

NEWS & VIEWS

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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHOIRS

AUTUMN 2013

CONFERENCE 2014

Booking Form Inside



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1963-2013



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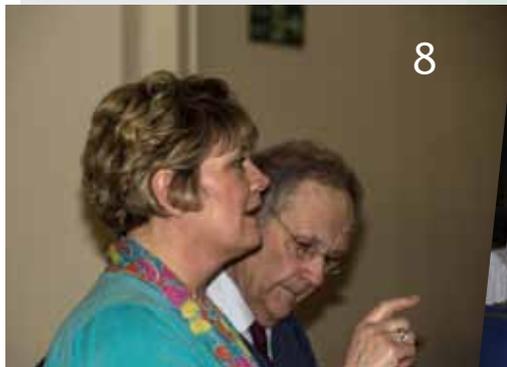
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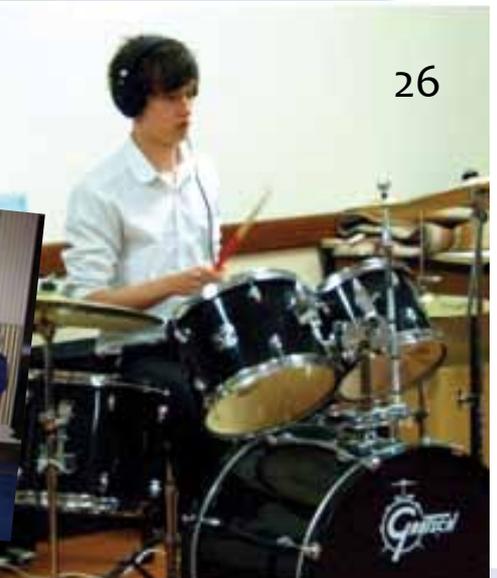


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Last date for submissions for Issue 203
SPRING 2014 - 31 DECEMBER
On your doorstep by 1 February

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Crawford's Corner



'Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness! Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;'

Autumn is here again. As I write this I can feel

the change we have had from an excellent summer. I need a fleece when I walk the dog in the morning. It is, of course, my NAC fleece.

Our front cover article this time is special. It tells the tale of one of our youth choirs on holiday together. Hertfordshire Community Youth Choir seems to be having a great time not only singing together but working and playing together. Choirs like this are our future and we must be grateful to the dedication of their organisers that they are thriving.

Lorie Stepney of Vauxhall MVC shows us another dedication. A dedication to

music and choral singing. I'm not sure I would have the stamina to attend so many concerts in a relatively short space of time. It's not just concerts he performs in but visiting other choirs and listening to them. Well done Lorie.

It was great to have a contribution from Cannock Chase Orpheus Male Voice Choir who say it has been six years since they sent in something to 'News & Views'. Come on fellows don't leave it so long next time.

This time we have the first news of next year's conference which will be at Scarborough in Yorkshire East. I hope the summer weather next April is as kind as it was this year. Yorkshire North is joining Yorkshire East to arrange the Gala Concert and I know that they are already working hard to bring it to the delegates. Have you been to conference recently? Why not, it's good fun and, you never know, you might learn something.

If you are hoping to come here are some ways of getting the booking forms to use.

- If you have your own copy then tear the forms out.
- If you are sharing copies you could photocopy the forms.
- As soon as your copy of News & Views arrives at your choir we upload a web copy to the NAC website and you can find it there under the Information tab. Download the .pdf and print off what you need.
- Easy.

Has anyone actually completed one of my cryptic crosswords? I usually let a couple of my choir colleagues have them to test before they appear in here so I know that they can be done. Let me know if you like them or if you find them too challenging.

Crawford

Chairman's Chat



After so many gloomy years without one, what a fantastic summer we've just had. For those who had outdoor concerts it must have felt like a dream come true, and especially so for the summer camp (report on page 21). It certainly lifts the spirits. But now it's getting cooler and the nights are drawing in and I bet some choirs have started rehearsing Christmas music!

With only three issues of News & Views per year, everything we say seems very repetitive at times, but I make no apologies in mentioning next year's conference. It will be in a beautiful hotel so all the plus ones will be extremely comfortable. The headline speaker will be Manvinder Rattan (all his details are in Clive's report). I've only met him once, but he is an extremely nice gentleman and, from what I've heard, plans are well under way for a great evening of entertainment for the Saturday concert. All I need now is for everyone to complete the booking form and come to the seaside for a great weekend. For those

who haven't been before, it's like a large family gathering, a house party where everyone is made welcome, and although we do some necessary work, who could resist a weekend party.

The NAC has now struck out and embraced the 21st century world and is now on LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter, and after only a couple of weeks on Twitter it has realised its 1000th follower. I'm frightened to ask 'what next', because for most of the officers this is new territory and it is exciting and we know we've a way to go to catch up with the younger people (for whom this is a way of life), but we're on our way!

Brenda Wilkinson



From the President



I have been in Hospital for 17 days following a fall at home and having fractured my hip I have been under the physiotherapist and am now getting about on crutches.

I am glad to say I have made good progress. To follow this I have had a chest infection and had antibiotics for the last week. I am now on water tablets to clear my lungs.

I had a request from the eye hospital to have a cataract removed. This was done on Monday 9 September and is still very painful but I can see well with that eye but my glasses are no use at the minute. It will be a few weeks before this can be rectified.

As you can understand my activities have been somewhat restricted but hopefully I shall soon be sorted out and getting back to singing and NAC business. I would like to thank the Officers for their cards and good wishes. To all choirs I wish you a good season of song.

Send Your Submissions To Crawford At

publications.officer@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk

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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

NOVEMBER 2013

Music For Heroes

Saturday 2 November 2013.

Venue: **Lakes Leisure, Kendal, Cumbria, LA9 7HX 7.30**

K Shoes Male Voice Choir Kendal is proud to host a Massed Male Voice Choir Concert accompanied by the Military Band of the Kings Division in support of Help for Heroes.

Choirs will be drawn from the North of England and Scottish Borders. The varied programme will be introduced by Master of Ceremonies Harry King of BBC Radio Cumbria.

Tickets £14 or £10 for children under the age of 16 years.

Available in advance from Lakes Leisure 01539-729777 or on the door.

www.kshoesmvc.org

Gwalia Singers

Saturday 23rd November

Venue: **The Albert Hall, Llandrindod Wells**
All proceeds will go to the local Twinning Association.

Blue Moon Harmony Choir

Saturday 30 November

Venue: **Cheltenham Town Hall 7:30**

A joint concert with the Cotswold Male Voice Choir in aid of the Wooden Spoon Charity. The Wooden Spoon Charity raises funds for projects to support disadvantaged young people. The proceeds from this concert will go toward the provision of play equipment for Belmont School in Cheltenham which provides for children with special needs. There will also be contributions by children from the school. Tickets from the Cheltenham Town Hall Box Office.

boxoffice@cheltenham.gov.uk

DECEMBER 2013

Sounds Of Christmas Guildhall

Friday 6th December 2013

Venue: **The Guildhall, Hull, Alfred Gelder Street, Kingston upon Hull, HU1 2AB**

The Hull Male Voice Choir - which celebrated its Centenary during 2011 - is presenting its annual concert of Festive Music and Community Carols conducted by Julian Savory and accompanied by Dorcas Leather.

Special Guests the Choir of Kirk Ella St Andrew's School.

Tickets available from October:

£7 (Children £3.50)

Gough & Davy, 13 Paragon Street, Hull
Reuben Hird on 01482 656869

Hull Male Voice Choir Members

hullmailvoicechoir@live.com

www.hullmailvoicechoir.com

Gwalia Singers

Tuesday 10th December

Venue: **Scout/Guide HQ in Bryn Road, Swansea**

Annual Ladies Charity Carol Concert,

Alan Clewett 01792 203392

a.clewett@uwclub.net

PROud to be there!

The Children's International Voices of Enfield

It was my pleasure to represent the officers of the NAC at a special celebration concert given by the Children's International Voices of Enfield at Palmers Green United Reformed Church on 14 July 2013. The concert was to celebrate the choir's 21st Anniversary and the 60th Anniversary of Her Majesty The Queen. They were joined by the Korbinian-Aigner Gymnasium Choir from Bavaria who they had visited recently.

I was invited to attend as a guest of the choir founder, June Keyte, and her husband and associate director Christopher. Both Pam and I enjoyed the very entertaining concert which was of an extremely high standard, with all five choirs of the Children's International Voices taking part, with an age range of 4 to 24+. We will never forget the contribution of the children's younger voices who were aged 4 to 6; they not only sang with great confidence and

enthusiasm, but sat quietly through the rest of the concert (over 2 hours) in their little chairs at the front of the audience applauding every act.

The quality and variety of items in the concert made it very entertaining and June should be congratulated for what she has created and achieved with this youth choir.



We all appreciate the importance of youth for the future of choirs and choral music; the Children's International Voices of Enfield are an example of the wealth of talent in the youth of today that can be nurtured and developed to a very high standard. Unfortunately not all children

get the opportunity or encouragement to develop their talents. On behalf of the Department of Education, the Arts Council is investing in a network of music hubs across England. One of the aims of music hubs is to develop a regional singing strategy to ensure that every pupil sings regularly and that choirs and other vocal ensembles are available in the area. 123 music hubs have been created, their primary activity being to liaise with all music oriented organisations in an area to actively encourage an integration of activities to support the development of children's involvement in music.

The NAC is actively working with some music hubs to support and help them; individual NAC choirs should approach their local hub and see how they can help.

<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/our-investment/funding-programmes/music-education-hubs/>

John Croft
NAC PRO

Mendip Male Voice Choir South West

All roads led to the Conygre Hall Timsbury last Saturday for the members and guests of the Mendip Male Voice Choir for a Gala Dinner.

