

THE NATIONAL PUBLICATION FOR ALL CHORISTERS

NEWS & VIEWS

201

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHOIRS

SUMMER 2013

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John Wallace writes

PATRICK HAWES

Headline speaker
at Conference





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Last date for submissions for Issue 202
AUTUMN 2013 - 31 AUGUST
On your doorstep by 1 October

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Crawford's Corner



Here is the Summer Issue of News & Views. I hope it arrives together with a little summer weather, though I won't count on it.

This issue is a bit bigger than the last one. There are thirty-six pages of 'goodies' this time which includes an article from John Trent Wallace which I am sure you will find thought provoking. There is my usual report on the doings at conference, well just a flavour really since to go too deeply into everything would take too much space and might bore the pants off you.

I was pleased to be able to include the information that Liz Moulder shared with us on Taking Care Of Your Voice. I found it really helpful. I did enjoy meeting some of you at the Llyndir Hotel, old faces and new.

It has been wonderful the way your reports and choir stories came in this time. I have really enjoyed having to add more pages to get all your submissions in. It is especially good when a choir who hasn't sent in a report before takes the plunge and finds that it isn't a difficult thing to do. If your choir hasn't sent me something about your activities then why not switch on your computer and get started right away. Drybrook & District Ladies and Bestwood Male Voice have already sent me something for the Autumn issue and I haven't quite finished this one yet.

I asked at conference if anyone had done the last crossword. No-one had but I'm sure there must be a cruciverbalist out there somewhere. Write and let me know.

You might notice that we have a Music and Festival page after a long time without one. I'm pleased that we have Tim Knight

on the committee to help and advise us all. It is also good to have a full quota of Officers. Clive Lawton is keen to get started on the work for next year's conference in Scarborough and it's good to have Natasha Cole with us to help spread the workload.

Below you will read the first Chairman's Chat from Brenda. I know she was nervous about her first effort so it's great to see what an excellent job she has made of it.

She and Paul Gailiunas proofread News & Views for me and it never fails to amaze me that they spot different things.

That's the magazine finished (I always do this bit last) so I'll go and lie down for a bit and let you get reading.

Crawford

Chairman's Chat



May I begin my chat by thanking you for voting me as your chair for the next four years. At present I'm wearing both of the masks that depict the arts; I'm all smiles because of a successful

conference, but I have an enormous sadness because when I returned home I learned that my choir's musical director and Midlands East President, Roy Davies, had died. This truly inspirational man will be very sadly missed.

This conference witnessed a number of officer changes, and I am very pleased to say that after a few barren years we have finally filled the Music & Festivals vacancy, so I begin my 'reign' with a full complement of officers.

On the cover of this edition is Patrick Hawes who was the principal speaker at conference. In his presentations we learned about how the narrative, parable or poem affected him and led him to the music he wrote for those words, and that principle is echoed in John Trent Wallace's piece – you have to read what's there and

feel it to tell the story (oh, I can hear Roy now at my choir's practices!). Oh dear, I sound like the lead presenter for Listen with Mother now. To find out what else went on at conference, Crawford has done his customary report.

I can see from my preview of the magazine that there is no let-up in choral activities; you are all so very busy. News & Views wouldn't be the same without Lawson's contribution about Glasgow Phoenix who never seem to stop for breath, and it's lovely to hear about activities from the newer member choirs.

With my best wishes to you all.

Brenda Wilkinson

The conference went well and I am sure most of those attending enjoyed the hotel and the presentations in music and instruction which was very much appreciated.

We have to thank Celia and Brenda for the work done in setting up the Conference considering the time involved in the arrangements. They had worked so hard to get all the information ready after the loss of the last Conference Co-ordinator.

We should thank Brenda Harper, the Group Chairman, for the excellent concert she had achieved with her choirs on the Saturday evening. The applause showed how the audience appreciated great performances. Well done.

On Saturday 4 May following an invitation from the Derbyshire Constabulary Male Voice Choir we attended the joint Concert with Caerphilly Ladies Choir at St John's Church in Derby. The concert had been arranged via the NAC web site and News and Views.

Eric Jackson

From the President



It is great that we now have a full complement of Officers which means that some of the work on your behalf can be shared and supported.

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

JUNE 2013

Musica Sacra Bratislava

Thursday 13 to Sunday 16 June 2013

Venue: **Bratislava, Slovakia**

Deadline for sending in applications for the festival is 1 March 2013

<http://choral-music.sk/en/festival/>

Thames South Group's 3rd Joint Concert

Saturday 22nd June 2013

Venue: **The Central Theatre, Chatham, 7.00**

Five choirs from the region join together for another spectacular evening of choral singing. More details to follow.

RSCM Music Sunday

Sun 23 Jun 2013

Venue: **UK-wide**

(The RSCM is a fellow-member of the TONSIL Group)

RSCM LAUNCHES MUSIC SUNDAY 2013: CHURCHES ENCOURAGED TO CELEBRATE CHURCH MUSIC

Churches throughout the world will celebrate the use of music within their worship - and honour the musicians who make it - by celebrating RSCM Music Sunday later this year. It is an annual initiative of the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM), which itself marks the event on Sunday 23 June 2013.

The RSCM invites churches, choirs, schools and other organisations to put on a fundraising Music Sunday event, with proceeds shared on a 50:50 basis between the hosting body and the RSCM. 'Some very successful events have taken place in the past when churches raised funds for something they care about in their church or choir', says Catherine Clark, Head of Development at the RSCM. 'Music Sunday is also about celebrating and honouring the music and musicians who make worship so precious to us all.'

In 2012, many churches used their Music Sunday event as a musical celebration of the

Queen's Diamond Jubilee. Some churches and choirs will be commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Coronation in June this year. 2013 is also the centenary of the birth of the composer Benjamin Britten, which some churches will mark with performances of his sacred music.

Those looking for ideas and material can see a list of last year's events and those already planned for 2013 on the Music Sunday page of the RSCM website www.rscm.com/musicsunday.

Events ranging from special collections at services to full-scale choral concerts raised anything from £30 to £1,000, with an average of £100 shared with the RSCM. 'Every contribution helps,' says Catherine Clark. 'If every affiliated member of the RSCM were to hold a Music Sunday event and raised just £50, that would still be a remarkable £22,000, bringing us that much closer to our £125,000 annual fund goal!'

Details of how to take part along with ideas for events, downloads including suggested prayers, readings and music can be found on the RSCM website www.rscm.com/musicsunday.

Serenade! Washington, DC Choral Festival

- Thu 27 Jun to Mon 1 Jul 2013

Venue: **Washington, DC, USA**

Join the festival that The Washington Post calls a 'True Harmonic Convergence!' and that critics have reviewed, saying, '...the whole bunch sang, danced, clapped and whooped it up in a joyful noise that brought the audience to its feet cheering.' Youth and adult choirs enjoy concerts in prestigious venues all over the Washington DC, Maryland and Virginia area and spread the joy of choral singing along with choirs from around the world. Experience workshops with notable choral conductors, musical exchanges with many national and international festival choirs, and explore the nation's capital, including sites such as the Smithsonian Museums, the national monuments, and the White House. A great new addition to the American choral scene.

<http://classicalmovements.org/dc.htm>

Future Dates:

2013: June 27 – July 1

2014: June 26 – 30

Contact: Yarina Connors, Classical Movements, Inc., 319 Cameron St., Alexandria, VA 22314, USA.

Phone: +1 (800) 882-0025

Fax: +1 703-683-6045

Email: Yarina@classicalmovements.com

Web site: www.ClassicalMovements.com

July 2013

Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod

Tue 9 to Sun 14 Jul 2013

Venue: **Llangollen, North Wales**

Thousands of people from around the world will again descend on the little town of Llangollen this July as it celebrates the 67th annual International Musical Eisteddfod.

Over the years the event which began as a festival of peace in the aftermath of the Second World War has grown into one of Europe's premier music and dance events. It has attracted cultural icons like Dylan Thomas and the great Italian tenor Luciano Pavarotti, who began his international career as a member of a choir from Modena at Llangollen in 1955.

In recent years artists of the stature of Bryn Terfel, Katherine Jenkins, Kiri Te Kanawa, James Galway and Montserrat Caballe have performed at the final Sunday Evening Gala Concert.

Most importantly the competitors have continued to come from all over the world – this year they will be here from Alaska, the Philippines, Russia, South Africa, Hong Kong, Australia, Canada, China, India, New Zealand and Ghana as well as from all over Europe and the UK.

This year's event runs from Tuesday, July 9, when the colourful traditional procession through the town will be led by Eisteddfod Patron Terry Waite, through six days of competitions and concerts to Sunday's spectacular fireworks extravaganza.

<http://international-eisteddfod.co.uk/>

Ihlonbe! South African Choral Festival Thursday 11 to Sunday 21 July 2013

Venue: **Venues in South Africa**

Producer: Classical Movements, Inc.

Location: Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town, Soweto & Safari

Participate in what South Africa's leading newspaper, the Cape Times, calls 'The Largest International Choral Gathering in South Africa' and 'Singing That Nourishes Body and Soul.' The Ihlonbe! South African Choral Festival offers a one-of-a-kind choral experience in dynamic settings such as Cape Town, Pretoria, Johannesburg, and Soweto as well as at a scenic wildlife safari park. Perform with several excellent South African choirs and participate in workshops with dynamic South African choral conductors. Ihlonbe! annually features a diverse representation of international touring choirs from all over the world in extraordinary venues with enthusiastic audiences. Experience African rhythms, dancing, and wonderful, unique singing. Open to all choirs, each conducted by their own music director.

Come away with a love for this extraordinary country and its high standards of choral singing. Ihlonbe! is a high value, low priced tour with South Africa's most famous iconic sights such as the Cradle of Humankind, Table Mountain, and Cape Point, as well as various outreach opportunities and what The Citizen newspaper calls 'More Than Just Music.'

Visit for More Information:

http://classicalmovements.org/s_af.htm

Future Dates:

2013: July 11 – 21
2014: July 17 – 26
2015: July 16 – 25

Contact: Jayci Thomas, Classical Movements, Inc., 319 Cameron St., Alexandria, VA 22314, USA.
Phone: +1 (800) 882-0025
Fax: +1 703-683-6045

jayci@classicalmovements.com

www.ClassicalMovements.com

Rhapsody! Children's Music Festival Thursday 11 to Sunday 21 July 2013

Venues: **Vienna, Salzburg & Prague**

In 2011, the Prague Post hailed the Rhapsody Children's Music Festival Vienna, Salzburg and Prague as 'The summer of young musical brilliance.' Festival choirs perform individually in three of Europe's most historical and musical

cities as well as in a combined grand finale conducted by select attending choir directors. Past venues have included the landmark St Stephen's Cathedral and the Haydn Church in Vienna, St. Andrä Church in Salzburg, and Smetana Hall, Dvorak Hall, and St. Simon and Judah Church in Prague. Participants will enjoy workshops with Viennese and Czech choral experts, cultural exchanges, and musical and sightseeing tours in the birthplace of classical music. Come share in this 'richly rewarding experience' (Prague Post).

<http://classicalmovements.org/rhap.htm>

Future Dates:

2013: July 11 – 21
2014: July 3 – 13

Contact: Christopher Harris, Classical Movements, Inc., 319 Cameron St., Alexandria, VA, 22314, USA
Phone: +1 (800) 882-0025
Fax: +1 703-683-6045

Christopher@classicalmovements.com

www.ClassicalMovements.com

The Drybrook & District Ladies Choir Diamond Jubilee Concert Saturday 13 July 2013

Venue: **The Forest Theatre** Coleford in the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire. GL16 7JT

Box Office: 01594 833416

Melodia! South American Music Festival

Sun 14 to Wed 24 Jul 2013

Venues: **Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires**

Featured in the newspapers and television channels of Brazil's leading press conglomerate, O Globo, as well as in all of Argentina's major newspapers from La Nación to Clarín, the Melodia! South American Music Festival is a celebration of the two most important countries in South America. The festival features performances by individual choirs with their own directors as well as combined choir performances conducted by a guest conductor in some of Argentina's and Brazil's top venues. Outreach, participation in a samba school, tango shows, a real Argentinean gaucho ranch, cultural exchanges with local students and music ensembles, a Latin American music workshop, and exceptional sightseeing and outreach opportunities make this festival a unique and exciting experience. Open to all choirs.

Visit for More Information:

http://classicalmovements.org/s_am.htm

Future Dates:

2013: Brazil only – July 14-24; Argentina only – July 18-26; Combined Brazil & Argentina – July 14-24

2014: Argentina only – July 17-25; Brazil only – July 24-Aug. 1; Combined Argentina & Brazil – July 20-30

Contact: Laura Smith, Classical Movements, Inc., 319 Cameron St., Alexandria, VA 22314, USA
Phone: +1 (800) 882-0025
Fax: +1 703-683-6045

Laura@classicalmovements.com

www.ClassicalMovements.com

OCTOBER 2013

Cottingham Singers 40th Anniversary Concert Sat 12 Oct 2013 at 7.30

Venue: **Cottingham Civic Hall**

A celebration concert with guests, Hull Ladies choir.

Tickets £5 including light refreshments
01482 506643

patdoc1@hotmail.co.uk

Cantate Barcelona Choral Festival Fri 18 to Mon 21 Oct 2013

Venue: **Barcelona**

For more information about the Festival 'Cantate Barcelona 2013', please write or call Music Contact International/music and friends: 0034 972358871, info@musiccontact.net www.musiccontact.net

NOVEMBER 2013

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. Also be contributions by children from the school. Tickets from the Cheltenham Town Hall Box Office.

boxoffice@cheltenham.gov.uk

Music & Festivals

As a firm believer that the choice of repertoire goes hand in hand with keeping singers and engaging with audiences, I relish the opportunity to take on the role of Music and Festivals Officer.

As well as establishing contacts with publishers and composers, I will be reviewing pieces for you, not only from the major publishing houses but also from the myriad of smaller catalogues. I hope in time to prepare some recommended repertoire lists for choirs and even some 'come and sing' new repertoire workshop days, however I have to make a start somewhere so I am pleased to bring you this selection of pieces and let you know in advance that for various reasons 2014 is a year when many choirs will be featuring the subject of remembrance, (100 years since World War I and 70th anniversary of D Day) so repertoire in the next News and Views will be based around that subject.

Songbird Series OUP Upper Voice Choirs

This is a new series of titles and I have been looking at pieces by the Canadian composer, Sarah Quartel. This is music with a distinctive edge and every one of the samples I received was of high quality, ranging from the simple, lyrical but effective *I Remember* for SA and Piano, to the rather more advanced but well written *Songbird* for SSA with a piano reduction – not without some rhythmic challenges but its learning would be well worth the effort and both these pieces, and the others in the series are recommended as fresh and engaging repertoire for upper voice choirs.

