

THE NATIONAL PUBLICATION FOR ALL CHORISTERS

NEWS & VIEWS

207

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHOIRS

SUMMER 2015

CONFERENCE 2016

Provisional Timetable

WORTHING 2015

Conference Report

Radcliffe on Trent MVC

Tour of Brittany with pictures

North Ferriby Ladies Choir

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**Last date for submissions for Issue 208
AUTUMN 2015 - 31 AUGUST
On your doorstep by 1 October**

Crawford's Corner



You are now reading one of the last things written in this issue of News & Views. Which is strange as it always appears near the front.

As editor I can't really write about what is in the magazine until I've put it all together. Today I'm waiting for a couple of advertisers to send me fresh artwork, they're busy people and I tend to interrupt their work to badger them into sending me a new advert. While I'm waiting I'll get on with this bit.

I've done my conference report and you can find it on page 13. I rather think that it was a conference report that got me started as editor of News & Views. Someone asked me to write a report from the view of an attending delegate. I was daft enough to say I would do it then one thing led to another and here I am writing Crawford's Corner.

In this issue you will find a number of choirs who regularly contribute to News & Views. The Glasgow Phoenix are usually represented as are Churchdown. This time there are a number of new contributors which is fantastic. I don't think St Stythians have appeared before and The Brue Boys are new boys in this periodical. It's always great to have new voices in these pages, so if your choir has not told us your news before why not fire up your computer and

let us know what goes on in your part of the choir world.

Crawford

The Cryptic Crossword

At conference I mentioned that I don't get feedback about things that appear in News & Views. This applies to the puzzle page where I produce a new cryptic crossword for each issue. I don't know how these crosswords are received by the readers. Are they too hard, too easy, too boring? Of course there is no proper answer to this as I must remember that what is a simple crossword to some, to others is dreadfully difficult. My wife doesn't like cryptic crosswords but I find them quite a challenge. Creating them is great fun.

While I have some space let me tell you how I go about creating the crosswords for News & Views.

I have a program that I use to create my crosswords, it is called Crossword Compiler 8 and can be bought online. It allows me to create a grid of any size that I like and will fill it with random words from a vast database. I can add words of my own or use different databases to create crosswords to a theme. The main bit that I have to contribute is the creation of the cryptic clues.

I'm afraid to say I like crosswords but I couldn't complete a whole one, not often, not on my own. I cheat by using a number of websites that offer help in solving anagrams, filling in the words when you only have a few letters, or providing synonyms and antonyms.

I do find that by trying to solve crosswords I am learning a little about how to create them. This time, for example, I chose to fill the grid with words from an anagram database so every word has at least one other word or group of words that can be made from rearranging the letters. This should, I suppose, make it a little easier to solve this puzzle if you have a handy little website like www.anagram-solver.net. The crossword program I use has an anagram writer which helps me to think of clues.

When you create a clue where the answer is an anagram you are supposed to use a word or words that show that the clue is one for an anagram. For example 12 DOWN Assorted actors and a crazy co-star may be revolutionary (6). the key words are *assorted* and *crazy* They both say that there are anagrams in the clue. In this case *actors* and *co-star* are anagrams of the answer. The straight clue is the word *revolutionary* as the answer is CASTRO

Do have a go at the crossword and let me know how you get on.

Crawford

Chairman's Chat



This issue seems to be rather reflective inasmuch as it is laced with anniversaries - even the more newly formed choirs are acknowledging their milestones! These celebrations are

wonderful because they cement the friendships that keep choirs moving forward. To reinforce that, I can tell you that through the NAC I have made some lovely friends who I know will be there through the rest of my life, and it was this fantastic mutual interest that brought us together.

I hope the activities of the choirs who report them inspire those of you who are hesitant about doing something not

done before. Over the years choirs have performed at some strange, awe-inspiring, unusual venues and at one-off landmark occasions, but they are the ones that are talked about for many years. Remember they had to do it a first time too. And when you have bitten the bullet I hope to read your account of your special occasion.

It is lovely to hear about the National Children's Choir of Enfield - what a fillip to their singing. Although it isn't possible for every youth choir to have John Rutter providing for them, it does show what we adults can do to (that word - again) inspire youngsters to sing which will carry through to adult choirs.

I feel I have banged a particular drum again, but music and its continuance is a priority, and a joy, for us choristers, so it's worth talking about. I hope you enjoy reading the magazine.

Brenda Wilkinson



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Forthcoming Events

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

Send your event to

publications.officer@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk

June

HULL MALE VOICE CHOIR

Saturday 6 June

Time: 7.00

Venue: **Queen Elizabeth Academy,
Mansfield**

Joint Concert with Mansfield & District Male Voice Choir and Hull Male Voice Choir

Tickets: £8 (Children in education £4)
01482 656869

Date: Saturday 20 June

Time: 2.00

Venue: Community Room

behind Methodist Church, Withernsea
Joint Concert with Withernsea Ladies Musical Society and Hull Male Voice Choir
Tickets: 01482 656869 (Price to be announced)

GILDENBURGH CHOIR CONCERT

Sunday 28 June 2015

Time: 7.30

Venue: **St Mary's Church, Whittlesey,
Peterborough**

The Gildenburgh Choir return to St Mary's Church with a concert of popular music and soloists from the choir.

Tickets and other information on the choir's website.

<http://www.gildenburgh.t15.org/>

July

GILDENBURGH CHOIR GALA CONCERT

Jubilee Gems

Saturday 11 July 2015

Time: 7.30

Venue: **The Cresset, Bretton, Peterborough**

The Gildenburgh Choir is celebrating their Diamond Jubilee with a Gala Concert at

the Cresset, in company with their friends the Gresley Male Voice Choir and the City of Peterborough Concert Band.

Ticket prices and further information will be available on the choir's website.

<http://www.gildenburgh.t15.org/>

CHILDREN'S INTERNATIONAL VOICES OF ENFIELD

Sunday 12 July

Time: 3.00

Summer Festival Concert - last day of the Enfield Choral and Orchestral Festival

Venue: The Burford Centre, Palmers Green United Reformed Church, Fox Lane, N13 4AL

This will be a very exciting opportunity to have the first London performance of the new work by Alexander L'Estrange, Zadok Rules / Hallelujah. This is really special and is a fun and educational way of learning the names of our Kings and Queens of England in chronological order as well as interesting anecdotes about them. Importantly, much of the music is based on Handel and other composers, who wrote during those periods. Alexander is coming to give Master Classes early in our rehearsal period.

THE ROWLAND SINGERS

"Step into Summer"

Thursday 16 July

Time: 7.30

Venue: **Lancing Parish Hall, South Street,
Lancing**

Tickets £9/£3 from 01903 238792

THE ROWLAND SINGERS

"Step into Summer"

Saturday 18 July

Time: 7.30

Venue: **Emmanuel United Reformed Church**

Tickets £9/£3 from 01903 238792

EUROPA CANTAT XIX EUROPEAN CHORAL FESTIVAL

Friday 24 July to Sunday 2 August

Venue: **Pecs, Hungary**

Festival history

The EUROPA CANTAT Festival first began in 1961 in Passau (Germany), and since then, every three years it is hosted by a different European country.

This great musical event brings together, for one week, more than 3,000 singers from across Europe and several countries in the world. It wants to offer its participants the opportunity to meet each other, make important educational experiences, sing their repertoire, learn new music, tighten relationships, understand choral and vocal traditions of the hosting country and also of the participating countries, as well as the latest news, innovations, perspectives of the International panorama.

This is preliminary information only - please watch the website.