The occasion was to honour and say farewell to Musical Director Kate Courage and her assistant and pianist Carl Speck they are both leaving the choir after nearly 10 years. Kate is leaving to have her first baby in a few weeks and Carl to take a new teaching job in London. After sitting down to a great four course meal with wine, Andy Green, the choir's chairman welcomed everyone to the evening then handed things over to Les Debenham, the secretary, to give a resumé of Kate and Carl's time with the choir starting ten years ago with just 28 members building it up to its present number of over 80.

The microphone was then passed back to Andy to make presentations of Bristol Blue Glass and a cheque from the members of the choir to both Kate and Carl with both replying saying how much they

had enjoyed their time with the choir. Hannah Lockwood, the choir's soloist, with Carl sang two songs with the second "Let's Do It" bringing the house down Kate supplied the accompaniment on the piano finishing the set with a humorous song herself.



Members of the choir were then invited on to the stage to sing "She", "How to Handle a Women", "There is Nothing Like a Dame" and "Blue Moon" finishing with an encore of the "Hallelujah Chorus" all well received by the audience. Mike Downing who chaired the subcommittee charged with organising the event had also arranged for the choir's bass section to perform a number written

by Mike for Carl to the music "Charlie Brown" with two members striking frying pans with hammers on the Bong Bong bit. Mike thanked his committee presenting Jane Bowden with flowers for her work and support throughout the organising period he also thanked the ladies who helped on the day. Everyone thought the evening was a fitting end to two people who were highly thought of by the members of the choir and had contributed to the high standard achieved which is evident at the many concerts given throughout the year.

The new Musical Director Jamie Knight is looking to push the choir on to new heights and there is room for new members to be a part of the exciting times ahead. If there is any man out there who have had the idea of singing with a choir here is the chance just come along any Monday night to Timsbury St Johns School at 7-30pm. (Not during the School holidays). The choir's next concert is this Friday 29 June at the Methodist Church, Midsomer Norton at 7.30 tickets can be obtained from Les Debenham 01761 233948 or Nick Furzland 01761 413842

Bryn Hawkins

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Music and Festivals

2014 will bring many opportunities for choirs to explore repertoire that is linked to ceremonial events, anniversaries of major world events and remembrance, so this edition's music features on that area.

Amazing Day – an Oratorio by John Brunning

John Brunning of Classic *fm* fame has a life as a composer which predates his radio life by many a year and has sent me a sample score and recording of this 32 minute Oratorio for Soprano, Baritone, Choir and Piano, although a version is also available for Orchestra.

The text of this 7 movement work stretches from the opening title, *Amazing Day*, To a closing *Hallelujah* by way of *The Lord's Prayer*, a *Pie Jesu*, an *Introit Kyrie* and *Sanctus*, *Ave Maria* and *The Lord Is My Shepherd*. For that reason some choirs may find that dipping into the score and presenting single movements, (may be interspersed with poetry) may provide a more effective and flowing performance. That said the music has a definite charm about it and is by no means difficult. It is tonal and melodic and poses few problems to a choir of moderate abilities.

Of the movements, *The Pie Jesu* is very effective with a restrained beauty, the opening of the *Ave Maria* exudes a simple delight but the opening sentence is interspersed by *Gloria in Excelsis* so that makes this piece difficult to stand alone, both these movements are in a style not dissimilar to Rutter though the rest of the piece probably is more romantic and film score inspired.

The *Introit* and *Kyrie* outstay their welcome for me, and the setting of *The Lord Is My Shepherd* whilst having a rather nice tune and some effective modulations is cast much in the same slowish mould which makes one long for something rhythmic and exciting.

The last movement, *Hallelujah* again demonstrates the composer's gift for writing a melody and along with the *Pie Jesu* this probably makes the best one to stand alone.

Having said all this, It's worth a look and with careful attention to dynamic and speeds a complete performance would certainly be an achievable and satisfying event.

For score ordering - See website

www.johnbrunning.com



Accessible choral library series – Spartan Press

For the Fallen – Peter Thompson (TKM705)

2 Festival Glorias – David Barton/Tim Knight (TKM702)

And finally... I am resisting the temptation to plug any music of my own, but I am offering two pieces from the above series, which I edit and publish, for your consideration. The pieces in this series range from unison to SAB and SSA and are designed to provide new repertoire within the framework or moderately easy piano parts and well written voice parts for the smaller choir, though of course they can be used by any number of voices

Falling neatly in to the category of Remembrance is the powerful; moving yet extremely simple 'for the fallen' by Peter Thompson, this Unison piece was used in a workshop at a NAC Midlands South West group singing day and received universal acclaim! – You can hear it on Youtube and it is available through all good music shops and also www.musicroom.com.

Also in the same series comes *2 Festival Glorias* for 2 part choirs (upper and lower voices) by the Lichfield based composer David Barton, ideal for a concert opening (and it has one by me thrown in for good measure).

Late News

As I was writing this a Press release arrived from Novello announcing the arrival of a New Carol Book combining children and adult voices, but with the ability to also use them separately, this seems like a very good idea to me. The book is called *Carols For Everyone* and is backed up by Making

Music. I haven't yet seen a copy but it will be worth a look.

Festivals coming up

International Choral Festival Oslo 2014

EventTours organizes the 1st International Choral Festival Oslo. The Festival will take place at the beautiful concert hall of the Folketeateret Oslo on Saturday, the 24 May 2014. All choirs are welcome. They offer complete arrangements with choice between hotel or youth hostel. It is a festival, not a contest, nevertheless, there will be awards for best conductor / best repertoire / best presentation / best solo singer.

The choirs can choose for an extra Open Door Concert at a Church in Oslo on Friday, the 23 May 2014. An extra open air concert will also be possible.

End of registration is the 1st of December 2013.

For more information:

<http://www.icf-oslo.com/>

EventTours T 0031-6-39440628

info@eventtours.nl

‘One can't judge Wagner's opera Lohengrin after a first hearing, and I certainly don't intend hearing it a second time.’

Gioacchino Rossini

Letter from NAC in Oz



Summer has started after a very mild and dry winter, so we are hardly noticing the difference. Lovely sunshine and a temperature in the low 20s can't be bad.

The Sydney Male Choir Centenary Year is in full swing. Following the successful tour of Europe we are now firmly back to local events with our annual City of Sydney concert, this year called '100 Years of Music', taking place next Sunday 8 September in Sydney Town Hall. This will attempt to trace the development of the choir from 1923 to the present and we will be singing songs associated with that development and will range from *The Prayer from Lohengrin* to *Gwahoddiad*, a *Gershwin Showcase*, a *Sinatra Medley* and a very poignant song highlighting the terrible effects of war *And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda*. This song, written by Scottish/Australian singer/songwriter Eric Bogle, was performed in Australia by the King's Singers. One of our second tenors heard it, contacted the King's Singers and the result was an arrangement for the Sydney Male Choir by Keith Roberts. No doubt there will be a few tears in the eyes of the audience and, I suspect, the singers.



We are being shadowed at our rehearsals and concerts by a film crew who are producing a documentary about the choir. This is a very exciting project and we are looking forward to seeing ourselves on the screen!

Later in the year we are joining together with the Royal Australian Navy, who are also celebrating their centenary, with performances in St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney and near the Cenotaph in central Sydney. The RAN Centenary is also being marked by naval ships from all over the

world locating in Sydney Harbour for one of the biggest displays of sea power ever seen.

While this year is a largely celebratory one it is also tinged with some sadness as our wonderful accompanist, Eleanor Gair, is retiring after the '100 Years of Music' concert. We have been honoured and privileged to have been accompanied by Eleanor since 1998 and we will sorely miss her sensitive and talented presence at the piano. We wish her well for the future and I'm sure that we will continue to see her from time to time – Peter Gair, her husband is our current President.

On a personal note, I have surgery scheduled for late October when I shall complete my set of metal knees. I'm trying to corner the market for titanium. Don't get behind me at airport security – it could be a long wait.

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



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Cannock Chase Orpheus Male Choir Midlands West

It's been six years since our last entry in NEWS & VIEWS and quite a lot has happened in the intervening period.

Three years ago, in October 2009, the choir carried out a major recruitment campaign. Numbers had dwindled to such an extent that, what was at its peak a 70 strong group, could rarely muster more than 30 choristers for a concert performance.

Over 100,000 leaflets were distributed around the local neighbourhood. The campaign was specifically targeted to attract 40 new members and as a consequence the choir's numbers virtually doubled. Then commenced a concentrated period of twice weekly rehearsals, every Wednesday and Friday, with established members supporting and helping to guide the new recruits through their apprenticeship.

It was almost nine months before the combined choir was considered to be integrated to the extent that performances met required standards, such are the demands of the choir's Musical Director, Alan Jones. Many new members were amazed at the thoroughness of the musical team and how long it took to properly learn the four part harmonies. Then there was the discipline and professionalism expected at concert performances. The choir's reputation was at stake.

During that time, the existing choir carried on performing at concerts without the support of their new colleagues.

So, where are we now? Well, since then, the choir (we no longer refer to ourselves as the old or the new choir or to choristers as old or new members) has staged over a dozen concerts each year, usually with support from established guest artistes, commencing with the opening performance of the Brewood Music Festival, Staffordshire in the summer of 2010. The integration is complete.

The choir has a reputation for enhancing special occasions and were honoured to have been invited to sing at the memorial service of world famous organist Carlo Curley who sadly passed away on 11 August at the age of 59. The service took place at Pershore Abbey on Friday 26 October 2012.

Although some longer serving members can get a little frustrated at the time it takes to perfect songs which they have



known for many years, nothing makes the concert repertoire until Alan Jones and his Deputy Conductor, Frank Morris, are totally satisfied. However, along with the professionalism of the rehearsal techniques, there is still time to have a laugh and make new friends. Group social outings are arranged on a regular basis.

At the beginning of 2013, in our quest for continuous improvement, a feedback survey of the choristers was carried out with a view to improving the choir's performance and the enjoyment of the members. Opinions on issues such as song choice, quality of performance, choice of venue, general discipline and professionalism were sought together with other suggestions for improvement. An action plan was produced to address the issues throughout the year.

