

NEWS & VIEWS

206

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHOIRS

SPRING 2015

Catalonia To County Down

Epsom MD in
Cornwall Festival
Composer Victory

Conference
Provisional
Timetable

Choir Rules In The Old Days 1915

Gloucester to Churchdown

Lest We Forget - £1,000

Sometimes The Piano
Isn't Quite As You Expected.

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National Association of Choirs

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Last date for submissions for Issue 207
SUMMER 2015 - 30 April
On your doorstep by 1 June

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Crawford's Corner



Well here we are at the beginning of a new year with Christmas behind us and a fresh season of singing spread before us.

My last rehearsal of the year ended in a visit to A & E with a fracture of the proximal humerus. Humorous it was not. I reached the top of the stairs carrying my choir bag and a glass of water. Some clown seemed to had raised the top step so I tripped over it and measured my full length into the bathroom smacking my cheek against the tiles. My first thought was OW! that hurt. My second was, I'd better be careful how I get up so I don't cut myself on the glass that I have just dropped. To my immense surprise the glass was upright and unbroken. I was upright but definitely broken somewhere.

In the last issue I invited you to send in any remembrances of Eric Jackson and his contact with your choir. Churchdown Male Voice Choir sent me a memory of when Eric visited them in Cheltenham in 2005. They very much share my view that he was truly a gentle-man and I thank them for their reminiscence.

In this issue we have a choir visiting Barcelona for a music festival; we have choir whose MD won a composing competition at

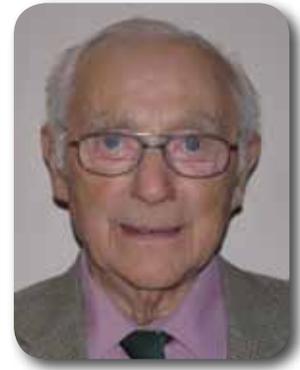
another festival and we have Alfreton Male Voice Choir who sent me a choir photo that included a babe in arms. Unfortunately she will not be eligible to join the choir when she grows up.

There are five pages of information about this year's conference in Worthing. if you haven't booked yet you'd better get on with it. This year we have Ronald Corp as our main seminar leader. I'm really looking forward to meeting him. He founded the New London Orchestra and I have six of his Light Music CDs.

As usual there is a cryptic crossword which I hope you will try. I worry about the crossword as I don't know if I have pitched at the right level for our readers. Nobody has written to complain about it but then no-one has said they enjoyed it. Perhaps no-one does it. Oh well, I enjoyed composing it, if that is the right word.

I wholeheartedly support our Chairman's exhortation to visit Worthing for the conference this March. it is a very enjoyable weekend so come to sunny Worthing and blow those cobwebs away.

Crawford



Churchdown Male Voice Choir

invited Eric and Jan to join in with their 40th anniversary celebrations in Pittville Pump Room, Cheltenham in 2005.

They enjoyed our concert and were very complimentary towards us. From then on both Eric and Jan sought out my wife and I when we attended the Association's annual conferences always pleased to see us and enquiring after the choir. Jan, you and the music world have lost a lovely gentle-man. We will miss him.

**Adrian Law
Chairman**

Chairman's Chat



I hope that you have all recovered from your busy Christmas schedules and that your new year is filled with choral promise. I normally comment about all of your activities, but Bob has beaten me to it this time, so I'm having to find another angle for my piece.

A little while ago the NAC broke into the social media and it now has over 2000 followers on Twitter. I don't know if this has any bearing on things, but membership has risen rather rapidly and we now have over 700 choirs on our books. This rather contradicts an article I read recently where it said choral singing is dead in the water because some of the new choirs have only just started up, which proves there is a need for people to get together and that is just what they are doing.

Our thoughts are now turning towards Conference, and this year our principal speaker's theme is getting young people interested in choral singing and that is just what we need to confirm our choral future. I'm not saying any choir is complacent, but some choirs have resigned from the NAC because they say they can't recruit and they are getting old and have had to disband, and this says to me that they haven't thought about their future. I'm looking forward to listening to him and see what nuggets we can bring to our next issue to help anybody who is finding recruitment difficult.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible in Worthing. You ought to come along, you know. There are choirs from the length and breadth of the country and you have a chance to see choirs from the locality singing in concert, have a good choral workout and make many new friends into the bargain.

Brenda Wilkinson



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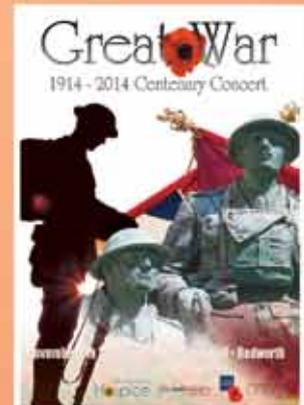
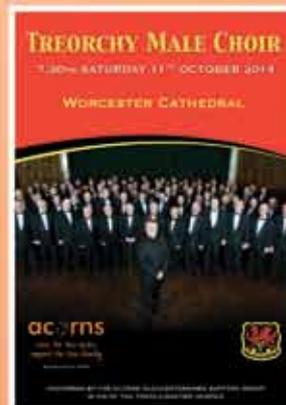
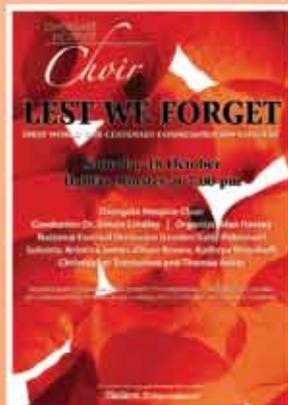
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Forthcoming Events

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

March

THAMES SOUTH GROUP

Joint Concert with The Pleasure Singers, (Horsham), The Rowland Singers (Worthing), Songbirds (Crawley) and Sussex Gruffs (Worthing)

Saturday 21 March

Time: 7.00

Venue: **The Assembly Hall, Stoke Abbott Road, Worthing**

Tickets £10/£3 from 01903 206206

GILDENBURGH CHOIR

Spring Concert

Saturday 28 March 2015

Time: 7:30

Venue: **St John's Church, Cathedral Square, Peterborough**

The Gildenburgh Choir presents a concert of more serious music, including Mass in B flat, Op 77, by Hummel. The organist will be Marc Murray.

Ticket prices and other information from our website.

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

April

GODSPELL IN CONCERT

Saturday 4 April to Friday 3 July 2015

Venue: **Many venues on a UK tour**

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GODSPELL IN CONCERT LAUNCHES NATIONWIDE CHOIR SEARCH OPPORTUNITY FOR SINGERS ACROSS THE LAND TO APPEAR ON THE PROFESSIONAL STAGE, WITH A WEST END CAST LED BY MUSICAL DIRECTOR RUSSELL SCOTT

For more information see Forthcoming Events of the NAC website.

May

THE ROWLAND SINGERS

"Spring into Song"

Saturday 2 May

Venue: **Emmanuel United Reformed Church, St Michael's Road, Worthing**

Time: 7.30

Tickets £9/£3 from 01903 238792

WEST GALLERY MUSIC COURSE

Benslow Music

Friday 22 to Sunday 24 May 2015

Venue: **Hitchin, Herts**

Tutor: Francis Roads
Standard Range: Intermediate

Due to popular demand, Francis Roads returns for another of his courses on West Gallery Music. The music is joyful, rewarding and easy church music, sung in town and country during the 18th and 19th centuries to whatever instrumental accompaniment might be available.

