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News & Views



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Summer 2011

No 195



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Autumn 2011 - 31 August

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Crawford's Corner



Hasn't it been a fantastic spring this year? Each day when I open the curtains and find the sun shining it raises my spirits. But it is no use waxing lyrical about the spring when this is the

summer edition of News & Views and they do say that it could well be a dreadful summer because we've had the good weather early. So if it's pouring with rain and blowing a gale when you read this you can mutter under your breath that Crawford got it wrong again.

It's absolutely no use thumbing through this magazine looking for the report on Annual Conference 2011 because it didn't happen. Now I won't go into the ins and outs of why, I'll just repeat that it didn't. And there was I with the complete set of Ellis Peter's Brother Cadfael books from which to choose an opening quote. One of the results was

that we had the first one day meeting, for the AGM, since 1987 at Sheffield University. I believe that many years ago the AGM was held in December. Can you imagine what that would have been like last December? Anyway the AGM was held in Luton thanks to the kindness and hard work of Luton MVC and, bless them, they even gave those who stayed a concert in the evening. Well done Ken Hone and his merry men.

The other result of not having a conference and a report is that this issue of News & Views is several pages thinner. I hope you choirs have all arranged extremely busy programmes of concerts and tours so that you can write and gloat about what you have seen and done. Come on, you know you want to. That will mean that the autumn edition will be like the pigeons in our garden at the end of the summer, fat and sleek, and it won't be me scratching around trying to fill the last couple of pages in a multiple of four.

At that AGM in Luton the officers were elected and you can find them listed on the back page. There's only one real change in that John Croft joins the team as Public Relations Officer and Richard Bradley changes his label to Services Officer, a title that better describes the hard work he does for you.

Now before I let you dive into the assorted doings of members across Britain let me remind you that conference next year is being planned for the weekend (23 – 25 March 2012). Get that in your diary now and when your choir's committee tries to arrange a concert for those dates tell them that you won't be there because you will be in Bowness on Windermere at NAC Conference. Start saving for it now (it's cheaper next year!) even if it's only to make Crawford work hard to write a report on it.

Now off you go and read the rest of issue 195. Enjoy!

Crawford

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Chairman's Chat



You will have realised from my Chat in the last issue that I wrote it in the anticipation of a successful Conference weekend in Shrewsbury. Sadly this did not happen. In order to protect

the integrity of the Association we were forced to cancel the weekend and transfer the AGM to Luton. There we were royally entertained by Luton MVC, and we are most grateful to them for stepping into the breach. On the positive side, we have heard very recently that the concert in Midlands North Group, which was to have been the Conference concert, took place and was a roaring success.

The overwhelming impression given by the contributions to News & Views this time is of good fellowship when singing together with other choirs, groups, and in festivals and visits overseas. Take, for instance, the write-up of the Yorkshire West Group concert in Huddersfield in April - yes, I know I was there, but Jeff Goldthorpe's description lets the rest of you see it as I did. Nineteen choirs in the magnificent setting of Huddersfield Town Hall - the very epitome of what the Groups set-up of the NAC is all about. It was a very happy afternoon indeed.

As a complete contrast, why is it, I wonder, that some member choirs seem to think that they exist in splendid isolation, and do not want any contact with other choirs? Unfortunately this is becoming a recurring theme. Maybe they do not realize how much enjoyment and sheer fun can be the result of getting together with neighbouring choirs, or pushing the boat out and making contact with others further away or even abroad. Maybe they have never considered the amount of publicity generated for all participating choirs by a massed voice concert - with the increased possibilities of more singing members wanting to join their choir. Equally maybe

they have no conception of the amount of help and assistance available from the NAC - in facilitating the joining up with other choirs, with links to tour companies... Or maybe they are just shy! Please don't be. One thing I learned very early in life was that if you want to know the answer to a question, then it's not a silly question. So feel free to contact your other local NAC choirs if you want to link up with them - they will be glad to respond and talk through the possibilities. Give one of the Group officers a call, or get in contact with the National Officers. Everybody in the NAC is hoping for your contact and will be only too pleased to help! Going back to the Yorkshire West Group Concert, the one thing I wished so much to be able to do was to magically transport Group Reps from inactive Groups to Huddersfield, so that they could see, hear, and be enthused by just what can be done, with the will to join in and work together.

Some forward planning for you - 123Sing! will be happening again this year, over the weekend of 30 September to 2 October. For those of you who may have missed out last year, this is a collaboration between Classic FM and Making Music, with input from other choral organisations including the NAC, and the object is to raise money for the Classic FM Foundation, which is a charity dedicated to funding music education and therapy projects working with some of the most disadvantaged children and adults across the UK. Many people in 2010 thought that they could only include events and concerts which took place over that weekend, but this year it has been made clear that any fund-raising event which takes place within a week either side of the main weekend can be included in the reporting. We will give you more information as and when it becomes available.

Have a wonderful summer of singing and do please let us know what you are doing, hopefully before you do it, so that there is time to publicise the concerts and events to the rest of the NAC world!

Celia Johns

From the President



With the change of venue for the AGM we, with the aid of Luton MVC, moved to Luton.

We are grateful that Luton MVC offered their facilities to

conduct the AGM in the Church Hall where they rehearse.

Sadly the response from choirs was way down from what was expected. Several choirs were involved in other activities on that date and apologies were received. We are reminded that the AGM is very important to the work and plans of the elected Officers for the coming year and so that they can respond to the wishes of our member choirs.

Our next Officers' meeting will be in Doncaster on 7 June and the Members' Forum will be in the Lake District on 11 June at the venue to be used for 2012 Conference.

We look forward to these meetings and hope that many of our choirs will be attending. Is it not possible that your choir's representative could be there, even if your choir is otherwise engaged?

Jan and I are going to Swindon at the invitation of the Kentwood Show Choir and we look forward to seeing them once again.

My very best wishes for your summer activities, may they be filled with good singing.

Eric Jackson

What's the difference between a puppy and a singer-songwriter?

Eventually the puppy stops whining.



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This Month's puzzle - A Cryptogram Solution on page 27

A cryptogram is a type of puzzle which consists of a short piece of encrypted text. Generally the cipher used to encrypt the text is simple enough that a cryptogram can be solved by hand. Frequently used are substitution ciphers where each letter is replaced by a different letter or number. To solve the puzzle, one must recover the original lettering. The ciphers used in cryptograms were not originally created for entertainment purposes, but for real encryption of military or personal secrets. Definition from Wikipedia.

This cryptogram is a quotation from a conductor well known for his quotable quotes.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	
												2			20								3			

										W													
10	17	22	24	24	10	22	15	8	24	22	17	21	22	6	6	18	21	17	5	3	21	6	6
										P													
12	15	25	4	21	12	17	20	6	22	1	21	16	13	25	8	16	16	17	24				
					M					W													
22	15	8	24	21	18	21	17	22	6	2	12	6	21	24	22	3	22	5					

'I think I should have no other mortal wants, if I could always have plenty of music. It seems to infuse strength into my limbs and ideas into my brain. Life seems to go on without effort, when I am filled with music.'

George Eliot - English novelist (1819 - 1880)



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The Appledore Singers Devon

Exquisite choral arrangements, stunning music selection, sheer quality of sound and friendly warmth of character have made The Appledore Singers a most respected and popular component of the local music scene in north Devon.



Courtesy of Jenny Chambers

The Appledore Singers are part of the establishment in Charles Kingsley's 'Little White Fishing Village', so busy in the summer and with a long history of seafarers and shipbuilding. Just as Appledore's maritime assortment has everything from small fishing boats, canoes, navy ships, beautiful yachts and jet skis, you find

the Singers performing an equally varied portfolio of swing, gospel, pop, romantic, jazz, ecclesiastical, classical and show songs. This gifted ladies choir is lead by Musical Director Pam Beechey, accompanied on piano by her husband Chris, who is also an accomplished organist.

