and gentle rhythm with unaccompanied sections (good for choral pitching) and full chords. Well worth a look for (sadly) next year.

I have heard many pieces by Ian both instrumental and vocal (choral) and have no hesitation in recommending a serious look at this composer's output.

Ian has written an organ book during lockdown entitled 'Organ Sound Colours' volume 1 and is presently working on a volume for choral singing.

Many of his pieces are available with some sound samples at

**Parish Publications - Forsyths Music Shop**

Much of his music is used in ABRSM and a look at his website will give you more insight into this talented composer

Private Music Lessons With Three Counties School of Music -

<https://ianhigginsonmusic.weebly.com>

I cannot do better than a quotation from John Rutter.

'Ian Higginson is a composer who is not afraid to write a simple, unaffected melody that choirs will find grateful and rewarding to sing. Here is a series of publications well worth a look at: expertly crafted, imaginative, practical and within the scope of most choirs and organists.'

It has been a long time since we were able to include reviews of some of the choral pieces that are available from current composers.

We hope this will be the first of many that will allow you to look for new material for your choir. *Crawford*

## Let's hear it!

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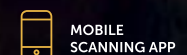
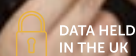
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# Conference update 2021

## Conference Co-ordinator - Clive Lawton



Following the cancellation of the conference at Easter 2020 and again in October 2020 I am now going for a third try and hopefully a lucky scenario. My initial thoughts were to try

for Easter 2021 but this is obviously too soon in the fight against Covid 19 as the Government explained only this week that restrictions will be in place until probably summer 2021.

With this in mind I have moved the conference to 15 to 17 October 2021 which will mean we will have a fighting chance of success without social distancing or any other restrictions impinging on our way of life. The conference will be centred on Blackburn as before. I intend to visit Blackburn again early next year to meet up with my contacts there.

We will discuss and formulate the timeline for the conference and the concert, the latter being performed by choirs from the area. So far I know we will be staying at the Dunkenhagh hotel where the conference will take place and I will be meeting the manager to agree rooms and conference facilities. David Lawrence will be our main speaker at conference. The cost of the conference will be £230 as before; therefore those delegates who have already paid will have their payment moved to the new dates. I already have your booking details and requirements. A new timeline and booking form will be included in the spring and summer issues of News & Views for those of you who need to book again.

The conference concert will have the two choirs who were founder members of the association in 1920, those being the Colne Orpheus Glee Union and the Nelson Arion Glee Union male choirs performing together with other local choirs and a brass

band. The proceeds of the concert will be given to the East Lancashire Hospice.

I will be contacting companies in the New Year to invite them to take a trade stand. They need our support as all are going through very difficult times as their businesses have needed to close during the lockdowns and tier restrictions, particularly our friends from the travel industry who have been severely hit by the restrictions.

I do hope as many of you will try to attend conference in 2021 and return to singing next year. It is a long time since we were able to sing as members of a choir and we all miss the pleasure that it brings. Now, thanks to the vaccine roll out we can see an end to the pandemic and a return to some form of normality.

If you wish to contact me with any questions or clarification, please feel free to call me on 07939012458 or

[cliveandpatlawton@btinternet.com](mailto:cliveandpatlawton@btinternet.com)



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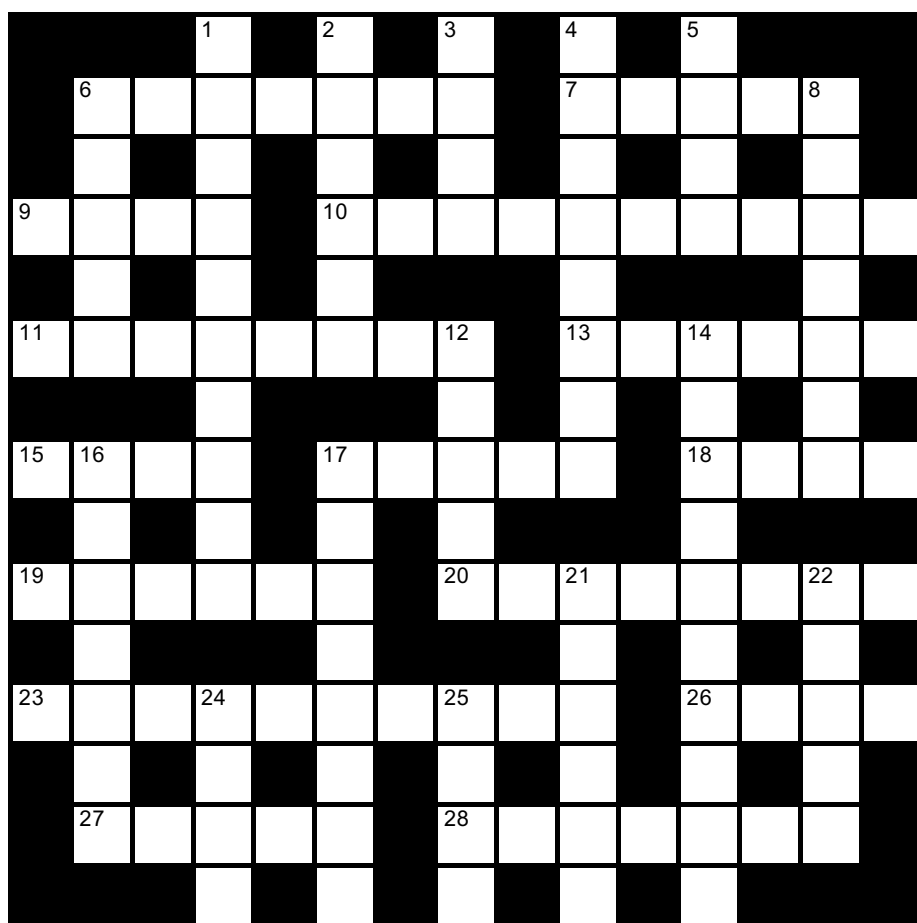
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# PUZZLE PAGE