Francis Roads's course is especially suitable for singers who feel that they need practice in holding a part, and players of wind and bowed string instruments who would welcome ensemble experience. West Gallery music will be of special interest to choirs looking to expand their repertoire with straightforward but rewarding material

Tutor website: www.rodingmusic.co.uk

Resident: £265 Non-resident: £190
Code: 15/246

25% discount for Under 27s: Resident: £198.75 Non-resident: £142.50

Contact for further information:

Benslow Music, Benslow Lane, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG4 9RB

01462 459446

info@benslowmusic.org

June

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/>

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 2015

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, per-

spectives of the International panorama.

This is preliminary information only - please watch the website.

<http://ecpecs2015.hu/>

October

International Oratorio Choir

Tuesday 13 to Sunday 18 October 2015

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/>

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MENSWEAR AND FORMAL HIRE

Alfreton Male Voice Choir Midlands East Group

The Early Days

Alfreton Male Voice Choir was formed at the turn of the 20th century but the actual date is not known. The year 1903 has been suggested but the earliest mention in the local press is in 1917. The conductor at that time was Mr John Haslam. The choir's most productive early period was in the 1940s-1960s under conductor Mr Albert Walton, including a win at Blackpool Festival and a notable 3rd at Llangollan.

The Middle Period

In 1971 the choir amalgamated with Pye Hill and District Male Voice Choir to form The Erewash Valley MVC under Mr Alan Lindley (conductor of 'Pye Hill'), who tragically collapsed and died on stage at Brownhills Music Festival shortly after the amalgamation. Following Alan's death some of the former members of 'Pye Hill' who felt uncomfortable in the new choir left and reformed 'Pye Hill' which is still going. Alan was succeeded by Mr Roy Annable (deputy conductor), Mr Joseph Clarke and Mr Bert Haddon.

In 1976 Mr Frank C Smith became our conductor and we took the opportunity to change our name to Alfreton & District Male Voice Choir (the 'and District' being added to reflect the 1971 'Pye Hill' connection and the greater catchment area for members). We had some notable success during his tenure including Bidulph Music Festival. During his time with us he also became the conductor of Alfreton Ladies Choir and founder conductor of Alfreton Choral Society (now The Alfreton Singers) with some members from the 'Ladies' and 'Male' choirs. In 1988 because of the deteriorating health of his wife he sadly relinquished the post. Frank was asked to be one of our Vice Presidents which he accepted. Frank was succeeded by Mr John Wheatley.

Into the 21st Century

In 1997 we were lucky to obtain the services of Mr Louis Spencer who has built the choir



up to its present high standard. In 2000 we hosted a visit by the Polperro Fishermen's Choir from Cornwall returning the visit in November of the same year. In 2001 and in May 2002 we hosted a visit by Betws-Yn-Rhos MVC from Colwyn Bay in North Wales. At our Centenary Concert on 27-9-03 Louis retired as Musical Director. All the members wish him a happy retirement. Louis consented to be a Vice-President of the choir.

Kathryn Haslam took over from Louis, leaving the choir in March 2006 and our Deputy Musical Director Mr Alan Randall took over until March 2007.

The Present



Our Musical Director is Mr. Terry Clay TD a widely experienced director. We are fortunate to have two experienced accompanists, Lisa Smith and Michael who do a tremendous job.

In 2008 we applied for and were awarded a grant from the National Lottery Awards for All scheme. This has enabled us to replace

our uniform, a new keyboard and to buy new music.

A suggestion was made that we simplify our name, it was agreed to change the name to Alfreton Male Voice Choir.

In April 2009 we were granted charity status.

The scheme of annual charity concerts started in 2011 with a nominated charity identified.

In 2011 and 2012 the choir supported Cancer Research.

In 2013 the nominated charity was the 'Mending Broken Hearts' appeal of the British Heart Foundation.

This year (2014) our concert was entitled "Lest we forget" and all proceeds were donated to The Alfreton Branch of the Royal British Legion. The programme also featured the Shirland Brass Band and Lily Taylor-Ward (a very talented young soprano). The programme featured music and songs from the First World War. It was a huge success and voted the highlight of the evening was the audience participation when they joined Lily, the band and the choir in a joint performance of First World War songs. The paper programme that was issued free on the night contained a full roll of honour for Alfreton's fallen in the First World War 1914 - 1918. Please see photograph taken at the concert. The grand total of the donation to the Royal British Legion was £1,000.

Looking forward we have now decided that with effect from 2015 we shall have two major concerts every year April and October. We shall be committing to more concerts with other choirs. Also next year we are looking forward to participating in a major choral event at the Albert Hall in London.

*Les Dorey
Publicity Officer*



If you look carefully at the choir photograph you will notice, as I did, that there is a babe in arms in the lap of the choir's accompanist, Lisa Smith. I contacted Les to ask about the baby as I was intrigued.

I learned that this is Amelia, born on 28 March 2013, weighing in at 9lbs 13oz.

Marvellous, we share the same birthday. Here is Zoe, the latest edition, born on the 9th August 2014, weighing in at 7lbs 11oz. Neither are eligible to join the choir but, I understand that Lisa's other children are, Joel 4 and Ethan 3.



Crawford

CHOIR RULES IN THE GOOD OLD DAYS 1915

The practice shall commence at 8.30 or at such later time as a sufficient number shall have gathered together. Members are thought more of if they arrive late.

The choir meets one evening a week for the following purposes: to discuss politics, tennis, scandal, or church affairs; to arrange socials, excursions, etc., and to flirt. NB – If there is any time not occupied in the foregoing manner, and if the members feel inclined, it might be desirable to have a little singing.

The choir shall consist of sopranos, altos, tenors, and basses. All those ladies who cannot read music shall sing alto. Should any lady with a high voice object to singing alto, she is recommended to consult a voice specialist, who will be almost certain to pronounce her a deep contralto, with a faulty method of production.

The tenors shall consist of many fair gentlemen, who do not mind straining their voices. All the gentlemen left over are required to sing bass.

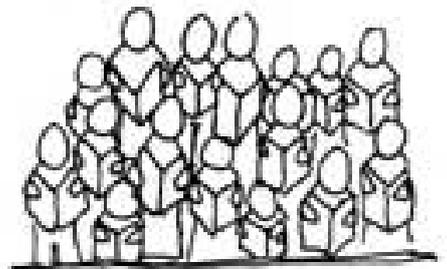
Basses are at liberty to sing tenor, if they feel that their extensive compass is not duly

recognised. He must be a poor worm of a bass who cannot sing tenor if he likes.

No notice should be taken of the conductor. Do not trouble to look at his beat. He should tap. What your next door neighbour is saying is sure to be of greater interest to you.

The conductor is always pleased to receive advice from individual members. He likes to receive hints as to choir management, suggestions as to tempo and expression, and is delighted to be instructed in the elements of musical grammar. If you think he has made a mistake, tell him so!

Members of the choir are recommended to take home copies of music to look over at their leisure. It really doesn't matter if they don't bring them back, because choir funds are usually in a flourishing condition, and more copies can always be bought.



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Letter from NAC in Oz

Happy New Year! May 2015 bring you peace, contentment and harmony.

It's at this time of year that the differences in climate in Australia compared to the UK become so obvious. Christmas and New Year in the summer do not sit easily when we are



used to the Northern Hemisphere winter. Traditional Christmas fare also seems out of place and we have now adopted the fish approach for meals on Christmas Day. So it was Salmon and prawns for our family at lunch time followed by a visit to the beach at Manly. Some of us swam while others walked along the water's edge paddling and managing to get our shorts wet. I was a paddler!