Voice Junction Series OUP SAA TTBB a capella

A Cradle Song - Joel Nilson

Setting words by W B Yeats this piece is in the new voice junction series designed to provide music for modern mixed voice groups, and indeed the voicing of this one suggests the bigger choir but it does not need to be.

What we have here, in my opinion, is a strikingly beautiful and original piece using a mix of major and minor chords and a simple melodic line against a thicker chordal texture which with careful tuning and sensitivity to words would make a stunning piece.

I am extremely grateful to OUP who sent me a whole range of samples and I will be reviewing others in a later edition but for those choirs looking for something completely different, I was struck by the sheer beauty of the *Furusato*, 5 arrangements of Japanese songs, arranged by Bob Chilcott, definitely worth looking at.



For the last 30 years or so, I have been carving out a career in composing and although I have had and continue to have a stream of performances worldwide, it was not always like that and any composer will tell you how hard a musical path it is, but it has brought me into contact with many other fine composers and I am going to help them along their way just as others did me, so you may find pieces reviewed by composers you have never heard of, but I assure you the music will be worthwhile!

Future Festivals

In this section will be Festivals, workshops and Bring and Sing events, here are a couple to start the ball rolling!

City of Derry International Choral Festival

The inaugural City of Derry International Choral Festival, to be held from 24 to 27 October 2013 as part of the city's year-long celebrations as the first UK City of Culture. For more details please visit

<http://www.codichoral.com/about/>

XVIth International Choral 'Kathaumixw', Canada.

This is a 5 day choral festival filled with concerts, common song singing, choral and vocal solo competitions, conductors seminars and social events. Up to 40 choirs from around the world take part together with soloists, guest conductors and the orchestra in residence. The festival takes place in the charming seaside town of Powell River, British Columbia, Canada. 'Kathaumixw' (pronounced Ka-thou-mew) is from the Coast Salish language meaning 'A gathering together of different peoples'. For more details visit

www.kathaumixw.org/

Tim Knight

Tim Knight

Music & Festivals Officer

Tim Knight has been involved with choirs all his life, from being a York Minster chorister under Dr Francis Jackson to over 25 years directing choirs.

He has long term relationships with many Northern Choirs and also founded the Leeds based choirs, The Heritage Singers and The Masterworks Chorale, (the first of these now celebrating 20 years has presented concerts in the USA, Holland, Hungary, Norway and Ireland).

He is Principal of the Yorkshire College of Music and Drama in Leeds, a consultant to the Royal School of Church Music in the Ripon and Leeds area and an award winning and widely published composer, his music being distributed worldwide by Spartan Press. In addition he leads Choral Holidays for a number of Organisations.

His knowledge of the Choral repertoire is particularly wide ranging from the cornerstones of the repertoire to long lost gems and he brings to the NAC a fresh, dynamic and down to earth approach which has made him a popular conductor and workshop leader.

He will be known to many choirs through his choir survival and revival workshops which have taken him all over the UK and indeed to the NAC's own Conference at Retford in 2004, presenting choirs with ways that they can increase audiences and keep and attract new singers.

Tim is a long-serving Associate Member of the NAC and looks forward to a closer working relationship with the Officers in the post of Music and Festivals Officer.

"I understand the inventor of the bagpipes was inspired when he saw a man carrying an indignant, asthmatic pig under his arm. Unfortunately, the manmade sound never equalled the purity of the sound achieved by the pig."

— Alfred Hitchcock

Barnsley Youth Choir

Yorkshire South



The Barnsley Youth Choir last appeared in this publication four years ago when still in its infancy, and has since gone from strength to strength with a membership of over 200 young people aged from 7-18. Having established a healthy programme of winter and summer concerts, 2012 saw the choir perform at the London Olympic Stadium prior to its official opening. During their London visit, the choir also performed at Stratford Circus Arts Centre in the Olympic host borough of Newham and at the Lord Mayor of Newham's show. Having witnessed the choir at one of their Christmas concerts, musical director of the Sing Live! Organisation, Steve Roberts, invited the youth choir to Manchester's Bridgewater Hall, where they joined their hosts in front of 2,000 audience members for some rousing renditions of famous sporting anthems.

Hungarian Visitors

This summer, The Barnsley Youth Choir is once again set to host a group from the renowned Kecskemét Kodály School in Hungary. The Aurin Girls' Choir, the ensemble for teenage students studying at the educational establishment, will be making a five-day trip to the South Yorkshire town at the end of June. They will conduct several workshops as well as a headline concert and special performances alongside the Barnsley Youth Choir.

The legendary teacher and composer Zoltán Kodály devised methods of musical instruction that revolutionised the way in

which children are taught. The Barnsley Youth Choir has deployed the Kodály method of vocal tuition since their inception in 2009. In that year The Miraculam Children's Choir, also from the Kodály School, visited Barnsley for a similar period, helping to inspire many of the young children who are still part of the organisation.

Barnsley Youth Choir's musical director, Mat Wright, spoke about the impact he thinks the forthcoming visit will have on his own choir.

'The standards of perfection achieved by the Aurin Choir really have to be heard to be believed. They have toured all over Europe to participate at the highest level of choral competitions and have established a reputation as a world-class choir. Our own young people have a real opportunity to develop their own technique but most of all to be inspired and uplifted by the quality of singing that they will witness first hand.'

Capturing the Choir

In February this year the choir undertook the mammoth task of recording a Christmas single, with the aim of generating much needed funds for the Barnsley Hospice. Supported by local MP Dan Jarvis, the choir spent an entire day in Barnsley's Emmanuel Methodist Church to capture the choir in a fully live environment. The recording process was guided by well-respected record producer and engineer Simon Humphrey, who has over 30 years experience in the industry and was the recording engineer on The Clash's debut album. The recording of 'Winter Wonderland' was a project that was first mooted in 2012 and has come to fruition through lots of hard work, as the choir's Chairperson Keith Norton explained.

'As a choir with an excellent reputation

within the local area, we had talked for some time about recording the choir professionally', said Keith. 'The opportunity not just to record, but also to do so under the watchful eye of such a well respected professional as Simon Humphrey, is one that the children involved in the process will all remember for a very long time.'

The Barnsley Youth Choir Concerts featuring the Aurin Girls' Choir will take place between Friday 28 and Sunday 30 June. Further details and ticket information can be found on the choir's website

www.barnsleyyouthchoir.org.uk

or on [facebook.com/barnsleyyouthchoir](https://www.facebook.com/barnsleyyouthchoir).

James Dickson

Cottingham Singers

Yorkshire East

40 years of singing

The Cottingham Singers is a mixed voice choir consisting of 44 members. It started as an evening class at the Cottingham Evening Institute in September 1973 and gave its first concert in March 1974. Now rehearsing at Bricknell Avenue Methodist Church, Hull every Wednesday evening from 7.30 to 9.30 the choir is still going strong and actively seeking new members. Paul Anderson joined us as our MD in September 2009 and our accompanist Marlene Pinchbeck has been with us since September 2003.

The concerts we give are in Hull and the surrounding East Riding of Yorkshire, and help to raise money for various good causes.

To celebrate our anniversary we are giving a special concert on Saturday 12 October at Cottingham Civic Hall starting at 7.30. Our guests for the evening will be the Hull Ladies Choir.

Anyone wanting to come and try out the choir will be made very welcome, especially people singing in the three lower voices. There is no need to be able to read music – just to sing in tune!

Contact Pat Docwra on 01482 506643 or e-mail patdoc1@hotmail.co.uk for any more information visit- www.cottinghamsingers.com

Pat Docwra
Secretary



Backworth Male Voice Choir North East NAC group

2012 was an eventful year for Backworth Male Voice Choir.

Formed in 1951 by miners in the colliery village of Backworth in Northumberland, the choir went from strength to strength, and by 2012 had around 60 members.

Early in 2011 the choir participated in a choral competition organised by the charity St Oswald's. This culminated in a concert staged at the City Hall, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Our performance at this event drew the attention of 'scouts' from a film company, 'Steel Mill Pictures'.

Filming started in July of that year, and we were asked to perform, taking part in the film 'Song For Marion', starring Vanessa Redgrave, Terence Stamp, Christopher Ecclestone, and Gemma Arterton. Five members of our choir auditioned, and were taken on as extras. They spent a considerable number of hours working in and around Newcastle.

The choir itself was required to perform a short piece on stage at the Tyne Theatre,

Newcastle, to an audience of 800. During our participation in the film we collaborated with Laura Rossi the musical director who is well known for her musical scores to a number of film productions.

The plot of the film centres around the character played by Vanessa Redgrave, who, learning that she is terminally ill, decides to join a choir, against the wishes of her husband, Terence Stamp.

Although I believe the choir's part in the film ended up largely on the cutting room floor, our name does appear on the credits! The five extras had more luck!

Our brief brush with movie-making went on general release in the UK in February 2013.

2013 promises to be a busy year for Backworth Male Voice Choir. We have a number of concerts arranged, and in June we are visiting old friends in a German choir in Solingen.

Information on forthcoming events involving BMVC can be found on our web site (which is currently being upgraded)

www.backworthchoir.co.uk

Peter J R Barker

A pianist played so well people said he could tame wild animals with it.

So they took him into the jungle and sat him in a clearing.

He played, and as the minutes passed wild animals came into the clearing and sat passively, transfixed by the beautiful music – leopards, rhinos, crocodiles, hyenas, and so on. Then in came the king of the jungle, the lion...

He stood for a moment and jumped on the pianist and ate him. The other animals watched in complete amazement while the lion had his dinner.

When the lion had finished an incredulous monkey went up to him and said "Why did you do that?" And the lion raised a paw to the back of his ear and said in a loud voice, "Pardon".



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So what songs do today's audiences want to listen to?

Audiences have always wanted to hear songs with good tunes that they can identify with. Keeping things fresh and vibrant is fun for both choir and audience, and I believe that means embracing songs from different genres.

I'm amused by a view that I believe is unfounded and fundamentally a wrong, that 'lighter' music is not of the same quality as the more 'serious' classical/traditional repertoire. To sing a pop or musical theatre song well can be just as difficult, in technical terms as well as interpretation, as singing a more 'classical' piece.

A dynamic repertoire also encourages new members to join a choir and creates bigger audiences, so avoiding new songs and sticking to the traditional may be very worthy, but unless change is embraced, there will be nothing to pass on to the next generation.

Dynamic and engaging performances are paramount to the continuation of choral singing. Indeed that should really read, the continuation of any form of musical performance. How many concerts have you sat through wishing the choristers would communicate the meaning of the song and their enjoyment of singing. It's a shame but many choral performances can be very self indulgent.

With the exposure TV is giving choral singing, we are all being judged. Are we smiling? Are we communicating? Your audience is expecting to be entertained with engaging performances, so whatever your song choice, be prepared to reach out with your music!

A blog from John Trent Wallace
www.johntrentwallace.com

The Derbyshire Constabulary Male Voice Choir Midlands East Group

The Choir began in 1956 and is recognised for raising money locally for good causes.

The concert season runs from October to April each year and the choir performs three out of the four weeks in a month supporting local charities. The choir is made up of men from all walks of life and it is no longer a requirement of membership to be associated with the Police Force. New members always welcome.

The choir has had another successful season 2012–2013 having completed 18 concerts and raising over £9,000. We also welcomed three new members - Ken Barnes, a second tenor; Jim Elliott, a first tenor and Eric Singleton, a bass.

The Annual Concert was held on the 20 April at St Osmund's Church in Derby. The choir invited another NAC member - the Rolls-Royce Ladies Choir - to join them as their guests. The evening was a great success and after a varied programme of songs the choirs joined together to sing *You'll Never Walk Alone* by Richard Rodgers.

The choir also took the opportunity to present Mrs Alma Clark with an Honorary Life Membership Award. Since 1986 Alma has been measuring and fitting choir members with uniforms and attaching medal ribbons, epaulettes and insignia. Alma has been involved with the choir and has attended almost all the concerts and events over the last 27 years. The choir thanked Alma for her kindness, her talent and her commitment.

The final concert this season on 4 May was with The Caerphilly Ladies Choir. The Ladies Choir were visiting Derby for the weekend and asked the Constabulary Choir to join them in concert.

The choir is led by Musical Director, Mr Chris Hare. Our accompanists are Anne Allen, who has been with the Choir since 1974, and Louise Cumpstone who joined the Choir in 2006.

The choir is always keen to sing with other choirs so if you are organising a concert in the Midlands please contact us.

The Choir can be found at

<http://www.derbyshire.police.uk/About-us/Male-Voice-Choir/>

and on Facebook.

janetireland58@gmail.com

Janet Ireland
Publicity Officer

St Stythians Male Voice Choir Cornwall

News from the West

The choir is pleased to welcome as its new President Dr Roy Wales of Rottingdean, Brighton. Roy is the founding Director of the Cornwall International Male Voice Choral Festival. He maintains strong links with the county and the festival despite his busy schedule as director of choirs, concerts and festivals in the UK and abroad. We look forward to this continuing link with Dr Wales.

The St Stythians Male Voice Choir started a busy year by competing in the Cornwall County Music Festival held in Truro in March, winning the senior male choir class. This event is followed by the Sixth Cornwall International Male Voice Choral Festival (based in Truro 2-6 May) where we are competing in the Hall for Cornwall, Truro. This well-established festival, now under the direction of Peter Davies, involves some 60 choirs participating in competition and in 25

concerts county-wide. There is also informal day-time singing at various public venues and visitor attractions, eg the Eden Project, Tate St Ives and some of our famed gardens. We are hosting one of the regional gala concerts in Helston. Our other major event of the year is taking part in 'Men of Cornwall Sing' (Kernowyon a Gan) at the Royal Albert Hall in London on Saturday 2 November. The concert is being organised by the Cornish Federation of Male Voice Choirs. Monthly practices through the year and extra local practices will ensure that the 650 strong choir will be well-rehearsed for the event. www.ststythiansmalechoir.org.uk

David Hutson

Grimsby & Cleethorpes Ladies Choir Lincolnshire

We have recently had a 'spring clean' of our music stock, and now have a quantity of SA, SSA and a few SSAA copies, which are surplus to requirements. There is a mixture of some new, but mainly used copies, but they are all in good clean, unmarked condition.

The choir has always sung a wide range of music, from festival pieces to songs from the shows, from sacred music to traditional folk songs, and this is reflected in the range of music available.

If you enjoy J Michael Diack's arrangements of traditional nursery rhymes, or Welsh, Irish and Scottish folk songs, or more up to date tunes such as *The Sound of Music*, *Pokare Kare Ana*, or *You can't hurry love* - have a look at what we have on offer.

There are also a number of works such as 'The Wonderful Year' with music from Haydn and Beethoven; 'The Christmas Rose' - a cantata of the Nativity - by Thomas F Dunhill; and 'Folk songs of the Four Seasons' by R Vaughan Williams.