## Across

- 6 Belief not found in foxholes (7)
- 7 Fit of pique possibly (5)
- 9 Airs fashioned in India (4)
- 10 Uttering repeated disapproval (3-7)
- 11 Reptiles place of pain and turmoil (5,3)
- 13 Important for vocal tone (6)
- 15 Rats become regal (4)
- 17 Oh Michael begins a measure of resistance (5)
- 18 Keep turning back a secret look (4)
- 19 Miss Piggy (6)
- 20 Sounds like expensive leather (8)
- 23 Scenic if it scrambled systematic study (10)
- 26 Use a keyboard for a specific kind of metal block (4)
- 27 Characterized by loud and nonmusical sounds (5)
- 28 What to wear (7)

## Down

- 1 Cover for a psychologist (10)
- 2 Pit top becomes impressive (6)
- 3 Release turned back time (4)
- 4 Presidential state (8)
- 5 Just a quick blow (4)
- 6 Once more (5)
- 8 Catholic sacrament (7)
- 12 Quantum idea envelopes the swollen and bombastic (5)
- 14 Or is poetry perversely for storage or safekeeping (10)
- 16 Just a little leek and potato (7)
- 17 Abides with me too long (8)
- 21 Get away from a fire perhaps (6)
- 22 Make move (5)
- 24 Turn back the tide to alter it (4)
- 25 Do this to a stag for 20 across (4)

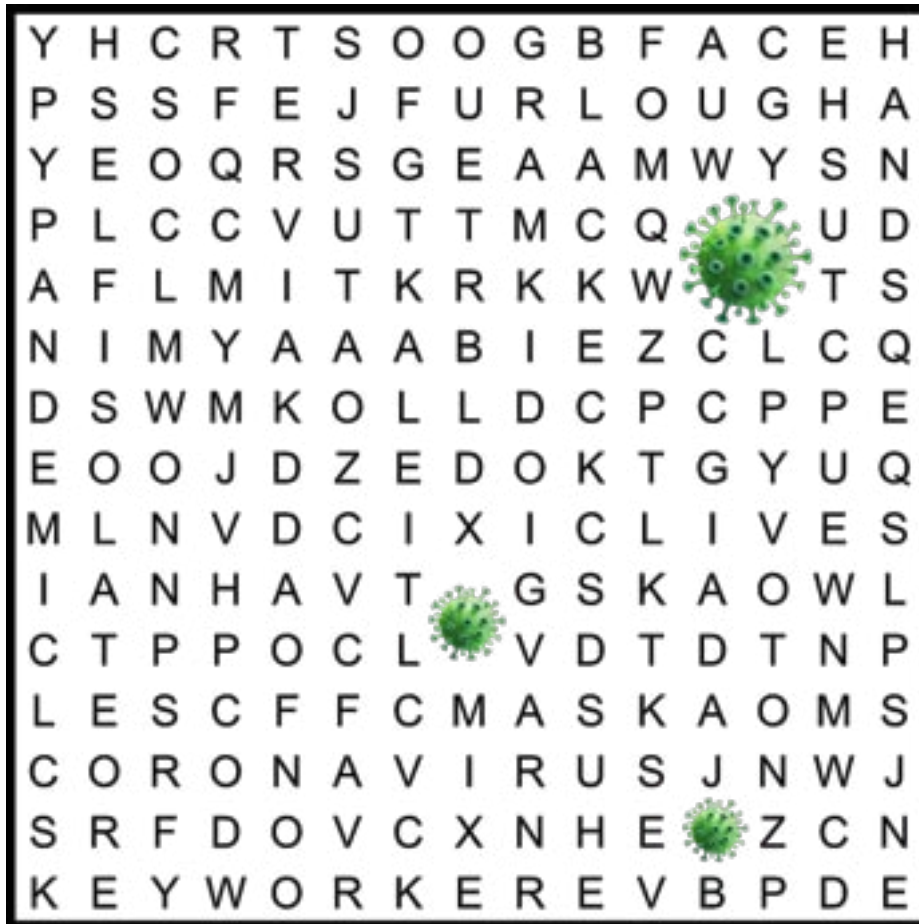
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**SOLUTIONS**  
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# CORONAVIRUS WORD SEARCH



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VACCINE

## Choral music legacy after sad loss of composer Barry Seaman

My beloved late husband, prolific composer Barry Seaman, tragically died from Covid-19 in April. He wrote much beautiful vocal music, performed and loved by choirs during his lifetime.

I am currently sorting and archiving scores and audio recordings.

Any choirs who are interested in performing his work please contact

**Jane Seaman**

at [workingwords50@gmail.com](mailto:workingwords50@gmail.com)

and I can send a list of works and/or scores.

It would be wonderful to know his music continues to be heard, performed and enjoyed.