You may have read or seen on TV that the bushfire season has started with Victoria and South Australia being the first states to suffer. Many homes have been lost but, thankfully, no major injuries. Firefighters have been battling with 100 kph winds and temperatures over 40° C.

I mentioned in my last letter that I had joined another choir, the Men's Shed Chorale. I'm not sure how well the Men's Shed movement is known in the UK, although I'm sure it exists. It has long been a tradition in Australia that every man had his shed which was a hideaway from the cares of domesticity – sorry ladies I'm not sure of a female equivalent. This has blossomed in the last few years so that there is now a national network of Men's Sheds where men meet to undertake various activities – woodworking, metal work, electrical work, etc using communally owned equipment and gaining knowledge from other Men's Shed members.

Two ex-members of the Sydney Male Choir approached the association to see if there was any interest in choral activities.

Despite the pessimism of the association the Men's Shed Chorale was formed and now has almost 30 members. We are led by maestro Alan Thrift who was MD at the Sydney Male Choir for over 20 years and he has made it possible for us to produce a good mellow male choir sound.

All of the members are ex or current Sydney Male Choir members and we enjoy being together again with the camaraderie that brings. We have a less stressful schedule now, meeting every two weeks in the morning followed by lunch at a local club – very civilised. We sing at local churches, retirement villages and our last gig in 2014 was the dedication of a healing garden at Sydney Adventist Hospital.

As usual 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

Gloucester to Churchdown

Reading your report of our WWI Concert in Gloucester Cathedral in the autumn issue prompts me to write.

From singing in school and house choirs in my teens I was able to join Brimscombe (a small village near Stroud) Male Voice Choir to accompany my grandfather, father and older brother, all singing bass. This choir disbanded in 1961. After marriage in May of this year I was soon able to form The Stroud Male Voice Choir after contacting some of my former choristers. We continued for a few years until a merger with the Stroud Ladies Choir to become the Stroud Light Music Choir, still performing to this day.

After a short spell with a mixed group I was on the lookout for male voice inspiration when I came across a write up about a Churchdown concert. Not then knowing even where Churchdown was, it is a large village keeping Gloucester and Cheltenham apart, I looked it up in my area telephone directory.

On contact with Churchdown Post Office, the gentleman who answered told me that he was a member of the local choir and invited me to the next rehearsal on Monday. I went, was made so welcome that I have been a member ever since. Serving on various committees including a spell as Chairman over these happy years I will hope to complete 45 years in May and continue to support and

encourage all choristers, but especially my beloved second bass.

**Phil Gardiner
Thrupp, Stroud**



Scunthorpe Male Voice Choir Lincolnshire group

The Scunthorpe Male Voice Choir is celebrating its 90th year this year, 2014. In all that time we have just appointed our 5th Musical Director. He is a young man of 23 years but conducts and controls the choir befitting a much more experienced MD. Daniel Fields follows Keith Morgan who was in charge for 7 years. Before him was Jeff Blewett who did a wonderful job for 25 years. He built the choir up from 16 members to over 70. As with most choirs, our numbers are down to 46 singers but have been lower.

Our celebrations included a 'Birthday Concert' in May which was excellent with balloons and cake for all and a display of photos and articles since 1924. There were lots of photos from our trips to the



USA and Germany, as well as parts of the UK. Around Scunthorpe alone, we book no more than one concert a month and we are already fully booked for 2015 and now looking to 2016. Concert promoters are a bit unsure what to do as they have no diaries for 2016 yet.

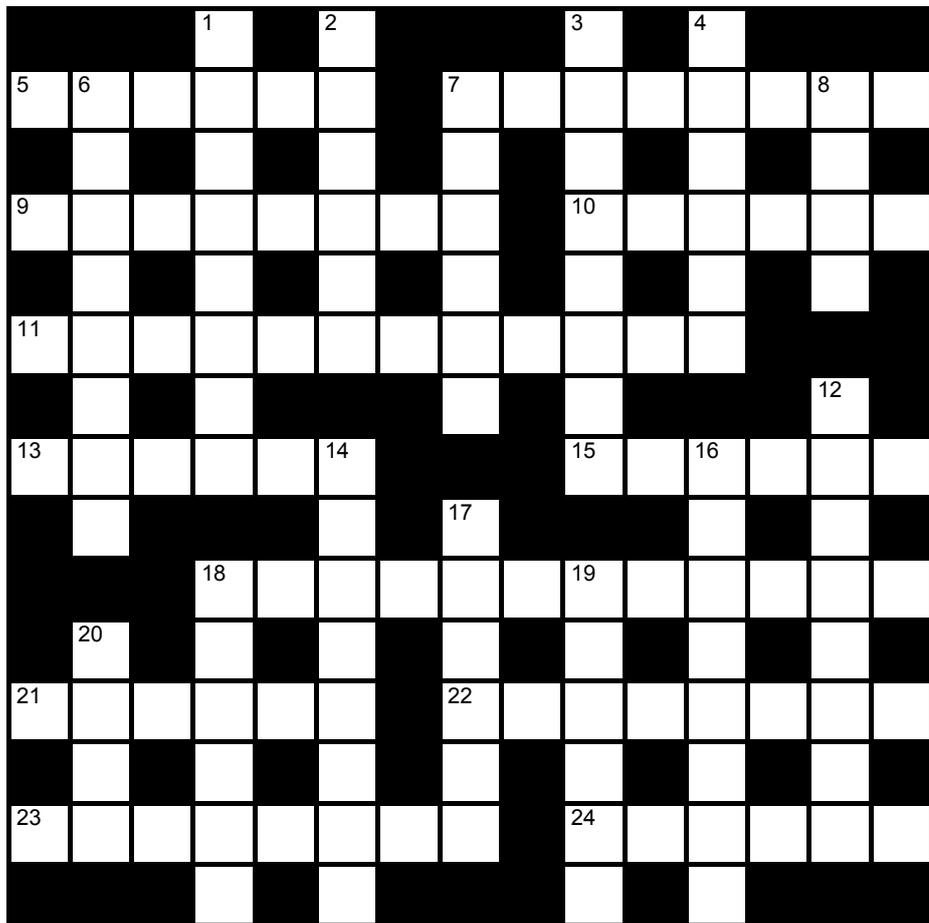
In March of this year, 2014, the choir recorded another CD. Our repertoire is very varied, singing classic pop songs from the 50s, 60s and modern day, also, songs from the shows as well as spirituals, Welsh hymn tunes, and many other types of music. These are all reflected on our latest CD. We used a local church over two Saturdays and the experience was fun as well as serious.

The choir is blessed with two long serving accompanists. Margaret Walker and Ann Rook have, between them, served over 50 years.