For a complete list of what we have to offer, please contact our librarian, Mrs Lesley Hewitson lesley.hewitson@ntlworld.com. She will give you any more information you require and will forward you a list of what is available.

So come on, for little more than the cost of postage, your choir can add to their repertoire and try something new and different.

Lesley Hewitson



Mrs Alma Clark receives an Honorary Life Membership Award

First update from that new guy!



Attending my first National Conference on Sunday was certainly an eye opener and, already being voted in as the new conference coordinator, I was greeted warmly by everyone I met.

What impressed me the most were three things, the enthusiasm, the putting forward of ideas and the number of young people present. Members coming from all walks of life but with a common interest in music. There were musical directors, conductors, musicians and officers and members representing many of the six hundred member choirs. The Members Open Forum was indeed rewarding as views were aired and discussed in some detail. It is my job to listen, to enquire, to use the people with knowledge of their local area (known as street cred in my book) to converse with not only those who were at conference but to find out about those who were not and try to make the forthcoming

conferences interesting enough to stir more people to join us in this annual event. Next year you can all dig out your buckets and spades as we are off to Scarborough - a town I have visited many times and twice with my own choir while on tour. It is a lovely seaside town renowned for its sea food (crab salad is a must).

I am fortunate that I have met several of the officer team already and have a good working relationship with all of them. I look forward to working within the team to make the next conference even better than this year, but it is upon you the membership to tell us what you would like next year. I have taken notes of all the comments raised during the open forum on Sunday. The officers will look at all these and formulate a plan of action for the 2014 conference. As Abraham Lincoln famously misquoted, 'You can please all of the people some of the time and some of the people all of the time'. My take on this is to say, how about, 'Most of the people most of the time'.

With your help we can raise the profile of the NAC and have more of you at conference next year.

I expect to have the conference coordinator email connection diverted to my PC in the next week or two. Then let me or any officer know your thoughts and ideas.

I know that the preparations for the Gala Concert on the Saturday evening are already underway and will be a wonderful celebration of choral music.

Today is the day after conference 2013 and also the first day of preparation for conference 2014.

Best wishes

Clive Lawton

"I love to sing, and I love to drink scotch.

Most people would rather hear me drink scotch."

— George Burns

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Conductor and Director of Music – Marilyn J Smith MBE LRAM

After a fairly hectic Christmas season, the choir entered the New Year with a relatively fallow period, which allowed our Conductor, Marilyn Smith, to introduce new and exciting repertoire and being someone who asks of the members to 'get the music off the page ASAP', she makes sure the space is filled. This has been quite challenging particularly for some of the older members (including the writer), but the ability and dedication of the members ensures that the new music is ready for performance.



Cameron Murdoch at the organ

The first concerts of 2013 were held late in March. The first, a most memorable and successful one in High Blantyre Parish Church in front of a packed audience who were most enthusiastic, who cheered and clapped demanding more. This is always very encouraging for the members and adds to their enjoyment.

The following evening the venue was very different being in the magnificent surroundings of Glasgow Cathedral (a building whose foundation stone was laid in 1136 by King David I) the choir took part in 'Hymns for Soldiers' in aid of the Army Benevolent Fund. The service/concert was particularly inspiring and was attended by senior members of the armed forces together with civic dignitaries and large audience. The programme included several favourite hymns such as Vaughan Williams great arrangement of *The Old*

Hundredth – All People That On Earth Do Dwell, I Vow To Thee My Country, Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah to the tune Cwm Rhondda, and *Onward Christian Soldiers*. The Choir's contribution included many favourite choral potboilers – Parry's *I Was Glad When They Said Unto Me, Benedictus* from Karl Jenkins' *The Armed Man*, Howard Goodall's lovely arrangement of *Love Divine All Loves Excelling, Libera Me* and *In Paradisum* from Faure's 'Requiem', John Rutter's *A Clare Benediction*, Wilhousky's *Battle Hymn Of The Republic* and finally *The Hallelujah Chorus* from Handel's 'Messiah'. Most of the items were accompanied by the choir's Deputy Conductor and Accompanist – Cameron Murdoch on the wonderful four manual cathedral organ which was a very satisfying and exhilarating combination. The service/concert ended with Cameron playing *Crown Imperial* with great gusto.

In the last issue we reported that Cameron had been honoured by the choir for his 25 years' service as Accompanist. We are very lucky to have such an accomplished musician who works so well with Conductor – Marilyn Smith. We are conscious that they make a great team and greatly enhance the choir's reputation.

Cameron Murdoch was born and bred in Glasgow (which he insists on telling everybody). His parents relocated to Exeter where Cameron received his secondary education, before returning to Glasgow to complete his education. It was in Glasgow that he attended the University of Glasgow and obtained the degree Bachelor of Music (Hons). He had further post graduate studies at the RSAMD (now the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and nowadays teaches piano there). Married to Christine – a Church of Scotland minister, and with a young son Iain, Cameron regularly plays harpsichord and piano with various musical ensembles throughout the UK, has taken part as accompanist in BBC's 'Young Musician of the Year' and his playing can be heard on the sound track of the film 'Chocolat'.

Apart from his playing skills, Cameron is a prolific choral arranger and some of the choir's much enjoyed repertoire has been arranged by him. Indeed the well-loved pipe tune *Highland Cathedral* was arranged by him in four parts for mixed voices. It has been requested by many other choirs who may have heard it performed on one of the Phoenix recordings. When asked if he had it copyrighted, he replied that he hadn't and was only happy that choirs are singing his arrangements.

The season continued with a concert in early April in St Andrew's and St Marnock's Church in Kilmarnock – again an enjoyable and successful concert. The annual Spring Concert 'The Spirit of Scotland' in Glasgow Royal Concert Hall will take place near the end of April with special guests 'Breabach' – one Scotland's most accomplished folk groups, voted best group of 2011 BBC Radio 2 Folk and Scots Traditional Music Awards and promises to be another fantastic evening.

The remainder of the choir's 61st season will see concerts in Ayr Town Hall, Whiting Bay on the Isle of Arran, and St John's Renfield Church in Glasgow for the West End Festival.

www.phoenixchoir.org

J Lawson Purdie

Persain Wales South

Persain is a ladies' choir which meets in the Ammanford area of Carmarthenshire. The word 'Persain' is Welsh for 'pure sound' - we are ever optimistic! The choir celebrated its twelfth anniversary last year, having been formed in the autumn of 2000, meeting for rehearsals in the Village Hall, Tycroes, and gaining an established reputation in the area with the help, in particular, of conductors and accompanists Nancy, Andrew, Glyn, James, David and Catrin.

Persain has performed at events at various venues in South West Wales, and travelled further afield. In 2007 the choir undertook its first overseas tour, to Torre Vieja in Spain, and in October, 2010, visited Cornwall, to sing in a concert at St Austell. The Imerys Male Voice Choir from St. Austell returned the visit to Ammanford the next year.

The choir has a varied concert programme throughout the year, singing at a number of concerts, weddings, harvest suppers and St David's Day events, and has entertained at the National Botanic Gardens of Wales, the Llandeilo Festival of the Senses and the Cenarth River Festival, as well as the annual Carols by Candlelight each Christmas. Choir members also enjoy a number of social occasions, holding craft fayres, dinners and visits to concerts and musical events.

Three years ago, following the resignation of conductor Catrin Williams, Persain was very fortunate in gaining Anne Wheldon as its new Musical Director. Anne began her career with the Welsh National Opera,

and continued to sing semi-professionally after leaving to bring up her family. She also taught music at school and, for fifteen years, Anne was Musical Director of Ynysybwl Male Voice Choir.

Changes have taken place, too, regarding Persain's accompanist. In 2008, David Rees, our accompanist for a number of years, graduated with a First Class Honours degree in Natural Sciences from Girton College, Cambridge, and is now studying medicine at Swansea University. David left the choir in 2010 to concentrate on his medical studies and future career as a General Practitioner.

The choir welcomed as its new accompanist Catherine Morgan, from Rhyd y Fro. Catherine began playing the piano at an early age and was awarded a licentiate diploma in piano performance from the London College of Music at the age of eighteen. She also plays the pipe organ, violin and various other instruments. She achieved an MA degree in Music from Oxford University and currently holds the post of senior lecturer in primary education at University of Wales Trinity Saint David's.

Persain has had a busy year. In June, the choir performed at a wedding in Moriah

Chapel, Tycroes, and at the end of July, Persain, with conductor, Anne, and first accompanist, Andrew Thomas, travelled on its second visit to Spain's Costa Blanca, where the choir gave concerts at the Church of La Zenia and at the Cultural Casino at Torre Vieja, famous for its production of salt and for the Habaneras



Choir Festival. In September, Persain sang at Ammanford Park in the Amman Valley Festival of Choirs, organised by Ammanford Lions and Ammanford Gateway, as part of the 2012 Bandstand Marathon and also provided the music for a wedding at Cwmgors Church.

Persain celebrated its twelfth anniversary in October with its first Annual Concert, to which the choir was very pleased indeed to welcome the wonderful quintet 'Triumph Brass' as guest performers for

the evening. The concert was attended by our local MP, Nia Griffith, proudly welcomed as the choir's Honorary President. She is a staunch supporter of events held by the choir. After a number of events to celebrate the Christmas festivities, Persain began the New Year as guests of Ammanford Town Silver Band at its Annual Concert, followed by a concert at which the choir welcomed as its guests City of Stoke Male Voice Choir and a concert with Llandybie Male Voice Choir. With a number of events planned for the future, including a reciprocal visit in September as guests of City of Stoke Male Voice Choir, Persain is looking forward to a lively and music-filled time ahead.

Members of the choir now meet for practice on Tuesday and Sunday evenings at the warm and comfortable Moriah Chapel Vestry, Tycroes. We enjoy singing a wide variety of music, and new members are always very welcome to join us.

www.corpersain.co.uk

Moiria C L Evans

Arrange for your choir to play their part in the WWI Centenary!



Belgium venues and hotels are booking fast!

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2014 will see the country come together at the start of a four year programme to commemorate the WWI centenary, and the 100 years that have passed since men fought and lost their lives in the battles of the First World War.

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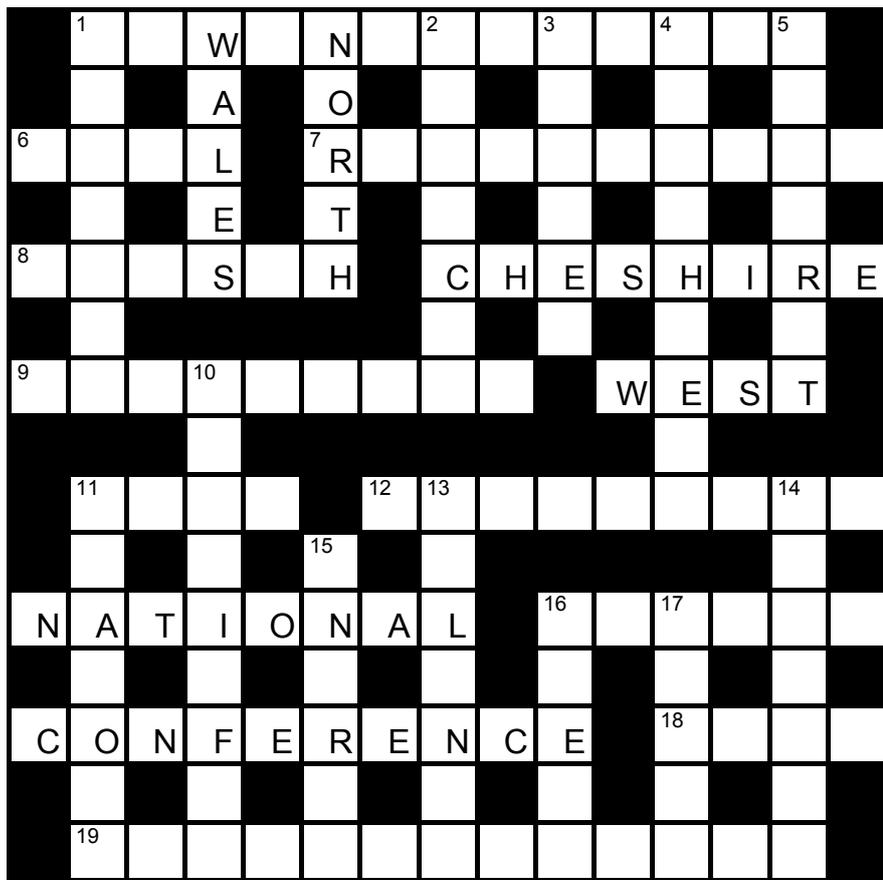
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PUZZLE PAGE

Try John Croft's
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Can you beat a score of 19/20?



- 'The boys from Syracuse' is a musical based upon which Shakespeare play?
- John Stafford Smith composed the tune for which national anthem?
- Handel composed *The Water Music* for a boating party held by which British King?
- Grunge music originated in which American city?
- Who composed the opera 'Lohengrin'?
- Who is the patron saint of music?
- What is the title of Beethoven's only opera?
- Who wrote the music for 'West Side Story'?
- What is the first name of the composer Mahler?
- With which instrument was Andres Segovia most associated?
- What is the number of Beethoven's 'Choral' symphony?
- With which instrument is Victor Borge associated?
- Who composed the opera 'The Magic Flute'?
- Who composed the oratorio *The Creation*?
- Who wrote the musical 'Blood Brothers'?
- Which musical features the song *Love Changes Everything*?
- What is the name of the villain in 'The Threepenny Opera'?
- Which musical features the song *I Know Him So Well*?
- Where are the operas 'Carmen' and 'The Marriage of Figaro' set?
- Which opera was written to commemorate the opening of the Suez Canal?

Across

- The silly wench imagines her work made easier by a Singer (6,7)
- From a French bent stick to an American puddle, can you make a shot? (4)
- A European cultural revival that the Yanks could. 't spell (10)
- Tasteless copy in a PE kit school bag (6)
- Carelessly Elsie said he puts her on a pedestal (9)
- Initially this is called kinky but it shows correctness (4)
- In conjunction, make a note to mix parmesan (9)
- Either way you say it, I argue against that whatchamacallit (6)
- Did Eve knead the dough in Eden? (4)
- You can't change the spots on an old dog (5,8)

Down

- Editors amended and recorded in history (7)
- One sees quite well like Patrick (7)
- Initially one more than a basket for jewels. (6)
- Definitely not for a hot bed. (3,6)
- An expert mixes a small amount of carbon to make a small part (7)
- Rommel in a different desert (6,3)
- Juliet, strangely, met Romeo at Betty's in Harrogate (7)
- French mixture (7)
- It is unclear why the Americans can split the atom but can't say it correctly (7)
- It might be like yeast causing genetic faults (6)
- Curiously come again without Cain at the end (5)
- Jinx became temporary fishfood? (5)

Answers on page 35

EASY SUDOKU »

8		7	2				3	
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The Drybrook & District Ladies Choir

South West

Diamond Jubilee Concert
Saturday 13 July 2013

Venue: *The Forest Theatre Coleford in the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire. GL16 7JT*

Box Office: 01594 833416

The Drybrook & District Ladies are eagerly looking forward to staging their forthcoming Diamond Jubilee Concert. This milestone event will be celebrated at the popular local venue, the Forest Theatre at Coleford. The event will commence at 7.00 in the evening with tickets available at the door.