One of the key actions arising from this was to offer all members the opportunity of a voice test with our Musical Director, Alan Jones to provide feedback on general competence, areas for development and to re-assess vocal range and type. Most of the members have taken full advantage of this and found it to be very constructive.

In addition, our Stage Manager, Dave Owen is well connected with two very distinguished singers having sung with them in his youth and he arranged for them to attend our rehearsals and give us the benefit of their voice coaching experience.

As a result, the choir has recently enjoyed sessions with two of this country's finest Opera Singers: soprano Yvonne Howard and tenor Barry Banks.

Both were originally from Staffordshire and were members of the Staffordshire County Youth Choir in the 1970s. Barry and Yvonne have gone on to a career singing in the world's best Opera Houses and other prestigious venues and concert halls.

Yvonne did our first session and it was a great night. She performs regularly with all of the major UK opera companies. Her critically acclaimed performances include Siglinde in 'Die Walkure' with Sir Mark Elder and the Halle, Leonore in 'Fidelio' and Mother in 'Hansel and Gretel' for the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. She was nominated for 'Best Actress' award for her role as 'Marylin Klinghoffer' in Penny Woolcock's film 'The Death of Klinghoffer'.



Yvonne had no problem holding the attention of over 50 men! She gave us great tips on breathing and diction, the effects were immediate. Yvonne sang *Weeping Mary* for us at the end of our rehearsal. It was just beautiful.

We were very lucky indeed to have a session from Barry Banks. Barry lives in New York and has been principal Tenor at

the New York Metropolitan Opera for more than 15 seasons. His very busy schedule takes him all over the world. We managed to grab him on a Friday night before he sang the Tenor part in Verdi's 'Requiem' at Lichfield Cathedral on the Saturday. He flew to San Francisco on Sunday for a Beethoven concert conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas.

Barry gave us great advice on singing through the vowel, breath control and demonstrated the techniques fantastically well. Barry is a wonderful character and we had a really fun time with him. He sang a couple of songs for us at the end. You wouldn't believe the power of his voice, the choir was stunned by his fantastic singing. His rendition of *Danny Boy* made grown men weep.

The choir continues to hold its annual concert in the Cannock area, and this year is no exception. However, this time we have chosen a new venue. The new Aquarius Ballroom in nearby Hednesford, recently completed as part of the redevelopment works surrounding the new Tesco superstore, will host the occasion on Saturday 12 October.

The emphasis for the annual concert is concentrated on a more light hearted mood with lots of laughter. To this end, the show will, as usual, be compered by and feature the popular black country comedian, Doug



Parker. Doug is well known to the choir's regular followers and always leaves 'em laughing.

The choir's special guest artiste this year will be the ever popular local soprano Sharron Burns. Sharron is a regular guest artiste at the choir's concerts and a principal of the Cannock Wood and Gentleshaw Musical Society. This 27 year old society is well

known in its home area, and in between gigantic shows like 'The Sound of Music' presented at the Prince of Wales theatre in Cannock, they also do a musical tour every year raising money for good causes.

The continued success and development of the choir depends on a progressive recruitment policy and so the quest for new members continues. The choir still has vacancies in all sections, but particularly for Baritone and Bass singers.

You can find out more about the choir on its web site:

www.chaseorpheus.co.uk

and have a listen to a small selection of the items we've performed over the years on YouTube.

You'd be more than welcome to come and visit us on one of our rehearsals either Wednesday or Friday evenings at 7.30 at the Great Wyrley Methodist Church, on the main A34, Great Wyrley near Cannock.

Brian Marks
Publicity Officer

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MEDWAY MELODIES

Thames South Joint Concert

The Central Theatre, Chatham, 22 June 2013

The 3rd Joint Concert entitled 'Medway Melodies' was held on Saturday 22 June in the Central Theatre, Chatham. Very successful musically, it was a little disappointing with only a small though very appreciative audience. A good time was had by one and all and the programme was both entertaining and very varied.

Two of the choirs involved sent in their reports on this concert

Rainham Ladies Choir

We, with four other choirs, took part in a joint concert at the Central Theatre in Chatham, Kent on 22 June. This was the first joint concert in which we had been involved and I'm pleased to give this short report.

The other choirs involved were:

Gillingham MVC

Royal Tunbridge Wells Orpheus MVC

The Rowland Singers

St Fidelis Junior School Choir

This was the first NAC concert in which Rainham Ladies Choir had been involved and we all enjoyed the evening. It was a vibrant evening and great to include a children's choir. The children did so well, enjoying themselves and entertaining everyone, even when they must have been tired at the end of a long afternoon and evening. Listening to the other adult choirs, it was brilliant to have such a wide range of groups and styles to listen to and great to hear so many contrasting pieces.



Singing with all the choirs together in the joint pieces was really uplifting! It was a shame that the audience was not larger, but those who did come to see and hear the concert enjoyed the show and many said that those who missed it, missed out! Well done to all those who worked behind

the scenes to give us all a pleasurable evening.

Wendy Back

Royal Tunbridge Wells Opheus Male Voice Choir

A personal view of the NAC Thames South Joint Concert

Chatham, 22 June - a chance to perform at a new venue, meet other choirs, and acquaint ourselves with the delights of the town. And we were singing the *Hallelujah Chorus* together. It had to be a special day. It was, but not entirely in the way we expected.

Own pieces selected - check.

Coach ordered - check.

Pick-up locations & timings agreed - check.

Choir briefed - check.

Own pieces rehearsed - check.

Joint numbers practised - check.

Shirts laundered & pressed - check.

Despite the usual planning, for various reasons we arrived 45 minutes late. Dumping our bags in the one remaining small changing room the 25 of us began rehearsing on stage straight away so as not to lose our slot. We had 20 minutes remaining, and made good use of it. It was certainly different from our usual rehearsal venue, but with the lights full in our faces we ran through enough pieces, we hoped, to give us the confidence we needed for a polished performance.

With the impossibility of all of us squeezing into our changing room, many of us stepped out into the town centre for a quick breather before the joint rehearsal. In my limited experience, these occasions can present all sorts of unwanted challenges, not least of which in this case was whether we could all fit on to the stage. At one moment when the stage looked full, I looked along the row of basses in the back row to see a long line of familiar faces in increasing shadow waiting to climb on. How could they possibly all get on? Answer - not easily, but with much squeezing, pushing and line shuffling they managed. Then of course we had to be able to see the MD, so more shuffling and craning was required. We all envied big Chris his height. And by this

time, crammed together, the heat of the lights was making itself felt. Claustrophobia and heat exhaustion were not an option.

The actual performance went pretty well, we thought. We cantered with our castanets through our *Mexican Fiesta*, Left our lover *Softly*, Rode our *Chariot in the Morning*, Lord, and delivered our triumphant *American Trilogy* with we hoped the feeling and power it deserved, all with the encouragement and direction of Richard and Adam. Among the joint pieces, the *Hallelujah Chorus* was the climax, and one I had been most looking forward to. The experience of singing it with five other choirs was memorable and left us with a real high, which of course is what Handel intended. The heat, light and squash were completely forgotten.

It was enjoyable and relaxing listening to the other choirs, and talking to them during the afternoon. The Rowland Singers' unusual and amusing *Zipdoodah* stood out for me. As with all events, a lot of work was obviously put into it by a small number of people and they deserve our warm thanks.

John Cohen

We are delighted that Rainham Ladies have agreed to host the 4th Joint Concert which will be held at Woodville Halls, Gravesend, Kent on Saturday 21 June 2014. We are hoping to get some different choirs taking part and the programme will again be fun and very varied.

We are in contact with Clive Lawton, NAC Conference Co-ordinator with some lovely ideas for the Thames South National Conference to be held in Worthing in 2015. Worthing is a lovely town very close to Brighton to the east and Chichester to the west. The Sussex Downs are only a 10 minute drive away and there is a lot to do in and around Worthing. Why not have a mini break by the sea? The hotel itself is two minutes from the seafront, five minutes from the pier and only a comfortable ten minutes to the Assembly Hall for the Saturday night Joint Concert.

Please put the dates in your diary and be sure to book as soon as Clive issues the booking form. (Friday 20 - Sunday 22 March 2015)

Jacky Hetherington

Hull Ladies Choir Yorkshire East

It is a well known fact that singing is good for you and being part of a choir is even better!

Hull Ladies Choir has been an established part of the music scene in Hull, East Yorkshire since 1936. It originally started life as a 'Festival' choir successfully representing the City of Hull in competitions in various parts of the country. It has provided a source of wellbeing and achievement for local women for many years.

A few years ago our choir was in danger of folding up as we were reduced to around 12 members but due to the determination of the remaining ladies we decided to carry on. At this point we felt that we should become more involved in the community and extend our range of performance. This means that we now sing at Charity Concerts, Functions, Residential Homes, and Weddings. In addition each second year we are invited to take part in the 'Filey Festival of Music' and enjoy the whole evening including the coach travel to and from the seaside venue every third year we join with hundreds of mixed voices to raise funds for 'Cancer Research UK' with a

concert at the Royal Albert Hall. Last year over 30 of our ladies participated in this event and all experienced a very enjoyable weekend away in London.

We are pleased to say that Hull Ladies Choir currently has around 50 members who come from Hull and the surrounding areas including Howden along the A63 and Withernsea on the east coast of Yorkshire. Our repertoire contains both serious and popular pieces plus some more modern songs. We are constantly updating and including new songs in our repertoire.

Each year we continue to extend our support for local charities. In April this year we raised a considerable sum of money for Martin House Children's Hospice in North Yorkshire and we were pleased to welcome the Torrington Male Voice Choir from Devon as our guests. The following month we successfully raised funds for two local charities at our annual concert at the Guildhall, Hull with our guests the Westfield Junior School Choir who were previous runners up in the BBC Choir of the Year.