Keith Ellis

PUZZLE PAGE

SOLUTIONS ON PAGE 27



Across

- 5 Chew on a cigar after your dish of mushrooms (6)
- 7 A mixed base diet may avoid it (8)
- 9 Simnel essential (8)
- 10 Mavis Candida? (6)
- 11 Smashed shorn shingle is wind blown (7,5)
- 13 Oddly ousted no longer happens (4,2)
- 15 Extract from the endless distillates (6)
- 18 Adversely the humblest four though a useful principle were not strictly accurate (5,2,5)
- 21 Not only crows hang around here (6)
- 22 Frozen assets? (3,5)
- 23 Terminate early (3,5)
- 24 Reformation hits me I believe (6)

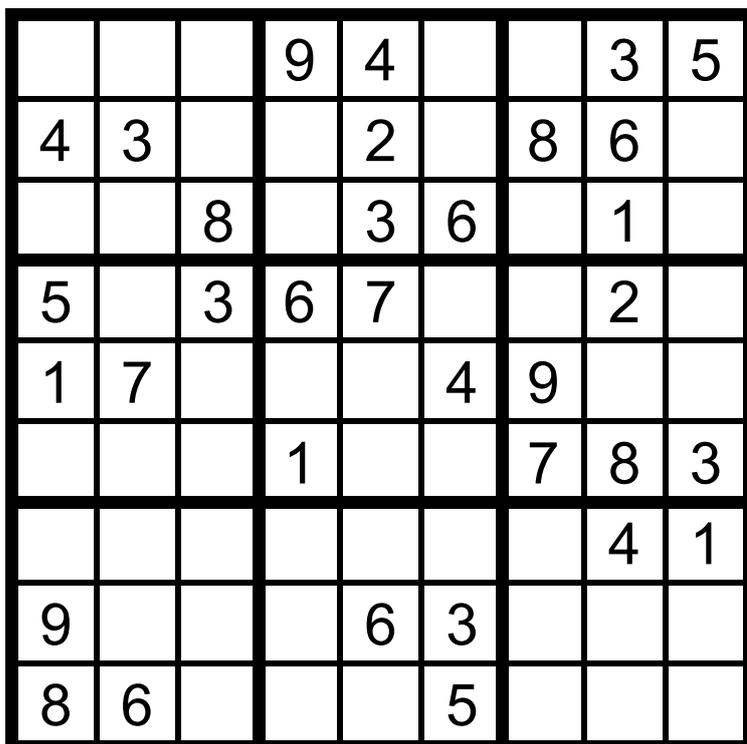
Down

- 1 Hoary headed (8)
- 2 Find spaces for edible garlic tops (6)
- 3 Sartorial elegance of he who kissed the forlorn maiden (8)
- 4 The best housing sounds the same (3,3)
- 6 Douglas Nostrum shelters openness (8)
- 7 Little boat may sound shabby (6)
- 8 Not hard for Marryat's Midshipman (4)
- 12 Headless duo go the distance to earn rewards (3,5)
- 14 Broken boil not a gift to God (8)
- 16 Large glass for drinks at sea (8)
- 17 Not the best wear for coffee (1-5)
- 18 Strong and full-bodied (6)
- 19 Alfie's table takes in the celebration (6)
- 20 Let it easily uncoil initially instead (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!

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87th Annual General Meeting 27th Annual Conference Weekend 20-22 March 2015



Plans are all in place for an exciting joint concert on the evening of Saturday 21 March 2015 entitled Singing by the Sea '15 to be held at The Assembly Hall in Worthing. Participating choirs are The Pleasure Singers (Horsham), The Rowland Singers (Worthing), Songbirds (Crawley) and Sussex Gruffs MVC (Worthing). Our compère for the evening will be a former Mayor of Worthing, Cllr. Robert Smytherman. The Thames South Group has been working hard during the year to put on an eclectic mix of choral music for your enjoyment. There will be opportunity for audience and delegate participation and also some surprises too which we are sure you will appreciate. Resident delegates have a ticket for the concert as part of the conference package. For everyone else ticket prices are £10 for adults and £3 for children and are available from 01903 206206 (Worthing Theatres Box Office)

This will be the fifth joint concert that the Thames South Group has staged and at each one it has supported a different charity with the proceeds from the raffle and retiring collection. Over the years we have donated well over £1000 to worthy organisations in our region. This year we are supporting Hounds for Heroes who provide specially trained assistance dogs to injured and disabled men and women of both the UK Armed Forces and Emergency Services. Through this provision they aim to provide help and practical support leading to an enhanced quality of life.

Conference is fun. After checking in on the Friday afternoon the weekend begins with a Gala Dinner followed by entertainment

and an afterglow where people can catch up with old friends and meet new ones. The Saturday is given over to seminars/workshops to which all delegates are invited. These promise to be exciting and enjoyable with plenty of singing opportunities for those who wish.

Ronald Corp OBE is the main speaker for the 2015 conference and will be covering among other things the subject of attracting young people into choral singing – something with which a lot of choirs struggle. Helen Emery (TS Chairman) will be teaching a song for the delegates to join with the choirs to perform in the concert on the Saturday night and back by popular request, Roger Hagarty of Roger's Music will be demonstrating the latest advances in instrumentation from his collection on Sunday morning.

So, why come to Worthing? This is a lovely seaside town, close to Brighton to the east and Chichester and Arundel to the west and bordered by the South Downs National Park to the north. Worthing itself has a lovely pier with a recently refurbished Southern Pavilion in art deco style where you can eat, drink (and be merry too if you wish) whilst appreciating the sea views. The Chatsworth Hotel is in the centre of town enabling you to abandon your car and walk everywhere. All the facilities that you will need for the weekend are within short walking distance. However, if you wish or need to use your car there is a large car park adjacent to The Assembly Hall. Why not extend your stay and take the opportunity to explore the region?

Helen Emery

Chairman Thames South Group



Conference Co-ordinator



Christmas is past and the New Year is underway. It is time to turn our attention to the Annual Conference in Worthing by the sea. Some of you have already paid deposits for

the conference and a few have sent full amounts to me.

Now is the time to ensure your place as delegates at this year's conference. The conference timetable and booking form are within this edition of News and Views.

The Chatsworth Hotel is a comfortable hotel adjacent to the sea front in Worthing. It is the only hotel large enough and the only one with conference facilities within the area. It is a short taxi ride from the railway station.

There is a multi-storey car park near to the hotel for which I am in the process of negotiating a lower costing. Negotiations are ongoing at the moment and are not available at the time of going to press. For those of you, who would like parking at the multi-storey, please see the information below. The multi-storey is a secure parking area. There is also on street parking outside the hotel similar to the parking we had at Scarborough last year.

Following negotiation with the hotel I have managed to peg the cost of the weekend at the same price as last year at £185. The South Coast can be expensive and I am pleased I am able to achieve this costing.

Extra nights' stay at the hotel can be arranged for you, with the Association, through me. I have set out the costs here for day and full delegates.

Our main speaker this year is the Rev Ronald

Corp MBE who will talk on the subject of ways of attracting the young into choral singing, a subject I think most choirs are interested in and also his many interests within the musical world together with an introduction to singing technique. You can view his many interests and achievements by logging onto his extensive website. This is to be recommended.

Helen Emery will be taking our second seminar spot on Saturday to teach a piece of music for presentation by the delegates within the Saturday evening concert.

Following popular request I have asked Roger Hagarty from Rogers Music to demonstrate his instruments and wonderful software to us on Sunday morning.

Please send your booking forms and payment to me at

20 Arthur's Court
Stretton
Burton upon Trent
Staffordshire
DE13 0GS

My mobile for contact is 07939012458

Cheques should be made payable to the **National Association of Choirs.**

Full delegate stay £185.00

Extra night's stay:

Double or twin room bed, breakfast and evening meal £100
[that is for two people sharing]

Single room bed breakfast and evening meal £95

Day Delegate charge £30
[refreshments and lunch included]

Day delegate extras:

Evening meal Friday £19.50

Evening meal Saturday £19.50
[Two courses before concert third on return to hotel]

Tickets for Saturday evening concert £10.00.