The choir has been performing for 26 years, and started in the house of a choir member, with just a few voices. During that time, the ladies of Appledore have helped raise thousands of pounds for charities and good causes. The choir has over 40 members, including a specialist group of seven ladies, The Apple Pips, who are not only part of the choir but also practise a completely different range of material, complementing the intimacy of a smaller ensemble. More recently the Pips have been joined by Chris Beechey and Anthony Chambers, whose male voices add a different dimension to their sound, singing under the accompaniment of Pam.

It takes a special kind of musical talent to perform so well that audiences feel a touch of magic when they're listening to them. What a joy, to experience that feeling of

spine-tingling delight on hearing a subtle and intelligent harmony, the crystal clarity of high notes, and the pertinent dynamics of tones and lyrics. If this all sounds a bit profound, just think of the pure fun of a toe-tapping tempo, finger-clicking beat and body-rocking rhythm. This is what all choirs aspire to, and what Appledore always aims to achieve, through the discipline and hard work of an inspiring MD.

The Singers' fine work continues into this season with several appearances in support of local churches, charities and good causes, as well as weddings and other special occasions. They appear at The North Devon Festival of Choirs in May, and among other summer events will hold their annual Special Summer Concert at 7.00pm on Thursday 7 July in Kingsley Hall, Westward Ho! Details of the choir and forthcoming events can be obtained from www.theappledoresingers.co.uk

Pam Beechey 01769 560034.

Linda Atherton
Publicity Officer

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Music



Performing Rights

I have recently been helping a choir obtain a licence to record an example of their choir rehearsing to put on their own choir web site. The fee quoted was £112 for a year with up to 3,000 hours of recording time.

I contacted the PRS licensing department and pointed out that the choir only wished to use a small amount of recording time to show their choir at work and would they give a quote based on the small amount of usage. They refused and stated that the full amount £112 would be charged. The choir decided not to take up a licence.

Copyright Matters

I was recently asked to clarify who would be responsible if a choir were found to be singing an unlicensed arrangement. This is the reply I received from the Music Publishers legal department.

'Both the performers and arranger would be liable to pay damages to the rights owner (publisher).'

Be warned you must have a licence document giving permission for the arrangement.

New Music

From the Royal School of Church Music.

Water of Life - a festival service for young voices celebrating God's physical and spiritual gift of water.

I particularly like the concept behind the sale of this work. You buy a book containing the conductor's music (not to be photocopied) and the singer's book with permission to photocopy as needed. Also there are two CDs, one of the pieces performed and another of the demonstration and backing track; all this for £25 or £18.75 if you are an RSCM affiliate. *Water of Life* will be used at events forming this year's RSCM Young Voices Festivals. www.rscm.com/youngvoices.

Sing we merrily has been written by Malcolm Archer for choirs to sing on RSCM Music Sunday 26 June. A setting of Psalm 81 'Sing we merrily unto God our strength'. Written in four parts with organ accompaniment. This is a good piece for any choir for any occasion. £2.50 or £1.87 for RSCM affiliates.

From Goodmusic (Roberton)

Festival Jubilate SATB by Antony le Fleming. A dynamic, challenging composition with orchestral parts available, it begins with eight bars unison and then into four parts and then again unison going back to four parts. This very exciting work ends with double chorus. It is well worth sending for a score. Brian Kay is performing this work at the Leith Hill Festival next year.

Also by Antony Le Fleming, *Land of Lost Content* is written in seven sections and is based on poems by various writers and is scored for piano sextet. There is a piano part in the vocal score. This piece is suitable for a skilled chamber choir. antony.lefleming@gmail.com

From Lindsay Music

Raise High the Song SATB by Douglas Coombes is a choral cycle of seven songs about birds. It is an interesting selection with a challenging piano accompaniment.

A Tapestry of songs from the British Isles SSA are modern arrangements of traditional British songs.

From Faber Music

Merry Christmas Everyone SSA SATB is three Christmas pops arranged by Gwyn Arch. *I Wish it Could be Christmas Everyday* SSA SATB arr Ben Parry. *Voc and Roll* SSA SATB arr Charles Beale. *Glee Volume 1* SSA SATB arr Charles Beale.

Eric Cooper

A Simpleton's Guide to the Four Part Choir.

This month it is the turn of the tenors. Those gentlemen that Sue Black calls 'Public spirited baritones'.

The Tenors

They are spoiled. That's all there is to it. For one thing, there are never enough of them, and choir directors would rather sell their souls than let a halfway decent tenor quit, while they're always ready to unload a few altos at half price. And then, for some reason, the few tenors there are are always really good - it's one of those annoying facts of life. So it's no wonder that tenors always get swollen heads - after all, who else can make sopranos swoon?

The one thing that can make tenors insecure is the accusation (usually by the

basses) that anyone singing that high couldn't possibly be a real man. In their usual perverse fashion, the tenors never acknowledge this, but just complain louder about the composer being a sadist and making them sing so damn high.

Tenors have a love-hate relationship with the conductor, too, because the conductor is always telling them to sing louder because there are so few of them. No conductor in recorded history has ever asked for less tenor in a forte passage.

Tenors feel threatened in some way by all the other sections - the sopranos because they can hit those incredibly high notes; the altos because they have no trouble singing the notes the tenors kill themselves for; and the basses because, although they can't sing anything above an E, they sing it loud enough to drown the tenors out. Of course, the tenors would rather die than admit any of this.

It is a little-known fact that tenors move their eyebrows more than anyone else while singing.

In the next issue we complete this guide with the Basses.

My idea is that there is music in the air, music all around us; the world is full of it, and you simply take as much as you require.
- Edward Elgar



KVU Singers (formerly Keighley Vocal Union) Yorkshire North Group.

The current season has been a mixed one for the choir.

It all started off wonderfully when we competed in the inaugural Festival of Choirs in Douglas, Isle of Man, in October 2010. The welcome all the choirs received was amazing, and the camaraderie exceptional.

After a party on Friday night to welcome all the competitors, with some singing a party piece, it was down to the serious work on Saturday. We were thrilled when we heard that we had won the Mixed Voice class, and were through to the Choir of the Festival competition on Sunday. However, this did mean our planned trip round the island had to be cancelled to make time for more rehearsals!

On Sunday, we sang last, so became more and more nervous sitting in the hall listening to the excellent competition. After the adjudication by Alwyn Humphrys, we were amazed to hear our name read out as Choir of the Festival! The trophy was presented to our Musical Director, Frank Smith, by the beautiful Moira Anderson OBE amidst great cheers and jumping up and down. What a marvellous weekend.



Sadly, the news we received in February 2011 was not so welcome. Our beloved accompanist, Ellis Wright, passed away on February 9 at the age of 88. Ellis had served KVU since 1969, receiving his 40 year award at the Annual Dinner in 2009. He joined the choir under the auspices of Jack Smith, the current MD's late father. This was an appointment the choir never, ever had cause to regret.

Amongst the soloists Ellis accompanied were the great Kathleen Ferrier and the bass, Norman Allen. He was always a sympathetic

and aware accompanist, especially for soloists. His very special northern humour often made the occasional tedious rehearsal more bearable. When a choir member was concerned that the layout in a particular church meant it would be difficult for Ellis to see Frank, our conductor, Ellis responded with: 'Don't worry about it. I never watch him anyway.' Many a true word spoken in jest!

His skill on the organ was never more obvious than on our annual trip to Freckleton in December to sing Handel's *Messiah*. Here is a work when the soloists and each part of the choir have time to catch their breath,

but never the organist. Yet Ellis continued to perform magnificently and without complaint, right up to December 2009, at the age of 86.

A press report in 1980, after the choir's Spring Recital, ended with the following sentence: 'A final word of praise for Ellis Wright – yet again a veritable treasure as accompanist.' He will be greatly missed.