This popular and well supported ladies choir will be performing under the baton of its charismatic and inspiring Musical Director, Barbara Wright, supported by the choir's accompanist, Linda Speed. The Drybrook and District Ladies Choir (affectionately known as the Pink Ladies on account of their uniform), will be assisted in this celebratory event by the voices of the Churchdown Male Voice Choir. Also performing will be seven past winners of the Margaret Rose Bursary Award. The prodigious talent of these protégés of the Drybrook and District Ladies Choir is guaranteed to both entertain and inspire as they join in this celebration of song and music. This is an event not to be missed by any lover of live choral music!

The choir, founded in 1953 under its then musical director Fred Kettle, has a great deal more to celebrate beyond the anniversary of its formation. Music has always been the life blood of the Royal Forest of Dean, with its performance not only feeding the spirit, but also bonding the identity and sense of unity amongst the community, linking generation to

generation in towns, villages and hamlets across the Forest. The tradition of music has helped the community remain intact throughout periods of tribulation and upheaval, many of which are enshrined in verse and song, so it is a matter of no surprise that themes of spiritual inspiration run deep through the veins of the choir's repertoire alongside songs that might best be described as 'joy set to music.'

As is reflected in its title, the Drybrook and District Ladies Choir is an inclusive organization, welcoming members from beyond the immediate locality, to share in the warmth of a community coming together in music. This sense of shared community is reflected throughout the choir's activities, as the Pink Ladies regularly attend weddings and funerals, bringing celebration and comfort to these major events in the life of the community. Always ready to share their love of life in music, the ladies also perform in the more intimate setting of retirement homes, bringing live performance to those less able to attend the big events at which they excel. Over the years the choir has drawn on many musical traditions from around the world, giving authentic renditions in a number of languages and dialects including a memorable performance of *Winter Wonderland* in Forest dialect, which received a warm nostalgic welcome from the enthusiastic audience.

The concept of serving the community, through sharing their musical talents, inspired the creation of the Margaret Rose Bursary formed in memory of Margaret Burford after her sudden death in 1999. The Margaret Rose Bursary is awarded annually to a talented young musician from the Forest, to assist in the development of his/her musical career.

The standards displayed at the auditions reflect the breadth of talent within the Forest, so receiving the award bestows

well-earned prestige in addition to the direct financial support. The choir always follows the musical careers of its protégés with an interest, which is in turn repaid by their guest performances as at this celebratory event. It is hard to imagine that Margaret Burford would have wished her musical heritage celebrated in any other way, so come and attend this event and partake of the living joyous spirit of music.

All are welcome!

Forthcoming events in 2013:

Sat 13	July	Diamond Jubilee Concert
Sat 29	Oct	Linton Church Concert
Wed 11	Dec	Forest Church Concert

For details of venue Tel: 01594 542414 or email barb.wright@tiscali.co.uk

Marilyn Scott
Publicity Officer

Worrall Male Voice Choir

Yorkshire South

Help for Heroes was founded by Bryn and Emma Parry in October 2007 out of a desire to help the wounded servicemen and women returning from Afghanistan and Iraq and provides direct, practical support to those injured in the current conflicts.

On Saturday 3 November 2012, Worrall Male Voice Choir helped to raise funds for Help for Heroes by organising a concert entitled 'Lest We Forget – A Tribute to Our Armed Forces' involving three local award winning male voice choirs and some very talented young musicians in the Sheffield International Venues, International Hall, Ponds Forge, Sheffield. They were joined by Bolsterstone Male Voice Choir, New Mill Male Voice Choir, the Sheffield Youth Orchestra and the evening had a Remembrance Day theme. There was also a special guest appearance by Laura Ashby, a young lady from Chesterfield who had recently recorded a song called *Soldier's Wife*. All the proceeds from the sale of her CD will be donated to Help for Heroes. (See www.lauraashby.net)

One very special moment was when an army surgeon in the audience who had just returned from a long tour of duty at Camp Bastion met a soldier who had been badly injured earlier in the campaign and whose leg she had amputated. Apparently they went for a drink with their respective



The Pink Ladies

families after the concert and were reminiscing into the wee small hours!

The Concert was in the presence of Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant for South Yorkshire, the Lord Mayor of Sheffield, gentlemen from The Royal Hospital, Chelsea, members of all three of Her Majesty's Armed Forces and was hosted by Christa Ackroyd of the BBC Television 'Look North' programme.

Lewis Atkinson, Chairman of Worrall Male Voice Choir said 'We were delighted to organise this concert to raise awareness among the Sheffield public of what Help for Heroes does for our injured servicemen and women. Over 5,000 service personnel have come back from Afghanistan and Iraq maimed and injured and they desperately need our support in so many ways. It was a very special evening and £2,500 was raised on the night for a very worthy cause'.

You can visit us at www.worrallmvc.org.uk

Ian Pasley
Secretary

Saltash Ladies' Choir Cornwall

The Saltash Ladies' Choir was formed in 1948 by the late Betty Pawley with the late Elsie Stoneman as their accompanist. In 2008 they celebrated their Diamond Jubilee with a lunch at the Hannafore Point Hotel in Looe. This year with a change of venue they are celebrating 65 years as one of Cornwall's leading ladies' choirs with a lunch at Whitsand Bay Hotel when hopefully their first Musical Director's son and his wife will be able to join in the celebrations.

At present, the choir has 36 singing members, but will always welcome new members to its practices at St Nicholas and St Faith Parish Church Rooms at 7.30 on Wednesdays.

Over the years the ladies' choir have been privileged to have sung with HM Royal Marine Band (Plymouth) on three occasions as well as the Loughborough School Band who were visiting the area in 2010, and with whom the Ladies joined in Concert in St Nicholas and St Faith Church to raise money for the church's restoration Fund. In 2012 the superb Tamar Valley Male Voice Choir came to sing with the ladies in a concert which again was for the Church Restoration Fund.

Since 2003 each year, at their Annual General Meeting, the ladies choose a

charity to support over the ensuing year, by holding concerts and coffee mornings, and to date they have raised £20,823 in Saltash alone. Some of the leading choirs from Devon and Cornwall who have helped towards this total are City of Truro Male Voice Choir, Holman Climax Male Voice Choir, Newquay Male Voice Choir, Liskerret Male Voice Choir, the Brixham Orpheus Male Voice Choir, the Riviera Singers from Paignton the popular Plymouth Area Police Choir and the Essex Police Choir to name but a few.

This year for 2013/14 the choir has chosen the Derriford Hospital Children's Cancer Services and the choir is singing with some choirs they have not joined with before - one special one being the the Sydney Male Voice Choir who are visiting Saltash for a concert following their participation in the Cornwall International Male Voice Choir Festival. This concert has been organised by our President. The other 'new' choirs are Pelynt Male Voice Choir, The Cornwall Junior Choir, which is based in Truro, and the Wyndham Singers from Collumpton. In July the ladies are off to Essex to join forces again with the Essex Police Choir for a return concert.

In 2014 they are again travelling to Wantage to join with the Wantage Male Voice Choir who they met during their first visit to the Royal Albert Hall when they sang in the Festival of Brass and Voices in 2006. Wantage have already visited Saltash for a concert. The ladies have been invited three times to sing at the Royal Albert Hall, 2006, 2009 and the last time was in November 2012 and they are delighted to have already had an invitation for 2015 which they have accepted. The choir is already accepting bookings for concerts in 2014.

Over the years, the Ladies' Choir has taken part in the Paignton, Plymouth and Saltash Music Festivals winning many trophies.

At the end of 2009, Eileen Hatch, the choir accompanist for 20 years had to retire due to ill health, and sadly in 2012 she passed away after a long illness. We were grateful to Carolyn Varcoe who had been the choir's Deputy Accompanist, for taking over the main role on Eileen's retirement. Carolyn, who is an accomplished musician both on piano and organ, is married and lives in Plymouth. Linda Eastlake, our Director of Music is also married. She too lives in Plymouth, is also a talented musician in her own right, and an excellent contralto soloist. Pam Hensman, one of

the choir soprano soloists, is the Deputy Musical Director. The choir have as their President, Councillor Sue Hooper MBE.

If any choir should feel they would like to join the Saltash Ladies' Choir in a concert, on a one for one basis, whereby we help each other out with a concert in our own respective areas, you would always be sure of a real Cornish Welcome! Please contact the Secretary, Cicely Sharp. dflatcis@gmail.com

Cicely Sharp

The Appledore Singers Devon



The Appledore Singers, a choir of some fifty ladies, based in Appledore, North Devon, perform at several venues throughout the year. We're always conscious of the need of various local organisations to raise money for projects – or simply to keep going. Two such organisations are the North Devon Hospice and the North Devon Chemotherapy Appeal.

Last November, the North Devon Hospice appealed for people to hold a 'Bring & Share' meal to raise funds for the charity. One of our members, Lynda Armstrong, organised the event at a day centre for teenagers with special needs, which she runs. The young people helped prepare and serve the food on offer, and the event raised a magnificent £280. We presented the cheque at the Hospice on a very wintry January morning.

The North Devon Chemotherapy Appeal is based at the North Devon Hospital in Barnstaple and its aim is to create a self-contained unit catering for the needs of all referred patients from North Devon. At present, most patients from this area have to travel to Plymouth or Exeter hospitals for their treatment, a journey of several hours. It is a local charity dear to the hearts of most North Devonians and folk are only too pleased to donate to it.



As with most choirs, the Christmas season is a very busy one for us. We usually start rehearsing carols and festive music at the beginning of September, alongside our secular repertoire. From November onwards we perform festive concerts at various venues throughout North Devon. Last December we were invited to sing carols at a branch of the local Tesco to raise money for the Appeal, and a small

group was formed to do this. We were also asked to perform at three local care homes – again collecting for the Appeal.

Our small group of singers relished the opportunity to don our red capes, tinsel and Santa hats, rattle our collecting tins in Tesco and eat all the lovely mince pies, cakes and sandwiches prepared for our delight by the care homes. These two events alone raised over £100.

Our primary fundraising event last year was the annual Charity Christmas Concert, held on 16 December which played to a packed house in Northam, a village between Westward Ho! and Bideford. Mince pies and mulled wine went down well – as did the excellent raffle to win hampers of produce donated by choir members and well-wishers.

The concert itself consisted of festive pieces and carols sung by the choir and by a group of seven of us: the 'Apple Pips', as well as piano solos by a young student, Freyja Hedisson. Poems were read (to much hilarity), by our Treasurer, Lorna Dorrinton, and the audience joined in with gusto when we sang old favourites such as *O Come All Ye Faithful* and *O Little Town of Bethlehem*. I'm sure that we nearly raised the roof with the final verse of *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*.

The result of all this fund-raising is that, together with a donation, we were able to present a cheque for £1000 to the North Devon Chemotherapy Appeal. A very satisfying year all round!

**Viv Zussman
Publicity**

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Wetley Rocks Male Voice Choir Midlands North

Very few of you will have ever heard of Wetley Rocks and the choir has definitely not been mentioned in this publication before. It's a tiny village tucked away on the edge of the Staffordshire Moorlands. An easy landmark is to say its 10 miles from Alton Towers!

The choir has its roots in a Men's Sunday evening at Wetley Rocks Methodist Church some 35 years ago. A group of men had particularly enjoyed their singing that evening, and decided to form a choir. Sufficient new recruits were quickly found, and Wetley Rocks Male Voice Choir was born. We are happy to still have several founder members still singing with us. Since that time concerts have been given all over North Staffordshire and beyond, from Shropshire to the Isle of Arran, and Mitterteich, Germany. Choristers are drawn from all over North Staffordshire and are united by a love of singing and good fellowship. The choir is non-sectarian and non-denominational.

Membership is small (approx 25 members) and like the vast majority of choirs we are always seeking new recruits, but the sound that is generated by these trusty men is utterly amazing.

MD Ian Jones, appointed three years ago, has taken the choir to a new level of performance. Much interesting new material has been introduced, and rehearsals are both challenging and enjoyable, with the men responding very positively to Ian's leadership.



The last few years have been difficult for Ian personally. His daughter had her second child just before Ian joined the choir



and he and his family knew things were not well. His daughter (an Intensive Care Sister) fought tirelessly for 2 years to get someone to listen to her, to the extent she was being labelled a 'neurotic mother' On the baby's second birthday the bombshell was dropped that Harry not only had Spina Bifida but other major spinal deformities and issues totally missed by many doctors and several hospitals. Still no help or support was forthcoming for the family and it was only when a relative suggested contacting the Spina Bifida society (SHINE) that a glimmer of light started to shine at the end of an endless dark tunnel. Good news is that Harry is nearly five, and yes has had major surgery with the possibility of more to come, but is thriving and coping well, as are the family. SHINE remain in contact on a regular basis, just asking how things are, just asking if they are in need of any guidance and for that we will be eternally grateful.

Obviously the choir ask Ian frequently how things are, and realised just what an impact SHINE had had on the family. Unbeknown to Ian, a decision was made to try and organise a concert to raise funds to give the proceeds to SHINE as a token and acknowledgement of what they did for Ian's family and what they do for so many other families.

This has been scheduled for Saturday 28 September 2013 in the Central Methodist Hall in Longton Stoke on Trent. The hall will hold up to 800 people so this for a small choir is a massive event. Audley Brass Band who is based a few miles away has generously agreed to appear free of charge to help boost the event.

Ian heard a song a short while ago called *Stronger as One*. This was written by Robert Hartshorn in 2012 to help commemorate the Queen's Jubilee. The

final verse Ian thought was so poignant to what Shine tried to accomplish:

In the rise and in the fall

Of echoed words in great halls

Nations may dawn, but it is we who are born

All equal and free with the power to see

Who among many has one heart and a soul

Shining as gold

*Under one sun we're **stronger as one***

Ian has developed a rapport with the great Welsh choral conductor and arranger Alwyn Humphreys, the Welsh music and choral genius, and he very generously agreed to do a unique arrangement of this piece for us. Robert Hartshorn was in full agreement to us using his song and the choir will be proud to perform this song for the first time at this concert. Alwyn is going to try and attend, although he does have prior commitments. SHINE are preparing a film to be seen during the singing of the song. I am sure there will not be a dry eye in the house!

We feel humbled, honoured and proud and are so much looking forward to what we feel sure will be an eventful evening.