Our main speaker this year will be Ronald Corp OBE composer, conductor, and Church of England priest. He is founder and Artistic Director of the New London Orchestra [NLO] and the New London Children's Choir. He is Musical Director of The London Chorus, a position he took up in 1994, and is also the Musical Director of the Highgate Choral Society.

Drawing on his experience with young people he has been asked to cover the subject of how to attract the young into choral singing, where to aim our endeavours to get young people interested in joining choirs. To quote one of our officers, "how do we make choral singing Cool" This together with instruction on voice control and singing technique.

Multi-storey Car Park for Conference £4.00 per day.

To use this facility you must provide Clive Lawton with your car's registration number before you go to conference. After checking in, take your car to the car park which should recognise your car and let you in.

When you leave you will need to provide the multi-storey with proof of your stay at the hotel which the Chatsworth can provide when checking out. Delegates will need to take this to the customer service window for their paperwork. You can then proceed to the payment machine where the discount will be already set up. The office is located on the ground floor of car park to the left of the exit barriers.

BOOK ON LINE

It is now possible to book for conference at the NAC website Under **Events** click on **Annual Conference 2015**

At the bottom of the page find [Please click here for Conference online booking form](#)

Click on it to fill in the form
Send your money to the address above



National Association of Choirs

Joining the Nation in Choral Singing

National Conference Provisional Timetable 20-22 March 2015

The Chatsworth Hotel, The Steyne, Worthing, West Sussex BN11 3DU

Friday 20 March

- 2.00 - Delegates arrive and register
- 4.30 National Officers' Meeting
- 7.30 Delegates and guests assemble for dinner
- 7.30 Reception NAC officers and their guests
- 8.00 Dinner is served
- 9.30 After dinner entertainment provided by the Thames South Group
- 12.30 Bar closes

Saturday 21 March

- 7-9.00 Breakfast - Main Dining Room
- 7.00 Access for trade stands to set up
- 9.00 Trade stand viewing - Georgian Room *music, staging, uniforms, tours, instruments, signs and banners, gems.*
- 10.00 Seminar 1 - Devonshire Room - Ronald Corp - Vocal technique and voice production
- 11.00 Coffee *included in price* trade stand viewing
- 11.30 Seminar 2 - Cissbury Room - Helen Emery - Music for performance at Saturday Concert.
- 12.30 Lunch *included in price for resident delegates* trade stand viewing
- 2.00 Seminar 3 - Devonshire Room - Ronald Corp - How to attract the young to choral singing
- 3.00 Tea/coffee *included in price* trade stand viewing
- 3.45 Seminar 4 - Devonshire Room - Ronald Corp - What makes me tick in the musical world?
- 4.45 AGM
- 5.30 Buffet meal before concert *included in price for resident delegates* last trade stand viewing
- 6.30 Concert-goers depart under their own steam for The Concert Hall, Worthing
- 7.00 Concert at Concert Hall. *Choirs from Thames South Group* Massed Choir Concert
- 10.00 Return from concert - Lounge - afterglow - light cold buffet *included for residents*
- 11.00 Keyboard available for residents' own entertainment

Sunday 22 March

- 7.30-9.30 Breakfast
 - For those wishing to attend local churches, details will be available at reception
- 9.00 Trade stands available for viewing
- 10.00 Demonstration of musical instruments - Devonshire Room - Roger Hagarty - Rogers Music
- 11.00 Tea/Coffee *included in price* last viewing of trade stands
- 11.30 Members' Open Forum - Devonshire Room
- 13.00 Conference close *lunch available in hotel at member's own expense*
- 13.00 National Officers debrief Meeting - Conference Room - *guillotined after one hour*



National Association of Choirs

Joining the Nation in Choral Singing

National Conference Booking Form 1 20-22 March 2015
The Chatsworth Hotel, The Steyne, Worthing, West Sussex BN11 3DU

Conference Costs

Full Conference Stay

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

There are no single room supplements

Price per person for whole conference includes admission to all lectures

two nights bed breakfast 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 £19.50

Concert ticket Saturday add £ 10.00

Payments

Full Conference Stay

Deposit of £70 [non refundable] by 30 November 2014, balance by 28 February 2015

Final payment reminders will be sent

Day delegates

Payment in full when booking [non refundable]

Amount Submitted £ _____

Please return your completed forms and deposits to the address below

- **This Year it is possible to book on-line at www.nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk** •

You must inform us in writing of any cancellation by 1 March 2015
[cancellations after this date will incur a charge of 50% of the total fee payable]

However substitute guests will be welcome

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

Joining the Nation in Choral Singing

National Conference Booking Form 2 20-22 March 2015

The Chatsworth Hotel, The Steyne, Worthing, West Sussex BN11 3DU

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

Guest 1

Title Mr/Mrs/Miss.....

First Name.....

Surname.....

Address.....

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

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

Email Address.....

Special Requirements

Diet [type].....

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

NAC group.....

Choir Name.....

Guest 2

Title Mr/Mrs/Miss.....

First Name.....

Surname.....

Address.....

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

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

Email Address.....

Special Requirements

Diet [type].....

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

NAC group.....

Choir Name.....

PLEASE PHOTOCOPY THIS FORM FOR MORE GUESTS IF REQUIRED

Please return your completed forms and deposits to

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

07939012458

conference.coordinator@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk

Côr Merched Cwm Llynfi Wales South

25th Anniversary Concert

This ladies choir based in the Llynfi Valley in South Wales recently celebrated their 25th anniversary with a concert at Maesteg Town Hall. Compèred by the broadcaster and presenter Roy Noble, the choir performed before a packed hall with honoured guests including the local MP, Huw Irranca Davies, the Welsh Assembly member for South Wales West, Mr Byron Davies and the Mayor of Maesteg, Councillor Phillip Jenkins.

Under the baton of their Musical Director, Paul Deenick, ably assisted by his wife Laura as accompanist, the choir opened the concert with the aptly entitled *As Long As I Have Music*. As the concert progressed the choir demonstrated their versatility with a range of items including, *Say A Little Prayer For Me*, *I Will Follow Him* from Sister Act and items in Welsh, *Suo Gân* and *Nos Da*.

Paul is also Musical Director of Caerphilly Male Voice Choir and they were invited as guests for this special concert. The men performed a good mix of numbers,



including Welsh favourites in their medley, *Fantasia On Famous Welsh Airs* and *Deus Salutis* and then introduced a jazzy feel with *Sweet Georgia Brown* and *The Rhythm Of Life*. Their rendition of *Five Foot Two, Eyes Of Blue* was much appreciated.

The two choirs joined forces at the end of the concert to give a powerful and moving performance of selections from *Les Miserables*.

The concert was further enhanced by guest soloist, the very talented tenor, Trystan Llyr Griffiths. Accompanied on the piano by Ryan Wood, Trystan gave a

wonderful performance, singing a range of music from both the operatic and concert repertoire.

The concert concluded with Côr Merched Cwm Llynfi singing *One Voice* specially arranged for the choir by Ryan Wood.

Côr Merched Cwm Llynfi is a non-auditioning choir which welcomes new members. Rehearsals take place at the Celtic Club, Garth, Maesteg on a Wednesday evening at 7.00.

Margaret Griffiths
Press Officer

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The Glasgow Phoenix Choir Scotland West

Sponsored by Co-operative Funeralcare

Conductor and Director of Music
– Marilyn J Smith, MBE, LRAM

Instead of having our usual break over the summer this year, the choir took part in an event during Glasgow's wonderful Commonwealth Games. 'Sound to Sea' took place over two nights at the beginning of August and included a range of music, dance, song, fireworks and a stunning aerial display on the roof of the Glasgow Science Centre. An amazing experience for the choir and a spectacle for the audience.