Barry has a profile at

<https://britishmusiccollection.org.uk/composer/barry-seaman>

You can hear his memorable Christmas carol, Gabriel's Greeting, performed in candlelight by the Canadian Cantillon Choir here:

<https://youtu.be/Slyhg8e04cl>

# Zooming into rehearsals

## Gildenburgh Choir - Anglia - Celia Johns Musical Director

*The Adventures of a Musical Director in Lockdown – or – what do we do with the choir now?*

This is the Gildenburgh Choir, based in Peterborough. 65 years of existence this year, happily singing everything from Palestrina to George Shearing, via Bach, Robbie Williams, John Rutter, Patrick Hawes... In short, a versatile mixed choir of currently around 50 singers, with a thoroughly reliable accompanist – and me.

I've been with the choir for just over 39 years. I started out singing second soprano, then – as you do when the years start creeping on – moved down to first alto. Having been assistant MD for about 25 years, I was persuaded in 2012 to take over as Musical Director. Many conducting courses followed, mostly with Sing for Pleasure, and I now feel that I have a moderate grasp of what directing a choir is all about.

At least, I had. Then came the coronavirus and social distancing. Over half of our choir consists of people well over the age of 60. We made the decision in mid-March that the choir would immediately stop rehearsing; we would review the situation after Easter with the idea of restarting on 20 April, and get back to rehearsing for our two summer concerts in late June and early July, and the wedding of one of our sopranos in September. We were not encouraged by the fact that our rehearsal venue then closed its doors to all the organisations using it, for the foreseeable future. So nowhere to meet and sing together – this was not looking promising. Life then got even more problematic, with the lockdown, which at the time of writing is still ongoing for another three weeks and possibly a lot longer. No way could we meet and sing together any time soon. The summer concerts were regretfully cancelled, but we still have that wedding



to think about. We could make that the goal of the rehearsals we were proposing to hold.

Scrolling round social media and the groups comprising choral directors told me that a version of video conferencing could be used to get choir members together singing. Yes, there were difficulties, mainly to do with the time lags caused by different Internet and broadband speeds. But it could be done. The favoured app was Zoom, so following some more investigation I downloaded it and got down to some practice.

The choir committee were up for an experiment, so the first thing we did was a quick get-together on Zoom between five of us, with our accompanist, to see what happened. This proved that the difficulties had not been exaggerated, and we would need to find some “work-rounds” before taking it to the choir members. I decided that we would have to do individual part rehearsals rather than trying to have all four parts together. Also, there was a time-lag between my conducting and the accompaniment, which simply compounded the problem of what the singers would hear and how they could respond. We would however go ahead and see what happened.

Our first rehearsals were with the sopranos and altos, three-quarters of an hour each. I was most encouraged to find that the vast majority of the ladies had managed to join us by Zoom, as had our accompanist, David. Much chit-chat to start with, understandable as they hadn't met for four weeks, but we did manage to do some singing. I found it very awkward because what I could hear from David was a beat behind my downbeat – and from the sounds coming from the screen, there were massive difficulties adjusting to the different beats. So, we all fell about laughing. Interesting evening all round.

The following week I had the tenors and basses, but because we have fewer numbers of men than we do ladies, I took both parts together. We had a similar evening from the point of view of actual singing, ie not much, but this was becoming a useful learning curve for me. The third rehearsal, again with the ladies but this time both parts together, was much better than the first one – a lot more actual singing done, and more work individually as well.

As I write, that is as far as we have got. The fourth rehearsal will be with both tenors and basses again, and I think we

are managing to do some good work. What we are definitely doing is keeping the choir members together socially, which is almost as important as the music for elderly people who may be isolated and have minimum contact with the outside world at present.

So, the lessons learned, as far as my choir are concerned, are:

Don't expect miracles musically, you won't get them.

When the choristers are singing, mute them all, so that they can hear you and the accompanist, but they cannot hear each other. Essentially, they are singing to themselves, in their own front rooms.

If you are conducting, don't. Unless you are an extremely experienced MD used to doing several things at once at differing beats. Give the singers and accompanist the initial beat to start, then stop conducting and let them sing to the accompaniment they can

hear. Watching the singers on the screen, you will realise that the mouths are moving in time with each other, but one beat behind what you can hear of the accompaniment – which if you were conducting would be yet another beat behind your beat. That's what I mean by time-lag.

We have, as yet, only tried to rehearse music which we already know and are polishing rather than learning. If we wanted to learn something new, there would be a considerable amount more work to do, in recording the parts and distributing them to the choristers so that they could do some homework before we meet on Zoom for rehearsals.

The social aspect of the rehearsals is as important as the singing. We feel that it is vital to keep the choir members communicating with each other, so that when we do get back together, the choir will mesh again without too much trouble. We have never

had a break like this before in the history of the choir – the six weeks' holiday in the summer is not in the same league at all, because at least then we know when we will meet again. Currently we have no idea when we will be able to come back together and make music again.

Advice – if I dare give it after a comparatively short time of doing virtual rehearsals – is to go ahead with the rehearsals if you possibly can, on the same evening and at the same time as you would normally meet. It gives a measure of stability to the choir members and gives them something to look forward to; it makes sure that however odd the noises are, at least there is music happening; it means that there is much-needed social contact between the singers. And above all, there is the enjoyment of getting together with like-minded people and just having fun in a world which, at the moment, is distinctly un-funny.

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# Our year got off to a good start!