<http://ecpecs2015.hu/>

October

PENN SINGERS

'Voices for Hospices'

Saturday 10 October

Time: 7.30

Venue: **Dudley Town Hall**

Tickets £12

Details of ticket purchase and guests are on the website: www.pennsingers.org.uk

ST STYTHIANS MVC

Gala Concert

Saturday 10 October

Venue: **Falmouth Methodist Church TR11 3PG**

Time: 7.30

Tickets £6

Tickets may be purchased from choir members or on the door. If you wish to reserve tickets please ring 01872 863008

INTERNATIONAL ORATORIO CHOIR

Tuesday 13 to Sunday 18 October

Venue: **Riva del Garda, Italy**

Choral Workshop on Lake Garda (Italy)

W. A. Mozart - Requiem

The Requiem Mass in D minor (KV 626) by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is his final composition. Even though only two-thirds actually originate from Mozart himself, it is one of his best loved and admired works. Mozart died while writing the Mass. The piece was completed by his two students, Eybler and Süßmayr. The genesis and quality of later additions have been hotly debated for a long time. The strange circumstances in which the work was commissioned, and the chronological connection between this requiem mass and Mozart's rather early death has also inspired countless legends.

On Lake Garda the International Oratorio Choir will be using the rehearsal rooms.

The lake presents a wonderful spectacle of natural luminescence and colours for an unforgettable musical event.

The concert will be held in Riva del Garda

(Italy) on 17 October 2015 within the context of the 9th International Lago di Garda Music Festival.

More information about this project: <http://www.choral-workshops.com/>

December**ROWLAND SINGERS**

Christmas Celebrations Concert

Saturday 12 December

Venue: **Emmanuel United Reform Church, Worthing.**

Time: 2.30

Tickets £9 adult £3 child.

BENSLOWMUSIC

Singing Day - With Jonathan Willcocks

Saturday 12 December 2015

Tutor: Jonathan Willcocks
Distinguished conductor and composer Jonathan Willcocks leads this brand new Singing Day devoted to the choruses of Handel's Messiah and Jonathan's own work, Sing Africa.

Jonathan - who is well experienced in run-

ning such events will conduct participants as a choir throughout the day, ending with an informal performance. If you have copies of the Messiah please bring them along but we will have spares for those who don't, and music for Sing Africa will be provided. The day will begin at 10.30 and will end around 4.30. We will provide refreshments for break times but participants will need to make their own lunch arrangements. Depending on numbers the day will either take place at the Benslow campus or at a larger local venue. Further details will be available closer to the time.

An event not to be missed!

Standard: Intermediate, Advanced

Fee: £20

Benslow Music, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG4 9RB

info@benslowmusic.org

01462 459446

www.benslowmusic.org

ROWLAND SINGERS

Christmas Celebrations Concert

Thursday 17 December

Venue: Assembly Hall, Worthing.

Time: 7.30

Tickets £10 adult £3 child.



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Music and Festivals Officer



A Batch of music has arrived this time and also some festivals to report about which makes up for the lack of a report last issue.

Firstly from our friends at Banks Publications came a bumper pack of new issues

For male voices we have PCS339 *The Wonder Of You* (TTBB) arr Alwyn Humphreys and ECS573 *Men Of Power And Song* (TTBB) Peter Davies, the first is a fine, well written piece that will find a place with many choirs and the second a very fine rousing piece set to original words that would make a very good concert opener/closer.

With an eye on Christmas, ECS569 *Little Baby Born At Midnight* (arr John Bertalot) is a unison, (optional descant) arrangement of an Appalachian tune, a lovely simple tune with a beautifully written accompaniment makes for a lovely piece, in contrast *Sing Noel* (ECS570) same composer is not simple but is exciting with its immense rhythmic drive, syncopated rhythms and forthright cheerfulness.

Of the other pieces received, David Houlder's hymn/anthem *Love Divine* (ECS576) suitable for singing at weddings, breathes new life into these words with a compelling tune and fine organ writing, and Thomas Hewitt Jones – *The Bread Of The Hungry* (ECS556) is very beautiful, with words by St Basil the great, a simple flowing vocal line flows beautifully over a supportive and very original accompaniment, finally from Andrew Carter comes *The Cloths Of Heaven*, (ECS580) SATB but with divisi that takes it up to 7 parts, a wondrous soprano solo, a rich sonority of textures and a really rather beautiful piece, not particularly easy for every choir but worth the effort.

Next up we have from the RSCM their book 'Thy Kingdom Come', a range of suitable music including hymns, worship songs, and choral music from Byrd to Margaret Rizza all on the theme of social justice and commemorating the 800th anniversary of the signing of the Magna Carta.

As is typical with RSCM publications this is beautifully presented and will be useful for church choirs to dip in and out of for the treasures inside, as well as being useful for

planning complete services.

One of the stipulations of this column is that music reviewed must be readily and commercially available, either because it is published by a publisher who distributes it to music shops or because the composer has a website from which everything needed to make a performance can be bought from or downloaded from, so finally in this roundup we come to a Cantata by the composer Ray Saunders, the website link is <http://www.raysaunderschoral.com>

The Cantata is entitled *A Better World* and it is composed of 12 distinct songs. These are held together by a series of brief narrations, each with a choral backing and a slide show of original art work to illustrate each song in the story. It is a story about two refugees and their trials and tribulations on their journey to a new future.

The work has had some performance to good reviews and is an interesting idea worth a look, none of the music is particularly difficult and several pieces are stand-alone songs. His website is very detailed in its various ways to purchase, either full scores, individual songs etc – and the work, including sound samples is all there to have a look at and listen to.

Festivals

As is always the case, many festivals and choir competitions reach us with closing dates far too near for a choir to make up its mind, sort everything out and attend, however here are a couple that are well enough away to be of interest.

5th International Gdansk Choir Festival 11-13 March 2016. A festival for competitive and non-competitive choirs. This year in the jury will be composer Vytautas Miskinis (Lithuania), composer Rihards Dubra (Latvia) together with conductors from Poland and Slovenia, besides the competition part choirs will take part in concerts in Gdansk.

<http://www.gdanskfestival.pl/>

11th International Warsaw Choir Festival 23-25 October Festival is held in many venues in Warsaw and it is focusing on a cappella music. Head of the jury will be composer Romuald Twardowski together

with Jury members from Austria, Hungary, Spain and Poland.

Choirs can compete in 5 categories for handmade statuettes of GOLDEN LYRE. More information at webpage www.varsoviacantat.pl

That's all for this issue.

Tim Knight

Conference Coordinator



Conference 2015 has come and gone in a flash but we all have lasting memories of the occasion until we meet again next year. From emails and letters received from several

of the delegates it appears we got the mix of seminars and social content just right.

Thames South certainly put on an impressive show for our annual concert with the Town Crier as compère. Well you couldn't say they were not introduced well as I am sure he could be heard in Brighton and Portsmouth. Congratulations to Helen Emery for her concert co-ordination and also for the delightful Emery Ensemble of seven ladies with beautiful voices who entertained the troops following the Gala dinner on Friday evening.

Our main speaker the Rev Ronald Corp was very well accepted by the delegates and gave valuable instruction in singing technique and voice control. His love of his chosen career in music was very evident. I think everyone present enjoyed his presence and his approachable nature. Helen Emery taught the tunes *Hey Jude* and *Oh I do like to be beside the seaside* to the delegates and all were invited to join the massed choirs on stage during the Saturday evening concert to sing the pieces to the audience. Roger Hagarty from Roger's Music presented an interesting demonstration of musical instruments on Sunday Morning.

What I was impressed with was the Members Open Forum, as it is my way of tapping into the thoughts and requirements of the membership on the topic of future seminars and points of interest for you the membership. I would like to know what you wish me to organise in the future regarding speakers and topics of interest. This year there was an abundance of suggestions. I have tried to satisfy all of these and I list

them now. What came out strongly was that you need to know

- who are the speakers.
- what topics are they to cover.
- conference dates suitable to delegates who are teachers, ie dates when schools are closed. Many Musical Directors are teachers and need dates when they can attend conference.
- Timetable for next year's conference in summer News & Views instead of autumn issue to enable delegates to plan holidays so as to include conference.