With Pamela Runcieman LRAM as our Musical Director and Marlene Pinchbeck BA as our Accompanist we rehearse weekly to learn and develop our singing to performance standard. We all enjoy practices

and performances but our choir is also about the social benefits of belonging to a group of ladies with the same aims and objectives. The choir members are very welcoming and many lasting friendships have been made throughout the years providing help and support for each other. In addition to weekly rehearsals we enjoy choir social events such as dinners, garden parties etc.

We have recently recorded our third CD which is available for purchase at all our concerts. The CD is already proving to be a great success with choir members, friends and supporters alike.

Prospective new members are always welcome to join us for rehearsals and are advised that previous experience would be helpful but is not essential in joining the choir.

Our continuing aim is to promote and enjoy singing as a pleasurable activity for audiences and choir members alike. If we can raise money in support of local charities and entertain a variety of audiences by doing something we enjoy so much the better.

*Chris Lake
Chairperson*

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Vauxhall Male Voice Choir Thames North

A few weeks in the life of a chorister.

Wednesday 10 April was my 82nd birthday.

Friday 12 April. I attended a choral evening of Viennese waltz time melodies with the Hitchin Thespians, a local amateur dramatic society with whom I was a member a long time ago.

On Saturday 13 April, I was at a Churchdown MVC concert in Cheltenham.

Over weekend Friday-Sunday 19-21 April, I attended the National Association of Choirs annual Conference near Chester. I arrived at the Llyndir Hall hotel, Rossett, Chester late Friday afternoon. Joined other delegates for an evening meal followed by an impromptu evening of entertainment.

Saturday 20 April, We visited numerous trade stands displaying choral singing wares during the day.

Liz Moulder, a long time Midlands East NAC choral music director together with Annette Wood, a professional Mezzo Soprano and singing tutor, ran two workshops; 'It Isn't Just The Singing' and 'Explore The Voice Together'. Both workshops were very informative.

At 3.30 we held the NAC Annual General Meeting. Patrick Hawes, a composer, ran another workshop, 'The Composition Of Music'.

Roger Hagarty of Roger's Music bought along and demonstrated a selection of music instruments.

After an evening meal, we attended an evening's entertainment at the William Aston Hall at Glyndŵr University, Wrexham, by the six or seven Ladies, Mixed, Youth, and Male Voice Choirs of North Wales & West Cheshire NAC group.

Sunday morning, the members of the attending four choirs in Thames North Group held a short meeting to restart activities in our group, more about this in News & Views, I hope.

Saturday 27 April, sang at concert in the Central Methodist Church Dunstable with Vauxhall MVC being the guests of the

Luton Concert Orchestra.

Sunday 28 April, It was off to Leigh-on-Sea for a joint coiert with Leigh Orpheus MVC, over 90 strong, & Sidney (Australia) MVC well over 60 singers.

Friday to Monday 3-6 May, my German chorister friend Rudi Frank and I Attended the 'Cornish International Male Voice Choral Festival', where over 60 choirs, (nine international), held 40 concerts, in 20 Cornish venues across the county. My German friend had come over specially for the festival.

We arrived in Truro Friday afternoon and that evening attended an International Gala Concert in Truro Cathedral, where 7 choirs, (three from abroad) sang a total of 40 songs. There were four other concerts that Friday evening elsewhere in Cornwall.



Lyndir Hall Hotel

Festival programmes were freely available at each concert.

Saturday morning & afternoon (9.00 to 6.00), there were two choral competitions, with 16 choirs in the 'up to 40 singers' and later, 6 choirs in the '41 singers and over' group.

The overall best choir in the festival was; 'Harmone Lindenholzhausen' from Germany with 79 singers. They also took the first prize of £1000 for best choir in the 41 voices and over group. 'Colne Valley' were FESTIVAL best UK choir and second in the 41 and over class, 'Peterborough' came third.

In the 40 voices and under, 'Euga' from Finland took first prize of £1000, with 'Synergy' from South Wales and 'Eight In A Bar' from Cornwall sharing second place. Of the 22 choirs competing, we missed the singing of about 6 choirs.

Saturday evening, we attended our second International Gala Concert, in the 'Hall for Cornwall' in Truro. With a concert of 32 songs. 7 choirs sang in this concert, which including the winners of both competitions.

There were also six other Saturday evening concerts spread around Cornwall.

Sunday, At the Eden Project, from 10.30 onwards, 10 choirs each sang for 25 minutes, (half hour slots). We missed about 3 choirs.

On Sunday evening, Rudi and I attended a Regional Concert at St Michael's Church Newquay, (where The Vauxhall MVC and I will be singing later in the year when we have our away weekend in Cornwall).

There were 5 choirs, singing in this concert, (including Newquay MVC and a Dutch Choir). There were 6 other regional concerts across Cornwall that evening.

Over the Cornwall weekend Rudi and I saw and had the pleasure of listening to over 40 male voice choirs. We attended three concerts and the daytime singing at the Eden Project. Something I would like my choir to do in the near future.

The Festival continued on Monday with daytime singing at three locations, a lunchtime concert in Truro Cathedral, and the Final International Gala Evening Concert in the Hall for Cornwall. Rudi and I missed the last day to return Rudi to Heathrow for his return to Germany Monday afternoon.

Saturday 11 May, I attended a Stevenage Ladies Choir concert where they hosted The Rowland Singers, an SATB choir of over 40 singers from Worthing.

Friday evening 17 May, I visited my old choir Churchdown MVC who were hosting The Forest of Dean MVC in a concert in Cheltenham. Brings back many happy memories of when I was a Churchdown member.

Saturday 18 May, Singing with the Vauxhall MVC at Helen and David's wedding at Breachwood Green Methodist Church, Hearts.

At rehearsal on Wednesday 22 May, we

heard that Josie our longstanding 80+ year old accompanist who had been away for a few weeks wasn't feeling too well, and since she only lived close down the road, the whole choir went to sing to her. Instead of just standing outside, we were invited in, all 40+ singers, in the front room, back room, kitchen and on the stairs. We sang many of her favourites until it was time to go. As we left, we met her neighbours who had come out to listen.

Saturday 25 May, singing with the Vauxhall Male Voice Choir at St Ann's Church in Luton, to celebrate their 75th anniversary.

Friday 31 May, off to Limerick via Aer Lingus to 'Limerick Sings' Music Festival. Due to a delayed take-off at Heathrow, it was after 10.00 when I arrived at 'The Savoy Hotel', too late to go to their introduction evening get-together, sing-song, I'm told it was a great success and went on till about 3.00.

Saturday morning was free time, then off to 'The Hunt Museum' where a local choir gave an afternoon recital, which included *The Elizabethan Serenade*, a favourite of mine, brought back memories of singing with my late wife. Then after refreshments

at the Museum, and a short walk to St Mary's Cathedral, (founded in 1168, and Limerick's oldest building), for an evening's Inaugural Concert. At least 200 to 250 choristers and audience, found our way back to 'The Savoy' where the hotel put their three lounges at our disposal. And surprise surprise, the singing went on well into the early hours. I can't remember what time I went up to my room.

Sunday morning was a bit of a haze, (the Guinness of last night?).

Sunday afternoon and A Choral Extravaganza at Limerick University Concert Hall, where all seven choirs joined for the finale with *The Londonderry Air* and Verdi's *Va Pensiero (Speed Your Journey)*, well over 200 singers. I must mention one choir, The Dalkey Active Retirement Association Choir; a choir of almost 100 singers, but only 42 came to the Festival. Ages range from around 60 to 94, with an average of 74 years.

After the concert, a grand BBQ was laid on at 'The University Stables' and guess what, singing broke out again and went on 'til way after 9.00.

Monday morning was free time and I took the opportunity to recover before returning home with fond memories of a very successful choral festival weekend and am looking forward to next year. This is a choral festival weekend that choirs should consider very seriously for next year and the future!

In just over seven weeks I have attended a weekend Choral Conference, two choral festivals, some 15 concerts, singing in two, and at a wedding. Saw and heard over 40 choirs at the Cornish International Male Voice Choral Festival and 14 choirs (seven twice), at the Limerick Festival.

Yet to come:

Saturday 15 June, Vauxhall MVC 70th Anniversary Massed choir Concert in Dunstable.

Saturday 22 June, The English Association of MVC, a nine choir massed voice concert at Tewkesbury Abbey.

Lorie Stepney

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86th Annual General Meeting 26th Annual Conference Weekend 4-6 April 2014

Clive the Co-ordinator's Conference Clips

I have been busy learning the ropes since the last issue of News and Views, starting to put some faces to names among the many delegates and members of our very large organisation. My thanks must go to Brenda and Celia for helping me with information about various aspects of the Association and the role which I have undertaken.

My immediate concern was to clarify the position with regard to the 2014 conference in Scarborough. I did take on board many delegates concerns about the cost of parking if the Grand Hotel was chosen as the venue. I must say that I had reservations about this hotel as the venue on another issue, that being the suitability of the hotel for our conference with regard to privacy when you consider the hotel caters for eight hundred guests. Our delegates would account for a small proportion of this number, the majority of the guests being holiday makers, many with children. With this in mind I suggested that we consider the Crown Spa on the Esplanade as a better option.

The hotel has a four star rating and accommodates 175 guests, so we would be the majority occupants of the hotel during the conference. It has adequate conference facilities and very comfortable accommodation throughout. The parking is free and is situated at the front of the hotel along the whole of the Esplanade. It is assigned solely for the use of the hotel by Scarborough Council and is safe, being



overlooked by the hotel. There is an 18 space secure parking lot behind the hotel which can be booked in advance at a cost of £10 per night for those who may prefer this option. I have used the hotel four



times in the past and have had no issues with parking.

The National officers are delighted to be able to tell you that we have two distinguished guests as speakers at conference next year. Manvinder

Rattan is Head of Music with the John Lewis Partnership, and Development Director and Head of Conductor Training for the charity Sing For Pleasure. I am sure his addresses will be very entertaining. I believe he is planning to have a good deal of audience participation. Tim Knight is a composer, arranger and conductor, an associate member of the Association and a member of our National executive. Tim will be taking a spot on Saturday to talk on his specialist subjects. Roger Hagarty of Roger's Music will be taking the Sunday morning spot to demonstrate the versatility of several musical instruments.