Finally, the choir has changed its name with effect from 16 February to KVU Singers. May we continue to succeed and enjoy our music as much as ever under our new name.

Vivien Drake

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Yorkshire West Group

When Jeff Goldthorpe, Chairman of the group, conceived the idea of staging a massed choir concert for the local Mayor's charity appeal he never imagined what a mammoth task it would be.

Four years ago when the group under the leadership of the then Chairman, Eric Cooper, put on a concert at the Huddersfield Town Hall for the charity appeal of the local Kirklees Mayor nine choirs took part.



Norma Hallett and Jeff Goldthorpe present a cheque to the Mayor of Kirklees, Councillor Andrew Palfreeman.

Logistically that was difficult enough. But this time incredibly nineteen of the group's 25 member choirs decided they wanted to take part.

Jeff approached the Mayor of Kirklees, Councillor Andrew Palfreeman, and asked him if he would like the group to stage a concert to raise money for his charity, Combat Stress, which helps the hidden victims of war - provided the group could have the Huddersfield Town Hall free of charge.

During his year of office the Mayor allowed six free lettings and Councillor Palfreeman was delighted to allocate one of those for the concert which went ahead on the afternoon of Sunday 3 April.

The Mayor paid for the printing of the concert programmes and for posters and flyers out of his own pocket and after the deduction of other expenses the concert made a profit of nearly £3,816 for the appeal.

More than 500 singers from seven male voice choirs, seven ladies choirs and five mixed voice choirs participated and most of the credit for the smooth running of the event goes to Norma Hallett, who is librarian of the Huddersfield U3A mixed voice choir and is also a member of the Marsh Ladies Choir in Huddersfield.

She was given the job of concert co-ordinator

which also included arranging and organising rehearsals on the morning of the concert. Said Jeff, who compèred the concert, 'She stage-managed the event with clock-work, military-style precision. Moving so many choirs between the stage, the stalls and back stage was a mind boggling task but it all went off without a hitch and on time.'

The Mayor was full of praise for Norma and for the group. He said, 'When Jeff approached me I had no real idea what to expect but I'm delighted with the outcome. Norma did a terrific job and I thought the standard of singing of all the choirs was outstanding. I think it was one of the most outstanding events of my year of office and I am very grateful to the group.'

Taking part in the concert, which featured the Fanfare Trumpet team from the West Yorkshire Police Band, were the following ladies choirs - Rodillians, Denby Dale, Horbury, Vocal Expressions, Almondbury, Pennine and Marsh. The seven male voice choirs were Colne Valley, Elland, Featherstone, Honley, Micklefield, Sharlston and Skelmanthorpe. Joining them were these mixed voice choirs - Halifax Young Singers, Holme Valley Singers, Huddersfield Singers, Huddersfield U3A and Wakefield Amateur Operatic Chorus. The concert was attended by the NAC, President Eric Jackson and his partner Jan and the NAC Chairman Celia Johns.

Combat Stress was formed in 1919 to help the thousands of men who had suffered immense psychological damage as a result of the First World War. It gives valuable support to many military veterans whose lives have been shattered by the horrors they witnessed on the battlefield.

Stan Solomons

Crawford's Rodgers & Hammerstein Cwiz

Questions for 10 different musicals and I haven't included 'The Sound Of Music'. That would be too easy.

4 & 8 are the toughest.

From which Rodgers & Hammerstein Musicals do these songs come?

1. People Will Say We're In Love.
2. You'll Never Walk Alone.
3. It's A Grand Night For Singing.
4. The Gentleman Is A Dope.
5. Younger Than Springtime.
6. No Other Love.
7. Getting To Know You.
8. All At Once You Love Her.
9. In My Own Little Corner.
10. I Enjoy Being A Girl.

Answers on page 22

If you have a theme for a future cwiz why not let me know?



Stan sent me this report on the activities of his group.

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Singing Our Way To Success



Although singing in schools has always been a traditional factor in music lessons it has suffered significant decline in perceived importance over the last three decades and has struggled to compete with pop music, music technology and the advance of the electronic keyboard.

As if this was not sufficient competition the decline in trained musicians in primary schools led to a culture of music being the responsibility of the individual class teacher with little or no training; and none being offered. The average class teacher has hesitated to take on the role of music teacher, and in some cases experienced absolute horror at the prospect of teaching singing and voice quality. Lack of keyboard skills and the confidence to deliver have struck terror into the normally brave hearts of many.

Ironically, many of the innovations that have contributed to the decline have also aided the revival of singing in North East Lincolnshire schools, to the extent that approximately three thousand children and young people, from the age of 5 up to the age of 18+ regularly take part in our annual singing festivals.

Around 1990 Margaret Thatcher introduced the TVEI (Technical, Vocational and Educational Initiatives) project into secondary schools in England and I was seconded to devise projects for the arts. Although cross curricular themes and initiatives in drama and dance were relatively easy to develop, the advent of music technology and the necessary teacher/pupil training initially was more problematic, until we hit on an idea that we thought would both inspire and teach teachers and pupils at the same time. We set up a project called 'It's a Record' which tasked all secondary schools and tertiary colleges in the LA to write, perform, record, label and sell a pop song using the then, 'new' technology. As this was aimed at the higher secondary age group, it immediately attracted the younger pupils, and the whole project was considered to be 'cool'; the songs were all published on a single cassette (subsequently a CD), label designs were offered under competition rules, and each school filmed a pop video to enhance their track. Sold publicly, the product was an instant hit and reprints became the norm over the years that the project ran.

I designated singing as a priority for development in 1995 and developed a rolling programme for teaching basic skills to whole staff teams in primary schools. Although this proved to be highly successful and many schools participated two concerns quickly showed themselves; they were their lack of confidence in using their own voice, and the lack of a role model. Having always been of the opinion that it is better to see something first hand rather than be told about it I established a junior schools singing festival under the inspirational leadership of Scott Stroman; Professor of Jazz at the Guildhall School of Music. He has led hundreds of courses and workshops in improvisation, performance, singing, world music, and conducting throughout the UK and Europe for education authorities, schools, colleges, universities, Arts Councils, choirs, and orchestras. He is equally able to work with professionals, amateurs, students, and children.

The festival was originally conceived to allow teachers to experience the teaching of music firsthand, so there was an insistence that all of the teachers who accompanied pupils to the festival HAD to take part themselves as part of the choir. Under Scott's direction they learnt basic vocal exercises, improvisation, part singing, expression, interpretation and, most importantly, that singing is fun! His insistence on all the songs being committed to memory prior to the festival, and his constant use of improvisation, meant that he was able to hold their attention throughout to lead them through use of expression, movement and interpretation. This festival has been held annually for fifteen years and numbers approximately 1,000 children on the stage.

The secondary schools festival began a year later than the junior, and was created both in response to requests from the secondary teachers and to address the issue of examination music students lacking vocal skills and, in some cases, a lack of aural perception. It was also a way of helping to train teachers fulfilling national curriculum requirements in teaching part singing so, once again, it was mandatory that accompanying teachers sang with their pupils. The festival attracts approximately 350 students of mainly upper secondary and sixth form age. This festival was also directed by Scott Stroman for many years. Both festivals are accompanied by a professional trio of piano, bass and drums, and are now directed by Lin Marsh. Lin is one of the country's most well respected singing leaders and trainers. She trained at Trinity College of Music and London University and has worked extensively in music education. She runs singing, performance and composing courses throughout the country and some are available through the Sing Up website. Lin enthusiastically shares her feelings about the importance of inspiring others to sing, and the need for quality vocal leadership.

'It's someone who's passionate about it! Somebody who loves people and singing. Somebody who knows their repertoire thoroughly and is an excellent communicator. I think very few people actually get vocal training for themselves, as part of their own development. I think most people want to sing better and understand how their voice works so they can make a better sound. That applies as much to conservatoire musicians as it does to a five year old who'd like to be able to sing a song better. Not many people have had access to vocal training - I think there's a big need for it.'