More information about the choir can be found on their website at www.wrmvc.com

Ticket prices have now been set at £8 and the concert is at the Central Hall, Longton, Stoke on Trent on Saturday 28th September 2013

Whilst we are not IT upbeat to have on line booking the choir's website will give contact phone numbers www.wrmvc.com/

John Giddings
Publicity Officer

Conference Report 2013

Croeso i Gymru, Welcome to Wales. Our 86th AGM and 25th Annual Conference Weekend took place at the Llyndir Hall Hotel in Rossett just a few hundred metres over the border of Clwyd. The hotel stands in five acres of landscaped gardens including classical statuary; I liked the caryatids, and the model sheep with a solid sheepdog. The car park was patrolled by a rampaging bull which may well have been searching for the placid fibreglass cow at the other side of the buildings. It sounds a bit weird but the hotel was very attractive, well appointed and exclusively ours for the weekend.

The first official function for our delegates was the Gala Dinner in the Llyndir Suite. The meal was excellent, well presented and eaten in pleasant company. I have had to Google 'ballontine' of chicken but it tasted good and was beautifully served as were all the meals we had during the weekend.

With the coffee John Croft (PRO & Services Officer) offered us a simple music quiz of a mere twenty questions, giving us the choice of teams of four or table teams. We opted for tables and gave ourselves suitable names. Our table had only five people on it by this time so we became the Famous Five. I thought our team did pretty well to get sixteen questions correct and we came a creditable fourth behind 'Paulunas' who got nineteen correct and teams 'El Presidente and the Miami Vice Squad' and 'Team Tanqueray' (I checked the spelling later, they spelled it Tankari, no sour grapes you understand) who each scored seventeen. If you'd like to try it for yourself, the quiz not the gin, I've included the questions elsewhere in this publication. I headed for bed at about the time Trevor, on the keyboard began a version of *The House Of The Rising Sun*.

Saturday morning began in sunshine with the trade stands set up and Liz Moulder ready to begin a seminar on 'Vocal Technique'. She said that she hoped in the half hour to give us 'food for thought' and she certainly did. We were led through a warm up session for our bodies, standing correctly and stretching and relaxing to lose body tension. We became young army recruits on parade, old people of 102 and arrogant youth. It was fun and it achieved its purpose. Liz provided us with a sheet with fifteen bullet points on looking after your voice which I think everyone should read and inwardly

digest. I'd like to include it in this issue. If there isn't room I'll put it in the next one.

I can really only give you a flavour of the seminars at conference and I find that a little frustrating. You really will have to get yourself to conference and enjoy what some of us enjoyed over the weekend.

The second seminar was led by our headline speaker the composer, Patrick Hawes, who introduced himself as a Lincolnshire man whose father was the landlord of the Smuggler's Inn in Chapel St Leonards. His parents looked at the pianist who played in the pub and realised that he was paid about five times what the bar staff were paid. They decided to send son, Pat, off to learn to play the piano. When he returned after his first year at boarding school they were a little disappointed that he was more interested in Beethoven sonatas than *Roll Out The Barrel* but they had started their son on his career path.

Patrick went on to give us a brief history of music and how its effects on him led him to compose the music he does. He also played for us a recording of a new composition which is out in September. We were the first people apart from his agent and the recording artists to hear this music. We also heard the third movement from his Highgrove Suite. He said he would get his agent to play the CD and get him to fade it out after awhile. Fortunately for us the agent didn't work out how to fade the music out and we



were able to hear the whole of it.

Annette Woods in her seminar revised what Liz had told us and expanded on it. We practised breathing with our hands on our hips coughing or laughing to feel the diaphragm. This was an interesting practical session in which Annette was a very positive and encouraging leader. It must have been fascinating and rather amusing to be watching from the sidelines as we sang scales, arpeggios and musical patterns for vowels and consonants. You

should have heard us singing 'Blackberry gateaux and chocolate chip'.

After lunch it was my pleasure to introduce Roger Hagarty of Roger's Music who brought a wide range of keyboards to conference. He demonstrated them to what I'm afraid was a rather small group but I enjoyed it. If I could have afforded the most expensive keyboard I could probably have become a rather good pianist. There was so much computer



help that even I could have managed. Roger has already booked to join us next year in Scarborough.

While I was listening to Roger my mobile phone was recording Patrick Hawes' second session when he was talking about his composing and recording of his *Lazarus Requiem*. He illustrated his talk with sections of the requiem recording. My, that tenor part is high. He told us that much of the requiem was written in Bray church because he felt it was important to write it in church and he worked on the text with his brother, who is in holy orders, to fit the biblical story into the requiem service.

Patrick's final session was a practical one singing *When Israel Was A Child* from his collection 'Song of Songs'.

The AGM was a quieter affair than last year. Celia had been our Chairman for four years and so had to stand down from that position but moved into the role of General Secretary. Brenda took on the role of Chairman. We were pleased to welcome Clive Lawton to the post of Conference Co-ordinator in his absence. He would be joining us on Sunday for the Member's Open Forum. We were also able to welcome a new Music and Festivals Officer in Tim Knight and also to co-opt Natasha Cole who had shown an interest in joining the team. She will help John with work in the services area.

Our last seminar of the day was taken by Liz Moulder who asked us to copy clapping patterns. She then led us into rounds of clapping patterns. Then we

hummed any note we liked changing the note each time she clapped her hands. She then split us into groups of around five. She began by giving us a short song to sing then adding another song for other groups to sing. We had to listen to others and hold our part in the songs.

After our buffet meal we dressed for the Grand Concert in Wrexham, that's Wreccsam to our Welsh readers.

The concert was very entertaining with a wide variety of music from ladies, male voice, mixed voice, community and a youth choir who wore amazing black T shirts with a dragon in the shape of a treble clef. I want one of those. As stage manager for my choir I always have an eye for the organisation of the comings and goings of a number of choirs. It was pretty well done with an MC describing the choirs as they arrived and introducing the MDs and Accompanists. At two points we were treated to amusing poems delivered by a lady. During their presentation there was no stage movement which allowed us to listen but, to my mind did nothing



to advance the concert. The finale saw all the choirs march on to the stage which, of course, took some time. The SM in me muttered, here's where the poems should be. The audience and I joined in the last items with gusto.

At ten, the next morning, after Sunday breakfast, we assembled for a singing workshop with Liz and Annette. First we had to warm up, especially after that breakfast finishing with 'the lips the teeth the tip of the tongue' sung very fast and needing good movement in, you've guessed, the lips the teeth and the tip of the tongue.

We started the real singing with *Fair Phyllis* a madrigal which I found very difficult to sight read even though Liz used her method to help choirs sight read. I need to get the tune in my head and find that hard with other parts coming and going around me. We then moved to *The Lord Bless You And Keep You* which I do with a mixed choir so I felt far more confident until the last page where the tenors need to be given the entry. Well I do anyway. We finished with *The Habañera* where we sang the chorus with Annette taking the solo; a wonderful finish.

After coffee and cookies we held the Members' Open Forum where all have the opportunity to have their say about how the Association is run. Clive Lawton was able to say hello to us all.

That about wraps up conference for another year. Why not join us next year?

Crawford

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Three Valleys Male Voice Choir Thames North

This popular choir operates in East Herts, West Essex and North London and further afield. Being only 20 miles from London it is the perfect area for a choir to pay a visit, spend a most attractive long-weekend with a joint concert and to also visit the Great Metropolis.

The choir, consisting of 30+ enthusiastic men, was formed in Waltham Abbey in 1994. Each year, as well as their regular visits to elderly-persons' residential homes and clubs, they appear at an equal number of public concerts. Since their inception they have performed over 400 concerts helping to raise a large amount of money for local and national charities.

In September 2006, they took part in a magnificent 'Festival Of Choirs' in the Alban Arena Theatre, St Albans along with nine other choirs, where some £2,500 was raised for the Paul Strickland Cancer Scanner Centre at Mount Vernon Hospital, in Middlesex.

In 2006 and 2007 they paid return visits to two Kent choirs, namely Snowdown Colliery Male Voice Choir and Thanet Male Voice Choir. In May 2007 they travelled to the Rhine Valley in Germany, on their first overseas concert tour. They performed in the Florinskirch in Koblenz, in the Spa Pavillion in Bad Ems and a church hall in Bad Salzig, to standing ovations!

They entered the BBC 'Last Choir Standing' competition in 2008 and although they were not selected to go forward, they had a two-second spot on the first programme. Fame at last! In 2009 they had concert weekends away in Weymouth and the Isle of Wight. The ancient abbey church at Waltham Abbey was the setting for a combined concert with the Rowland Singers. A return visit was made to Worthing where an outstanding concert took place in the magnificent Assembly Hall.

In October 2010 they spent a long weekend in Great Yarmouth singing in two local churches to great acclaim. At the end of September 2011 they travelled to Weston-Super-Mare where they had another similarly successful weekend. Chester was the area visited in 2012 and a tour is planned to Worcester for October 2013. The choir committee see the importance of including members' partners in visits and social events and are looking at developing a Supporters Club. In

recent months they have embarked on an Outreach Recruitment Programme, holding rehearsals on their regular rehearsal night at different venues throughout their area, Tony Moore, their publicity officer said, 'We are pleased with the results so far, we have recruited eight new members just by going to another area and not waiting for them to come to us'.

With the retirement of MD, Dave Martin, the choir has engaged John Trent Wallace of Men2sing fame, who has ten years experience of directing male choirs. John, also an accomplished sound-engineer, produced the Three Valleys Male Voice Choir's two CD releases, 'Songs From The Valleys' Part 1 & 2, was persuaded to take up the baton with this accomplished Hertfordshire choir.



John Trent Wallace

As the musical director of Men2sing from South Woodham Ferrers, Essex, he has been instrumental in providing the vision and direction for the choir's musical output and performance style. Drawing on songs from many different genres, he has created new choral arrangements and orchestrations, which have underpinned their diverse repertoire and unique sound. John, as an individual performer, first took to the professional stage as a soloist at The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, alongside Kiri Te Kanawa, and has subsequently been involved with many classical, rock and musical theatre projects, working in venues ranging from The Royal Albert Hall to The Theatre Royal, Waterford. He has composed, arranged and performed a wide range of music, and has been musical director for many shows, concerts and other performances as diverse as *Bugsy Malone*, *We Will Rock You* and *Les Miserable*. He was resident musical director for Brentwood Theatre for eight years, during which time he composed and created orchestrations

for their Christmas shows. As a published composer of musical theatre he has many shows to his name, including *All 4 One* and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*.

Nigel Thomas, secretary of the Three Valleys Choir said, 'The Choir is excited at the new direction that John is taking us in and we are already gaining the confidence to produce an even better sound for future concerts'.

They are taking bookings for that Special Event, Fund-raising Concert, Wedding or Funeral for 2014 and beyond.

Their repertoire is varied and very easy on the ear, including popular songs, songs from the shows, some church-music and light-opera. Any male, living within a 20 mile radius of Waltham Cross, Herts who might be interested in attending a rehearsal should post a message on their website: www.3valleymvc.org.uk or ring Tony 01279 415563.

Tony Moore
Publicity Officer

A girl went out on a date with a trumpet player, and when she came back her roommate asked, 'Well, how was it? Did his embouchure make him a great kisser?'

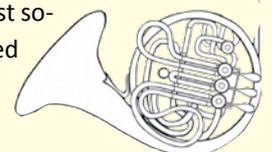
'Nah,' the first girl replied. 'That dry, tight, tiny little pucker; it was no fun at all.'

The next night she went out with a tuba player, and when she came back her roommate asked, 'Well, how was his kissing?'

'Ugh!' the first girl exclaimed. 'Those huge, rubbery, blubbery, slobbering slabs of meat; oh, it was just gross!'

The next night she went out with a French horn player, and when she came back her roommate asked, 'Well, how was his kissing?'

'Well,' the first girl replied, 'his kissing was just so-so; but I loved the way he held me!'



Gwalia Singers, Swansea Wales South

The Gwalia Singers were founded in 1966 and quickly gained the reputation of being a small, successful male voice choir with a strong sense of 'belonging'. Although the last 40+ years have seen some big changes in the choir's circumstances, the essentials remain. We still draw our members from all over the Swansea area and beyond and our members have a wide range of backgrounds. We still enjoy success on the concert platform and have a determination to perform at the highest standard possible.

The choir's rehearsals are held every Tuesday evening at 7.15 to 9.15 in the Swansea Yacht and Sub Aqua Club in Swansea Marina. We always give a very warm welcome to anyone wishing to join the choir so feel free to drop in and give us a try. Visitors are also welcome to listen to our rehearsals. We sing some songs in Welsh (as well as a few in other languages), but most of our repertoire is in English. All ages and all abilities are welcome to come and listen and/or join, especially if you enjoy singing as much as we do!

We sing at many concerts during the year, a lot of these are to raise money for charity. We are also becoming very much in demand to sing at weddings. Christmas is always a hectic time and over this year's festive period we performed at four different charity concerts as well as a wedding on New Year's Eve. Our latest concert was to raise money for the Chernobyl Children's Life Line charity. This charity supports projects that help children who are suffering with awful cancers as a result of the Chernobyl nuclear explosion. The highlight of our concert programme is always our Annual Concert and this year it will be held on the 15 June in All Saints Church in Mumbles.

Over the years the Gwalia Singers have produced several CDs. The latest of these, 'A New Dawn', includes the following numbers - *Cwm Rhondda*, *Benedictus*, *Let All Men Sing*, *Exodus Song*, *Light a Candle*, *I'm Gonna Walk*, *The Lost Chord*, *Hallelujah*, *Seize the Day*, *You Raise Me Up*, *The Longest Time*, *Llanfair*, *Bring Him Home* and *American Trilogy*. This and some of our other CDs are available by contacting our secretary.

Over the years the Gwalia Singers have been on many tours. For four years we were the resident choir at the St. David's



Welsh Festival at Disneyland, Paris. Two years ago we went to Krakow in Poland where one of the highlights was singing in the Cathedral in the Wieliczka salt mines. Last year we went to Mannheim to participate in the 150th Anniversary of the GV Teutonia 1862 choir. Next year we are off to Bruges in Belgium where we hope to sing at the Menin Gate at Ypres.

Our current musical director, Nick Rogers, moved to Llandrindod Wells in 1978 and joined the Rhayader and District Male Voice Choir, taking over as conductor in 1982. He moved to Swansea in 1995, when he joined the Gwalia Singers. Nick was appointed Deputy Musical Director a few years later and has been leading the choir since November 2006. He has a great feeling and enthusiasm for music, which when delivered with his sense of humour and hard work makes rehearsals enjoyable and ensures performances of a high standard. The choir has also increased in numbers, which was one of Nick's main priorities when he took over; we have around 60 singers at the moment.

Our accompanist since 1998, Rhian Stone, comes from Loughor, near Swansea. She completed her studies at the prestigious Welsh College of Music and Drama in Cardiff, Wales' national conservatoire for the performing arts, she obtained an honours Music Degree (Keyboard Studies). Stephen Wilson, our assistant accompanist has lived in Swansea since the age of 7. He plays the violin, piano, organ for two churches and will turn his hand to any other instrument you give him. He has played keyboard with a number of local bands and drama groups and also arranges music when asked.