The Hotel

Scarborough's only 4 star hotel and the highest rated AA Hotel on the Yorkshire Coast, The Crown Spa Hotel, celebrates the completion of a nine year, multi-million pound investment which has dramatically transformed one of Scarborough's most prestigious landmarks. Primarily the hotel is renowned for exuding luxury accommodation, with superb views of the Yorkshire Coast headland, Norman Castle and the harbour. However this is just for starters, in-house we have: Taste Restaurant & Cafe Bar offering fine dining, a fully equipped Health Club to help you tone up, and Crown Spa & Beauty Treatments to help you wind down. You'll find complimentary WIFI Broadband, non-smoking throughout, safety deposit box,

trouser press in each room and 24 hour room service

The Gala Concert

Yorkshire East Group are arranging the concert on Saturday evening in Westborough church and arrangements are at an advanced stage for this event.

At the moment I am concentrating on arranging the trade stands. I hope to offer some different stands together with those that attended this year. Companies trading in musical manuscripts, instruments, tours, choir staging, uniforms, signs and banners, to name just a few. With the ladies in mind, I thought you might appreciate a couple of stands with a definite feminine touch, these offering silk stoles and semi-precious gem jewellery.

You will find a booking form within this issue and I would encourage you all to book early for the conference next year. Please note that this is a two sided form which I have attempted to simplify this year. There is availability to extend your stay after the conference if you wish. I have negotiated special rates for this option so please let me know if you would like to take up this offer.

I don't agree with hotels charging extra for single room occupancy. I have negotiated that there will be no single room supplement for our delegates next year. I will endeavour to have this arrangement in subsequent years at conference as I don't believe single people should be penalised in this way.

I have visited Thames South who are arranging the conference in 2015. This will be centred on Worthing, a pleasant seaside town with a very good venue for the Saturday evening concert. Worthing is in easy reach of Brighton and Portsmouth with its historic dockyard.

I have visited several hotels to discuss our needs and the facilities they can offer. More on this later when I have definite arrangements to pass on.



Reg'd. Charity No. 1014630

National Association of Choirs

Joining the Nation in Choral Singing

National Conference Booking Form 1 4-6 April 2014

The Crown Spa Hotel, Esplanade, Scarborough, North Yorkshire, YO11 2AG

Conference Costs

Full Conference Stay

PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE IN THE BOOKING FORM FROM PREVIOUS YEARS

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

There are no single room supplements

Price per person for whole conference includes admission to all lectures

two nights bed breakfast and evening meal

refreshments and free admission to Saturday evening concert

per person £185

Day Delegate [Saturday]

Please circle requirements

Refreshments and lunch included	£30.00
Evening meal Saturday add	£32.50
Concert ticket Saturday add	£ 8.00

Payments

Full Conference Stay

Deposit of **£70** [non refundable] by 31 December 2013, balance by 28 February 2014

Day delegates

Payment in full when booking [non refundable]

Amount Submitted £_____

You must inform us in writing of any cancellation by Saturday 1 March 2014
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Cheques should be made payable to the National Association of Choirs

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

Please return your completed forms and deposits to

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

07939012458

conference.coordinator@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk



Reg'd. Charity No. 1014630

National Association of Choirs

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National Conference Booking Form 2 4-6 April 2014

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

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First Name.....

Surname.....

Address.....

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

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

Email Address.....

Special Requirements

Diet [type].....

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

NAC group.....

Choir Name.....

Guest 2

Title Mr/Mrs/Miss.....

First Name.....

Surname.....

Address.....

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

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

Email Address.....

Special Requirements

Diet [type].....

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

NAC group.....

Choir Name.....

PLEASE PHOTOCOPY THIS FORM FOR MORE GUESTS IF REQUIRED

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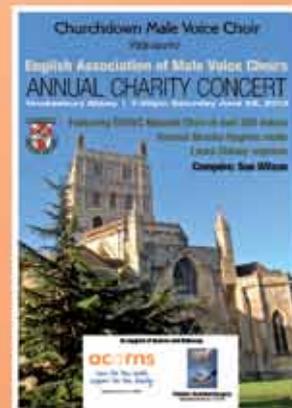
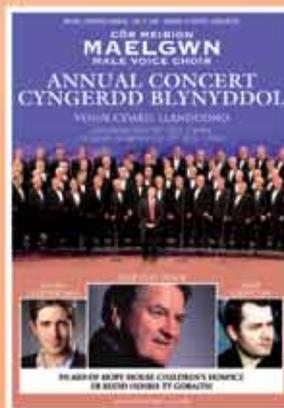
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The Glasgow Phoenix Choir Scotland West

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The choir's AGM in early June saw a number of changes in the office bearers. Bowing out after a highly successful stint as Choir President was Janette Walker who, as well as chairing Council Meetings and representing the choir, also presided with great skill over the choir's Diamond Jubilee celebrations; with three major concerts in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall along with many other concerts throughout her five year term. Janette's cheerful disposition did much to bring some brightness to the proceedings. To succeed her the members voted overwhelmingly for Lady Jan Bonomy (more below). Janette then became Honorary Vice-President as is customary for retiring presidents.

The new Vice-President is former Librarian Angus Leitch whose previous post was taken up by Douglas Gale. Other changes were Ann Kay who became Publicity Officer, while her husband Ronnie became Bass Steward. Brian Dunnachie became Tenor Steward in place of Douglas Gale. The Honorary Patron remains The Lord Provost of the City of Glasgow, Cllr Sadie Docherty.

New President - Jan Bonomy has the distinction of being the first 'Lady' President. Although she is the third female to hold the position in the choir's history, Jan is the first titled President. She has sung in choirs since primary school days including church choirs. Jan joined the Phoenix as a teenager 48 years ago and has seen the choir progress over the years, has been to North America three times, enjoyed winning the Cork International Choral Festival with them and took part in annual concerts in Croydon, Manchester and Newcastle. She met her husband Iain Bonomy (a young aspiring lawyer) in Motherwell, they married and moved to East Kilbride where they set up home and had two daughters, Ann and Jill. Iain rose through the ranks of the legal profession in Scotland to become eventually a Senator of the College of Justice for Scotland with the title The Rt Hon Lord Bonomy. Iain is

an associate member of the choir and is an ardent follower having enjoyed concert tours around the UK, Germany, USA and various other countries. Jan is a stalwart of the alto section and has served on Council as Secretary and Vice-President. She is sure to be a highly motivated and popular President and we look forward to her wise and witty counsel.



Photograph by Les Hill

The 2013-14 Season commenced in late August with the Ceremony of Investiture of the Sovereign Order of St John of Jerusalem Knights Hospitaller in Orchardhill Parish Church, Giffnock with the choir leading the praise and singing various choruses. This was an afternoon event and was a most spectacular and moving ceremony with members of the order coming from many parts of the world. This was followed in the evening by a concert in the same venue in aid of church funds and Rotary. The end of August saw the Phoenix taking part in the Bathgate Festival in West Lothian.

On 2 September there is an open night where potential choristers are invited to come along and listen to the choir in a short rehearsal followed by refreshments so that they can mingle with members. The choir is particularly looking for men and especially basses.

At the time of going to press the Phoenix is about to embark on another Irish tour over the Autumn Holiday weekend at the end of September. The members are privileged to be invited as guests of the First Minister of the Northern Ireland Assembly - The Hon Mr Peter Robinson to give a concert in the Grand Hall at Stormont Castle. The following evening the venue will be Streaton Presbyterian Church in Newtownards. On the Sunday the coaches will take the choir down to Dublin where they will sing in the magnificent Corpus Christi RC Church. At this series of concerts it is hoped that three new recordings will be released which will include the second volume of 'Songs of Comfort', and also a live recording of Faure's *Requiem* in Iona Abbey which was recorded in the middle of a gale. The sound effects as a result were very interesting and added to the atmosphere of the performance. The third recording is a postcard compilation which, along with the Faure album, was recorded live in Iona Abbey.

Two concerts will be given in October - the first being held in Bishopton Church of Scotland in aid of Erskine Home, a home principally for ex servicemen and, at the end of the month one in St David's Church, Kirkintilloch.

During the month of November, two concerts will take place to honour Scotland's patron saint - St Andrew, the first in Cadder

Freestone Masonic Lodge in Bishopbriggs, and the second in Clydebank Town Hall in aid of St Margaret's Hospice in the town.

The Christmas season will be as busy as usual with Christmas concerts in Freemasons' Hall in Edinburgh for the Grand Lodge of Scotland, followed by our annual Christmas concert - 'The Sounds of Christmas' in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, with guest stars and old favourites, the Co-operative Funeralcare Band, and introducing Choir of the Year 2012 - Les Sirenes. The year will end with an annual Christmas concert in another favourite venue - Moncrieff Parish Church in East Kilbride.

J Lawson Purdie
Hon. Vice-President

Exeter Police and Community Choir Devon

The choir reaches a highpoint in its history this year when it celebrates its 50th anniversary.

The event was marked by a special concert on 28 September in Exeter where members were joined by the Con Brio mixed choir from Bradford-on-Avon. The two choirs have performed joint concerts several times in the last few years.

What's more the concert - staged at the Salvation Army Temple, Friars Gate - was FREE as a big thank you to all the choir's supporters and followers over the years.

Exeter Police and Community Choir was originally formed by serving police officers in Exeter in 1963 but for some time has attracted members from the wider community.

It has performed concerts all over Devon and raised over £100,000 for local charities over the last 50 years, helping local clubs, societies and churches to increase their funds.

In addition, the choir holds its own special Christmas concert in Exeter and this has



raised tens of thousands of pounds for local causes such as Dream-A-Way, FORCE, Hospiscare, the Exmouth Lifeboat Station Appeal, the West of England School for Children with Little or No Sight, The Chestnut Appeal and Age UK.

In previous years, the choir has appeared on television and on the radio. The lively repertoire includes spirituals, hymns, songs from musicals and other popular pieces.