To complete the jigsaw we set up infant singing festivals and have enjoyed 15 years of growth and guidance, most of them under the leadership of Alison Pryce-Jones. Alison studied at the Royal Northern College of Music and the London Opera Centre, and graduated as a singer, flautist and pianist. She was a founder member of Opera North, has sung with Scottish Opera and performed in a wide-ranging repertoire as a soloist on the stage and concert platform. Alison is joint Artistic Director of the Yorkshire Youth Choir and Musical Director of the City of Leeds Youth Choir. She works as a choral animateur and adjudicator throughout the region. Once again, even with infants, Alison starts the basic groundwork of vocal and breathing exercises, diction, expression and movement using prelearnt and memorised material to make them free of distraction and copies. We currently experience a turnover of 1500 children in the 5 day festival period and, once again, all of the teachers are on the platform singing and learning together.

In addition we are involved in the national Sing-Up programme and provide other projects and activities for both teacher and pupil participation. For pupils that wish to extend their experience we have a growing number of accredited singing teachers working in schools, and the junior and senior youth choirs continue to grow in numbers.

It has been a challenging process, during which we have had to respond to changing circumstances, attitudes, perceptions, legislation and influences. But at the heart of it all must be the ethos that singing is fun, and that enjoyment is fundamental to music-making. Now that we have responded to change we look to the adult choirs to recognise that they must reflect on why there are whole generations missing from their ranks and how they can both support young people in their singing. Real and lasting partnerships within communities are at the heart of the Henley Report on Music Education and local choirs can make a big contribution, and reap the benefits, from this. Have you a school near where you rehearse? Have they a choir? Why not find out and invite them to sing at your next concert? It may be the start of a lasting relationship.

The next Junior Schools' Musical Festival will be held at the Grimsby Auditorium on 6 July 2011 with over 900 children taking part.

Chris Johnson
Consultant Head of Music and
Performing Arts
North East Lincolnshire



Worcester Male Voice Choir Midlands South West

The choir raised £2000 at their Christmas concert held in Pershore Abbey

The end of 2010 proved to be another very busy time with public singing in Worcester at the Victorian Fayre, Christmas Carols on two busy shopping days in the city centre and finally carols again at St Peter's Garden Centre - the latter occasion being during the snow.

In between all of that we held two major concerts. In November the choir's Annual Concert was held in College Hall, King's School, with guest compere, Michael Collie, the BBC Midlands Today journalist and guests, Elizabeth MacDonald (soprano), Becky Waite (trumpet) and Keith Hearnshaw (organist). The concert was concluded with a wonderful rendering of *Morte Christe*.

That was quickly followed by our Christmas Concert in Pershore Abbey. The event was a sell out and £2000 was raised for the Mayor of Pershore's Charities (The Royal National Lifeboat Institution and Macmillan Cancer Support). A traditional first half of male voice choir favourites were followed by Christmas carols including some audience participation. A new guest joined us for the evening: Claire Powell an excellent soprano from Wales.

The Mayor and Mayoress of Pershore were presented with a cheque by officers of the choir.

Not to be outdone the New Year started off with an excellent concert organised

by BBC Hereford & Worcester Local Radio in aid of their 'Love Lives On' appeal (this appeal is for the charity, Noah's Ark a charity for children who have lost one or more parents). The concert was held at the Malvern Theatre and the choir was joined by the Hereford Police Choir and the Malvern Singers.

In preparation for the event BBC Midlands Today TV crew came to the choir rehearsals to see us at practice. Nicholas Wright our MD and Shelia Leatherland accompanist were in sparkling form at the practice.

Following that, we have performed three more concerts in the period up to April. The first was in aid of the Worcester Nurses' League 'Window Appeal', followed by a concert at Studley for the Redditch & District Welsh Society and finally a celebration of St George's Day. The latter included a wonderful conclusion with *Rule Britannia, Pomp and Circumstance* and *Jerusalem* with choir and audience alike waving their flags in celebration.

We are now looking forward to hosting the eight choir EAMVC Concert for the Midlands and South West at Worcester Cathedral; then a visit to Hidcote Manor Gardens, Chipping Campden a National Trust property where we will be entertaining the public in the wonderful public gardens. In September we follow with a concert at Coventry Cathedral as part of the 90th birthday celebrations of the British Legion. More details of this next time.

Terry Dillingham
Public Relations Officer



The Silver Ring Choir of Bath South West



The Silver Ring Choir of Bath under the baton of Conductor Ruth Mckibbin is celebrating sixty years of song this year. The choir was formed in 1951 by our founder conductor, Mr Kelvin Thomas, who later went on to receive the MBE for his service to music. Over the sixty year history of the choir it has had just four conductors.

In February the choir recorded a new CD. It has a special celebration piece of music that has been commissioned and co-written by multi-million selling composers, Ben Cullum, and his brother

jazz star Jamie Cullum. Both Jamie and Ben have a long association with us. Our pianist, Adam Biggs has transcribed and arranged the music for the choir. A major anniversary concert took place on 30 April at the Forum in Bath with The Silver Ring Choir which included a guest spot with Jamie Cullum where the new song was premiered. The new CD went on sale at this event.

In May the choir take part in the opening night of the Bath Music Festival. In June the choir will be in Germany on an exchange visit with the Hebertcher Choir from Hochst-im-Odenwald; this is a very special visit as it represents fifty years of friendship with this choir. The friendships made back in 1961 still flourish today. The choir has made many exchanges since that first occasion and families have become intertwined. Music has built a bridge between the two countries.

Over the weekend of the 2/3 July the choir has a visit from Chorus 14 from Paris. Last year the Silver Ring choir was invited to sing at a concert with them in Paris. They are on a return visit and a concert is planned over this weekend.

In October a celebration buffet is arranged at the Guildhall in Bath. It is hoped to see as many ex-members as possible to help us celebrate 'Sixty years of Song'. An exhibition of all the archives over the sixty years will be on display along with past choir dress and other memorabilia. A historical booklet has been produced documenting the history of the choir.

These are but a few of the many events planned throughout the year with the choir. If you are interested in supporting us in any way or would like information on any of the above topics please phone our secretary on 0117 9422205 or log on to our web page www.silverringchoir.org.

Maureen Parfrey



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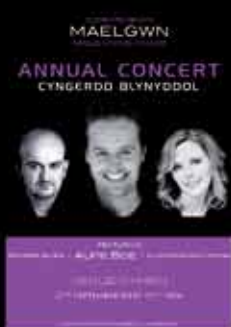
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NAC Website

Access to the Members' Area

Have you taken the opportunity to look at this area of our website?



This area is only available to members of the NAC. In it you may read News & Views online, read the minutes of Officer meetings and Members' Open Forum meetings. You can find advice sheets on a wide number of topics which may answer questions about how to become a charity, how to recruit an MD or Accompanist, dealing with copyright and even child protection issues.

There is a section on insurance and one to help you get a copy of the official logo of the NAC to put on your programmes and stationery.

To get access to this area of the website contact our Webmaster, Celia Johns, using the contact information from the back page of this magazine.

St Edmundsbury MVC.

Anglia

The choir and The Minden Band of The Queen's Division joined recently in a concert in the Sales Ring of Tattersalls, Newmarket to raise funds jointly for Help for Heroes and The Royal Anglian Regiment Benevolent Charity.

Attended by a capacity audience of 650 the choir and the band produced a memorable evening of music covering a wide range of musical tastes. Robert Altham, Cambridgeshire Coordinator of Help for Heroes spoke on the work that this charity is doing for our wounded servicemen and women, and Captain Ollie Ormiston, 3rd Battalion Royal Anglians, spoke on the work that The Royal Anglian Regiment Benevolent Charity does for deserving members of the regiment, both past and present.