I have managed to put out a provisional conference timetable and content in this News & Views as requested and hope this fits your expectations. You asked for Sound Technology to be covered including backing tracks and amplification. My friend and Colleague Karl Harper is a robotics engineer and musical instrument repair expert plus Musical Director and voice teacher. He is well placed to offer an interesting hour with mixing desks and sound control devices for choirs and public address systems.

Social Media is becoming more and

more relevant to choirs as we progress in the digital age. Twitter, Facebook and websites are an area where many choirs perhaps fear to tread. Our own co-opted national officer Tracey De Vere White is an expert in social media and has offered to take us through an understanding of the subject, its pitfalls and advantages. She has extensive knowledge of the potential of advertising within social media and will give many tips on its use.

Our main speaker, David Lawrence, is well known in the musical world. His list of achievements and involvement in many musical projects is too extensive for this article. He has a great interest in the young musician and singer and has adjudicated in many competitions where aspiring talent has competed. I suggest you look at his website for a comprehensive overview of his work.

As the dates for the 2016 conference are already fixed and the hotel booked for the conference I am unable to look at dates where schools are closed next year. However, I will be meeting with our 2017 Gloucester hosts in July this year and will bring this subject into deliberations over dates for 2017 and beyond. I have received an approach from Glasgow City Council to take the conference there in 2018 and will keep all these suggestions in mind when looking into this as a potential venue.

Newcastle on Tyne is our next venue and the Jury's Inn hotel is modern and spacious. It has ample space for our conference and all the amenities we require. Disabled facilities are good and there are no stairs. Parking is in the adjacent multi-storey car park. There is no street parking at this hotel.

The concert will be staged in The Sage, Gateshead. I will be arranging coach transport from the hotel to The Sage for all guests. Costing of the 2016 conference and booking form will be available in the autumn News and Views and will be as reasonable as I can possibly achieve considering the venue is a city centre hotel. The costing will include the coach transport to The Sage Arena. There will be costing for day delegates and for the Gala Dinner and Concert tickets for day delegates included in our tariff.

In closing may I take this opportunity of thanking each and every one of the delegates who attended this year's conference. It was a pleasure and a privilege to organise the conference when such kind words of appreciation were received by both myself and my wife Pat. Looking forward to meeting you all again next year.

Clive Lawton



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Jurys Inn Newcastle offers 274 stylish and comfortable hotel rooms ready to



accommodate up to three adults, or two adults and two children under twelve. Our rooms are spacious and include large soft beds, en-suite bathrooms with complimentary toiletries, flat screen TVs with Freeview, work area and free WiFi internet access.

Whether you are visiting the city for business or pleasure, the hotel offers all the comforts of home.

Wheelchair Friendly Rooms

Jurys Inn provides a number of wheelchair accessible bedrooms. These rooms have been designed to the highest specifications to make your stay with Jurys Inn as easy and pleasurable as possible.

Food and Drink

The hotel features a stylish in-house bar where you can enjoy a drink or meal after a long day. Alternatively, you can dine in our on-site contemporary restaurant which offers a varied menu of delicious dishes.

Costa Coffee Bar

With Jurys Inn Newcastle's all-day Costa Coffee bar you can curl up with a good book, catch up with a newspaper, work or browse the web with Jurys Inn's hotel-wide free WiFi.

We have 9 fully equipped Meeting Rooms and event staff on hand to ensure your meeting runs as smoothly as possible.





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National Association of Choirs

Joining the Nation in Choral Singing

National Conference Provisional Timetable 8-10 April 2016

The Jurys In Hotel, Scotswood Road, St James Gate, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4AD,

Friday 8 April

- 2.00 Delegates arrive and register
- 4.30 National Officers' meeting
- 7.30 Delegates and guests assemble for dinner
- 7.30 Reception National Officers and guests
- 8.00 Dinner is served
- 9.30 After dinner entertainment provided by the North East Brass Ensemble
- 12.00 Bar closes

Saturday 9 April

- 7.00 Access to trade stands to set up
- 7.30-9.00 Breakfast in main dining room
- 9.15-10.15 Annual General Meeting
- 10.15-10.30 Comfort break only
- 10.30-11.30 Seminar 1 David Lawrence
- 11.30 Coffee and trade stand viewing
- 12.00-1.00 Seminar 2 David Lawrence
- 1.00 Lunch and trade stand viewing *Lunch included in full delegate package*
- 2.30-3.30 Seminar 3 Tracey De Vere White - Social Media
- 3.30 Coffee and trade stand viewing
- 4.00-4.30 Seminar 4 David Lawrence - What makes him tick in the musical world
- 4.45 Buffet meal before concert *included in full delegate Package*
- 6.15 Coaches to Sage depart hotel
- 7.00 Concert at The Sage - Massed Male Voices 10 choirs Massed Mixed Voices 7 choirs
Massed Ladies Voices 7 choirs Finale All choirs
- 10.00 Return from concert. Light cold buffet *included in full delegate package*
- 12.00 Bar closes

Sunday 10 April

- 7.30-9.00 Breakfast
- For those delegates wishing to attend local churches, details will be available at hotel reception*
- 10.00 Karl Harper - Sound technology, inc amplification, rhythm tracks, backing tracks and much more
- 11.00 Coffee and trade stand viewing
- 11.30 Members Open Forum
- 1.00 Conference closes. *Lunch available in dining room at members own expense*
- 1.00 National Officers' debrief meeting *guillotined after one hour*

OH I DO LIKE TO BE BESIDE THE SEASIDE.

Conference Report 2015

Traditionally, well for several years, I have begun these reports with a song title and I can't think of one more suitable than Oh I Do Like To Be Beside The Seaside. There are a couple of reasons for this which will become clearer. If I'm beside the seaside I prefer a bit more sand than can be found at Worthing but, never mind I do like the pier.

Delegates began arriving and the officers were there to greet them. Not as many delegates as we would have liked but the North East had a major group concert in the offing. I was disappointed that my wife and I were the sole representatives of Lincolnshire when in the past we have usually been one of the best represented groups. The men of Fife were with us though. I believe they flew down frae bonnie Scotland.

The hotel was a good venue in the old style of creaky floors and long corridors with little ups and downs. Sadly, there was no pool for my wife. The parking was in a nearby multi-storey car park, hate them, but we got a very good rate for the weekend.

There was a good selection of trade stands with Carole Lyndsay-Douglas offering a wide variety musical bits and bobs, great for Christmas and Birthday presents. Pat Lawton brought lots of jewellery and things. I bought some things for my wife's birthday. Roger Hagarty was with us again. This is the last time as he is retiring next year. I, for one, will miss him.

The evening dinner was excellent. Last year I mentioned the roast potatoes.

That must have been prophetic as there weren't any this year. After the meal we were wonderfully entertained by the Helen Emery Ensemble. They had a very busy weekend and began it very well.

On Saturday morning Ronald Corp began by teaching us a little song which became a round.

*O heavenly Father bless us and keep us all alive,
there's ten of us for dinner and not enough for five.*

We then woke up our feet and knobby knees and sang other little phrases to get us moving our bodies and loosening up.

We panted and buzzed and made jungle noises; we found our lungs and ribs and diaphragms and counted loudly. Then sang red leather yellow leather and red lorry yellow lorry which doesn't get any easier with the years and was worse when he made us put them together.

We sang a number of bits and pieces which are often used with children like *Senwa dedende senwa* and *Engine engine number nine*. No-one seemed to be offended by this. We were all fully involved and sang with gusto.

We then got more serious and sang *Jesu Joy Of Man's Desiring* in four parts which was rather challenging, for me anyway.

We finished by singing *Poppa's got a head like a ping-pong ball* to the allegro from the William Tell Overture.

I think it is safe to say that it was the shortest sixty minutes any of us spent. The time flew by and the end came far too soon.