## The Glasgow Phoenix Choir - Scotland West – Anne Kay

Conductor and Director of Music  
– Cameron Murdoch

Well... our year got off to a good start! Our first concert of 2020 took us to Dumbar-ton where we performed a most enjoyable concert in St Peter's Bellsmyre RC Church, raising funds for the church's work in the local area. As this was a first visit from the choir, we were surprised at the very large turn out and delighted that the audience were exceedingly enthusiastic in their reception. It must be noted that the choir may have been on extra fine form following the delicious lunch provided by the ladies of the church. It's not just an army that marches on its stomach.

In early February, we were involved, with our friends from the Sovereign Order of St John of Jerusalem, Knights Hospitaller, in celebrating our national bard in a traditional Burns' Supper. A most enjoyable evening followed and included the opportunity to raise funds for charities. The choir has received much support from the Sovereign Order over the last few years and we are always grateful to have the opportunity to socialise with our friends who do so much to help others through their work. For those who have not heard of them, the Sovereign Order of St. John of Jerusalem, Knights Hospitaller was founded on the principle of putting others before self. It is a Christian, chivalric, ecumenical and international community of members, who continue more than 900 years of tradition helping the sick and the poor of all nationalities, races and creeds. The order's motto is *For Faith, For Service to Humanity*. The modern-day Order is divided into 19 Commanderies in eight countries in Europe and North America, consisting of approximately 850 members worldwide.

The middle of February took us to another new venue, the United Reformed Church, Rutherglen. We have performed in the area before, but this was our first trip to this beautiful, light and airy church. The organisers of the concert were assisted by friends from Cambuslang Parish Church and what a great job they did. The audience was so large that multiple chairs had to be added to accommodate everyone.



Due to circumstances beyond our control we had no accompanist on the day, but Cameron stepped into the breach and conducted and played, doing both brilliantly. Who says men can't multi-task? As an audience member on that occasion, I, with the rest of the audience, thoroughly enjoyed the whole concert and particularly the newest item in the repertoire, *Dixie*, which was truly beautiful. Other special items were Karl Jenkins' *Laudamus Te* and James Erb's arrangement of *Shenandoah*. One of the funniest moments occurred when the audience were somewhat startled by the beginning of Bob Chilcott's *Buffalo Gals*, that 'Oh' took them by such surprise that Cameron had to stop and explain it wasn't a mistake.

A small party of choir members took part in a 'welcome' concert to start off the annual dinner of the SAIF (The National Society Of Allied And Independent Funeral Directors) in Glasgow's Central Hotel. The music had a Scottish theme and was greatly enjoyed by those in attendance.

During the period from mid-January, the choir had been working hard to learn a range of new music, including Bob Chilcott's *A Little Jazz Mass*, for our spring concert. I'm sure you all know what is coming... yes, everything came to a halt in mid-March because of Coronavirus. We had been looking forward to the event as we were planning to perform two concerts in one day in the new RSNO Audi-

torium in Glasgow's Royal Concert Hall. This would have been a very different venture for us and one that we continue to look forward to, though there is still no new date in sight at the time of writing.

In the meantime, our Facebook co-ordinator, Jo di Lieto with her husband Glauco, prepared a short 'virtual concert' based on a video recording made at our Rutherglen concert in February. This was uploaded to Facebook to coincide with the original date of the spring concert and was very well received by choir members, who are missing one another desperately, and by our friends from the UK and across the globe. The 2,600 views we've had demonstrate that this was a worthwhile exercise. Congratulations and thanks must go to Cameron, the choir on the day, Angus Leitch for his introduction and, most particularly, to Signor e Signora di Lieto for all their hard work in editing - mille grazie.

With everyone else, we are now awaiting the lifting of lockdown rules and it seems unlikely that we will meet again before the start of our new season when we hope to be able to celebrate our 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Glasgow Orpheus Choir. In the meantime, please keep safe and accept the best wishes for health and well-being from all at Glasgow Phoenix Choir.

# Now things are peculiar!

## The Glasgow Phoenix Choir - Scotland West – Anne Kay

As with all choirs, our 2020-21 season has got off to a peculiar start. Like everyone else in choir-land, we are still unable to meet to sing together. Our numbers mean that, to socially distance, we would need to hire an exceptionally large venue or try outdoor rehearsing...not a pleasant thought in the Glasgow climate as we are having a particularly wet and windy summer.

We have, to date, taken part in three online rehearsals using Zoom. The first was run as an experiment, with all members attending the full rehearsal. It was an interesting experience, which allowed Cameron to try a few things and realise what would or would not work. It was also interesting to see what lockdown had done for the hairstyles of members. Fortunately, I think, most of us had managed a return to barbers/hairdressers, but a few people seem to have decided that they like the hirsute look – I do mean some of the chaps – what an excellent collection of beards; in contrast, others had decided to save money by shaving everything off. Amongst the ladies, we had a rainbow of hair colours, with some surprising and dramatic changes from dark to light or light to dark. My own hair ap-

peared somewhat lighter...hair dye...the sun? No, just the ageing process. My hairdresser tells me silver is very 'in' and some people request to have theirs coloured just like mine, good news for all of us 60+ trend-setters!

Our following rehearsals have been split into sections with the sopranos and altos having the first 30 minutes; then, after a short break, the gents of the choir have 30 minutes to themselves; and we come together for the last half-hour. Wisely, Cameron has built in some chat-time at the beginning. Our hellos (and goodbyes) are reminiscent of 'The Waltons', on speed. Once the work begins, Cameron mutes us, as the resulting cacophony of out of sync voices might be too much to bear. It is lovely to see so many people taking part, though singing on your own is a bit surreal, it does help you realise how much you rely on neighbours to help the learning (and tunefulness).