The MC for the evening was Richard Everett, Secretary of St Edmundsbury Male Voice Choir, who had organised the event to

acknowledge all the help and support that both charities had given to his grandson, the regiment's most seriously wounded member during its recent tour of duty in Afghanistan.

The evening was brought to a close when the *Sunset Hymn* was sung by the choir accompanied by the band, while a bugler from the band also played the *Last Post* as Sgt Toynton lowered the Regimental Colour, a most moving finale which brought tears to a number of eyes in the audience. A retiring collection was made and in the final analysis the concert raised some £14,500 which will be divided equally between the two charities.

Richard Everett



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The Coryndon Choral Composition Competition.

This is a competition to win a commission worth £7,250 to compose a choral work of at least 30 minutes in length for a SATB choir, which may be divided, soloists and orchestra similar to that scored for Faure's Requiem (full orchestral concert version).

The commission will be awarded by a judging panel of three judges together with the sponsors following the submission of 5 minutes of finished music from the proposed work, accompanied by a sketch of the full work together with the complete text to be used.

The World Premiere of the work will be given by Plymouth Philharmonic Choir under the direction of Christopher Fletcher in the Plymouth Guildhall in the spring of 2013. The choir is of good standard with approximately 160 voices and gives at least three concerts a year with professional soloists and orchestra, to an audience of around 750-800. Additional concerts are also given in both larger and smaller venues. Below are examples of works performed in recent years.

Mozart, *Requiem* and *Grand Mass in C minor*; Karl Jenkins, *Armed Man* - with the orchestra of the Royal Marines; Haydn, *Creation Mass in Bb major* and *Maria Theresa Mass*; Orff, *Carmina Burana*; Britten, *Saint Nicolas* - with a children's choir; Rutter, *Magnificat*; Elgar, *From the Bavarian Highlands*; Walton, *Coronation Te Deum*; Mendelssohn, *Elijah* - with Thomas Allen; Goodall, *Eternal Light* - as part of a ballet performance in The Theatre Royal Plymouth and as a concert.

The choir will shortly perform; Bach, *Christmas Oratorio*; Karl Jenkins, *Requiem*; Rossini, *Petite Messe Solennelle*; Carter, *Benedicite*; Handel, *Dixit Dominus* and a work commissioned from West Country composer Clive Jenkins.

More information about the choir is available on their website;

www.plymouthphilchoir.org.uk

The rules and guidelines for the competition are as follows:

1. The competition entry must be around 5 minutes. The commissioned work will be a performance length of at least 30 minutes, or sufficient to be the only work in the second half of a concert.

2. The theme will be 'In Memoriam', sacred, secular or any combination.

3. Closing dates.

Competition. September 30 2011.

Commission. September 30 2012.

4. Entries for the competition must contain two full paper scores and a CD of the section submitted, the text for the entire work and a sketch of the full work to be submitted for the commission. Computer set scores are also encouraged, as an aid to the judging panel.

5. Entries for the competition must be submitted before the closing date of September 30 2011.

6. An interim award of £500 (part of the commission fee) will be made to the composer selected for the commission.

7. Composers must own the copyright to all texts used in the composition or provide proof that they have permission to use any texts contained in the composition.

8. Entrants must guarantee that both the section submitted for the competition and, if successful, the commission, are their original work with no more than 15% of the composition having been performed, commissioned, published or under consideration of publication or performance prior to entry into the Coryndon Choral Composition Competition.

9. Neither the section of the work submitted for the competition nor the commissioned work selected by the judging panel may be performed in public until two months after the World Premiere given by Plymouth Philharmonic Choir.

10. All rights for the full commissioned work reside with the composer.

11. The sponsors of the competition and the commission will be acknowledged in all published versions of the work or programme notes for future performances, as will the fact that the premiere was given by Plymouth Philharmonic Choir with conductor, soloists, date and place.

12. Unless a publisher is found prior to the premiere of the work the sponsors of the competition will pay for the production of orchestral, soloists and choir copies of the work to be used in the premiere, though choir members will be likely to buy their own copy.

13. Plymouth Philharmonic Choir will have the right to give two more performances of the commissioned work at any time in

the future.

14. All works submitted must be of professional standard and sit well with Plymouth Philharmonic Choir's usual repertoire.

15. Entrants must be over 19 years of age and holders of a United Kingdom Passport.

16. No personal details may appear on the score or on electronic submissions. A separate sheet with all relevant personal details must be attached to each entry or on an accompanying email.

17. Composers may only make one entry.

18. The judging panel will be; Christopher Fletcher - Musical Director of Plymouth Philharmonic Choir, Clive Jenkins - composer and Anne-Marie Smith - a member of the choir; together with the sponsors.

19. The judging panel has the right not to make an award of the commission if the works submitted fail to reach the expected standard. The judges' decision will be final and no communication will be entered into.

20. Entries must be submitted to;

John King. john@kinglarden.plus.com

Coryndon, Aish, South Brent,
Devon. TQ10 9JH

21. The sponsors of both the competition and the commission are Maggie (alto) and John King (second bass), both members of Plymouth Philharmonic choir.

John King

Coloratura Soprano:

A singer who has
great trouble finding
the proper note, but
who has a
wild time
hunting
for it.



Edinburgh Telephone Choir Scotland East

Sixty-four years ago - in 1947 - Mollie Scott who was a Supervisor in the Edinburgh Telephone Exchange came up with the idea of forming a choir consisting of the Lady Telephonists. Thus the ETC came into being and, in the years that followed, the 'opposite sex' was invited to join enabling a wider range of music in parts to be performed. The Choir has become well-known throughout Scotland's Capital city and surrounding districts and many charities have benefited from monies donated by the group.

Committed to a concert per month from September to March, the Choir has sung not only all over the City but has ventured 'abroad' to Fife (Inverkeithing, Dunfermline, St Andrews); the Lothians and the Borders (Linlithgow, Polmont, Galashiels, Moffat, Musselburgh, Bonnyrigg, Ormiston) and each Spring (in April) is to be heard in our Annual Concert for four nights in the Church Hill Theatre playing to around 1200 supporters and friends.

'Variety' has always been the choir's watchword and in the past seven years,

dancers from Manor School of Ballet have become firm favourites with our audiences performing ballet, jazz, tap and Highland to a high standard. Two years ago, in 2009, one of the local schools Pipes & Drums took part to critical acclaim and in our 2011 Annual Concert a section of Broxburn & Livingston Brass Band was cheered to the echo with a most professionally played selection of popular pieces.

Choice of music ranges from classical to contemporary, show & folk music from all over the globe or - as we say in Scots - 'frae a' the airts'! - with Mozart, Schubert, Strauss, Rutter, Jenkins, Kern, Bart, Berlin, Gershwin, Lloyd Webber etc well to the fore.

Choir membership remains relatively constant - around 40 - but as with many others all over the country, tenors and altos are in short supply, the former being 'like hen's teeth'... rather scarce! The present MD (a former Church of Scotland Minister) has been with the choir for fourteen years since retiring from full-time ministry and shall continue as long as this happy band of minstrels requires his services!

We are an enthusiastic group and to quote a well-known phrase - 'age shall not weary

them nor the years condemn' and hope to continue to enjoy making music and putting a song in the hearts of all whom we entertain.