After a well-earned cup of coffee we knuckled down to work with Helen Emery to learn two songs to sing with the massed choirs at the concert. Here we return to my music for the conference as we were asked to sing *Oh I Do Like To Be Beside The Seaside*. We all knew the chorus of course but we had to sing the verse as well, and in harmony. I thought we did rather well. The second song was *Hey Jude*. We had some lovely dadadadadadas by the time we'd finished.

Ronald's next session was about how he organises his New London Choir. He has a training group which starts at seven years old. At ten or eleven they think of auditioning for the senior choir. There is a youth choir. When the boy's voices change they go to sing Barbershop then come back to the youth choir. The Senior Choir can be heard in the soundtrack of Cinderella.

He went on to talk about how much music is part of all educational subjects. It brings you to literature. We sang about Chicago in an earlier session so it brings you to geography. It brings you to science. How does a string work, how is a piano tuned to make the best sound. Maths is an important part of music.

He was concerned that we have thrown away our folk songs. If you go abroad you will be regaled with national songs sung from memory and in harmony. We cannot do that in this country. We might manage Jerusalem but it will be in unison. If we remember a sea shanty we will only manage one verse and there will be no harmony. I have experienced this when visiting abroad with my choir. We had songs from our repertoire that we could sing unaccompanied but when we ran out of those the choirs we were visiting had hardly got started with their local folk music.



Ronald's other session was about his own background and experiences and work with The New London Orchestra. He is very interested in the light music of the late 19th and the 20th century. I have no doubt that his time working in the BBC music library gave him a rich vein to mine. I have 6 CDs of his music which contain many signature tunes from radio's past, Dick Barton, Top of the Form, Children's Favourites and The Archers to name but a few.

The AGM of the Association is one of the main reasons for the weekend and this duly took place at 4.45. During this last year we have lost our President, Eric Jackson and a past General Secretary and Vice President, Frank Rhodes and also our friends Joe Agnew and Gloria Preece. A minutes silence was held for them.

Under the financial report questions were asked about the availability of electronic copies of this magazine in the form of pdf's for those choirs who do not need the standard four copies. This has been available for some time as a pdf version is put on the website as soon as the hard copy is available to members. We seem well off but with the centenary coming up in 2020 we will need the finances accruing to celebrate this occasion.

All the officers were available for re-election and were duly re-elected so that keeps us going for a bit longer.

After a buffet meal we took a stroll to the Assembly Hall in Worthing for the evening concert. You can see a picture of our compère on the front of this magazine. In stentorian tones he welcomed us to Worthing. We were entertained by a male voice choir, ladies choirs and mixed voice choirs. They began with a massed piece and ended with massed pieces and the music was varied and interesting. An enormous amount of work goes into producing these concerts and all those involved must be commended for all the time and effort expended. It isn't just those who appear on the stage; behind the scenes there are people we never see who are grafting away making sure that everyone and everything is perfect. Well done Thames South. Clive Lawton has written some of his own thoughts elsewhere in this issue.

Sunday morning brings the last lecture session and this is sometimes the poorest attended. Those who weren't there missed Roger Hagarty demonstrating the instruments he brings with him. I always end up wishing I were not only able to play the piano but also had the money to

buy his top of the range keyboard that he demonstrates so brilliantly.

The Members' Open Forum is an opportunity for the attending members to offer advice and constructive criticism to the officers. There was much discussion about finding a replacement for our late President. It will not be an easy task. Our conference co-ordinator gave some information about next year's conference. He was asked if he could put information about the conference programme into the summer issue of News & Views so that people could see what was on offer earlier. If you look elsewhere in this issue you will see that he has tried to do this. He was also asked to consider the number of teachers who are members and try to plan conference for the Easter break. This is more difficult but I'm sure he will try.

Thames South was able to report that the concert on the previous evening had raised around £600 for 'Hounds for Heroes'.

After the MOF members go home but the officers meet for their own debrief for an hour and then head home as well. So that is conference for another year.

Bob Swallow

East Fife Male Voice Choir

Scotland East

The end of May this year we will be a sad time for the choir, as we will be saying farewell to our Musical Director, Jim Broadley, after 32 years of loyal and faithful service.

Jim has, over the years, introduced the choir to many new arrangements and styles of music. When he took over as MD, he coaxed the choir in to singing without music on stage, which has enabled us to give more expression to our music. We will certainly miss Jim's wit, humour and professionalism throughout his time with the choir. He will no doubt look in to see 'the boys' from time to time which we will look forward to.

We are pleased to announce the appointment of our new Musical Director, Marilyn Boulton. Marilyn comes to us with a wealth of musical talent having recently retired from St Leonard's School in St Andrews after having been there for sixteen years. As a sophisticated and professional musician, Marilyn studied at the Royal College of Music in London, where she was a prize winner. Her

versatility extends to playing the piano, harp and clàrsach (Scottish harp) in a wide range of styles. She has conducted many choirs and orchestras, which include the Kent Youth Choir and orchestra, and currently takes the Chamber Choir of the University of St Andrews. Marilyn takes up her appointment with us at the beginning of September, and we look forward to this very much.

Brian Beaton

North Ferriby Ladies Choir Yorkshire East and North

We are a lively and enthusiastic ladies choir, with a varied repertoire, who meet to rehearse in a village to the west of Hull. We are looking to arrange a joint concert with a visiting choir in 2017, as part of Hull's City of Culture celebrations. Hopefully, we can also come to you and return the favour.

2017 promises to be an exciting year here, and there will be plenty for your choir to do in and around Hull before and after the concert. So, if your choir is based within a 150-mile radius of Hull, and you fancy arranging a joint concert swap, do please get in touch! jackiepiccos@gmail.com

**Jackie Piccos
Vice President.**

Mevagissey Male Choir Cornwall

When the Mevagissey Male Choir step on to the risers at St John's in St Austell on Saturday 2 May, they will be achieving yet another memorable landmark in their proud history - their 1,000th concert.

Following hard on the heels of last year's 40th anniversary celebrations, which included a Gala Concert at the Eden Project, this new milestone coincides with the Cornwall International Male Voice Choral Festival. As a result the Meva Choir will be sharing the stage for this momentous event with choirs from Germany, Switzerland, Wales and England.

Mevagissey Male Choir's first ever concert took place on 17 April 1975, five months after the original 20 founder members got together to sing. Six of those founders are expected to take their places on the risers on 2 May – a seventh, David Foard, who until recently was still singing with the choir, sadly passed away only last month.

Since those early days the choir has visited the USA, Canada, Germany, France, Holland, Portugal and the Republic of Ireland, as well as Wales and Scotland, and have performed three times in Westminster Abbey, the only male voice choir believed to have done so.

Later this summer the choir has been invited to sing with the Plymouth Military Wives Choir at the Plymouth Guild Hall and they are already looking forward to the concerts they will perform on the Mevagissey quayside every Monday evening in August.

01726 812046 or 07730 683324

miketate@live.co.uk

Mike Tate

Children's International Voices of Enfield Thames North

On the 22 March our two choirs the NYC Singers and Children's International Voices Choral have been selected by the London Officers of Rotary International to sing in the Royal Festival Hall. We are thrilled with this



opportunity to sing at such a fantastic venue.

Also, we will be busy as on the 24 March we are flying to Helsinki to meet up with many choral director friends, who are going to attend with us a new work *Rubáiyát*, by Einojuhani Rautavaara, with the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra. We are very thrilled that our son-in-law, Gerald Finley, will sing this work, which was written for him. In June / July he will sing the title role in Rossini's *William Tell* at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden.

Christmas was very special for us as we had been learning many pieces by our Patron Dr John Rutter CBE and he had promised to record, edit and produce a CD for us

featuring our Christmas Concert music. How wonderful it was. Not only that, he also arranged beautiful parts for flute, oboe and harp to accompany most of the pieces, which were either with organ or piano. We used the fun title of RutterFest! which John kindly agreed to and we sang to capacity audiences, having had to schedule an additional performance. The CD has been completed, but now we need to spend time preparing the booklet and we will sell the CDs to parents and friends in the autumn in preparation for Christmas gifts etc. So exciting for everyone concerned.