Because of the choice of viewing methods available on Zoom, there is an interesting opportunity to see the choir from the perspective of the conductor and, I suspect, we might all learn from that. Some people sing heartily while others do so without

benefit of lip movement; some look like chorus members from La Scala, Milan, as Tosca is about to throw herself from that parapet, others are much more subdued, or are possibly on the point of falling asleep; some smile radiantly throughout while others look as though their thoughts are on a higher plane - probably wondering what to have for a post-rehearsal snack; quite a few of us look totally puzzled, particularly if there's an internet issue and sight and sound of others gets lost for a few seconds.

I hope that Cameron is gratified by the fact that most members have decided to keep up the rehearsals, even though they are vastly different from our usual experience. He has great plans, including, in the short-term, recording a video for broadcast on social media. That will be an exciting experience. Everyone is aware that next year is a big one for the choir as we will begin celebrations of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Glasgow Phoenix Choir and 120 years since the founding of our amazing predecessor, The Glasgow Orpheus Choir. I am sure we have great times ahead. Best wishes to all other choirs in this difficult time.



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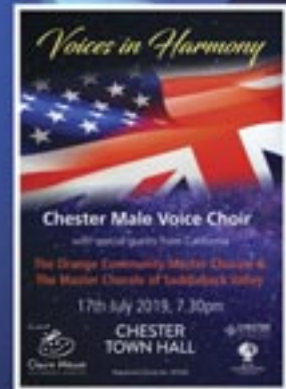
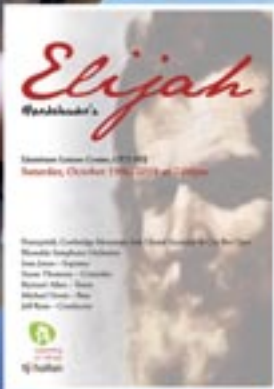


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# It started with a blog

## Budleigh Salterton Male Voice Choir – Devon – Ted Butcher



It started with a blog (hummed to the tune made famous by ‘Hot Chocolate’ – you’ll have to ask the grandkids who they are). As a ‘newbie’ who joined the choir in 2015, I was asked to pen a few lines into a programme, as an incentive to others to join.

Consequently, within a year I was ‘invited’ to take on the choir’s Publicity role. However, it was slightly glossed over that the job entailed preparing, printing, and distributing a sixteen page programme for each concert (then up to ten per year), producing A4/A5/A6 posters and fliers, interviews with local radio stations, and write-ups for regional papers, all from the kitchen table! Plus learning over one hundred old and new pieces to our MDs satisfaction.

With 2020 being a practically concertless twelve months, here is a reflection of the lovely hot summer of 2019.

- For 2019, the Budleigh Salterton Male Voice Choir have had a busy year, with the highlight being a visit to the Festival of Male Voice Choirs at the Lighthouse Theatre in Poole, which was organised by the Bournemouth Male Voice Choir. We were allocated fourth

place out of eleven in the competition.

- The hot summer continued into June with our open air concert at Kennaway House, Sidmouth in the form of a proper cream tea (which-ever way you put the cream on didn’t matter).
- At the end of June we celebrated the Diamond Wedding at Otterton Parish Church of two long serving members.
- July saw us on the beach at Exmouth Lifeboat Station as it was RNLI Sea Sunday.
- August Bank holiday we were invited to perform at All Saints Church, Dulverton, on the edge of Exmoor.
- All which brought the Choir into rehearsal for another concert in October at the Manor Pavilion, Sidmouth, based on ‘Songs from the Musicals’, which included pieces from ‘Chess’, *Rhythm of Life*, and *Can you Feel the Love Tonight* from ‘The Lion King’.
- The Sidmouth Town Band Quartet accompanied us for a Remembrance Concert in November at

the Holy Trinity Church in Exmouth, with assistance from the audience singing military songs.

- Our Traditional Christmas Carol Concert in December was this year on our home ground at St Peter’s Church, Budleigh Salterton, with seasonal drinks and mince pies.

The Publicity Officer’s role is basically achieved by how much the individual is prepared to work at it. With the help of a hardworking committee, plus other enthusiastic choristers, we are always amazed by the attendance at our concerts. Although the next public gathering is not until the early months of 2021, we are still rehearsing, via ‘Zoom’, a few contemporary tunes, like *Don’t Stop Me Now* and *Fields Of Gold*, ready to hit the stages running.

You can visit us at

[www.budleighmvc.co.uk](http://www.budleighmvc.co.uk)

for the latest news and ask questions on

[info@budleighmvc.co.uk](mailto:info@budleighmvc.co.uk)

# Dr June Keyte MBE ARAM

## Children's International Voices of Enfield

June was born in South Wales and trained in London as a music teacher at Trent Park College of Education (later Middlesex University). Her distinguished 50 year career in music and music education included many different roles, from Director of Music in comprehensive and independent schools, to editing the music publication of the Society of Assistant Teachers in Preparatory Schools, and conducting the BBC Schools Radio Music Broadcasts for 27 years with her Comprehensive School Choir the Kingsmead Singers. In 1994 she founded Children's International Voices of Enfield, for which she won much national and international acclaim. Most recently she travelled to Johannesburg to be one of the international judges at the Ekurhuleni Melting Pot, National Choral Festival.