Iain Dunn Musical Director

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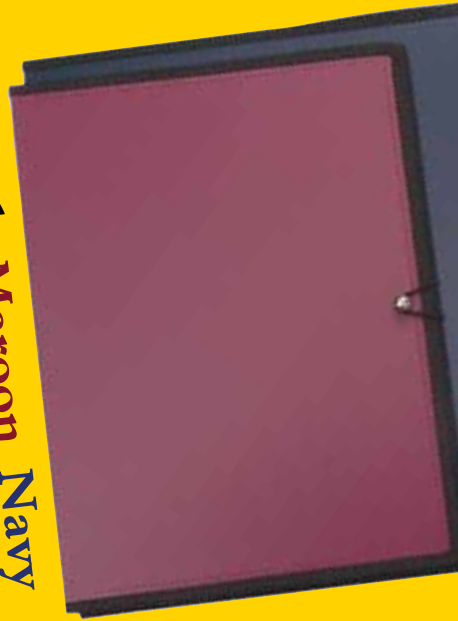
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The Glasgow Phoenix Choir Scotland West

Sponsored by The Co-operative Funeralcare

The beginning of the choir's Diamond Jubilee celebrations got off to a cracking start in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall with a concert entitled 'Another April Evening' and had as guests the Donaghadee Male Voice Choir from Northern Ireland and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra Junior Chorus all of whom gave outstanding performances. The Glasgow Herald report on the Phoenix concert said 'To signal their growing success and to complement the fact they effortlessly fill the Concert Hall three times a year, their 34th album release has achieved the Scottish Record Industry Association Gold Disc award. Under the watchful eye of conductor Marilyn Smith the choir charmed us with their relaxed and powerful sound and impeccable diction'. It was indeed gratifying to know that the Phoenix has become an overnight success after 60 years.

The Donaghdee men were in Glasgow for the weekend and joined the Phoenix in a very enjoyable and well received concert at Moncrieff Parish Church, East Kilbride, on Saturday evening followed up by morning service on Sunday at St John's Renfield Church where choir accompanist Cameron Murdoch is the organist.

One item which featured the men of the Phoenix and the Donaghadee Choir was Morte Criste - always a favourite with audiences.



The New Year heralded in the beginning of the Phoenix's Diamond Jubilee year with various events taking place. Among the concerts given were in Arthurlie Parish Church, Barrhead; St Mun's Church, Dunoon; St Mary's-Greyfriar's Church, Dumfries; St Andrews R C Cathedral, Glasgow (where the choir gave an opening concert after extensive refurbishment); Whiting Bay on the Isle of Arran; and a tour to Oban, Mull and Iona in late May. The season ended with concerts in Cumnock; Eastwood Theatre, Giffnock; and St Peter's Church, Glasgow as part of the West End Festival. New additions to the men's wardrobe were black shirts with silver bow ties to go with the white jackets.

In May the choir enjoyed its Diamond Jubilee Dinner at the Grosvenor Hilton in Glasgow where we were delighted to

welcome our Honorary President – well know baritone Peter Morrison and former conductors – John Cranston and Peter Shand, together with George Tinning, Managing Director of the Choir's sponsors – The Co-operative Funeralcare supported by senior executives of the company, Cllr Margot Clark representing Glasgow City Council, and various representatives of the choral and music world. The entertainment was provided by a rising star in the entertainment world, the ever popular Gordon Cree who is fast becoming a permanent fixture at our annual dinners.

The choir's Diamond Jubilee Concert entitled 'Coronation, Requiem & Gloria' takes place on 17 September in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall with special guests Ayrshire Voices, City of Glasgow Chorus, Dunfermline Choral Union, Dunfermline Junior Chorus, Hereford Police Male Choir and Glasgow Sinfonia Orchestra with a programme of great choral favourites including Handel's great coronation anthem Zadok the Priest and a performance of Faure's Requiem. The platform will be filled to overflowing similar to the Golden Jubilee concert in 2001 as shown here.

As always our Business Manager John Blue and Council members Elizabeth Dingwall (Choir Manager), Anne MacDonald (Secretary) and Lady Jan Bonomy (Vice-President) work tirelessly on behalf of the choir to make things happen in all the year's celebrations.

www.phoenixchoir.org

J Lawson Purdie
Hon Vice-President

Caerwys Male Voice Choir

Caerwys, Flintshire, North Wales

WANTED

A New Musical Director

to take post after the National Eisteddford

The choir, one of the youngest male voice choirs in Wales, was founded in 1999 and has a current membership of 27 voices.

Rehearsals are at 7.30 pm every Monday at St Michael's Church
Caerwys, Flintshire, North Wales.

Enquiries are welcome from both ladies and gentlemen.

We value our Musical Director highly and pay appropriate remuneration.

Applications should include a current CV and sent to the
Secretary - Roger Jenkins, 2 Park Grove, Caerwys, Flintshire, CH7 5BX 01352 720637

www.corcaerwys.org.uk

Grimsby and Cleethorpes Ladies Choir Lincolnshire

The year 2011 heralds the 40th Anniversary of the founding of the original Cleethorpes Ladies Choir which was formed by Vera Burton in 1971.



Brenda Oxoborrow, a music teacher, took over as Musical Director in 1980.

In 1996 the choir integrated the then Grimsby Ladies choir to form The Grimsby and Cleethorpes Ladies Choir as it is now known.

The present Musical Director is Rita Grove who took over the musical leadership of the choir in 2008. Rita studied singing with the founder of the choir and sang with the choir from 1972-1984. She has had a varied career singing in oratorios, light opera and recitals singing leading roles in several operas for the Airedale Opera. Rita rejoined the choir in 2002 and was deputy accompanist until 2008.

Under her guidance she has passed on to the members many singing techniques to improve their quality of deliverance of the repertoire in concert.

Rita is supported by Sheila Shelston, the choir's accompanist who has had experience in playing for and singing in church musical activities and had many successes at Hull Music festival. She was a member of the Grimsby and District Amateur Dramatic Society where she became Deputy Accompanist. In her teaching career she has produced musical shows and led choirs and orchestras.

She has been the Grimsby and Cleethorpes Ladies Choir Accompanist since 1982.

The present membership is about 42 and the choir sings a large and varied repertoire ranging from jazz through to the musicals and serious pieces written by composers such as John Rutter, all of

which are enjoyed by the membership.

Over the years the choir has had many Festival successes and several exchange visits have been made to choirs in France, Germany and Denmark where the choir had the opportunity to sing in the famous Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen. The choir has also had the opportunity on visits to

sing in Barcelona Cathedral, Spain and Lismore Cathedral, Ireland, The Anglican Church and The British Institute in Florence, Italy,

The choir has belonged to the National Association of Choirs for many years and is an active member of the local group, sending representatives each year to the Annual General Meeting of the NAC.

In 2003 the choir joined with members of Group 15 (now Lincolnshire Group) to present a successful Christmas Charity Concert.

The choir has also had the privilege of hosting concerts with several Male Voice Choirs from around the UK and also in 2000, 2002 and 2004 with the famous Black Dyke Band in the Central Hall in Grimsby.

Recently our association with bands has included hosting a concert with the Carlton and Frickly Colliery Band in Feb 2011, as part of our anniversary celebration concerts, a band we hope to host again for a Christmas Concert in 2012.

In our 40th Anniversary year the choir is maintaining its established tradition of bringing to the area quality music groups by hosting a special concert, as the highlight of our singing year, with the Syd Lawrence Orchestra. This Special concert took place at Grimsby Central Hall on Saturday March 26 at 7.30 pm.

Chris Dean, the Musical Director took the band through swing jazz and of course the sound of the big band. He was supported

with guest vocalists and a close harmony group. The orchestra has been voted the best big band for the eighth consecutive year and brought back vintage memories and a nostalgic look back for many of us in their music

Our Anniversary year has been a busy but enjoyable time with the choir organising a celebratory dinner for all members and friends. A visit to Luton has been arranged as guests of the Luton Male Voice choir to sing in a concert there in early October of this year. The year will culminate for all of us in a Celebratory Christmas Concert in early December with special guests Colne Valley Male Voice Choir.

Linda Sankey

Top Ten Reasons for Being a Tenor:

1. Tenors get high without drugs.
2. Name a musical where the bass got the girl.
3. You can show the sopranos how it SHOULD be done.
4. Did you ever hear of anyone paying £1000 for a ticket to see the 3 basses?
5. Who needs brains when you've got resonance?
6. Tenors never have to waste time looking through the self-improvement section of the bookstore.
7. You get to sing along with John Denver singing High Calypso.
8. When you get really good at falsetto, you can make tons of money doing voice-overs for cartoon characters.
9. Gregorian chant was practically invented for tenors. Nobody ever invented a genre for basses.
10. You can entertain your friends by impersonating Julia Child.