June & Christopher Keyte

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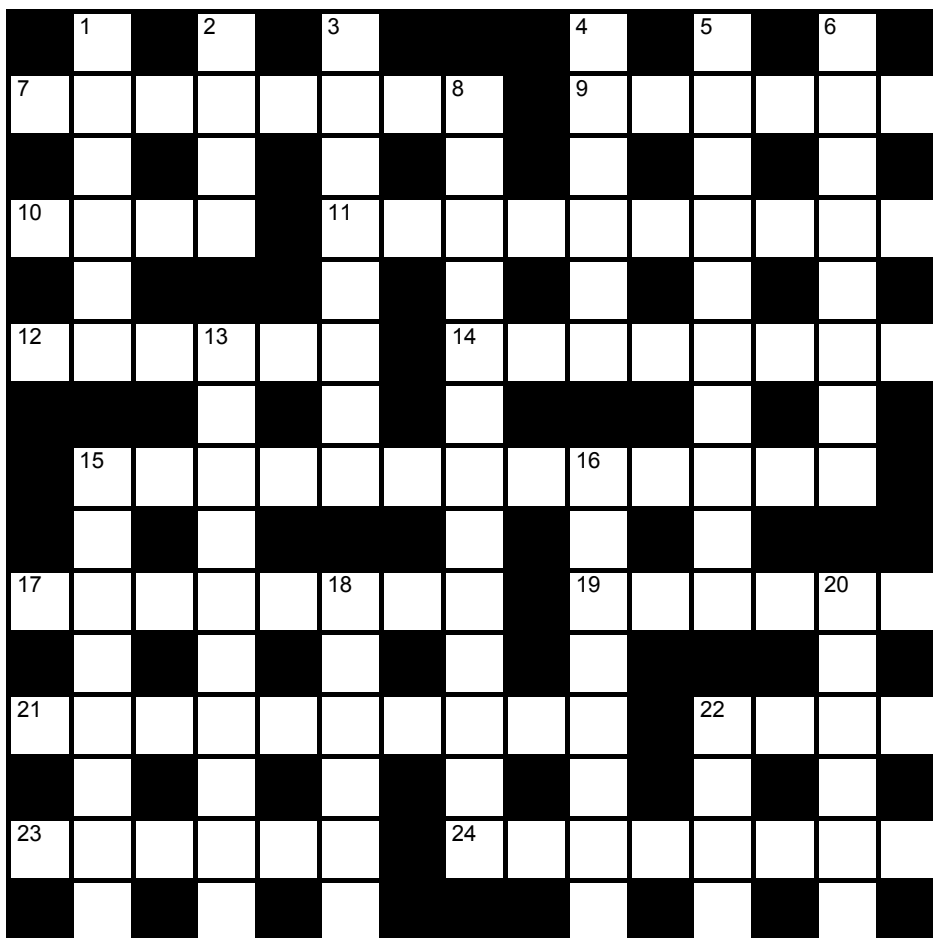
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Should be a nice easy puzzle this time as all the words are anagrams

PUZZLE PAGE

Across

- 7 Small songbird unusually we hear at dusk (8)
- 9 Damaged pub tea (4-2)
- 10 Urge on strange drop (4)
- 11 Go in a tunic after a fashion when selling to the highest bidder (10)
- 12 Assorted actors and a crazy co-star may be revolutionary (6)
- 14 Get on Sam anyway, we got millions of 'em (8)
- 15 Venetian's test results in lack of confidence (13)
- 17 Various reprises let him breathe again (8)
- 19 Wrongly impute that the computer is working (6)
- 21 The dishevelled technocrat wore a double-breasted mac (6, 4)
- 22 Stop over the new spot to send a letter (4)
- 23 Horrible Horace has Huntington's (6)
- 24 Mixed info as in Italian music (8)

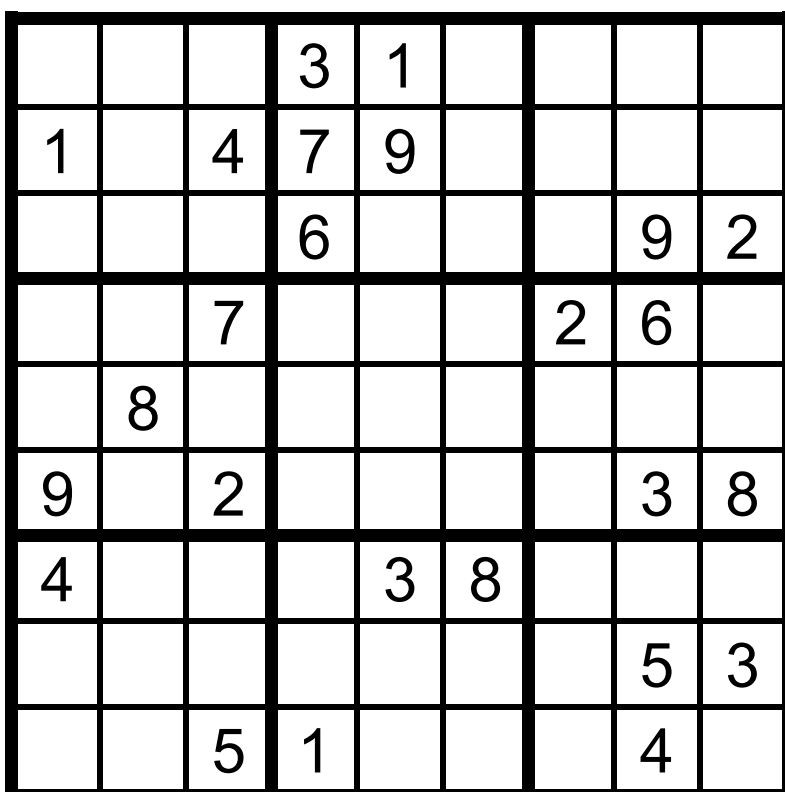


Down

- 1 Cleo changed her asp or climbing aid (6)
- 2 Sounds like the Lord arranged dual honour and praise (4)
- 3 Drunken amaretto may cause tumour (8)
- 4 A gradual decline affected Big Ben (6)
- 5 Major road terminates in ruins (4, 6)
- 6 Change isn't rung it's produced by a rotary tool (8)
- 8 General reappoints freakish seismic morons (13)
- 13 Terrible tenors pine to be able to eat baked beans (3, 7)
- 15 Doctor Heath cry, gods rule OK! (8)
- 16 It's bursting Peg, run it calamitously (8)
- 18 Warm again to eat her cooked dinner (6)
- 20 It's all over the place, I'm this poor batsman (6)
- 22 Where you play water polo strangely? (4)

To have your own copy of this page to work on go to www.nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk and look for the latest copy of News & Views then print the page. Easy!

SOLUTIONS ON PAGE 23



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Churchdown Male Voice Choir South West

A male voice choir that was started by some keen singers in a pub will this year reach its 50th year of performing.

The choir was formed in 1965 by a group of singers in Churchdown. Under its founding Musical Director, Roy Dorrington the choir performed its first concert in a local school in December of that year.

Over the years rehearsals have been held in many local venues including, the Bat and Ball, Churchdown Infants School, RAF Innsworth, the Church of the Immaculate Conception and finally has now settled in its permanent home of Churchdown Community Centre.

The 70 - strong choir led by MD, Ralph Barnes, and accompanied by James Quinn at the piano, performs around 12 concerts a year and raises over £10,000 each year for local and national charities.

Publicity Officer Barry Woods said 'We perform everything from operatic choruses, traditional male voice repertoire, hymns, pop songs and songs from the shows. We also have some excellent soloists within the choir. We meet every Monday evening at Churchdown Community Centre from 7.30 to 9.30 and would welcome any new singers to join us. Over the last few years we have had several new members join the choir through either being at one of our concerts, being introduced through one of the choir members or through our website, www.churchdownmvc.com

On occasions the choir will meet with other local choirs to perform in joint concerts. A recent example of this was a concert in Churchdown Community Centre on 18 April.