June's key role in music education was widely recognised. In 1990 she was awarded a Winston Churchill Memorial Fellowship for Trainers of Children's Choirs to study choir training in Finland, and later that same year a Bye Fellowship at Selwyn College, Cambridge. In 1992 she was awarded an ARAM from the Royal Academy of Music (having studied violin there as a postgraduate with Frederick Grinke) in recognition of her 'distinguished services in Music Education'. In 2005 she was

awarded an MBE by HM The Queen for her Services to Music and to the Community and was also awarded an Honorary Doctorate (together with her husband Christopher) from Anglia Ruskin University. One of June's passions was commissioning new music and many composers were persuaded to write for her. The list is long and includes Betty Roe MBE, Douglas Coombes MBE, John Rutter CBE and Sir Peter Maxwell Davies CH CBE.

Celebrating over 25 years of Children's International Voices of Enfield, the choir have visited Switzerland, Iceland, Wales, Finland, Germany, Italy and Sweden. Important concerts have included a BBC Prom in the presence of HM the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh to celebrate her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Save the Children at St Paul's Cathedral in the presence of HRH The Princess Anne and the London Youth Festival of Music at the Royal Festival Hall by invitation of Rotary International. In 2014 Children's International Voices of Enfield gave three Christmas concerts called 'RutterFest', performing 11 Christmas works by John Rutter which he himself kindly recorded, edited and produced on CD.

Her legacy lives on in the many performers, teachers and lovers of music found internationally who she taught during their musical training, and her inspiration and kindness are continually remembered by those musicians and countless friends. June will be greatly missed.

<https://www.childrensinternationalvoices.org/>

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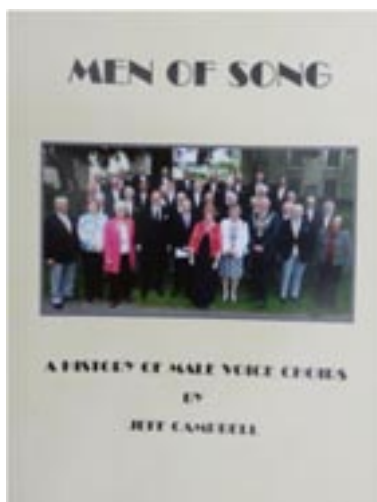
## Looking for a writer for the sequel

**Jeff Campbell - 01548 831559 - enidcampbell@hotmail.co.uk**

What I am looking for is a person who is interested in writing a sequel to my book. The aim of a new book would be to re-search all the MVCs that for one reason or another didn't appear in my book. There are enough MVCs to constitute a new book. These MVC's stories richly deserve recognition.

I will point the new author in the right direction in locating these choirs and assist in any other way if required.

As far as I know there are only 2 other books about MVCs, one by professor Garath Williams which mainly concentrates on the Welsh Eisteddfods - Do You Hear



The People Sing? The other is by Colin Hockridge covers everything about the York MVC - Sound Fellows (The story of the York MVC).

I would like to see every MVC receive the recognition and admiration they so rightly deserve.

Obviously, I would like someone to continue where I left off and of course all profits would belong to the new author.

Let's hope that someone comes forward it would further the interest in MVCs.

*Jeff used to sing with the Tamar MVC and is now with his local 'Ivybridge U3A Choir'.*





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# Len Wilson - 50 years with Steeton MVC

## Steeton Male Voice Choir - Yorkshire North and East – Ian McDonald



On Sunday 1 November 2020 we helped Len celebrate 50 years of wholehearted commitment to SMVC. He actually reached 50 years on October 30. Despite

the Covid restrictions we were able to present him with a 'This is Your Life – 50 years with SMVC'. This was a bound book of photographs and articles about Len and his involvement with the choir which attempted to present a record of his phenomenal contribution to our choir and the amateur choral world over such a long period of time. More than 15 uniformed members of the choir lined the pavements (socially distanced) to applaud him and present him with the book. The neighbours were very curious.

It is no exaggeration to say that he has been the key man in the success of the choir for more than four decades. His leadership and organisational skills have played a huge role in sustaining SMVC as one of Yorkshire's and even England's leading choirs.

Len moved to the Aire valley as Head-teacher of East Morton Primary School in

the late sixties. In 1970 he decided he needed a relaxing activity and joined SMVC having promised his wife he would not get involved in the organisational side of the choir. He joined the second tenors and has been a top class member of the choir ever since, leading the way in his diligence in learning new songs and pointing out the errors in the second tenor part as well as most of the choir. Three weeks after joining the choir he attended his first committee meeting, and he has been an ever present ever since.

He became treasurer in 1975, a job he undertook with ruthless efficiency and thoroughness and as a committee member added his not inconsiderable voice to the development of the choir and was always looking to recruit new members. It was during his time as treasurer that Len started his tour organising.

In 1993 Len took over as secretary to

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SMVC and his work and commitment has been nothing short of astonishing. As the current secretary I have a unique insight into that, and the internet was not operating at the start of his tenure. In the first two decades Len did almost everything other than keep the books and conduct. He was our concert organiser, publicity officer, tour organiser and administrator general. I don't know how he did it all, but he always admitted to enjoying every minute, giving him a focus for life in retirement from education. When I took over, we split the work up by establishing a concert organiser and a publicity officer. I couldn't compete with Len's commitment.