Ten Top Reasons For Being Basses in the next issue of News & Views.

Midlands West Group

We held a very positive AGM on 5 March at the Chucker Working Men's Club, where MDs and delegates met to discuss business and social aspects of the group.

The AGM was hosted by Walsall Harmonic Male Voice Choir. We were welcomed by Mr Bob Share, Secretary, and a very nice lunch was provided by the ladies of that group. We welcomed two new choirs into the group, Willenhall Music Society and Forte Gospel Choir from Coventry. NAC goods were put out to sell during our break, such as key rings, pens and badges and a lively interest was shown by members. There were some positive, lively discussions during the meeting, when David Small from The Chase Orpheus Choir spoke to us about their recent successful advertising campaign for new members. We will all be thinking hard about the way it was tackled.

Some of these points were given to us later during an informative workshop, delivered by Mr Robert T Elliott. All aspects of choir life were discussed thoroughly, and again questions were put forward by members. We have a wonderful mezzo soprano in our group, Diana Gunn, whom I had

mentioned to Robert when discussing the brief I had given him, and he did call on her to sing for us, she sang beautifully and unaccompanied. This was a very interesting and professional workshop, which we can recommend to any choir interested.

I stepped down from the chair at this meeting, but the new Chairman, Mr John Raybould, and committee, will no doubt take the group forward. They will have my full support. Midlands West group was in danger of being disbanded 3 years ago, but the hard work by committee put the group back on track and we now have a thriving and vibrant group of choirs.

Dorothy Bates

Rodgers & Hammerstein Cwiz

Answers

1. Oklahoma
2. Carousel
3. State Fair
4. Allegro
5. South Pacific
6. Me And Julie
7. The King And I
8. Pipe Dreams
9. Cinderella
10. Flower Drum Song

What will your choir be doing this year?
Why not write and tell us about what will be happening to your choir from **November** onwards.

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News & Views - 196 Autumn 2011

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Tamar Valley Male Voice Choir Cornwall

Why not form a new Male Voice Choir?

On first thoughts, not a difficult question, but one loaded with imponderables. This was the short agenda that faced nine determined men, one evening on St George's day 2006, in a cottage tucked away in East Cornwall. The meeting took on a positive attitude and it was decided to form the choir named The Tamar Valley Male Voice Choir, the Tamar valley and its river being the boundary between Cornwall and Devon, or England as the Cornish refer to it. It was further decided that the market town of Callington would be the practice centre for the choir which would possibly attract members from both sides of the Tamar.

The first major decision was to discuss and appoint a Director of Music, an appointment that had to be correct to achieve the high standard that the founder members were intent to attain. The TVMVC were most fortunate to be able to appoint Rosemary Cole to fulfil the all important roll. Rosemary came to the extremely small choir with a host of qualifications not only with experience of male voice singing but with the ability to arrange and compose pieces exclusive to the choir. The other attributes Rosemary had, and indeed still maintains, is a tremendous determination for success and a great sense of humour.

The accompanist approached was David Crocker, well known in the whole of the Tamar valley and beyond for his remarkable musical ability on organ, keyboard and piano. David is often called upon for solo pieces at many concerts and has, on unaccompanied pieces, helped to swell the singing.

Thus the stage was set and the choir grew to 11 members in time for their first concert some 6 weeks after forming. In 2008 the choir undertook an ambitious tour of the Czech Republic as guests of the Jerabinka children's choir in Opava. The choir performed five concerts two being in Opava one in the beautiful Vresina Church the other in the Parliamentary Hall of the Minorite Monastery, which were well received and indeed the TVMVC played host to the Jerabinka choir in 2009. Since those days an acceleration of success has put the choir into a fairytale position in the popularity of male voice choirs over a very wide area, the choir has recorded 3 CDs, made television appearances, had sell out Gala Concerts performances at the world famous Eden Project here in Cornwall and been guests of the Ynysowen MVC at Aberfan. This year a tour of North Wales and

Anglesey has been arranged all coupled with an average of 28 concerts each year. Many thousands of pounds have been raised for charities and many pasties (Cornish of course) eaten to keep up with the hectic schedule.

The TVMVC is lucky to have a wonderful fund raising Ladies' Committee, who were instrumental in providing funds for the recently purchased new uniform proudly worn by the choir whose numbers have risen to 32.

The founder members are proud that their vision has matured into a choir that has achieved so much in only 5 years and with the present drive and enthusiasm within who knows where our journey will take the choir in the next 5 years.

www.tamarvalleymvc.co.uk

Henry Sharp



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The Torrridge Male Voice Choir
Devon

The Torrridge Male Voice Choir is known as one of the friendliest and benevolent choirs in the south west of England.



What does 'The Torrridge' mean to you? Maybe you visualise a gentle river starting its winding journey near Hartland in north Devon, rising at Baxworthy Cross, then hurrying down to the little white town of Bideford. Perhaps it means a fast flowing estuary, forming part of the Tarka Trail featured in Henry Williamson's novel 'Tarka The Otter'. On a more pragmatic theme, it's a district council fortunate to be situated in one of the most beautiful

parts of the country. Then again, maybe it's just a phrase to rhyme with 'porridge'!

'The Torrridge' is also known as one of the friendliest and benevolent choirs in the south west, singing to support charities and good causes. Their generosity in giving performances puts them in high demand across the stunning Devon coastline and inland towns. The Torrridge Male Voice Choir, to give it full title, comprises former choirs from Bideford and Hartland, with members from local north Devon villages. It is made up of twenty-five stout hearted and good natured men, keen to enjoy music together for an excellent purpose. Two of the members attend from Cornwall, one coming all the way from Truro every week to sing with the choir!

The TMVC aims to attract guest choirs from time to time, and this spring was fortunate indeed to welcome a new Welsh male voice choir, Bois Goetre-Hen a'r Cylch, from Coytrahen, near Bridgend, visiting Devon for a special concert held at Bideford Methodist Church, raising funds for The Devon Air Ambulance. It was a magnificent evening combining both English and Welsh languages. The choir also enjoys a trip away annually, and

goes to Ross-on-Wye for their outing this year, to enjoy a concert with The Drybrook Ladies Choir in June. Performing with local choirs and bands is always special for The Torrridge, and their Night Of The Proms concerts with Bideford Town Band are hugely popular. In October they are singing with local ladies choir The Appledore Singers at Woolsery Church, to raise funds for various cancer charities.

Choirs of all shapes and sizes enjoy singing as a fun activity that gives a feeling of well-being and brings joy to others, and the TMVC is no exception. Their efforts to be inclusive, arranging local and distance events with other groups, make them a little different, and certainly increases the sociability of singing across county and country borders.

Contact Chairman Derek Gale on 01409 281196

www.torridgemvc.co.uk

*Linda Atherton
Publicity Officer*

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Letter from NAC in Oz

G'day from a wet and cold Down Under. The choir year is well under way and the Sydney Male Choir has been busy as usual.

Our first concert after the summer break was late in March but by the end of April we have performed at five events ranging from singing at a farewell dinner for a top official in the State road building organisation to the Anzac Day Dawn Service to singing at a Sydney Kings basketball match - pity they lost - as well as at 2 'normal' concerts.

As seems usual recently Anzac Day suffered from terrible weather and we were all soaked to the skin by the time the service was over. It is amazing that over 5,000 people attended this service in the rain at 4.15am! Such a range of ages will keep this tradition alive. Australians certainly do not forget the debt they owe to their fighting men and women and the Sydney Male Choir is proud to have sung at every Anzac Day Service to be held since 1928.