As a result of taking part in this event, the choir began rehearsals for the new season at the beginning of September. Sadly, we were without Tommy Tracy, a tenor of nearly 20 years' standing. Tommy had decided that, at the ripe old age of 84, he should 'hang up his tonsils'. Tommy is a lovely man and is missed by the whole choir. We did though have the chance to welcome back Eileen Kidd (soprano) and Susan Evans (alto), both of whom had left the choir in the last few years.

Re-energised by the summer holidays, the whirlwind that is Marilyn J Smith presented the choir with a large batch of new music, including a beautiful new arrangement of *The Lord is my Shepherd* by Will Todd and *Brother, Sister, Let Me Serve* you by Alex Patterson, both of which have wowed audiences wherever we have performed them. In addition, we have added a First World War Medley to our repertoire, which has also gone down very well, particularly at Christmas when we added in a short section of *Silent Night* sung by one of our wonderful tenors, Billy Hillan.

Our first concert of the year was in aid of Christian Aid. We are very grateful that our sponsorship by the Co-operative Funeralcare allows Glasgow Phoenix Choir to perform a high number of charity concerts throughout the year (eight so far this season). Our choir business manager, John Blue, came up with a great new approach to selling tickets for charity concerts which take place at a distance from Glasgow, helping to raise maximum amounts for local charities in areas where we perform concerts. John is a wonderful asset to our choir, who constantly looks after our best interests and works extremely hard for the choir at all time.

Once again we had a very successful Open Night which led to a high number of auditions and recruitment of a number of ladies for



both sections and... one bass. Where are all the men who love singing and who are not already in a choir? There must be some out there who would enjoy being part of a lively, friendly and successful group.

As well as raising money through concerts, the choir held a raffle in lieu of a coffee morning in aid of MacMillan Cancer in September, during our Highland Tour to Strathpeffer, Dornoch and Inverness. Two members of our social committee organised the event and raised £400. Well done, Carol and Stewart Moir and the choir members who helped by contributing prizes and giving other help. In Strathpeffer, we enjoyed a lovely concert with our friends from the Dingwall Gaelic Choir, who have been celebrating their Diamond Jubilee this year. Our choir president, Lady Jan Bonomy, presented Kirsteen Menzies with a painting, *The Three Conductors*, by our own very talented soprano, Isobel MacKinnon, which featured Marilyn J Smith, Kirsteen and Hamish, her father and previous conductor of the Dingwall Gaelic Choir.

Perhaps the most unusual event of this season, so far, was our participation in the Glasgow Doors Open Day. Our sponsors asked if we could appear as part of their event in Craigton Crematorium. Due to space restrictions, a small choir performed two short concerts of appropriate music in the chapel of the crematorium.

The first half of the choir year ended with a series of special Christmas concerts in Edinburgh, Glasgow and East Kilbride. All three certainly helped to get the choir members and, hopefully, our audiences, in the mood for Christmas. The Glasgow concert was enhanced by our guests The Co-operative Funeralcare Band conducted by Allan Ramsay; Inverclyde Schools Junior Choir, conducted by Gemma McLean; and Inverclyde Schools Senior Choir and Inverclyde Voices conducted by Palma Allan MBE, all of whom were in very fine form and whose participation made this concert a very special event for the audience and for Glasgow Phoenix Choir.

Our final news of the year is that we have released two CDs. Both were recorded in Iona Abbey during our Diamond Jubilee year. The first is a Postcard from Iona and the second is our recording of Faure's Requiem. We are very fortunate to have been given permission to use two paintings by the very popular Scottish artist John Lowrie Morrison (JoLoMo) as the artwork for these.

Finally, from all of us at Glasgow Phoenix Choir, best wishes for the coming year. Enjoy your singing.

*Anne Kay
Publicity Officer*

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Donaghadee Male Voice Choir Northern Ireland

Donaghadee Male Voice Choir on song from Catalonia to Co Down

Choir President Lady Sylvia Hermon MP, Baroness May Blood, Chair of the Integrated Education Fund, Northern Ireland, and 10 supporters from Barnburgh Village Singers from South Yorkshire were among the guests of the choir in a packed Ulster Hall on Saturday night, 20 September 2014, when Donaghadee Male Voice Choir performed in concert with the legend that is Phil Coulter.

The appreciative audience were treated to a magnificent evening of wonderful music and memories by Phil Coulter at his best. His relaxed delivery almost camouflages his genius at the piano and the audience were treated to some of his famous 'hits' including *The Town I Loved So Well*; *My Lagan Love*; *Carrickfergus* and of course *Puppet On A String* and *Congratulations*, all interspersed with brilliantly delivered anecdotes from his life experiences.

The choir was on top form, giving one of its best-ever performances. It was indeed an honour and privilege when the choir performed *Ireland's Call* (the 'national anthem' of the Ireland rugby team) and the famous *Steal Away*, both accompanied by the composer - the great man himself.

We witnessed Phil Coulter at his best - composer, pianist, singer, and raconteur. It was a memorable evening, and Phil Coulter along with the choir thoroughly deserved the audience's standing ovation.

Less than a month later, during which the choir led the praise at a local Harvest Service, the choir headed off on 15 October 2014 to Barcelona to participate



in the XI Cantate Barcelona, a music festival attended by choirs from Norway, France, Denmark, and England, together with local choirs from the Catalonia region.

Donaghadee MVC had the wonderful

experience of singing to packed venues including the Teatre Municipal in Blanes, the Palau du Congressos in Girona, The Poble Espanyol de Montjuic in Barcelona, and Iglesia De Sant Roma in Lloret. These were four magnificent concerts which were very warmly received by large and enthusiastic Catalan audiences who were totally spellbound by the 'Donaghadee Sound', and were particularly moved by the 'Dee's singing of *Danny Boy*.

During the visit to the Festival there was opportunity to take in a bit of sight-seeing, including a short tour of Barcelona, and visits to the Bodegas Torres winery outside Vilafranca, the Salvador Dali Museum in Figueres, and the coastal town of Tossa de Mar.



But if there was to be a highlight of the tour it must be the visit to the Santa Maria Monastery at Montserrat, dating back to the 9th century, where the men from the 'Dee had the privilege of singing in the simply magnificent Basilica at a lunchtime concert with the world-famous Montserrat Boys' Choir. DMVC was the only choir from the festival to be accorded that honour. It was an unforgettable experience in front of an estimated audience of 1,500 - one of the biggest audiences for which the choir has ever performed.

At the close of the festival all the participating choirs held a final concert in Girona, where each choir sang two pieces from their repertoire. This was followed by an unforgettable Gala Dinner for all choirs where many more songs were heard from each choir - impromptu and representative of each country.

Musical Director Robert Wilson MBE summed up the visit 'The Cantate Barcelona Festival has been one of the best that Donaghadee Male Voice Choir has ever experienced. The audiences were amazing, the hospitality was second-to-none, and the festival organisers were top-drawer. We all had the most enjoyable and memorable time in Catalonia, and the reputation of the choir has once again been enhanced beyond these shores'

Four days after returning from Catalonia, Donaghadee Male Voice Choir took part in a special Centenary Gala Concert in a packed Queen's Hall Newtownards, Co Down to commemorate the start of the Great War and honour those who served. The concert was organised by Ards Borough Council and also featured Festival Brass and soloists Siobhann Petit and James Huish.