The tours were legendary. They were not so much singing holidays but more a European education with a Thomas Cook guide thrown in to help everyone. Len organised away fixtures and tours within England and Wales and 7 superb European tours. This was also at a time when we did 20 or more concerts a year.

On top of all the other tasks Len took on was to establish a choir magazine. Our magazine 'Steeton Chimes' flourishes still.

In 2012 Len stood down as secretary to the choir at the insistence of his doctor. He was doing virtually a full-time job at the age of 85. He continued to be my guide and mentor and has continued to contribute by uploading all our new songs onto a software package for all the members to use as a rehearsal tool. Again, an invaluable contribution.

Also, in 2012 he was asked to be our President. As ever he undertook this role with his usual vigour doing presentations and making speeches and continuing to contribute as one of our comperes.

I am sure many people in the male voice choir and wider choral singing community would have had the pleasure of meeting Len and working with him on joint concerts and choral events around the country. You will all bear testimony to his charm and generosity of spirit. Len continues to be a true gentleman in all senses of the word. I am sure Len has missed the choir more than the rest of us in this difficult year.



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# A Gong for Founder

## Cornwall International Male Choral Festival - Louise Midgley



Dr Roy Wales

Photo - Phil Monckton

The musical maestro who founded Cornwall's thriving International Male Choral Festival twenty years ago has been recognised by The Queen with a British Empire Medal (BEM) for his services to Choral Music across the world.

Dr Roy Wales, who has spent a lifetime forming and conducting choirs and training choral conductors, was instrumental in setting up, developing and directing the Festival - now the largest event of its kind in the world.

Roy, who is currently celebrating his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday year with a series of concerts and events, was conducting a concert of massed Cornish Male Voice Choirs at the Royal Albert Hall in October 2000 when he had the inspiration to create an international music festival for MVCs hosted by those Cornish choirs.

He shared this vision with like-minded, influential people within Cornwall's musical community - bringing together an enthusiastic team of key organisers and volunteers and directing the first three of the biennial festivals before passing on the baton.

One of those founding team-members, John Larke, is as keenly involved today as he was twenty years ago and he says, 'From the very first we realised Roy's ambition and scale for the Festival would attract choirs within Cornwall, the UK and

across the globe to share their music with as many people as possible in this beautiful part of the world. In the event we have hosted choirs from every continent – it's a huge achievement.'

Dr Roy Wales says, 'Clearly I am very proud of the way the Festival has continued to develop and grow since I retired as Director and I am delighted that it is now regarded as the largest male choir festival worldwide. I always felt Cornwall was the right place to host an international male choral festival because of the extensive and longstanding male voice choir tradition in the county.'

During the next Cornwall International Male Choral Festival - running from 29 April – 3 May 2021 - 60 choirs of all ages and nationalities will be taking part in 50 events in 40 venues to entertain more than 50,000 people. The International Concerts and Competitions will be taking place at Truro Cathedral and the Hall for Cornwall – which will be open once more following major renovations.

Already the 2021 event has signed up a quarter of the choirs who will be singing their hearts out across the county, with internationals registering an interest in attending including choirs from Brazil and South Africa, Australia and the USA, Iceland, Portugal, Croatia and Sweden.

As the choirs themselves sign up, composers from across the globe are vying to pen a winning piece of music for

the 2021 event in the hotly contested Composers' Competition - a jewel in the crown of the Festival. The competition deadline is 31 March this year, with the bar for contenders set very high by the last winners who came from Seattle, Shanghai and Surrey.

'Although we have two years between each festival the work doesn't stop for a minute,' says Director and Cornish musical supremo Gareth Churcher. 'Over the twenty years since Roy Wales had his incredible vision, the Festival has grown in respect and stature to be internationally very famous and it's fantastic to have so many choirs and composers queueing up to take part.

'We're also looking forward to seeing the Hall for Cornwall back in action for 2021, giving singers of all ages and nationalities the opportunity to sing on a world-class stage. It will be a bonus for our established sponsors who have supported the Festival over the years – as well, potentially, as a showcase for a large corporate sponsor such as we have had in the past and hope to attract for next year's event!'

Full details of the 2021 Cornwall International Male Choral Festival, along with festival films, photos and information from previous events, can be found at

[www.cimcf.uk](http://www.cimcf.uk)

or for expressions of interest contact Gareth Churcher

[director@cimcf.uk](mailto:director@cimcf.uk)



# A Shining Centenary

The Mendip Male Voice Choir - South West - Peter Bradshaw



Members of the Mendip Male Voice Choir in Somerset maintain a long and distinguished tradition of male voice singing that began one hundred years ago in the village of Timsbury, where they still rehearse. During all these years the choir has had only five musical directors. The first, Oliver Janes, founded the Timsbury Male Voice Choir in 1919. In an interview some years ago his son, Kenneth, recalled, 'Around 1920 quite a lot of families had pianos. Music was there for the making and on a Sunday evening after church or chapel services the families would invite their friends to come and join around the piano and sing. As a result of this men and ladies found the art of harmonising. In the early days of the choir we used to rehearse in the old school. In the corner you had a lovely big fire burning and a tortoise stove.

The choir members even in the early 1920s had good voices. It was a coal mining village, and I've a feeling that the village tended to follow the Welsh tradition of singing. I don't think you can get basses to equal them today. The choir went from strength to strength, and by 1928 they were entering competitions but in the 1940s a lot of activities were upset by the War. The Male Voice Choir closed up for

two or three years and got back together in 1946.'