With summer approaching we are now rehearsing for the next set of concerts as

well as singing at a number of weddings. We will be singing a wide variety of musical items. These include Welsh traditional numbers as well music from shows and films. In fact you could say 'something for everyone' or 'Bernstein to Wagner'!

The choir's rehearsals are held every Tuesday evening from 7:15 to 9:15 in the Swansea Yacht and Sub Aqua Club in Swansea Marina. We always give a very warm welcome to anyone wishing to join the choir.

On Friday the 3 May we sang at the Tenovus Annual Concert in All Saints Church, Oystermouth, Mumbles at 7:30. Also singing at this concert will be Swansea Sing with Us Choir, Bishopston Primary School and Joshua Stokes. Over £1000 was raised at this concert for the tenovus charity.

Saturday the 25th May we will be performing at All Saints Church, Kilvey, Swansea to raise funds for the Church Restoration Funds

Saturday 15th June we have the highlight of our year - our Annual Concert held at All Saint's Church, Oystermouth, Mumbles. We will be singing items in four sections on the programme. Our soloists for the evening will be the soprano Laura Nicholas and Ashley Rogers a 17 year old baritone.

Tickets are £9.00 for this concert and are available from any of our choir members or by phoning 01792 402080.

<http://www.gwalia-swanea.co.uk>

The choir's secretary: Alan Clewett, Sheringham, Clyne Valley Lane, Killay, Swansea SA2 7DT 01792 203392

a.clewett@uwclub.net

Adrian Crowley

Bestwood Male Voice Choir Midlands East



It is with the deepest regret that we announce the death of the dear and much loved President of Bestwood Male Voice Choir, Howard Leese OBE.

Howard passed away peacefully on Sunday 17 February, in Kingsmill Hospital, surrounded by his wife Marjorie and other family members.

Music was a significant part of Howard's life, having been encouraged by his mother, a soprano soloist, to enter competitive music festivals with his treble voice, before joining church and chapel choirs.

He served an engineering apprenticeship at Jos Sankey & Sons (now GKN Sankey), joining their male voice choir at 18 years of age. At 21 years, Howard left his Shropshire home, joining the Civil Service on outstation duties at Morris Oxford, staying there for some three years. He spent happy times there in their male voice choir, becoming Assistant Conductor. Many years followed working from offices in London, living in Middlesex and Surrey, singing mostly in church choirs. During August 1971, Howard was posted to Royal Ordnance Factory, Nottingham and soon afterwards, joined Bestwood MVC. He conducted the choir on many occasions, including tours abroad, making many friends over the years.

In the choir's 2012 Diamond Jubilee Concert Souvenir Programme, Howard was quoted as saying 'Bestwood MVC has a reputation for outstanding fellowship amongst its members, no doubt fostered by its mining roots. As a miner's son myself I am very proud to be President of this magnificent choir, having reached our Diamond Anniversary year'.

Howard was a true gentleman, in every sense of the word and will be very sadly missed by his family, choir members and all those who were fortunate enough to know him.

Peter Fletcher
Vice Chair & Publicity Officer

Pembroke and District Male Voice Choir Wales South

60 year Anniversary

December finally brought P&DMVC's celebratory year to a very successful end. Originally formed in 1952 it has, like any other choir, a chequered history, with large membership at times and drought at others. Close to going under at one period the choir survived the crisis and continues to thrive.

One of the choir's founder members was local businessman, Bill 'The Boss' Lewis. Still a successful and popular business today it contains a strong family management structure and is a prominent business and employer in the community.

The Boss was conductor for over 40 years, was honoured with an MBE for his services to music and once had the honour of conducting the 1000 Voices, Association of Welsh Male Voice Choirs at the Royal Albert Hall. Regrettably Bill is no longer with us. His place as conductor is now occupied by his daughter, Christine Lloyd. His son-in-law Phil Lloyd (Choir Secretary) is a key member of the Committee of South Wales Association of Welsh Male Voice Choirs and is the popular regular presenter at all 1000 Voices concerts. His granddaughter, Jenny, is choir accompanist and his grandson, Steven, sings in the second bass section.

There is one other founder member still active in the choir with an unbroken service since choir formation and that gentleman is Owen Jones, now 90 years old, still Principle Baritone and normally at every practice and concert that his health allows; a remarkable record indeed and a tribute to his commitment.

P&DMVC is a wonderful example of a community choir. No official or member of its musical team receives payment of any kind, every chorister pays their own expenses to practice and concerts and in that way every penny that is raised goes directly to that charity or organisation that asks for the choir's services in raising money. The choir had a very heavy celebratory formal programme for 2012 but managed still to maintain its usual commitment to the local community throughout the year.

Pembroke Dock was a military town originally with representatives of all Armed Forces present in large numbers at times.

The Navy established a major dockyard there in the 1800s (Nelson's favourite harbour!). Hundreds of Sunderland flying boats were stationed there during and after WW2. The Army have been present from Napoleonic times, major forts still dot all round the Milford Haven Waterway. The Royal Dockyard contains the Garrison Chapel, a famous local landmark, which had a major renovation costing little short of £1,250,000 recently. This was the location for the first of P&DMVC's celebratory concerts. In early March P&DMVC invited The Band of The Royal Welsh Guards to play there, the concert shared equally between the choir and the band. The Garrison really is a huge chapel and on the night completely packed with supporters of the choir who enjoyed a wonderful concert.

Early March saw the choir with the 1000 voices at Manchester's MEN arena, the Albert Hall unavailable for that concert. April brought the choir to Monkton Church for a major charity event.

P&DMVC have very close ties with Mansfield and District MVC and at times appear in each others 'patches'. In July Mansfield brought down two full coaches to Pembroke to assist and to take part in a combined concert for P&DMVC's the 60 year celebration.

In September Aled Jones of TV fame came as the guest of P&DMVC to Folly Farm where close to £6,500 was raised for a local cancer charity, RWE Npower were major sponsors of this event.

P&DMVC also have close ties with Neyland Ladies Choir and both choirs combined to give a concert in the Torch Theatre Milford in Oct. Another sold out event.

The choir was asked to return to Dawlish Warren Hotel in late October to give a repeat performance of one they gave one or two years previously that raised a very large figure for the local Round Table. There was a repeat of that money raising exercise again. In between all the major events of course the local community could not be ignored and performances of an average of two concerts a month were completed throughout the year.

December brought the choir's Annual Christmas Concert with the winners of the competition for local Primary Schools' choirs to the beloved Tabernacle Chapel Pembroke. This competition sponsored by P&DMVC is a major local event raising large sums for charity.

P&DMVC's Musical Team, its officials and its choristers will admit that 2012 took considerable effort, organisation and commitment to complete and there was a certain amount of relief and satisfaction evident when it finally came to a conclusion. There was a short rest period over the Christmas period to recharge batteries but the choir was hard at it again from early January developing and extending their repertoire for the demands they know will be put upon them by those for whom the choir's services mean so much to the local community. That though is what the choir do and is the reason why they formed in the first place. They are Pembroke and District's community choir and are proud to be so. More information on P&DMVC can be found on their extensive web site www.pembrokeanddistrictmalevoicechoir.com

A Stewart

Cor Merched cwm Llynfi Llynfi Valley Ladies Choir Wales South

The choir joined the Association last year and have enjoyed reading about all the

wonderful choir activities and concerts.

The Musical Director of the choir is Paul Deenik Bradley and the Accompanist is Laura Smith. The choir is so fortunate to have young very talented leadership.

The highlight for 2012 was the visit to the Netherlands in October. The choir was invited to take part in the event held each year in the Dutch city of s'Hertogenbosch to mark its liberation by the 53rd Division of the Welsh Guards in October 1944, in which 146 soldiers died. Their sacrifice has never been forgotten and the city has a special Welsh monument at which there is a special Liberation Ceremony. The choir was the first ladies' choir to be invited, there have been 25 years of male voice choirs, as you are aware there are plenty of very good male voice choirs in this area!

It was a moving ceremony that nobody



will forget. Also participating was the local large mixed voice city choir. Their choir sang some items in the beautiful cathedral and had a tour and civic reception in the historic Town Hall.

On the last evening there was a capacity audience at the Jheronimus Bosch Arts Centre in which both choirs participated, for the first half the ladies wore traditional Welsh costumes and changed to more glamorous black sequin jackets and chiffon trousers. The choir received a rousing reception for the varied programme and the concert ended with both choirs singing a touching World War II Requiem and the Dutch and Welsh Anthems. Choir members were pleased to be able to sing the Dutch anthem without holding words or music.

We have several concerts scheduled for 2013 including a trip to London in May. Our major concert will be at Maesteg Town Hall on 20 September when we will have a professional tenor as our soloist.

We would like to hear from other choirs.

ruthdennis71@yahoo.co.uk

*Ruth Dennis
Secretary*



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Vocal Technique

Looking after your voice

- Always check your posture throughout all performances. Poor alignment can produce problems especially for breath control whilst also introducing tension throughout the body. Both will affect the quality of sound.
- Both Pilates and Yoga are excellent in supporting posture as well as giving you an awareness of how to alleviate tension.



• Many singers fail to use common sense when dealing with their voice. The physical demands on all singers, whatever genre, necessitate good health beginning with an awareness of your overall physical well-being.

• Do not attend a rehearsal/concert if you have a throat, ear or chest infection. Resting the voice means exactly that. Do not talk, (that includes a forced whisper) take the necessary medication and stay in a warm, but not too dry, atmosphere.

• Avoid the use of alcohol, caffeine and chocolate especially before or during a rehearsal or concert. Wait forty-five minutes after a meal to sing/rehearse. No singer should smoke.



• Read all instructions and note the side effects of any medicine whether prescribed or bought over the counter. Some can affect the voice.

• Always warm up the vocal chords. The type of warm up should reflect the demands of the concert/rehearsal.

• Pace yourself. Be aware of the length of concert/rehearsal and never sing a programme at full volume.

• Poor breathing and inappropriate support along with a 'closed' throat will produce poor tonal quality in the voice.

• Listening is one of the most important skills a singer should have and is often not mentioned in articles on voice production. Tuning the ears, as well as the voice, is integral to producing vocal sounds that enhance the tonal quality of a song. Only by 'listening' will you come to realise the sound you are trying to achieve.

• Sitting in rehearsals demands sitting on the front half of a firm chair, with your feet in contact with the floor. Shoulders should be drawn down, spine straight and there should be space for your diaphragm to descend fully and your rib cage expand. Never cross your legs!

• The attack or onset of a note should be produced without too much breath or a hard glottal attack. Over use of a glottal attack can result in nodules on the vocal chords.

• All singers have an optimum vocal range. The untrained voice will normally have a narrow range due to a lack of register use ie, head, chest or falsetto. It is necessary to train the voice to run smoothly from one to the other without a 'break' and to extend

the voice where applicable. Never force the range of a voice.

• Tension in the jaw, lips and palate will affect and result in poor articulation as well as tonal production.

• Lack of confidence is quite common even though we often hear of the 'prima donna' temperament! Most singers remember what they believe to be a poor performance rather than the more successful outcomes. It is the teachers/conductors role to ensure that singers feel confident in the programme they are to perform and have the necessary skills to perform it well.

E Moulder Spring 2013

Liz started singing at the age of five when she was auditioned for the then school choir. Throughout her time at school she was fortunate to have music teachers who encouraged and developed her love of singing particularly at her secondary school which had an incredible reputation for music at that time.

It is this positive experience that started Liz on her vision of trying to attain the highest possible performances for musicians at all times - not just in the competitive or exam situation but to enthuse in all the love of singing and performing which she still enjoys!

Liz, a former student of the Royal College of Music at Manchester, has been involved with choirs from the age of seven, becoming a conductor at 14. Liz studied piano and singing as her main studies at The Royal Manchester College of Music (now the Royal Northern College of Music) studying singing with Caroline Crawshaw.

As I wrote in my Conference report. Liz gave us a help sheet that gives excellent advice for any chorister who wishes to look after their voice and perform well in concert. I am happy to find that I can include this help sheet for you all to read and benefit from it.

Crawford

Vauxhall Male Voice Choir Thames North

This year the Vauxhall Male Voice Choir celebrates, with pride, its seventieth anniversary. It has become a tradition that, at each decade, the choir pushes the boat out with some memorable events to mark the passing milestones. Our choristers have come a long way since those dark and grim wartime days when, in 1943, two enlightened, music-loving gentlemen started a choir within Vauxhall Motors, with the main purpose of providing relief and recreation away from the strain of the war effort. The choir was soon flourishing under the umbrella of the firm's Recreation Club and offering local concerts and, indeed, radio broadcasts to our forces overseas.

By the end of the war, and during the 1960s and 1970s, the choir was in demand both locally and over the South of England; it entered and won many competitions, performed with famous military bands and made several radio and television appearances. On one occasion the choir ventured into the very heartland of Wales to take part in the annual eisteddfod and managed to win a first prize! Throughout this period, and subsequently, the choir has enjoyed the full support of its parent company, Vauxhall Motors. During those heyday years Vauxhall was a huge establishment within Luton, and made available its massive canteen and staff dining rooms for many concerts, including massed choir concerts so enjoyed by all and which helped to bond the fraternity of male voice singing. It was in the late 1970s that membership of the Vauxhall Recreation Club and hence of the choir was opened to non-Vauxhall employees; this, coupled with the successes of the choir, saw the choir membership rise to its largest ever peaking at high on eighty choristers.

During the 1980s, highlights included an appearance at the Royal Albert Hall and an Anglia Television appearance. From 1990 through to the early 2000s, travel was increased and the choir itinerary took it to the Channel Islands, France, Germany, Isle of Wight, Eastbourne, Worthing, Bristol and more. Christmas 1999 saw the choir make three appearances on Anglia Television. The first CD was made in 2000. During this era a policy decision was made within

our organisation concerning the future of the choir. Two routes were open: either to concentrate on competition singing or to focus on singing for charity and the entertainment of audiences. In our experience the two paths are mutually exclusive in that test pieces, requiring so much attention, are rarely favourites of the general public; we opted for the latter permitting a wider repertoire and a route leading to the opportunity of many more charity related events.

Since the millennium year the choir has gone from strength to strength. We have learnt to balance our major fundraising concert events, including Help for Heroes, cancer organisations and local needful causes with functions which help replenish our own coffers enabling us to continue our work. The public can be very appreciative of a choir willing to perform for weddings and funerals — the church choirs are not as common as they used to be! We are currently running with in excess of twenty concert events per year including a significant number around the Christmas period. We are blessed, as ever, with a brilliant and professional musical team to whom we own a major part of our success story over the years.