It was a very busy few months.

*Michael Pritchard
Publicity Officer DMVC*

Exeter Police And Community Choir Devon

Singing is good for your health – so why not make a lifestyle change and join a choir? It is good for your heart – and that's official according to Heart Research UK. And it is a great way to relax from today's stresses and strains.

Exeter Police and Community Choir is testimony to the fact that singing is good for all ages with three members near or just over the age of ninety – with the youngest in their thirties. Professor Graham Welch, Chair of Music Education at the Institute of Education, University of London, has studied developmental and medical aspects of singing for 30 years and he says the health benefits of singing are both physical and psychological. 'Singing has physical benefits because it is an aerobic activity that increases oxygenation in the blood stream and exercises major muscle groups in the upper body, even when sitting. Singing has psychological benefits because of its normally positive effect in reducing stress levels.

'Psychological benefits are also

evident when people sing together as well as alone because of the increased sense of community, belonging and shared endeavour.' Regular exercising of the vocal cords can even prolong life, according to research done by leading vocal coach and singer Helen Astrid, from The Helen Astrid Singing Academy in London. 'It's a great way to keep in shape because you are exercising your lungs and heart,' she says.

A recent study by AXA, the insurance and asset management group, found that 50 percent of people relaxed by singing or dancing to music.

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

New members are always welcome and no formal auditions are necessary. If you like singing for pleasure and enjoy good company, then please contact choir secretary on 01626 891933 or email copsec@supanet.com

Bill Smith



Send Your Submissions To Crawford At

publications.officer@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk

**Thanet Male Voice Choir
Thames South Group**

The Thanet Male Voice Choir sea-front proms have become annual events which people from far and wide delight in attending; some people have even contacted us to ascertain future dates so they can arrange their annual holiday at the appropriate time. 2014 was no different and the proms were played to packed houses at The Pavilion in Broadstairs on the south-east coast on the last Wednesdays in July and August.

A full programme was enhanced by the singing of soloist Hannah Kirk and then a marvellous duet between her and our MD, Martin Rendle. Audience participation saw everyone joining in enthusiastically with



Pack Up Your Troubles and It's a Long Way to Tipperary (accompanied by actions.) and the evening was concluded with Hannah proving a superb Britannia and everyone singing along whole-heartedly to Jerusalem and Land of Hope and Glory, accompanied by much flag-waving.

7 November saw us in a different mood when the choir sang at St George's School in support of the Gurkha Memorial which is scheduled to be unveiled in Folkestone. We were delighted to sing to help these tremendously brave people and many

pieces, including Yeomen of England and Mansions of the Lord, were extremely well received.

2015 sees us travelling to Germany as well as performing more locally, frequently raising funds for charities. How great to do some good when you are enjoying yourself.

*Neil Armstrong
Secretary*

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The Viva Musica Choir Midlands South West

For the last 25 years Viva Musica choir has been performing regularly throughout the West Midlands and Worcestershire. Viva Musica is led by Rosemary Phillips and accompanied by Andrew Biggs, who with their wealth of experience inspire the choir to meet new challenges and maintain their high standard.

On Saturday 18 October the choir performed at Dudley Town Hall with their special guest Wynne Evans.

Wynne is an accomplished tenor who performs with the English and Welsh National Operas, is a presenter on Classic FM and his debut album went straight to number 1 in the Classical Music Charts. However, Wynne is probably best known as Gio Compario in the TV adverts for a well known insurance comparison website. Wynne performed 4 solo items, including Granada by Lara and My Life Belongs to You by Norvello. Viva Musica accompanied Wynne for 3 items, which included Funiculi Funicula by Denza. Wynne was a great success and ensured the evening was a treat for everyone with his wonderful sense of humour.



During the year choir members voted for their favourite pieces and the programme for the concert included the most popular items, such as You Raise Me Up by Graham and Lovland, and my own personal favourite I Was Glad by Parry. The concert saw the first performance of Sing Sing; Music was Given. This piece was written for the choir by Tony Bridgewater to celebrate Viva Musica's 25th Anniversary.

There have been many highlights for the choir throughout the last 25 years,



including performances with Alfie Boe and Amore, performing at Symphony Hall and Worcester Cathedral, hosting a choir from South Africa and travelling to Europe.

Viva Musica's next concert will be on Saturday 13 December at St James's Church, Wollaston, Stourbridge where they will be joined by the choir from St Margaret's of Hasbury Church of England Primary School.

For all ticket information and our full concert programme please visit our website www.viva-musica.co.uk or our Facebook page.

New members are always welcome - please see our website for full details. Viva Musica is particularly looking for new tenors and bass.

Lorraine Newman

Epsom Male Voice Choir Thames South

A much-loved poem by Alfred Lord Tennyson provided the inspiration for the winning piece of new music among 40 UK entries for Cornwall's next International Male Voice Choral Festival.

The hotly contested Composers' Competition ended with Ian Assersohn's setting of Tennyson's 'Crossing the Bar' moving an audience at a Truro and Penwith College-sponsored prize evening almost to tears when it was performed for the first time by Alastair Taylor's newly formed 'Celtic Male Ensemble'.

The Composers' Composition is one of the jewels in the crown of Cornwall's biennial world Choral event which will take place from 29 April to 4 May next year,

with more than 60 choirs converging from around the globe for 50 concerts in 40 venues in every corner of the Duchy.

Surrey-based Ian, who studied composition and piano at the Royal College of Music before embarking on a 25 year career as a senior IT director, recently came back to his music - with outstanding results. Announcing him as the winner among 40 entries by 31 composers, adjudicator Dr Alan Bullard said he had created 'an effective and moving work which represents the best of the Male Voice Choir tradition, with shapely melodic lines, a sense of musical climax, and a traditional but effective harmonic control. It will appeal to performers and it sets a well-known text which will win the audience's hearts.'

Ian, the Musical Director of Epsom Male Voice Choir, Leatherhead Choral Society and Concordia Singers, was presented with a silver cup and a cheque for £1000 by joint president of the Cornwall International Male Voice Choral Festival, Michael Galsworthy.

As the evening closed Ian declared, 'Returning to music has been a very positive and successful career move for me. I always love hearing my music performed, especially for the first time, and The Celtic Male Ensemble did a great job.'





'Crossing the Bar' will have its world premiere during the 2015 Festival which Director Peter Davies says is already set to be the biggest in the event's 14 year history.

'We have choirs already signed up from South Africa, America and Canada, Spain and Switzerland, Russia and Lithuania, Estonia and Germany – as well as choirs from across the UK and, of course, more than thirty from around Cornwall.'

The last Festival in 2013 was a huge cultural success, spread across five sun-filled days with more than three thousands singers of all ages and nationalities performing for more than thirty thousand people in venues across Cornwall, from the Minnack Theatre to St Michael's Mount and from Mevagissy to Bude.

Full details of the 2015 Cornwall International Male Voice Choral Festival can be

found on www.cimvcf.org.uk. Concert tickets will be available from the end of November and can be purchased through the Festival website or directly via www.hall-forcornwall.org.uk.

Louise Midgley

SOMETIMES YOU
TURN UP AT A
VENUE TO FIND
THAT THE PIANO
ISN'T QUITE AS
GOOD AS YOU
EXPECTED IT TO BE.



Worcester Male Voice Choir Midlands South West

The Festive Season proved to be a very busy, enjoyable and rewarding time for the Choir.