In 1951 Kenneth took over from his father. He recalled, 'When I came to Timsbury I was fully aware that I was taking on a very old established organisation and I had to keep my end up, of course. We went to competitions in Bristol, at the University. We were very good, but I didn't encourage competition much afterwards because I found it interfered with our other activities. All the time you spent on competition work you were missing out somewhere else. Music got too expensive to get thirty or forty copies for a choir to sing from and then put on the shelf and never use again. It was tip-top quality stuff but not really what people want to hear at concerts.'

His successors, Brian Attwood (1985-2003) and Kate Courage (2002-2013), continued to give priority to entertaining audiences rather than entering competitions. They broadened the range of music, began performing with other choirs and undertaking tours. The choir grew in number, reaching over eighty at its peak and, having widened its membership, was renamed the Mendip Male Voice Choir. One of the songs written by Kate for the

choir, called *Shining*, is dedicated to the work of the Children's Hospice South West. It is a moving piece, the lyrics of which are from the perspective of a young hospice patient. The choir is active in encouraging other choirs to purchase and perform the piece as proceeds from the sale of copies go to the Children's Hospice South West.

\* to listen to the choir practising *Shining*

visit [www.mendipmen.co.uk](http://www.mendipmen.co.uk) and press the **Shining** tab\*

Current Musical Director, Jamie Knights, regards it as a privilege to be leading such an historic choir. 'There is little doubt', he says, 'that singing in a choir is just as important as it was 100 years ago. Leading a team of 70 singers and an accompanist to sing for countless audience members over the years, never knowing exactly what will happen, is what makes my job so exciting'.

The choir celebrated its centenary throughout 2019 performing in thirteen concerts, publishing a Centenary Booklet and two CDs, holding a gala dinner, undertaking a tour in Cornwall and raising £9,500 for charity. Long may it continue!

# Welcome back Tony Whittaker

## Warrington Male Voice Choir - North West - Bob Williams



After eight years away, Warrington Male Voice Choir has welcomed back Warring-

ton born pianist, organist and composer Anthony Whittaker, as its accompanist.

Anthony joined in with a recent virtual choir rehearsal and was given a very warm welcome back. His association with the choir began in 1994 when he first played the organ for a Christmas concert. He became the official choir accompanist in 1997, playing on several of the choir's CDs and touring extensively with them. He has also written and arranged music for the choir, some of which has been performed at the International Eisteddfod. He reluctantly, left the role in 2012, when his international work became more time consuming.

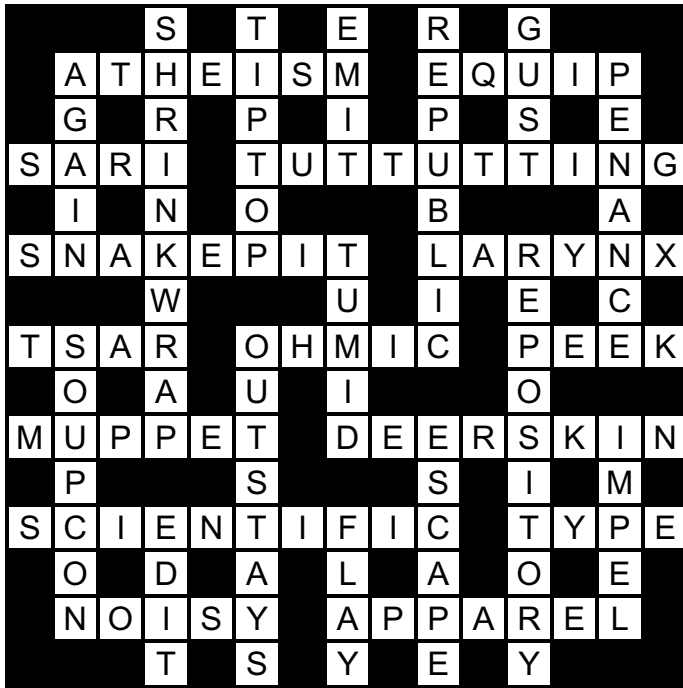
Over the last eight years, he's partly concentrated on composition and has had many performances of his music

around the world. However, he kept an association with the choir, taking some rehearsals and playing in the, much loved Christmas Voices, Christmas Brass concerts in the Parr Hall.

Speaking after his appointment Tony commented: 'I'm delighted to be working with the choir as its accompanist again.' Adding his own thoughts, Musical Director, Russell Paterson, said: 'I'm delighted to have Tony back on board as my musical partner and I can't wait until we can actually appreciate his unrivalled musicality in person' and Chairman, Bob Williams, said 'It's great to have Tony back with us and part of the Warrington Male Voice Choir family'.

Tony has already been hard at work with the choir, preparing for a virtual Christmas; more details to be announced shortly.





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‘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.

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**Jean Cooper** - *ret General Secretary*

**Gerald Haigh** - *ret Chairman*

**Peter Marshall** - *ret Services Officer*

**Alan Simmons** - *Music Publisher*

**Doris Williams** - *Music and Festivals Consultant*

## Meeting Dates

### Officer Meetings

All Officer Meetings  
will be held using Zoom

Tuesday 9 June   Tuesday 8 September   Tuesday 10 November  
Tuesday 12 January 2021

### Members Open Forums

All Members Open Forums  
have had to be cancelled  
until further notice

**No  
Spring  
Issue**

## Closing dates for submissions to News & Views

Summer Issue  
30 April

Autumn Issue  
31 August