The Musical Director of the Exeter Police & Community Choir, David Williams, has led the choir since October 1995 and before that fulfilled the same role for the Torbay Police Choir.

Choir accompanist Margaret Chave has

performed as accompanist with many choirs and groups in the South West and elsewhere, ranging from Northampton Regional Opera to smaller ensembles and solo recitals.

Choir rehearsals take place on Monday evenings at 7.30 at St. Boniface Church, Whipton, from September to May (allowing for a summer recess).

New members are always welcome and no auditions are necessary. If you like singing for pleasure and enjoy good company, then please contact choir secretary Bill Smith on 01626 891933

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Gippeswyk Singers Anglia group

The Gippeswyk Singers are approaching the new choral year with considerable excitement, not only are they moving to a new base for their future concerts but also embarking on their first trip overseas.

The Singers are a non-audition choir of about forty members who perform several concerts each year, supporting local charities. Their repertoire includes a wide range of vocal genres from the sixteenth to the twenty-first centuries and includes madrigals and other a cappella works to accompanied standard repertoire pieces such as Faure's *Requiem* and Haydn's *Maria Theresa Mass*.

The choir was started in 1972 by Geoff Lavery, who was teaching at Ipswich School in Suffolk. He formed a small chamber choir of teachers, parents and friends. The name comes from the Anglo-Saxon name for Ipswich. Geoff conducted them until 1986, when he took up a new post outside the county. The baton then passed to Barry Salmon who conducted the choir until 2010. In recognition of his long service, Barry is now our president. In January 2012, Geoff Lavery returned to Suffolk upon his retirement from the teaching profession and once again became the conductor of the choir he founded 40 years previously.

Now after eighteen years, the choir moves to St Augustine's Church, Ipswich in September. This will be its new rehearsal venue and, although the choir will be happy to perform at other venues throughout Suffolk, this church will provide their primary concert platform.

Having just completed their second successful season under Geoff's direction, the choir is looking towards a new and exciting season ahead, beginning with their own celebration of Benjamin Britten on Sunday 24 November 2013 at Levington Church, Suffolk. Appropriately there will be a performance of Britten's *Hymn to St Cecilia* as well as one of Purcell's own works in celebration of the Patron Saint of Music and Musicians. The choir will be accompanied by a small string orchestra - this will be a new challenge for the Singers who have not worked with such an ensemble for many years.

On Saturday 7 December the Singers will celebrate Christmas with their traditional Christmas concert featuring a local primary school children's choir plus seasonal readings and carols both old and new. Their Christmas concert is particularly popular with local families who enjoy joining in the singing. On this occasion, the Singers will be performing at another local church, St Andrews, Rushmere, Ipswich.

The year 2014 will prove to be a landmark one for this chamber choir, as arrangements are well in hand for a short tour to Holland in June. The Easter concert on 28 March is but a taste of things to come! As well as a performance of one of Hummel's little known Masses, there will be some smaller

pieces in preparation for our Dutch visit. Our programme for the tour will be a cappella English Music through the Ages, ranging from early English madrigalists, through Sullivan, Parry and Elgar, to the Beatles and beyond. There will be a pre-tour concert on 16 June and then a post-tour celebratory performance of the programme on 27 June.

As our web site

www.gippeswysingers.co.uk

says: 'We sing to enjoy ourselves, entertain others and raise funds for charities.'

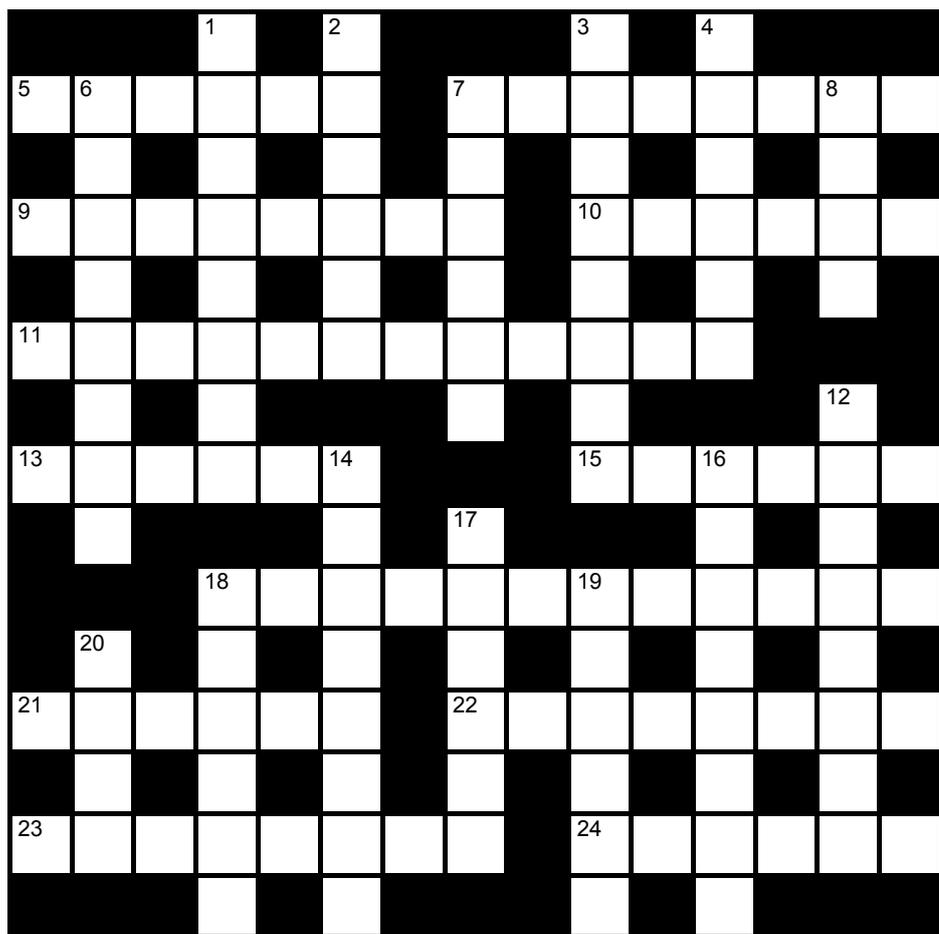
Jane Bradburn



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PUZZLE PAGE



Across

- 5 I'll be loving you (6)
- 7 Barry and I rearranged the farm lands (8)
- 9 plight troth (8)
- 10 Call into existence (6)
- 11 Something to be learned, perhaps a deterrent example (6,6)
- 13 Broken slates with a frilly edge (6)
- 15 Newspaperman rioted (6)
- 18 Skillful gifted adept (12)
- 21 Russian answer to zero gravity pen? (6)
- 22 Held up to mockery and scorn (8)
- 23 Battered pilot has to go and get better (8)
- 24 A collection of corrigenda (6)

Down

- 1 War in Essex tails off (8)
- 2 Discussion system way to catch fish (6)
- 3 Shear stress may cause a gap in hard water (8)
- 4 Sly van devastated rustic shade (6)
- 6 For rescue adrift, bale it of course. (8)
- 7 RAF badge shows a higher rank for a while (6)
- 8 Take Sian away from the eccentric ruffians, she may wear it (4)
- 12 Needing blanket cover? Let me find some (8)
- 14 Habitat for horrible oily talc (8)
- 16 Unsafe and it ends in a pickle (8)
- 17 Remove the lid enclosing an armadillo, it's neither right nor wrong (6)
- 18 Take a tattered cap etc (6)
- 19 Mr Bannister pays to stay (6)
- 20 A psychedelic rock band? It could be nothing (4)

Snag A Ram Solution
 Page 27
 Crossword &
 Sudoku Solution
 Page 31

VERY EASY SUDOKU »



SNAG A RAM

Or should I say
ANAGRAMS

Here are some anagrams formed from the names of the Officers, except for one. My anagram maker will not offer me any anagrams for one of our Officers, but which one?

1. A BOWLS BOWL
2. JAIL CHOSEN
3. DRINKABLE IN SNOW
4. NICER AS JOCK
5. USUAL LIP AGAIN
6. A LOANS CHEAT
7. NOW EVIL TALC
8. MIGHT KNIT
9. ????? ?????

Making anagrams of **NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHOIRS** produces 55557 anagrams, the first 1000 of which all contain the word **ACACIA** which is also known as thorn tree, whistling thorn or wattle.



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			7	8				
8	9	1	5	6	2			
				4	1			
1		6			7	3		
		2	3	1			4	
7			4	9		6		2
3	2	5	1		8	9	6	
4			6			2		8
	8	9				7	5	

Daleian Ladies Choir Midlands North

Golden Anniversary 1963 - 2013



On Friday 3 May 1963, a group of friends and wives of the Daleian Singers met to discuss the formation of a ladies choir in the village of Silverdale in Newcastle-under-Lyme. The 38 ladies present decided enthusiastically to go ahead with the venture, with Doris Ford (wife of the Daleian Singers' conductor) as conductor and Dolly Jones as Secretary. The choir went from strength to strength, giving concerts and achieving success at music festivals locally and around England and Wales under the baton of Doris Ford, Fred Payne and, since 1969, Joan Audley. The Daleian Ladies Choir currently numbers 36 members. Whilst we have only one original founder chorister, there are many who have been with the choir for 30-

40 years. The choir has joined the Daleian Singers on several occasions to give Gilbert & Sullivan concerts, sometimes with D'Oyly Carte principals. More recently, the ladies have sung with the Newcastle Male Voice Choir. The choir's rehearsals are still held in Silverdale Methodist Church with Edith Edwards as its excellent accompanist, and it continues to have strong support from the local community.

The Daleian Ladies celebrated 50 golden years of singing by giving a concert at Newcastle-under-Lyme Methodist Church on Saturday 11 May, with The Daleian Singers joining them as their guest choir. The concert was a great success, with the church filled to capacity, and both choirs on fine form. It was great to see so many Silverdale residents in the audience.