There wasn't a seat to be had and the packed audience enjoyed an evening of splendid music. The guests were the Innsworth Military Wives' Choir under its leadership of both Ralph Barnes and Norwegian, Gita Wymer, with James Quinn at the piano. The choir has only recently been formed and has already made a big impression both in the county and further afield. The choir sang a variety of pieces, from Gary Barlow to Bono and Webber. Also included was *Wherever you are*, which was sung and recorded by the original Military Wives' Choir founded by Gareth Malone and which will forever be associated with the Military Wives. Gita Wymer, as well as being an inspirational leader of the choir proved to be a significant composer, as her two songs, *Home* and *Lullaby* proved. In the second half she also showed what a beautiful singer she was as she sang *In my daughter's eyes* which she dedicated to her eight-year old daughter who was in the audience.

The host choir was also on top form and there was plenty to choose from its own performance. Soloist Jeff Bourton, with Pam Taverner at the piano, sang some love songs and, in the second half Ralph Barnes gave us some songs from the shows. The final piece from the choir was *Back to the 60s*, a medley of songs from that period which included *House Of The Rising Sun*, *Pretty Flamingo*, *Silence Is Golden* and ended with the immortal chorus of *Da Doo Ron Ron* in which the audience clapped and sang along. Before the final piece a surprise item was a thrilling piano solo from James Quinn of Greig's *In the hall of the Mountain King* which was played as a tribute to Gita who will shortly be moving back to Norway.

The final piece saw the two choirs together with both James Quinn and deputy accompanist, Len Morris, at the piano in a

stirring performance of *The Rhythm of Life*.

On Saturday 4 July the choir will be in All Saint's Church, Cheltenham for a concert in support both of the Leukaemia and Intensive Therapy Fund (LINC) and the Cobalt Unit

Saturday 11 July sees us in the Salvation Army Hall in Gloucester for a concert in support of Guide Dogs for the Blind

On Saturday 15 August we are in St Barnabas Church, Gloucester for a concert in support of Alzheimer's Society, and on Saturday 12 September we shall be joining in the mass choir concert with the NAC in Colston Hall. Tickets for the local concerts will all be £8 and are available from Colin Acton on 01452 714360

Barry Woods

The Glasgow Phoenix Choir Scotland West

Sponsored by The Co-operative Funeralcare

As usual, Glasgow Phoenix Choir has been busy rehearsing and performing since the beginning of 2015. In order of appearance, we helped celebrate Falkirk Rotary Club's 90th anniversary with proceeds going to Strathcarron Hospice; raised money for church funds in Dalry and Lanark (where some of the proceeds were also donated to Rotary projects); performed in the beautiful Devonvale Hall in Tillicoultry where the proceeds are to be used to develop Tillicoultry Parish Church's garden as a community project; and, kicked off a year of events to celebrate the Bicentenary of Bishopton Parish Church.

As the run up to Christmas 2014 had been very busy, the choir missed out on its



usual Christmas buffet. Many members of the choir regretted the absence of this event, so our social committee made up by organising a buffet and Easter hamper for our last rehearsal before the Easter holiday. I think it was Napoleon who said, 'An army marches on its stomach.' Substitute the word 'army' with 'choir' and you will have some idea of how we operate. Needless to say, if you know our eating habits, this enterprise was a great success.

The final event in the current part of our year was our annual spring concert on 24 April in Glasgow Royal Concert Hall. The concert began with three movements from *The Magnificat*, in tribute to John Rutter who celebrates his 70th birthday this year. The performance was enhanced by the beautiful singing of soprano soloists Elizabeth Dingwall and Elspeth Shearer. We also included sections from our two recently released CDs: *Faure's Requiem* and *Postcard from Iona*, both recorded in front of a live audience in Iona Abbey. Logan MacDonald made a wonderful job of the solo in the *Libera Me*. In a later part of the programme, Sandy Mitchell (tenor), did a lovely job of the solo in Gordon Cree's arrangement, for the choir, of *Caledonia*.

We were also joined by our very special guests, Karen Matheson and her band. Karen was lead vocalist with Celtic super-group Capercaillie and with them has sold more than a million albums and appeared in over thirty countries. As a solo performer, Karen has been involved in various collaborative projects around the world, including the award winning *Transatlantic Sessions*. She also performed a solo rendition of a Gaelic lament in the film 'Rob Roy'. Karen holds an honorary degree in music from the Robert Gordon University – another achievement to add to her OBE and award of 'Best Gaelic singer' from the inaugural Scottish folk awards – just some of the many plaudits earned during an astonishing career. As might be imagined, the choir was somewhat nervous about meeting this Scottish superstar, but need not have been. Karen is a lovely and most gracious lady who delighted us by her eagerness to sing with the choir. Together, we supported our own Billy Hillan in a duet with Karen as they sang *Amazing Grace*; later in the concert we sang *Fhear A Bhata* (The Boatman). On this occasion, Karen and our own Katie Orchiston sang lead vocals, with the choir singing softly in the background in the choruses. It was clear that both choir and audience enjoyed the experience of our work with Karen. Special mention must be

made of her rendition of the Burns classic, *Ae Fond Kiss*, which was spellbinding.

During the concert, our conductor, Marilyn J Smith, added an extra item (*You Raise Me Up*) to the programme in tribute to David Hendry. Members of the choir had been saddened to hear of his death, at the age of only 53 years on 26 February, 2015. Mr Hendry was a former Managing Director of The Co-operative Funeralcare who was originally responsible for their generous sponsorship of Glasgow Phoenix Choir over the last several years. Mr Hendry had been seriously ill for some time but had shown great courage and fortitude during his illness. He had a wide range of interests, including music, and, as might be expected, had prepared for his funeral in an exemplary manner. One of his requests had been for a group of singers from the choir to attend his funeral to sing two of his favourite songs, *The Dark Island* and *You Raise Me Up*. The funeral service was held in the beautiful setting of Dunkeld Cathedral on Tuesday 3 March, which was filled to capacity for the event. We were told that Mr Hendry had hoped that about a dozen singers might turn out for him. In fact, about 50 members of Glasgow Phoenix Choir were privileged to be able to show their respect and appreciation for Mr Hendry by singing the requested items in his honour. We should like to extend our condolences to his family, friends and all at The Co-operative Funeralcare.

And so, to the last part of the season. Our next concert will be in early May when we are off to Methil, Fife; and we are preparing for a weekend of three concerts in June with The Dublin Airport Singers, whom we were privileged to work with in a fund raising concert in Dublin in 2013. We are all looking forward to meeting them again and enjoying a good sing to end the season.

Anne Kay
Publicity Officer

The Brue Boys South West

Based in Baltonsborough, Somerset, The Brue Boys are recent members of the NAC.

The male voice choir was founded in 2007 by our Music Director, Jennifer Wescott, and now has over 50 members. The name is taken from the River Brue which flows close by.

Our concert programme is usually 6 to 8 performances a year and we have

repertoire which ranges from traditional folk, to modern standards and music from the shows.

Improvement in the standard of our singing is, as with all choirs, a constant ambition. To that end we have at least one 'masterclass' a year. We have benefitted from the input of such luminaries as Elizabeth Glen, Gwyn Arch, Julian Jensen and Alwyn Humphreys. These events certainly inject a 'buzz' into The Brue Boys.

We are pleased that since our inception in excess of £20,000 has been raised for charitable purposes including giving money to local primary schools to enable music tuition to be maintained.

We are this year, as last, performing at the Bath & West Show on 30 May and in advance planning for a visit from a French choir 'Les Voix du Marais'. They will be with us for three days culminating in a joint concert on 18 July.

We are now focussing on some new material for our next concert at Castle Cary Church on 8 May 2015.