But enough of our history! What is planned for this year of celebrations? There are two major events which we have set in motion: a massed choirs' concert in the summer and a mini-tour to Cornwall in the autumn. It has become something of a custom that we hold a massed concert at the passing of each decade of the choir. This year we are delighted that the male voice choirs of Brighton Welsh, Croydon, Welwyn

Garden City and Wycombe Orpheus have agreed to help us celebrate our birthday. The concert will be held in The Methodist Church, The Square, Dunstable, Bedfordshire and will start at 7.30 on Saturday 15 June. Tickets are an affordable £10 and you would be made very welcome if you could attend. We are fortunate to have secured the services of the excellent soprano, Lynn Deacon, from Eastbourne with whom we have shared stage on many occasions.

The choir have made contact with Newquay Male Voice Choir who are an extremely friendly group and have agreed to host our visit to the south-west corner of England; one of the few places we have yet to explore! On Saturday 26 October our choir will be offering a one-hour charity sing in Truro Cathedral at lunch time, followed by an evening joint concert with our new friends from Newquay, in St Michael the Archangel, the parish church of Newquay. Again, should you be nearby please come and support us in this charity event.

In addition to our 'normal' commitments during this anniversary year, we are planning, in close co-operation with Vauxhall Motors, a major event in late 2013 in support of Help for Heroes. It is certainly going to be a year to remember. We extend our very best wishes to any choir celebrating a major anniversary this year. Our thoughts are with those stoic lads of the various organising committees, on whose shoulders rests the burden of success of your chosen ventures!

*Dave Sage
Treasurer*



Letter from NAC in Oz



At the time of writing most of the Touring Party have arrived back in Australia. There are still a few stragglers who are exploring further. The

Centenary event has been a resounding success with enthusiastic welcomes in France and England.

The choir sang in Paris as well as taking in the sights on the Seine, Versailles and Monet's Garden in Giverny. Moving to Amiens there were moving tours of the Allied cemeteries in the Somme and culminating in their appearance, together with 2 school groups from Queensland, at the Dawn Service on Anzac Day in Villers-Bretonneux. Having to rise at 2am was a strain and not conducive to singing. Neither were the layers of clothes worn by the choristers to ward off the effects of the sub-zero temperatures. The village on Villers-Bretonneux is very conscious of the contribution that the Anzacs made to their liberation from German occupation and there are many tributes there to Australia.

The school in the village was largely funded by contributions from Australian people and is a constant reminder of the Aussie generosity. After concerts in that area the choir moved near to Douai where they had a joint concert with the Chorale Mineurs Polonais de Douai. Here is a link to a short video taken by the French choir of that event featuring Sydney Male Choir performing "M'bube"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZxffQs5XyIY>

I think there was some puzzlement in the French audience at this! Have a look at it and see what I mean.



The choir then moved to England performing with the Croydon MVC and the Leigh Orpheus MVC before travelling by train to Cornwall for the Cornwall International Male Voice Choir Festival. Performances took places all over Cornwall as well as the choir taking part in the competition. We were not placed in the

competition, but the lessons learned will, I'm sure, be extremely useful in the future development of the choir.

One of the places that the choir performed in was the Eden Project, shown in the picture kindly supplied by Adrian Rowlands. Further concerts were held in Saltash and Bristol before the last concert with the Kidderminster MVC. After a farewell dinner the tired but exhilarated choir members and their followers split up to go their various ways. No doubt they will all have vivid memories which will be with them for ever.

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



The Jane Lilley Singers South West

2013 is a momentous and exciting year for the Jane Lilley Singers, as we celebrate 40 years of singing together. Some original members of the choir have stayed the whole course! As our JLS version of Bohemian Rhapsody says, '...boy bands come, boy bands go – we go on forever,' as we prove that we are the original (and best!) JLS.

We are a ladies' choir with, currently, 31 regular members, singing a wide range of music, from Queen – as indicated above – to Handel and Bach, Gospel and songs from West End shows, so our concerts always contain something for everyone, we hope. We also sing at a variety of occasions, from weddings and charity functions through to our annual Christmas concert, held at the prestigious Guildhall in Bath. Our 40th anniversary concert will also be held there on 6 July this year.

We have also sung a number of times in choir competitions, with notable success, having won the Cheltenham Gold Cup (musical variety), and being voted 'Adult Choir of the Year' at the Bournemouth Music Festival in 2005, where we won every class for which we entered.

In addition, the choir has appeared on television in regional choir competitions, and were also asked to sing on Songs of Praise in 2011.

JLS has recorded numerous CDs which exhibit the wide spectrum of our repertoire,

from sacred music and Taizé through to *Dancing in the Street* and *Rain Dance* by Karl Jenkins. We hope to produce a new CD to celebrate our 40th Anniversary year, containing new music from our July concert and a special thanksgiving service to be held in June, including a song written especially for us by our extremely talented accompanist, Dominic Irving.

Excerpts from our CDs and information about the choir and forthcoming events can be obtained from our website,

www.janelilleysingersofbath.co.uk

It is doubtful whether we shall all still be singing together in another 40 years, but in the meantime we are enjoying the ride, the camaraderie and the opportunity to make beautiful music under Jane's inspiring and inimitable direction.

Jeannie Holmes

Poynton Male Voice Choir North West

This year has seen a number of important changes at PMVC. Our President, Peter Milgate, was forced to retire due to ill health and Joe Tindsley, a member for 50 years and a previous Chairman was elected President. Geoff Hiscott was appointed Chairman and Peter O'Brien as Secretary. Last but not least, John Hanlon as Treasurer - a completely new team!

In 2014 the choir will have been in existence for 80 years and another major change will take place when our Conductor/Musical Director for the past 30 years, Mr David Mosley, will retire although he intends to maintain a strong link with the choir.

We shall therefore be looking for a replacement for David effective from July/August 2014 to ensure the choir continues its momentum into the years ahead. We are a happy group of some 40 voices singing songs from the shows, classic popular music and light choral pieces.

We rehearse every Monday evening at Poynton Methodist Church and carry out approximately ten engagements each year including three at our home church.

We would like to invite anyone interested in succeeding David or for further information to contact our Secretary, Peter O'Brien. 0161 456 7864.

peterobrien678@btinternet.com

Peter O'Brien

Dursley Male Voice Choir South West Group

Hope for Tomorrow Concert raised £13,018.51 for Charity.

When half of the tickets had been sold by the end of 2012, it was clear that this concert was likely to be a very successful venture, and indeed that's how it turned out with barely a handful of seats empty on the night. Indeed that may have been due to the snow that had just fallen in Gloucestershire. Mark Cummings, straight from BBC Radio Gloucestershire, proved to be a great compère who entered fully into the spirit of the evening.

A very significant feature of DMVC's concert programmes is the number of 'in-house' arrangements that are sung. This concert was no exception with Barrie Cooper the Musical Director contributing one composition to accompany the words of *The Charge of the Light Brigade* by Tennyson, three other songs and a medley of songs from 'Les Misérables'. His predecessor, Colin Lawrence, was represented by a further five songs and several songs in the medley.

Wynne Evans was an immense presence on stage – mainly for his musicality – not just his physique. Many knew him not only because of his association with a certain insurance company but also international reputation as a singer. His singing drew huge applause and it was a treat for the choir to be able to sing six songs with such an acclaimed performer. His humour was infectious. Needless to say the fact that

Wales had won a certain rugby match in the recent past featured from time to time as did anecdotes about his life in music.

From the discussions amongst choristers it was clear that they had had a great evening and what's more, the press critics' reports were uniformly very positive as seen in a selection that are shown on choir's website www.dursleymalechoir.co.uk.

It should be noted that the website replaced the old one just a few months ago and it is encouraging that it has drawn favourable comments. All constructive comments are welcomed.

The choir was supported splendidly by many groups and credit to them. Once again details may be found on our website. Without this support it would certainly not have been possible to raise the sum we did.

'Hope for Tomorrow' was founded by Christine Mills in December 2003 after she lost her husband, David, to cancer. One of the many stresses the couple endured was travelling from their home to the Oncology Centre – a journey of nearly 60 miles. Christine wanted the charity to focus in a practical way, to alleviate the additional anxieties of travelling. She met Dr Sean Elyan, Consultant Oncologist and Medical Director of the Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and discovered that he had a vision to bring chemotherapy closer to the patient.

The Gloucestershire Mobile Chemotherapy Unit was the first launched in the world in 2007 by Charity Patron Sir Stirling Moss OBE and was named 'Helen' in memory of



a dear friend of the charity founder, who sadly passed away from cancer. In a unique partnership with the NHS, owned and maintained by the charity and operated by highly trained NHS staff, these well-equipped Mobile Chemotherapy Units can travel five days a week throughout their counties of operation to five set locations. These units have the capacity to treat up to twenty patients a day.

Each bespoke unit costs £260,000 to build and maintain over three years, the charity also provides each area of operation with a Nurse's Support Vehicle – this allows the chemotherapy nurses to travel freely between the Oncology Centre and Hope for Tomorrow's Mobile Chemotherapy Unit. Currently four Mobile Chemotherapy Units, and five nurses support vehicles are operating in Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Somerset, Wiltshire and Hampshire and units five and six are due to be launched during 2013. The charity is currently fundraising to bring its fifth and sixth Mobile Chemotherapy Units into action during our 10th Anniversary year, 2013. It is the supporters that will not only help to raise the necessary funds to launch these two new units, but also keep the currently operating fleet of four units on the road. For more information about the charity, please visit their website at www.hopefortomorrow.org.uk.

Following on from the hugely successful charity concert in aid of 'Hope for Tomorrow' at Cheltenham Town Hall recently, Dursley MVC is pleased to announce that Mark Llewelyn Evans will be the Guest Soloist for the 2013 annual concerts. These will be held at the Chantry Centre in Dursley on 31 May and 1 June.

Huw Jenkins
Press & Publicity



Wynne Evans with
Christine Mills and Rosa Woodley

Send Your Submissions To Crawford At

publications.officer@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk

Singing For A Bright Future

John Trent Wallace



Creating a vibrant choir that has a life and future can be pretty daunting. It seems that this can be made even more difficult when the choir has been categorised in a particular area, such as choral, gospel or male voice. These labels can be a double-edged sword that can often hinder the attraction to new members and audiences, whilst becoming a strait jacket preventing a choir from growing and developing.

I wanted to share my experience of leading an established choir and how over the past 10 years I have been finding a way to broaden its appeal in order to ensure the choir has a strong future. My wide musical background and non-allegiance to a single genre has played an integral part in how I approach music making. I use best practice from all areas of music making and performance, and apply them to drive an ethos of entertaining an audience through good choral singing.

In order to achieve this success I believe there are three main aspects: Vision, Performance Values, and Repertoire. In this article I want to focus on Repertoire and how this can be a fundamental element of a choir's success. However, before doing so, I will touch briefly on the first two elements.

Vision gives a direction to all aspects of the choir - musical, visual, performance style and so on. This sense of purpose defines the group, pulling members and audience to it. It sets the framework in which you operate and ensures that as the choir develops, there is freedom to move forward with less resistance to positive change.

Strong Performance Values are aligned to the Vision, and have a massive impact on the success of a choir. How you look,

present your concert and communicate with the audience are key elements of a good concert, and are driven by things such as: knowing the words to songs (even if you are using music!), having a strong understanding of the meaning of songs and their context; smiling/showing your enjoyment, projecting energy and enthusiasm to an audience, discipline in how to move onto the performance area, standing and sitting, what to wear, right through to more advanced areas such as use of a sound system and lights. In my experience without understanding and developing these areas you will severely restrict the impact and success of your choir.

Repertoire ultimately defines a choir and how appealing it will be to both its members and audience. I have the view that I am taking the choir, and therefore the audience, on a musical journey where we will enjoy the company of old friends, as well as discovering new and exciting personalities. I have found audiences love to hear new songs during a concert, many of which become their favourites and the ones that they talk to their friends about, which is the best form of advertising! Great examples of this are *February Song* (by Josh Groban), *Bui Doi* (from the musical *Miss Saigon*), *How Can I Keep From Singing* (as featured by Gareth Malone) and *Haven't Met You Yet* (by Michael Bublé).

This musical journey is best achieved by using songs that develop and progress naturally within an existing repertoire. Unfortunately, I found that for male choirs there was, and still is, a very limited choice of arrangements of songs outside of the accepted norm. Of those that are less 'traditional', many tend not to capture the genre well or translate into exciting choral arrangements. I therefore look for songs which are well known, have strong tunes and harmony, with a pulse and vibrancy from which I can create my own arrangements that bring the best in choral singing to audiences.

When learning both classic and new songs, each type should be sung in a style that brings out the best from it,

changing and developing areas such as vocal style and use of vowels so that each song makes musical sense. For example, don't sing a swing number as if it were Mozart's *Ave Verum Corpus*. Stand and sing in a relaxed style, smile and share your enjoyment of the music with the audience. The main factor in a concert should be the choir sound, and not the song type. Taking this approach will help in creating a concert that comfortably includes music from the current charts to early music. A great song is a great song, wherever it comes from.

I'm sure that there will be readers who think that these types of changes would not be possible in their choir. Over the years there have been many arguments presented to me for not singing certain songs, particularly if they derive from outside of the accepted norm for the choir. However, these comments are often made without the full appreciation that audiences are looking to be entertained with songs that they can identify with, and that usually means modern songs.

Through popular TV the fun of choral singing has been brought back into the consciousness of our audiences and with the success of groups like *Only Men Aloud* there is a growing demand for us to sing well within a concert setting of high production values. If sung well new songs will actually go down better than many older ones.

This musical journey is immensely satisfying as it broadens musical horizons and ensures that your concerts are fresh and entertaining. So do consider exploring new types of songs that will help your choir to grow and reach as wide an audience as possible.

John Trent Wallace is a published composer, arranger and musical director. If you would like to contact John for advice and guidance on developing your choir, or are interested in his choral arrangements please visit

www.johntrentwallace.com

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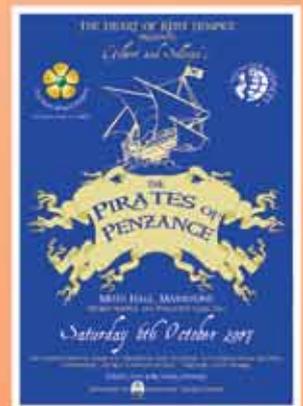
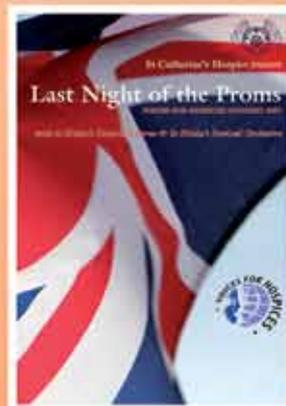
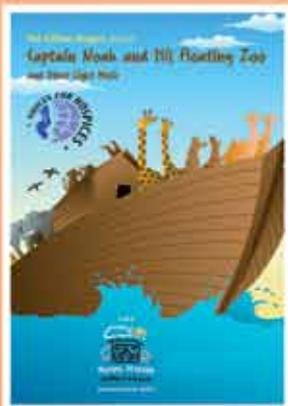


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Worcester Male Voice Choir Midlands South West

2013 has started as we finished the previous year, very busy! Membership of the choir continues to grow, and now stands at 75 choristers, whilst the demand for concerts, weddings and other formal events surpasses all our expectations.