The Daleian Ladies continued their celebrations the following Thursday, with an excellent meal at a local hotel. Nancy Ellams, the only original founder member still singing with the choir, was presented with flowers after giving a splendid speech about 'The Early Days'. Joan Audley, the choir's conductor for the past 44 years, received a thank you gift for her unstinting leadership. Joining the current choristers

were several former members, and it was lovely to reminisce about past concerts and festivals.



Long may The Daleian Ladies continue to make beautiful music!

daleianla.choir@gmx.co.uk

Alison Townsend

**Hell is full of
musical amateurs.**

George Bernard Shaw (1856 - 1950)

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The deputy MD will be warmly welcomed into the choir to assist with conducting and developing singing and performance techniques. They will have the strong support of a well organised and enthusiastic Committee and also from the choir members.

The choir rehearse on Thursday evenings from 7.30 to 9.30
at The Holy Trinity International Day School in Kidderminster.

A suitable remuneration will be subject to negotiation.

Further details and information from
The Kidderminster Valentines website <http://kidderminstervalentines.digitalvoices.org/>
or jennyrafterygb@gmail.com

Cover Article

Softly Sighing To The River?

Hertfordshire Community Youth Choir

Thames North

The title comes from 'Pirates of Penzance' because the theme for Hertfordshire Community Choir's Summer Camp was Pirates. Can you imagine this little lot Softly sighing by any river. Read and enjoy, these are our future.

Crawford

This mixed voice choir, with members aged from 7-21 was founded in April 2009. We have since performed at countless venues, including the O₂ Arena for the 'Voice in a Million' concert, the 'Gordon Craig' in Stevenage three times singing with Blake and Earls Court for the 'Ideal Home Show' at Christmas. We meet weekly in Stevenage, Hertfordshire for an hour during term time, singing a range of music, in 2-3 parts.

This August, we held our 4th Summer Camp. The theme remains a surprise to the members until we arrive on the first day. With past themes including Space and Survival, this year saw a pirate-themed week. The choir was split into two teams – named by their members as Sparkle Craft and Awesome Allstars – and we competed to win the most points. These could be collected through simple activities like doing the washing up, but we also took part in some exciting new activities.

To fit with the pirate theme, we spent a day at Fairlands Valley Park in Stevenage, bell-boating and raft-building. Most members had never experienced anything like it and it was thoroughly enjoyed by everybody. One team excelled at racing the bell-boats, and the other's raft managed to



support four members in the water for a considerable amount of time. It was a great chance for us to get to know each other better, and we found transferable skills between boating and music, such as time-keeping, rhythm and listening.



A large, and more musical, part of our Summer Camp is planning and then performing a show for our parents. Obviously this had to also be pirate

themed, and had to contain a song. We were in charge of making our costumes, writing a script, preparing props and either writing a new song, or adapting the lyrics to an existing one. Each team produced a completely different show, but both showed how well the choir can work together and demonstrated that every member has something unique to bring to the choir. Summer Camp was great fun, although very tiring, and we definitely can work better as a choir as a result!

The next year promises to be equally as exciting, with concerts scheduled for Christmas and celebrations planned for our 5th birthday in April. Camp next year is going to be even more adventurous, including a concert and an extra night, and we hope to increase membership as the year progresses. We may only be a small choir, but we make a big sound and do some great things!

Amy Sprinks & Chloe-Louise Cook
Choir members

A Little bird tells me they may be heading for the border next year. I wonder who they might be visiting?



Worcester Male Voice Choir Midlands South West

'What a wonderful job, and how grateful I am to have persevered with it.'

Not my words and not my job but the words of our new Deputy Conductor, Hayden Thomas. Like many choirs we are reliant on a few key people and Nicolas Wright, our Musical Director and Conductor and Sheila Leatherland our Accompanist are two such people. However to rely just on them was neither a sensible or practical strategy.

In 2009 the hunt therefore started for a new member of the music team. Strenuous external efforts were made with little success until our then Vice Chairman, Hayden expressed an interest. He had a go at conducting at an evening rehearsal but it came as a quite a shock even to someone accustomed to standing up in front of people and delivering courses and plays; the faces watching with trepidation, not knowing what to expect but willing him on. With many choristers not reading music the challenge was considerable and his aspirations were dented.

A few weeks later his baptism of fire arrived when the Musical Director was unavailable and the choir was due to sing three pieces on live radio. He survived and since then he has conducted in numerous public venues including at the Eden Project, Lanhydrock House, numerous weddings and in May this year his first full concert with the Musical Director acting as accompanist.

Hayden remains an important member of the First Tenors, leads our Welsh contingent and does a great deal of work producing practice CDs for choristers. As he has remarked he can now enjoy the best of

both worlds and we have a stronger team able to cope much better with the growing choir commitments.

The early Summer period saw the choir hold a very successful local concert in Kempsey Church just outside Worcester and situated in the heart of the area which made the international news headlines earlier in the year with the massive flooding from the River Severn despite new flood defences.

We then launched into a series of visits to other counties starting off with an invitation to perform at the annual SHENFEST Music and Literature Festival, in Shenington near Banbury, Oxfordshire. The Festival has a number of significant patrons including BBC presenter Ken Bruce and amongst the world class music (their description) the choir was in the company of the Haffner Wind Quartet and Ronnie Scott's regulars, performing an Evening of Sinatra. Not to be outdone the choir showed its versatility by singing, amongst many other pieces, the French composition *Cantique de Jean Racine*. The concert was held in a packed local church and singing continued until late in the evening in the local hostel. This was followed a few weeks later by the EAMVC Concert in the splendid Tewkesbury Abbey where a massed choir of over 300 voices entertained an excellent audience.

Then back to the coaches for another visit, this time to Lister Hall, Chantry Centre, Dursley. It was a very hot July day and despite full uniform being the order of the day, white shirts sufficed. We joined our very good friends the Dursley MVC for a return joint concert this time on their patch. As well as performing their own pieces the joint choirs produced a great sound with *Rhythm of Life*, *Morte Christe*, *You'll Never Walk Alone* and *American Trilogy*. It was

good to hear Dursley's rendition of the *Hallelujah Chorus* a version of which we are currently working on.

Various coach companies have been busy accommodating our visits and this will continue in early September when the choir goes on tour to Durham; more about that in our next update.

Terry Dillingham

Bestwood Male Voice Choir Midlands East

Annual Gala Concert with the Thoresby Colliery Band

Rehearsals went well for Bestwood MVC's annual Gala Concert at the Albert Hall, Nottingham on Sunday 29 September



2013.

The choir was joined on this occasion by the well known Thoresby Colliery Brass Band, based in the heart of Clumber Park in Nottinghamshire. The band is extremely proud of its local heritage and links with both the county and the local community.

The Band formed in 1948, the result of a conversation held between two men, Mr Kitchener and his friend Mr Miller, on a bus between Mansfield and Edwinstowe, the idea being to form a brass band in the north Nottinghamshire village of Edwinstowe. As with Bestwood MVC, at one time as the name 'Thoresby Colliery Band' suggests, many of the musicians were employed in the coal industry.

The audience enjoyed a rich mixture of voice and brass instruments, with the grand finale being a combination of choir, band and audience!

Proceeds from the Gala Concert will go towards Bestwood MVC's funds to enable the choir to continue supporting local and national charities long into the future as it has in the past.

Peter Fletcher
Publicity Officer



Chesterfield Male Voice Choir

Midlands East

CMVC has appointed Andris Ugulis as its new Musical Director with effect from 4 June.

Andris holds a Bachelor Degree in Music from his native Latvia. He is a qualified conductor of choirs and symphony orchestras, as well as being an independent musician and teacher. His extensive experience includes touring Europe, the USA and Australia both as a member of a professional choir and as Director of various choirs and a Latvian Symphony Orchestra. Since coming to the UK with his wife and daughter, he has become MD of Barnburgh Male Voice Choir and organist at his local church in Barnsley.

CMVC is delighted to have Andris take over its musical leadership and looks forward to him developing the choir to even higher standards. For his part, Andris says he is 'really excited' about joining such a long-standing and respected choir and is especially keen to help develop its appeal to prospective new, younger members.

For further information please visit

www.chesterfieldmalevoicechoir.co.uk

or contact David Brocklehurst, General Secretary

chesterfieldmvc@gmail.com

01246 559919 / 07966 373984.

David Brocklehurst
General Secretary

SNAG A RAM

ANAGRAM solutions

1. BOB SWALLOW
2. CELIA JOHNS
3. BRENDA WILKINSON
4. ERIC JACKSON
5. PAUL GAILIUNAS
6. NATASHA COLE
7. CLIVE LAWSON
8. TIM KNIGHT
9. JOHN CROFT



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JUST WAVE YOUR ARMS AROUND AND LOOK CONFIDENT? HOW TO BE A CONDUCTOR

At 10.00 on Saturday 18 May, a slightly nervous group gathered in Biggleswade, Bedfordshire to attend a unique conducting course led by Dr Douglas Coombes MBE.

This one-day course comprised three parts. In the morning the participants had a Masterclass from Douglas. He began with the fundamentals of posture and ensuring that conducting won't damage your back in particular. Next came a discussion as to whether conductors should 'mouth' the

words - in this group the consensus was a definite 'yes' in order to help the choir with vowels etc. This led on to the importance of facial expression. After that we explored the pivot points (wrist, arm, shoulder and their different effects) followed by the 'mystery of the upbeat' and all experimented with how you can give your accompanist and choir the tempo, style etc just through the upbeat. Douglas also talked about the need to be reading ahead as you conduct, keeping your fingers together to increase the power in your beat, how vital it is to colour the words and ensure intensity in soft singing.

With all of that ringing in our heads, it was then time to start looking at the music for the course. Each of the six attendees had been allocated, in advance, two pieces based on their previous experience. These songs were all in the repertoire of The Amici Singers, a women's choir

founded by Douglas in 1978, which he still conducts. Each song was intensively analysed to help the conductors with their performance of it.