For more information on The Brue Boys please visit our website www.brueboys.org.uk

Malcolm Allen

The Low Fell Singers North East

The choir's Musical Director, Jean Stevenson, is celebrating 60 years as a member of the choir this year. Jean joined the choir (then the Low Fell Ladies Choir) in 1955 as a chorister.

She began her musical life at six years of age when she had her first piano lesson and continued playing up to grade 8 standard. Jean also studied music in teacher training college and later studied singing at Newcastle Polytechnic.

During her career as a teacher, Jean taught music and singing, training choirs of young people as well as directing the music of Gilbert and Sullivan operas in school.

Jean became Deputy Musical Director of the choir in 1980 and became its Musical Director in 1986 on the retirement of the then Musical Director, Mollie Peacock, the founder of the choir. Under Jean's leadership the choir has gone from strength to strength.

The choir is arranging a special concert to mark Jean's 'Diamond Jubilee' and there is also to be a celebration dinner. Both events will take place in October.

Joan Wilson

St Stythians MVC Cornwall

The St Stythians Male Voice Choir was founded 68 years ago in Stithians. The Musical Director is Ken Downing (a member of the choir from his youth) and the accompanist is Kathryn Downing. The choir is a founder member of the Cornwall Federation of Male Voice Choirs.

We have participated in all four Federation massed Cornish Choir Concerts at the Royal Albert Hall, London between 1980 and 2000. We, also, appeared there again in November 2013 for Kernowyon a Gan. The choir sings throughout Cornwall and beyond. Major out-of-county trips in 2012 were to the Fairfield Halls, Croydon for a Diamond Jubilee Concert and to Ely Cathedral for a massed choir concert on 20 October to celebrate the 50th birthday of Huntingdon Male Voice Choir.

The choir competed in the County Music Festival (Truro) 2013, winning the Advanced Male Voice Choir class. We have participated in all six Cornwall International Male Choral Festivals 2003 - 2013. In 2014 we ventured north to explore the delights of Saddleworth and enjoyed northern hospitality.

The choir, as most choirs do, raises money for a wide range of 'good causes'. The nominated charity for 2014 was for two local young people with life limiting conditions. This year we are collecting for the Cornwall Music Trust which provides



music and instrumental tuition in schools, taking the place of what used to be provided by Cornwall Council.

On 10 October we give a warm welcome to The Silver Ring Choir, who have travelled all the way from Bath in order to sing in our Gala Concert. Formed in 1951, they are a highly successful and enthusiastic mixed voice choir of 40+ singers. They have an excellent reputation and have toured extensively. Their Musical Director is Phil Draisy and their accompanist John Lowe. We are also most fortunate to have Adrian Wilton as our compère.

Tickets may be purchased from choir members or on the door. If you wish to reserve tickets please ring 01872 863008

The choir would like to acknowledge the continuing sponsorship by J C Williams Ltd (Furnishers) of Helston

John Houldsworth

Gwalia Singers Wales South

The highlight of the Gwalia Singers' year is fast approaching and they are rehearsing for their Annual Concert. This takes place in All Saints Church in Oystermouth on Saturday 27 June 2015 at 7.00. The tickets cost £9.00 each and this includes a commemorative programme.

They are preparing some new items for this event and these include *You Are So Beautiful* with *The Wind Beneath My Wings* and *The Jimmy Brown Song*. They are also learning a new version of *My Way* the song made famous by Frank Sinatra and resurrecting Robbie Williams's memorable song *Angels*. Many other favourites from their extensive repertoire will also be performed.

The guest performers for this concert will be 'LaSe' a female vocal quartet. They have a very good reputation and the choir is looking forward to singing with them.

Tickets for this concert are available from any choir member, by phoning 01792 402080 or there may be some tickets available on the door.

For further information, history, photographs and recordings of the Gwalia Singers please visit our website: <http://www.gwalia-swanssea.co.uk>.

To contact the choir's secretary: Please write to: Alan Clewett Sheringham, Clyne Valley Lane, Killay, Swansea SA2 7DT

(01792) 203392 a.clewett@uwclub.net

Adrian Crowley



Grimsby and Cleethorpes Ladies Choir

Lincolnshire

The Cleethorpes Ladies Choir was formed by the late Vera Burton in 1971.

In 1996 the choir changed its name to Grimsby & Cleethorpes Ladies Choir. In 2008, Rita Grove took over as Musical Director from the late Brenda Oxborrow, with Sheila Shelston as accompanist. Under her direction from 2008 and through her excellent knowledge of singing techniques and music she had been able to develop the tone and diction of the choir to a very high standard. Lately we have been commented on and praised for our quality of tone and diction from members of the audience at several concerts. Choir members have also gained a better understanding of music theory from Rita's high standard of teaching which has also enhanced the standard of singing.

The choir has been a member of the National Association of Choirs for many years and is an active member of the Lincolnshire Group.

Concerts with choirs and bands regularly take place, often on an exchange basis. The



choir has quite recently had the Yorkshire band of the Royal Volunteers as guests at a very successful and enjoyable Christmas Concert at the Central Hall, Grimsby.

Various charities have benefited from performances. The Parkinson's Society and Ovarian Cancer have had money donations raised by concerts, raffles and social events. Smaller concerts in aid of local charities, singing at weddings and visits to entertain at residential homes all contribute to a busy calendar of events for the ladies of the choir.

The choir has a very wide repertoire which seems to cater for all tastes ranging from the classical songs to music from the shows.

During 2014 we have had the good fortune of embracing new members, some with young voices. They have integrated well not only in the singing but also on the social side and have become good friends.

The new recruitment is largely due to the new website created by a member's partner. It has our history, events diary, who's who and contacts.

www.g-c-ladieschoir.co.uk

The choir rehearses at the Central Hall, Grimsby on a Tuesday evening at 7.00 in the winter months and 7.30 in the summer months.

Linda Sankey



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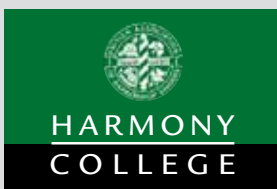
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Open to men and women, joining the College Chorus is a great introduction to this unique style of harmony. You will be given music and learning tracks in advance, receive expert tuition during the course, and then, along with your fellow choir members, perform on the Saturday evening college show.

Other Courses Available

If you wish, you can learn more about barbershop harmony by opting to attend other specialist courses including: Directing, Coaching and a Personal Development Stream which allows you to choose from a wide choice of barbershop related subjects and other singing topics.

Book Early - Book Online Now

View the Prospectus online and book your place. We normally have over 300 people attending, so we would recommend you book early, as demand for places for the college chorus, will be high.

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Radcliffe On Trent M V C East Midlands

Tour of Brittany 9 April to 13 April, 2015

Our annual tour began, on a Thursday morning, with the usual hustle and bustle besides Grange Hall, Radcliffe on Trent, as 33 choristers, with 19 accompanying wives, eagerly awaited the arrival of our Sharpes double-decked coach. There was even a hint of fraternising between sections; such was the excitement as we found space on the pavement for our luggage. We were further buoyed by the presence of our former chairman, Martin MacGillivray, who had retired to the Isle of Skye, last year, and was re-joining our ranks, having boned up on the tour repertoire remotely. To be honest, we were really interested in getting his wife, Margaret, on the trip; what with her being a retired French teacher and all. This year, we had to make room for our portable piano keyboard, since we had arranged to take advantage of a captive audience on board the outbound ferry, from Portsmouth, by performing a concert en route to Brittany. Four more choristers travelled separately, and with our musical team, we had almost 60 on tour.

At a services, just south of Newbury, our driver changed over, and we once again in the familiar and capable hands of Trevor. Some of us are of the belief that Sharpes are either short of drivers, or Trevor arranges his leave roster around the choir's annual tour. There are those who still begrudge the chap for making a late evening, post-concert fuel stop, during our Lancashire & Liverpool tour, two years ago, which risked a return to our hotel after last orders at the bar!