Following a very successful Concert at Chantry High School, Martley in aid of funds for the Pensax Memorial Stone for those lost from the village of Pensax during the First World War and then participating in the City of Worcester Remembrance Service, the choir started their long celebration of the festive season.

Late November, and the festive season started for the choir with the Worcester Victorian Fayre. A very popular Christmas Fayre lasting 4 days with visitors, and products from Kleve the German city twinned with Worcester. On this occasion we sing outside the Guildhall, an impressive



Council building and it enables us to dust down our Christmas repertoire and mix in some other popular music. We sang for the first time, Darke's In the Bleak Midwinter which has since become a real favourite. Then perhaps the major performance of the year the Annual Christmas Concert in the wonderful Pershore Abbey - which has outstanding acoustics! This Concert is now so popular that in order to satisfy demand for tickets we hold it on both the Friday and the Saturday evening. This year we had two comperes sharing the task of keeping the Concert moving along; firstly our very talented joke a minute BBC H/W Radio presenter and President of the choir Dave Bradley and Philip Serrell TV personality and antiques expert well known for his appearances on 'Flog It'. In the first half the choir performed a range of pieces from their general repertoire and then the second half following the traditional wine and mince pies for all in attendance - was very seasonal. The beautiful carol Quem Pastores, the quaint



Little Road to Bethlehem and of course the splendid first formal public performance of In the Bleak Midwinter. These and others plus several traditional carols for audience participation made the concerts a huge success. The choir was led by our MD Nicholas Wright and accompanist Sheila Leatherland who were joined by the very talented and old friend Keith Hearnshaw on the Organ. Keith also played Callonde Westminster to start a rousing second half. In addition our guests the outstanding Shulah Oliver and Katie Sheldon playing violin and cello and amongst the pieces performed were Don Giovanni and Swan Lake. Not only are these concerts enjoyable to perform but the proceeds are always donated to a local charity. In this instance we were privileged to support the Mayor of Pershore's Charities 2014/15 which were Guide Dogs for the Blind and the Stroke Association. The Mayor brought along many of his colleagues from other local authorities and sitting in the front rows their chains helped dazzle the choir into a stunning performance! In all the proceeds exceeded over £3000 Two days rest and the choir were off to Stourport to raise funds for the Cardia Rehabilitation Unit at Kidderminster Hospital. This consisted of a full carol concert including readings and we were immediately booked again for 2015

Time for a couple of rehearsals and then ten days later perform in the BBC Radio Hereford and Worcester Celebration of Worcester which was being performed live at Malvern Theatre in front of a full capacity audience and recorded for transmission on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. In fact the public were treated to some snippets on the radio and BBC Midlands Today TV the next week, just to whet the

appetite. By now the choir was in full flow with their Christmas carols and together with the Worcestershire Symphony Orchestra, Bromsgrove Chamber choir and very talented soloist Charlie Green, of Britain's got talent fame, provided a simply magnificent concert. Humorous readings from the BBC presenters and hosted by Michael Collie BBC TV. The programme provided entertainment of the highest quality.

The emphasis then moved subtly from the formal concert or event to community singing. The move started with a Community carol concert in Norton Village Hall where we shared the limelight with pupils from the Norton First School. What a delightful evening it turned out to be. We met and surprised a lot of new people with our repertoire and everyone enjoyed the infectious readings and delightful singing of the young children

The next stop in the busy schedule was the Worcestershire Royal Hospital where we sang in the main foyer as patients, visitors and staff alike went about their business cheered by the choir carol singing. Later that week the choir visited a local nursing home in nearby Kempsey and sang to the residents who included our ex-chorister Derek Chapman who moved into The Lawns some twelve months ago. Not quite an ex-chorister as Dereck donned his choir jumper and joined in with some of the pieces. It was a thoroughly enjoyable visit and together with the hospital visit a few days earlier reminded us of the contribution that we can make to those less fortunate than ourselves.

We reached the final festive event on the Saturday before Christmas, singing in Crowngate, the main shopping centre,

in Worcester. Again it was in aid of local charity and provided entertainment and cheer as the crowds went about coping with 'Panic Saturday', Guess what; Father Christmas joined the choir for part of the singing-yes the real one who was plying his trade elsewhere in the city-but he did remind us of a certain 1st tenor by the name of Brian Pensom; but was it? We will have to wait till 2015 to check it out ;but will time permit? We already have 14 Concert bookings for 2015 with more to follow. Just as well we now have a full musical team. Scott Wolfendon, a talented young musician, has joined as Assistant Accompanist which should help reduce the workload of Haydn Thomas, Deputy Conductor, and Nicholas and Shelia. One of the highlights of 2015 will be the tour to Cornwall in the spring for the International Music Festival. More about that next time.

Terry Dillingham
WMVC Public Relations Officer

Saddleworth Male Voice Choir North West

Saddleworth Male Voice Choir celebrates its 60th anniversary in 2015. On Saturday



9 May there will be a Celebration Dinner at the Saddleworth Golf Club when local dignitaries, choir members, patrons, and former members have the opportunity to celebrate the occasion together and renew old friendships.

The year's main event is a Gala Concert which will be held as part of the four yearly Saddleworth Festival of the Arts. The choir is very grateful for the support given by the Festival Committee in providing this year's special guest, the popular Welsh tenor Wynne Evans of 'Go Compare' fame and the theme of the concert will be the Songs of Mario Lanza. The concert will be held at the Uppermill Civic Hall at 7.30 on Thursday 11 June. Tickets are available from the Festival Committee:

www.saddleworthfestival.org.uk or from the choir's ticket secretary David Davies (01457 873182).

Another highlight of the year will be a return to one of the choir's favourite venues, Fountains Abbey, where the choir will sing in the ruins of the abbey during the annual Fountains by Floodlight season. The choir is also organising a Pint and Pie Night when other male voice choirs are invited to an informal sing-along to celebrate the choir's anniversary and what we all hold dear - the joy of singing.

The year will end with the choir presenting a concert on the 5 December to celebrate the 800th Anniversary of St Chad's Church, Saddleworth, which was first consecrated in 1215. Finally on the 19 December at the Civic Hall in Uppermill, the choir holds its 53rd consecutive annual performance of Handel's Messiah with an augmented ladies chorus, the Pennine Orchestra and professional soloists from the Royal Northern College of Music.

Further details of the choir's 2015 calendar will be available at: www.saddleworthmvc.org

John Watts – Chairman/PRO SMVC

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www.facebook.com/thebroadwaychoir

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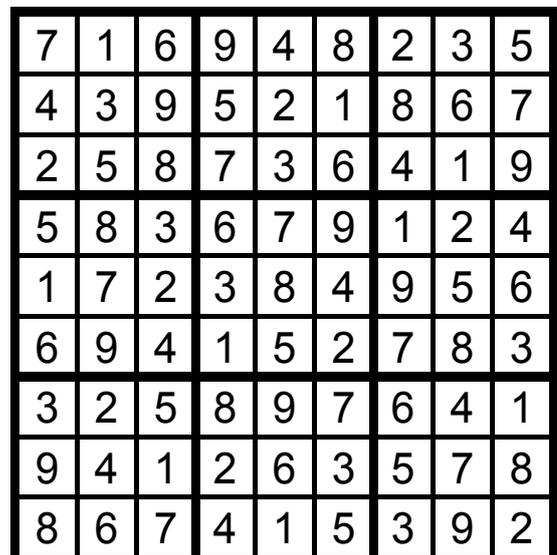
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The first thing is to send your article **attached** to (not in the body of) an email to

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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 .jpgs 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.

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