Then after a half-hour lunch break it was time to move down to Trinity Church to meet the choir and accompanist and start the second part of the course. Each conductor was allowed 25 minutes to rehearse the choir in their two pieces. This was when the fun really started! What had seemed quite easy when we were just talking through the music suddenly became utterly different when standing in front of 35 singers who knew the music extremely well, but had been instructed to follow each conductor minutely.

The six conductors were of varying levels of experience. Three of them regularly conduct choirs of their own, two do so on an occasional basis and the sixth had never conducted in her life before! Douglas



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helped each conductor in his easy, friendly manner, so no one felt too out of their depth and the choir also did their best to make the experience a really positive one. It was fascinating to see and hear the effect different conductors had on the choir - the sound changed perceptibly, according to the way they were conducted.

During the tea break the conductors were able to chat with the choir which broke the ice all round. Then it was time for the third part of the day, the concert. With a paying audience to listen, this was an opportunity to experience concert conditions under which to perform their two songs. Douglas opened the concert, explained what had been going on all day and introduced each of the conductors and their pieces.

Unlike the rehearsal, this time there was no chance to stop and do something again. Each of the participants gave of their

best and the choir responded to them, as did the audience. The look on the face of the lady giving her first ever performance was a picture when she managed a diminuendo and brought the choir off - a mixture of utter incredulity and delight.

After an interval (more tea and wonderful cakes kindly supplied by members of Trinity Church) everyone went back again to have a half hour forum, where the audience and choir asked questions on conducting. This led to some really interesting discussions and showed that everyone had had their knowledge of conducting considerably improved and their respect for those who attempt this most difficult art greatly enhanced.

Elizabeth Gammell

This day was organised by Douglas Coombes in conjunction with ABCD (the Association of British Choral Directors), Your General Secretary was one of the six volunteers taking part, and she tells me it was a very enjoyable day, if slightly scary in places. Elizabeth Gammell sings with the Amici Singers, and was another one of the conducting volunteers.

At no time did Douglas suggest that you simply had to just wave your arms about and look confident. That's just my attempt at humour in the title.

Crawford

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MENSWEAR AND FORMAL HIRE

The Drybrook and District Ladies Choir South West

Margaret Rose Bursary

On the evening of Wednesday 8 May, the band practice room at Drybrook became alive with the sound of music as the Drybrook and District Choir held its annual audition for the Margaret Rose Bursary. The bursary, now valued at £750, is awarded annually to a talented young musician from The Forest of Dean to assist the development of a professional career in music.



Reflecting the enormous musical talent in the forest, the bursary auditions attract a high degree of competition and this year was no exception. This year, no less than eight talented young musicians contested this coveted award, pursuing not only the financial assistance it brings, but also the highly valued accolade that it brings to its recipients reputation. This year's contestants presented a wide and diverse range of talents, not only reflecting the variety of musical instruments with which they gave their performances, but also a staggering degree of virtuosity in the use of advanced computer technology.

The panel of judges were set a challenging task in choosing this year's winner from amongst the amazing performances based on such a wide range of musical genre, ranging from rock to classical, with a truly eclectic list of inspirational influences thrown into the mix. To meet this task, the panel, Clive Lewis, Linda Speed, Fiona Crawley and Paul Speed, were able to call upon their own wide range of musical diversity and after much deliberation were finally able to announce the winner of the Margaret Rose Bursary 2013 as Kieran Ball.

In addition to his virtuosity as a drummer, Kieran is also a talented composer and songwriter. Working with computerised overlay programming, Kieran presented a haunting and emotionally dynamic score of his own creation to accompany a film clip from the film "Lady in Black". The power of his musical interpretation left the audience spellbound in its appreciation of what must be considered an already professional talent. Not one to rest on his achievements, Kieran spelt out the direction he wished to take to transform that talent into a successful career.

Kieran Ball is a name to watch!

The Margaret Rose Bursary was created in memory of Margaret Burford, the much-loved Musical Director of the Drybrook and District Ladies Choir who died suddenly in 1999. The bursary carries forward Margaret's love of music to the future generations of the people of the forest and stands as a fitting tribute to her contribution to the community.

The Pink Ladies on Tour

After their much acclaimed performance at St Ethelbert's, on behalf of the MOOSE charity fundraisers, the Drybrook and District Ladies Choir (aka The Pink Ladies) have spread their wings.

By special invitation, the popular ladies choir was called upon to travel far away from their customary audience, in and around The Forest of Dean. Following the spread of their reputation, the choir members packed their bags and, courtesy of Grindles Coaches, were whisked away to Derby to perform as guests of the Derbyshire Dalesmen Male Voice Choir. The chosen venue for their performance was the spectacular Christchurch in Belper.

The church was designed by H J Stevens in the Early English and built in 1849/50. Apart from giving a visually stunning setting, the grade 2 English Heritage listed building also provided a beautiful acoustic to showcase the choir's carefully crafted harmonies.

The choir's performance, drawn from the ladies' wide repertoire, received a clamorous ovation and they were not allowed to retire before giving an encore performance.

After the performance, still high on harmony and counterpoint the ladies were treated to the delights of the local



cuisine, a pie and a pint. Reinforced by this hearty traditional fayre, the choir received a vote of appreciation before retiring to a well-earned nights rest at the Hallmark Hotel, where they were residing throughout their stay.

Using the hotel as a base, the ladies took full advantage of the opportunity to explore the local cultural sites afforded by their visit, taking in the cathedral and museum, to say nothing of the local retail experience. There was also the opportunity to visit the historic Chatsworth House, although sadly without Mr Darcy arising from the lake as portrayed in the televised version of *Pride and Prejudice*. Despite this disappointment, the stately house and its grounds still gave much to admire and enjoy.

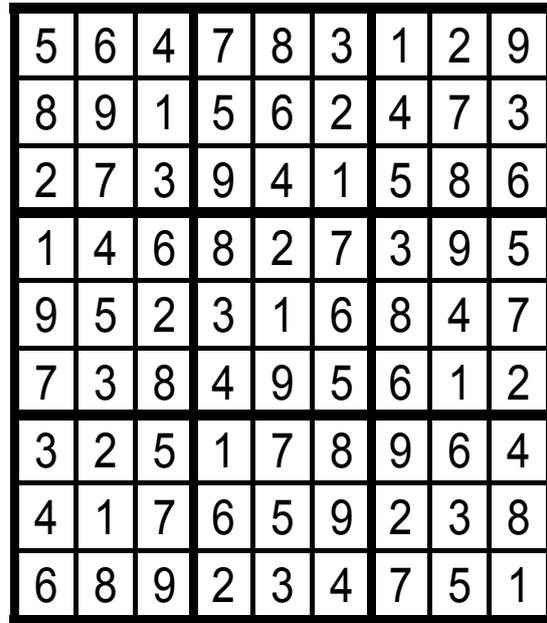
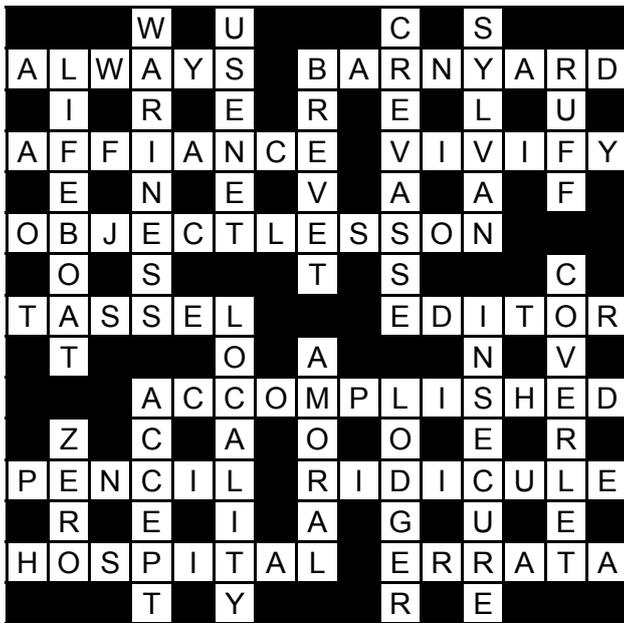
As is always the case, this good time eventually came to an end and it was time to leave the hospitality of Derbyshire. The ladies took a last look around before re-boarding the coach for the homeward trip.

Despite the many attractions still unexplored, there was such an eagerness to return to their nearest and dearest, that the ladies nearly forgot to take their driver with them. In the excitement of the moment, one of their number eager to try her hand at the wheel!

Once the driver overcame the mutineers and retook control of the bus, they finally departed on the homeward journey back to Drybrook, taking in a visit to a garden nursery along the way.

After meeting the challenges presented by this tour, there is no doubt that the Pink Ladies will be looking forward to taking their music on the road again.

Marilyn Scott



New Member's Directory

If they are in your group give them a call and say hello.

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01663 765877 sally.jolley@btinternet.com

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Louise Kay 2 Old Bank View, Oldham OL2 4QF
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CEFN HENGOED LADIES Wales South 45 choristers

Mrs Raydene Thomas 35 Station Road, Ystrad Mynach, Caerphilly CF82 7AT
01443 816563 raydenethomas@btinternet.com

THE KRUNERS Cornwall Mixed voices 40 choristers

Mrs Terrie Cook Westcliff, Beach Road, St Ives, Cornwall TR26 1JY
01736 797708 westcliff.stives@btinternet.com
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Professor Stephen Millard 9 Priory Road, Hornsey, London N8 8LH
0208 340 6213 info@tottenhamsingers.com
www.tottenhamsingers.com

GOT 2 SING Hereford MidsSW Mixed voices 40 choristers

Jane Dunn Hill House, 61 Park Lane, Bewdley, Worcester DY12 2HA
01209 401749 chrisjanedunn@yahoo.co.uk
www.got2sing.co.uk

GOT 2 SING Ludlow MidsN Mixed voices 40 choristers

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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. Attach them to an email.

If this is hard to understand then ring me and I'll talk you through it. 01472 500130

PLEASE DO WRITE IN

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