Our new Musical Director, Houston Dunleavy, has started to introduce pieces of music that are new to the choir and, although some of these are quite challenging musically, the choir is responding well to them, as are the audiences. Several of the pieces are Australian and it has long been an aim of the choir to include more such items. We were pleased that the arranger of a couple of these new items was able to attend one of our concerts to hear our rendition of his work. He seemed pretty pleased with what we did, thank goodness.

We are still working on our plans to celebrate our centenary in 2013 and hope to be able to attend the annual Anzac Day service held in Villers-Bretonneux in France, the site of the Australian National War Memorial. If we are chosen to sing at that service we will also travel on to attend the Cornwall International Male Voice Choral Festival at the end of April. We would also like to perform other concerts, possibly with other choirs while in the UK so if you would like to see us in May 2013 please let me know.

Summer has gone with a vengeance and we are now left with cold wet weather and the medium term forecast says it will continue for some time. Jan and I will miss it though as we travel to the UK at the end of May. We might see some of you there!

As always if you wish to contact me please do so via email at

petefig@optusnet.com.au.

I always look forward to contact from the UK.

Peter Marshall



Bagpipes at a Funeral

As a bagpiper, I play many gigs. Recently I was asked by a funeral director to play at a graveside service for a homeless man. He had no family or friends, so the service was to be at a pauper's cemetery in the Oklahoma back country. As I was not familiar with the backwoods, I got lost and, being a typical man, I didn't stop for directions. I finally arrived an hour late and saw the funeral guy had evidently gone and the hearse was nowhere in sight.

There were only the diggers and crew left and they were eating lunch. I felt badly and apologized to the men for being late. I went to the side of the grave and looked down and the vault lid was already in place. I didn't know what else to do, so I started to play. The workers put down their lunches and began to gather around.

I played out my heart and soul for this man with no family and friends. I played like I've never played before for this homeless man. And as I played 'Amazing Grace,' the workers began to weep. They wept, I wept, we all wept together. When I finished I packed up my bagpipes and started for my car. Though my head hung low, my heart was full.

As I opened the door to my car, I heard one of the workers say, 'I never seen nothin' like that before and I've been putting in septic tanks for twenty years.' Apparently I'm still lost... it's a man thing.

Pastor v Choir Director

Church feuds are not uncommon, especially among cliques in the congregation. But when the pastor and choir director get into it, stand aside.

One week our preacher preached on commitment, and how we should dedicate ourselves to service. The director then led the choir in singing, 'I Shall Not Be Moved.'

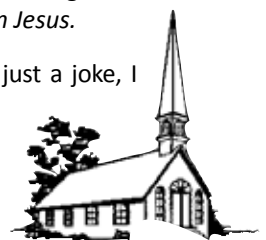
The next Sunday, the preacher preached on giving and how we should gladly give to the work of the Lord. The choir director then led the song, *Jesus Paid It All*.

The next Sunday, the preacher preached on gossiping and how we should watch our tongues. The hymn was *I Love To Tell The Story*.

The preacher became disgusted over the situation, and the next Sunday he told the congregation he was considering resigning. The choir then sang *Oh, Why Not Tonight*.

When the preacher resigned the next week, he told the church that Jesus had led him there and Jesus was taking him away. The choir then sang, *What A Friend We Have in Jesus*.

Don't worry this is just a joke, I think.



Lincolnshire Group

A world premier performance brings choirs together

There is a lot to be said for regional get-togethers - particularly if you are not the organiser! Whatever the formal agenda, the opportunity to eat, drink, chat and sing with a group of people with a common interest brings great social and spiritual benefits. And the showing-off traits sometimes associated with those who perform in public gain a gratifyingly larger audience.



Those who have organised these events often find it easier to explain how NOT to do it. There is no magic solution which fits every requirement. Are they to be fund-raising events? The significance of geography and history, among the many interdisciplinary contributions music can make, should never be underestimated.

In the Lincolnshire Group of the NAC we have tried and succeeded with a number of different formulations for group concerts over the years. Massed choir performances offer the great sounds and emotions that only large numbers of singers can provide; but (and there is always a but) to be at their best they require a commitment to joint rehearsals which is not always easy to make because of geography and individual choir rehearsal schedules. We have also held concerts at which individual choirs strut their stuff in turn; this format displays all the competitive attributes of a festival but without the pain and pleasure of an adjudicator's judgment and is, consequently, somewhat less collegiate than massed choir events.

Last September we adopted another variation on the theme, structured around a specially written piece of music. Fred Goodwin, one time organist and choirmaster at St James's Church in Louth had previously written for Louth Male Voice Choir and the church choir. His brief on this occasion was to compose a work which could be sung by ladies' choirs or male voice choirs (to encourage them to learn it with the possibility of including it in their ongoing repertoires) separately or together as a

mixed voice choir.

Fred said before the performance: 'My brief was to write music that could be sung by sopranos and altos, or by tenors and basses, or by all combined together. The texts were to come from a poet with Lincolnshire connections. Choosing the poet was not too difficult. I selected three of Tennyson's shorter poems, designed to produce three-part songs with different moods: *Ring Out Wild Bells*; *To Sleep*; and *The Splendour Falls On Castle Walls*. Writing for the available forces was quite a different matter. As a challenge it has been stimulating and at times infuriating, but also rewarding. The resulting music does not, perhaps, always give the participating singers the easiest ride, but I hope it will have given them something to get their teeth into, and that they will make a joyful noise when they all come together.'

The massed choir consisted of members of the Humberston Singers mixed voice choir, male voice choirs from Scunthorpe, Grimsby & Cleethorpes and Louth, and female voice choirs from Immingham (Pelham Singers) and Louth (Ludensian Singers).

Fred held a briefing session with the choir directors six months before the performance and then rehearsed and conducted the performance as the highlight of the concert on the day.

The event covered its costs (including Fred Goodwin's composition fee and music copies) and we received positive feedback from audience and many of the 150+ participants. As for the butts... you cannot expect me to reveal those.

Fred has kindly agreed that our payment allows any member of the NAC to use his music - and arrange their own copies. He asks only that he be notified. For further information, please contact Frederic Goodwin

01507 605254

fgoodwin@btinternet.com

alanmjohn@btinternet.com

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Alison Bebb

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Midlands North

25 Years of 'Of One Accord'

The Shropshire choir 'Of One Accord' Were formed in Nineteen-Eighty-Five Which means that last September We reached the age of twenty-five.

How to celebrate this milestone Was something we had to agree. A ceilidh? A meal out? A party? We decided - "Why not all three?"

The celebrations will last all year But started on the eighth of October With a party and concert - highly acclaimed, Even by those who were sober!

A few of our favourite pieces Were chosen by Alison, our MD They ranged from Karl Jenkins's 'Adiemus' To Queen's 'Bohemian Rhapsody'.

There was 'Tell Me It's Not True' Such an emotional song from 'Blood Brothers' And the gorgeous 'American Trilogy' Amongst a variety of others.

Having been delighted by our concert The audience was treated to food And then (several glasses later!) For dancing was in the mood!

It was time for 'The Hot Jazz Biscuits' To step up into the limelight. A group of exceptional musicians Who entertained for the rest of the night.

We all had a wonderful evening Surrounded by so many friends Remembering the years spent together And thanking those upon whom we depend.

To be part of this choir is an honour And we continue to grow and to thrive. As we celebrate this great milestone We say "Here's to the next twenty-five!"

We don't often get poems.

What a lovely way to celebrate a twenty-fifth anniversary. Thank you Alison.

Come on now the rest of you, put your thinking caps on and send me novel ways of bringing your News & Views.

Crawford

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Officers Meetings

16 September 2011

Venue to be confirmed

15 November 2011

Venue to be confirmed

17 January 2012

Venue to be confirmed

Members Open Forum

3 September 2011

Venue to be confirmed

28 January 2012

Venue to be confirmed

Future venues will be confirmed at the Officers' Meeting on 7 June which is, unfortunately, too late for this issue.