We arrived at the ferry terminal, in Portsmouth, with enough time to troop off the coach and comply with the new security regime of having to show our passports at the UK border on the outward leg. It was then all aboard the ferry, where we quickly staked out our seating area and wasted no time in getting up to speed with Euro transactions as we sorted out our first 'refreshments' of the tour. The Brittany Ferries vessel departed on time for its seven hour passage, although our expectation of seeing pods of porpoises sweeping majestically across the English Channel was somewhat short lived, due to our sailing directly into a bank of fog, which surrounded us for the remainder of our journey.

Shortly before 1600, several of our

choristers were press ganged into fetching the piano from our coach, lugging it up several decks (well, via the lift, in truth) and setting it up in front of the stage. The choir assembled as planned in short-sleeved order, our fellow passengers, mostly consisting of French school parties in their mid-teens, looked on in bemused fashion; and, just as we were about to launch into, *The Water Is Wide*, our pianist, Eleanora Babitsky, was pressing on silent keys due to electricity supply having tripped out. The ship's Entertainment Manager came to the rescue, and within three nervous minutes of his flitting about between stage and bar, we were up and running. Our nautical set concluded with, *American Trilogy*; always a crowd pleaser, no matter what the age group or nationality, but not enough to blow the sea mist away, unfortunately.



We disembarked in Ouistreham, near Caen, Lower Normandy, nearly two hours' drive from our intended base in Saint Malo. As a result, it was a weary throng of choristers who shuffled into the Escale Oceania Hotel, at 0200. That final leg came close to silencing the joke telling and singing from the 'naughty schoolboys' in the rear of the coach's upper deck. By 1000, on our first morning, we had been through breakfast and were taking in the sights and attractions (and Breton cap stalls) of Saint Malo's ancient walled city, ahead of a splendid choir lunch at La Table D' Henri. Our upcoming concert in Saint-Brieuc, that evening, meant that we couldn't imbibe too much, although an hour or so by coach to the venue gave us



the chance to recuperate. Our interest in quite how Trevor the Driver managed to reverse a huge coach back out of a one-way city centre street perked us up, just in time for our arrival at L' Eglise Saint-Yves.

We shared a stage at L' Eglise Saint-Yves with two mixed Breton choirs, Kanomp Ar Vro and Soli Deo Gloria. It was gone ten o'clock when we took to the stage after the interval, but our energy levels were raised by the enthusiastic support of our choral hosts who were now in the audience. Our rendition of *The Hallelujah Chorus* was a clear favourite with them. Victoria Barlow, our musical director (MD), helped our reception further, by conversing with the audience in French, which also encouraged our chairman, John Parry, to try out his French during the gift exchanges at the end. As a grand finale, we joined both local choirs on stage to sing the Breton national anthem, Bro Gozh ma Zadoù, sung to the very same tune as the Welsh national anthem. Radcliffe had learnt the first verse and chorus, in Breton, and were able to sing it without copy, although some of our front row were suspected of

cheating by peeking at the folders of the ladies in front of them! The evening was capped by a tremendous afterglow, filled with copious amounts of wine, cider and delicious home cooking provided by our hosts... as well as the compulsory singing, of course. It was a good job Trevor had to get us back to Saint Malo due to his shift time expiring, otherwise we might have made a pig's ear out of *The Rhythm of Life* for a second time!

On the Saturday, we had a concert free day and went on an excursion to the famous tourist attraction, Abbaye du Mont-Saint-Michel. Arriving around lunchtime, the choir split up as we spread ourselves around several of the restaurants that hug the base of the mount along the walkway up to the abbey, itself. There were plenty who were satisfied to take in this magnificent building from lower down, rather than put too much pressure on hips and knees in walking up the steep, cobbled incline. The photographers and culture vultures among us, and those with a simple drive to get to the abbey, were well rewarded; especially since the early rain had abated and the skies were clear.

We returned to La Table D' Henri that evening, for our tour dinner, with invited guests from three local choirs with whom we had arranged joint concerts. Our guests were most taken with our appointment of a Sergeant At Arms, whose after-dinner role was to administer fines for



misdeemeanours and cock-ups reported to him, during the tour. Examples of fines were: for a group of Welsh choir members singing out of tune in three different languages at the Saint-Brieuc afterglow; a top tenor being sighted fast asleep on a park bench inside the walled city, at 1000, one morning; and late entries for poor dress sense at that evening's tour dinner!

Sunday provided a final opportunity to catch the scenery and shops around Saint Malo, including an opportunity to walk along its long sandy beach, in sunshine that our trip had been blessed with, for most of the time. At 1700, we arrived at the church, Saint Jean l'Evangéliste, Saint Malo, for a joint concert with the mixed and unaccompanied choir, Vent Du Large. At this event, we performed 2 joint pieces, *Cantique de Jean Racine*, (conducted by their MD, Alain Wolff) and *The Water Is Wide* (conducted by our MD, Victoria Barlow). Another vibrant and generously hosted afterglow, saw a donation of over £100 from our tour dinner fines being made to, Les restaurants du Coeur de St Malo; a charity that provides food to the homeless. In the singing exchange, we were treated to fabulous renditions of bright, polished and precise, unaccompanied singing from our hosts. We did our best to respond, but it had been a hard trip and our voices weren't really up to it by then!

Our tour ended at 2330 on the Monday, when our coach arrived back in Radcliffe on Trent. Some had work the next day. Well; they were not wise enough to book leave. We look forward to welcoming our Breton hosts for a home game, before too long.

Ritchie Davies
Publicity Officer.

To all who moan about the price of musicians

A chap calls the musicians' guild to get a quote on a 6 piece band for a wedding.

The rep says "Off the top of my head, about £2000"

The chap says "WHAT? FOR MUSIC?"

The rep responds "I'll tell you what. Call the plumbers' union & ask for six plumbers to work from 6 'til midnight on a Saturday night. Whatever they charge you, we'll work for half.



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01793 770630 mary.new@btinternet.com

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07966 307945 david.crown@some.ox.ac.uk

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7	5	3	6	8	4	1	9	2
3	4	7	8	5	1	2	6	9
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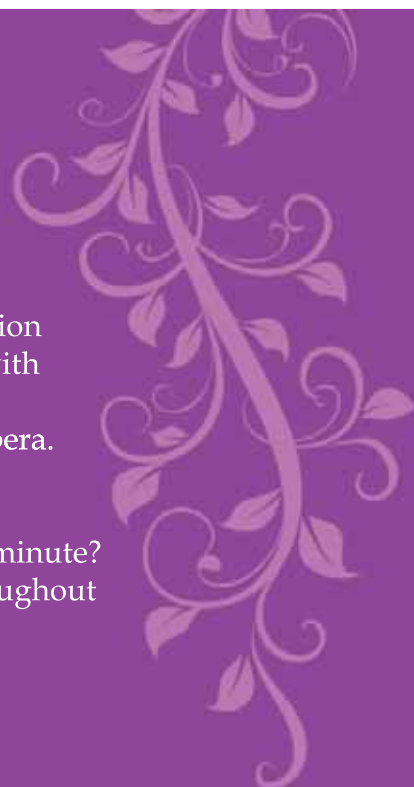
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How I like to receive articles for News & Views.

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

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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. **KEEP IT SIMPLE!**

HOUSE STYLE

- We use Calibri 10pt in News & Views. (If you don't have this, don't worry I can soon change the one you use.)
- Set your paragraphs to single space with no spacing before or after paragraphs.
- Start with the name of your choir.
- Then say the NAC group your choir is in.
- Write your article.
- Say who has written it.
- Quotes use single speech marks (same key as @ but without the shift).
- Dates do not include st nd rd or th
- Abbreviations do not have full stops.
- Song titles are shown in *italics*.
- Do not put photos in the text.

- Don't use am or pm in times.
- Unless the word 'choir' is part of a title it should **NOT** have a capital letter.
- Your choir is singular so 'the choir is' not 'the choir are'.

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

Attach them to an email.

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

01472 500130

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