Our 10 Strong Team Of Welsh Speakers

In addition to presenting concerts in Worcester and Bristol, the year so far has seen wonderful opportunities to help promote and celebrate very important national and regional events.

In March the choir was invited to provide a St David's Day Concert at Cradley Church, Herefordshire where many a Welshman resides. Led by our 10 strong team of Welsh speakers, the choir of some 50 plus sang a concert mainly in Welsh with no music or crib sheets. *Land of Our Fathers, Rachie, Counting the Goats, Yvory, Gwahoddiaid* and *Ar Hyd Y Nos* to name but a few. It was a truly magnificent evening where we were joined by a brilliant young harpist Shelley Fairplay who put the icing on the cake.

Then on a cold April morning with a bitter easterly wind blowing a hardy group of some 30 choristers stood on College Green beneath the tall tower of the imposing Worcester Cathedral. The choir was invited to participate in a live performance on BBC Hereford and Worcester local radio to celebrate the formal raising of the first official flag for Worcestershire. The new flag designed by a local resident shows the three black pears on a white shield against a background of green for the countryside and blue for the county's river.

The event attended by local dignitaries including the local MP proved to be very popular listening and the choir rendering of *Land of Hope and Glory* was very appropriate and well performed. As the radio presenter commented the choir sang with commendable gusto through chattering teeth. The choir also provided most of the backing applause for the

event as it was so cold the attendance by the general public was limited. Our accompanist, Sheila Leatherland, was pleased to have her frozen fingers massaged by the radio presenter and we were all glad of the hot coffee and bacon butties provided after the event.

To conclude our very patriotic start to the year the choir hosted its own celebration of St George's Day concert in the excellent surroundings of St Martin's Church, Worcester. The event started with a male voice arrangement of *The National Anthem*. A full house gave a great reception to some wonderful varied singing from across the choir repertoire. We were privileged to have Henry Sandon (Antiques Roadshow celebrity) as guest conductor for the singing of *Morte Christe*. He had been the conductor of our predecessor the Worcester Police MVC. This gave our Musical Director Nicholas Wright a deserved break from this musical extravaganza which he had so masterfully devised. In addition the special guests for the evening were the young and talented George Millard Jazz Quartet from London who entertained the audience with something new and very special. Indeed this was the first time in the 100 year history of the church that jazz had been performed and it was not a day to early.

The evening concluded with rousing performances by guest soprano Margaret Peters, Organist John Wilderspin, and the choir, of the traditional *Land of Hope and Glory, Jerusalem* and *Rule Britannia*. The audience participated fully in this finale and with flags waving the church was a sea of colour and noise. More fun to follow during the summer.

Terry Dillingham

The Marchington Singers Midlands East

The Dalesmen Male Voice Choir's report on their trip to Scotland in 2012 reminds me of our tour last year. We were also centred in Stirling, with concerts in The Holy Rude Church, Birnam, Dunkeld, Dunblane, and in our hotel, where we sang on behalf of Scottish Autism. We had a great visit to the Falkirk Wheel and found it to be a marvel of engineering.

Future events for us include our summer concert at Abbots Bromley School in Staffordshire on 13 July and this year's theme is 'Swing along the Prom'. There will be jazz and music with a seaside element and ice cream too! Tanya Hilton, a Russian concert pianist who has played for us before, will be joining us for what promises to be a lovely concert.

This is a change of venue this year as there is a larger hall for the growing audience and very good acoustics.



We sing for local organisations, weddings and others in between. You will see from our website that we are available for weddings too. Our annual Christmas concert will be in St. Mary's Church in Uttoxeter on 14th December 2013.

We are hoping to organise a choir workshop later in the year, possibly October.

<http://www.marchingtonsingers.org/>

**Sheila Templier
Chairman**

Cymau Male Voice Choir Wales North/Cheshire West

Wales is rightly known as the 'Land Of Song' and North Wales is home to several of the best male voice choirs that Wales has to offer.

There has been a choir in Cymau for almost a century. It was from these old established roots that the current choir was formed and which celebrated its 40th anniversary last year. Whilst not enjoying the international status of some Welsh choirs, we nonetheless join forces with other choirs normally on a bi-annual basis as we did for example by attending the 1000 voices at Manchester Arena in February 2012 and the National Eisteddfod in Wrexham last July.

Our main focus however is on our regular local concerts, almost all of which support locally based charitable organisations where every single penny raised from ticket sales and/or donations is passed to the charity concerned. The choir members, the conductor and our two accompanists all provide their services free of charge although a small fee is charged for attendances at weddings.

For the last six years the primary beneficiary from our charitable work has been the Children's Hospice Tŷ Gobaith (Hope House) in the Conwy Valley. We have donated £50,000 to that very deserving cause. This is in addition to supporting various other charitable causes over many years, but recent donations include the sum of £1000 to The Countess of Chester Hospital to enable them to purchase an ultra sound scanning machine (known as a V scan), and £500 towards the purchase of a new heart monitoring machine. Donations of £500 each were also made shortly before last Christmas to the Mold Hospital League of Friends and Nightingale House Hospice, Wrexham.

As a small choir we are proud of our charitable achievements and hope to be able to continue supporting local deserving causes for many years to come. There was a time when the Cymau Male Voice Choir numbered over 50 members. It made an important contribution to the social cohesion and well being of the local community as well as helping build the reputation still enjoyed today for the uniqueness and richness of the Welsh male voice choir. Times of course change and, sadly, our numbers have steadily declined to the point that there are now

only 15 choristers plus our dedicated conductor, two faithful accompanists and our invaluable secretary. We are also supported by a loyal group of ladies in the background known as The Shadows who support us through thick and thin.

Considering our falling numbers we are still able to successfully meet all our commitments and receive very positive feedback from our audiences. We already have a full programme of concerts pencilled in for 2013 but, if we are to continue to deliver on the high expectations rightly expected by our audiences, we need some new members. All existing members do their best to attend every possible concert and practice but it is inevitable that there are occasions when holidays, illness or other engagements prevent 100% attendance.

A fuller version of this article, including an open invitation to anyone who may be interested in joining us at our Monday evening practices at the Cymau Chapel, was published in our local news letters and newspapers.

*Alan Parkinson
Publicity Officer*

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Chester Ladies' Choir Wales North / Cheshire West

You look at the year ahead and think, how we are going to cope with the problems of ever rising costs. It doesn't get any easier, does it? And yet we survive, even prosper.

The Chester Ladies' Choir enjoyed a successful year with increased membership singing to full audiences and we are financially sound and our charities were grateful for donations from our Christmas concerts at Eaton Hall, for the Stroke Association; singing from a boat on the River Dee, for the Hospice of the Good Shepherd and at the Town Hall for the Alzheimer's Society. So we shouldn't worry. But of course, we do.

As, I am sure it is the case with many other choirs, we are faced with higher charges for venues. Our fee for hiring Chester Town Hall, for instance, has more than doubled this year. But with a quick change of heart – we are a ladies' choir, of course – we are not going to worry. We are going to be positive.

We are planning more concerts in addition to our spring and Christmas events. In May we are going to Bath and look forward to singing with the Mendip Male Voice Choir. We will be in good voice at the wedding of one of our members. And we will have to be in even better voice for a recording session later in the year.

By the time you read this I hope your conference at Llyndyr Hall has been successful and that you may have had time to visit our wonderful city of Chester.

I started off in a rather downbeat mood but now I am decidedly upbeat for 2013.

Kate White

Northampton Male Voice Choir Midlands East

NORTHAMPTON MVC set to soar with exciting 5 year plan

It has appointed Stephen Bell as its new Musical Director. Stephen started his musical career as a chorister and later, tenor at St Anne's Cathedral in Belfast. He went on to study music at Southampton University and then, conducting at the University of Surrey.

At Southampton, he became the Musical Director of the university Gilbert and Sullivan Society and has since, very successfully, conducted a variety of choirs, orchestras and musical societies. These include Wolverton G & S Society, Company MK, Northampton Chamber Choir, The Guildhall Orchestra and since 2005, he has been the Musical Director of the Northampton Concert Band and more recently, the Rushden Windmill Brass Band. Stephen works as Sales Operations Manager for Mercedes Benz Retail Group UK in Milton Keynes.

The choir was formed in 1946 and was originally called the Northampton Men's Own Male Voice Choir. However, in 1980, in recognition of the choir's contribution to local charities, it was granted the privilege of wearing the Northampton Coat of Arms and the name was changed to Northampton Male Voice Choir. The choir has a current membership in excess of 60 members. In the last 12 months the choir has performed at a large variety of venues including Ely Cathedral and a tour to Chester. It has performed at several Northampton Rugby Club matches at both Franklin Gardens and Stadium MK. It also welcomed the Glasgow Phoenix Choir to a joint concert in Northampton in aid of Macmillan Nurses. The choir has been invited back to Glasgow to perform with them in 2014.

The choir's Associate Conductor is Andrew Howes. Andrew has been associated with a large number of choirs, choral groups and musical society's and has regularly performed at the International Gilbert and Sullivan Festival in Buxton.

The choir's Principal Accompanist is Andy Poole BA MSc. Andy studied music at University of London Goldsmiths, from 1968 to 1973. He spent many years teaching music to secondary school pupils before continuing his studies at the Open University and De Montfort University.

The choir's Assistant Accompanist is Sue Rayment. Sue has studied Viola, Oboe and Piano and has performed at a variety of venues across the UK including Westminster Hall and with the St Thomas' Hospital Orchestra in London.

On taking over as Musical Director, Stephen stated that his target is to double the size of the choir and make it 'admired

and respected as the foremost male voice choir in the country' within 5 years. To achieve this aim, he has promulgated a 14 part plan focussing on every aspect of the choir's activities.

To help achieve this target, the choir has started a new initiative called 'Northampton Men Allowed' This is a community based project, where male members of the public are being invited to come and 'sing for pleasure' at a series of pre arranged venues within the Northampton area. As part of this initiative, Northampton will be leafleted; adverts will be placed in the local press and media where possible. Flyers, posters and email contacts will also be utilised.

Hopefully, this will result in a new choir 'Northampton Men Allowed' being formed, to sing two or three songs at a special charity concert being held on 12 October at Northampton School for Boys. Several performers have already been booked for the concert, which is being held in aid of 'Help for Heroes'. These include Northampton Male Voice Choir, Bournemouth Male Voice Choir, guest soloist, Faryl Smith and compere, John Griff from BBC Radio Northampton.

Any enquiries regarding the concert, or information regarding the choir can be addressed to:

NMVC Chairman Neil Harding

01604 675161

neilharding205@btinternet.com

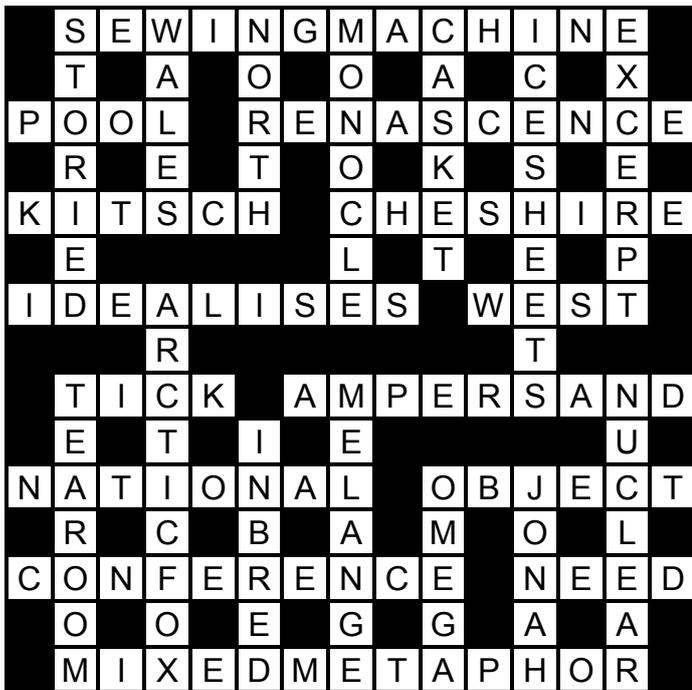
John White

"Rock 'n' roll will never die. There'll always be some arrogant little brat who wants to make music with a guitar."

— Dave Edmunds

Send Your Submissions To Crawford At

publications.officer@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk



Puzzle Solutions

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

Answers to John Croft's Conference Music Quiz

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. The Comedy of Errors | 8. Leonard Bernstein | 15. Willy Russell |
| 2. The Star Spangled Banner | 9. Gustav | 16. Aspects of Love |
| 3. George I | 10. Guitar | 17. Mack the Knife |
| 4. Seattle | 11. Ninth | 18. Chess |
| 5. Wagner | 12. Piano | 19. Seville |
| 6. St Cecilia | 13. Mozart | 20. Aida |
| 7. Fidelio | 14. Haydn | |

New Member's Directory

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

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>CADENZA YorksE Mixed voices 17 choristers</p> <p>Sandy Long 2 Sylvan Falls, Drifffield, East Yorkshire YO25 5FE
01377 254150 slong19@tiscali.co.uk</p> | <p>FELIXSTOWE COMMUNITY CHOIR Anglia Group Mixed voices 80-90 choristers</p> <p>Edna Boon 98 Colneis Road, Felixstowe, Suffolk IP11 9LY
01394 277280 ednab4@hotmail.com
www.felixstowecommunitychoir.org.uk</p> |
| <p>CARTMEL CHORAL SOCIETY Cumbria/IoM Mixed voices 70-80 choristers</p> <p>Jane Sharpe Calderbeck, 1 Highfield Road, Grange over Sands LA11 7JA
01539 532574 janesharpe33@btinternet.com</p> | <p>FLINT LADIES CHOIR WalesN/ChesW</p> <p>Alison Round 173 Prince of Wales Avenue, Flint CH6 5JU
078525 08466 choirmad@me.com</p> |
| <p>CHAMELEON MidsE Mixed choir 22 choristers</p> <p>Ray Taylor 6 Haddon Court, Ashbourne, Derby DE6 1JP
07971 687832 ray@reachbeyond.com www.chameleonchoral.co.uk</p> | <p>HOLDERNESS GRANGE CHOIR YorksE Mixed voices 37 choristers</p> <p>Mrs Gillian Hanslip 124 Birch Tree Drive, Hedon, East Yorkshire HU12 8FJ
01482 893910 gillian@hanslips.co.uk</p> |
| <p>CITY OF BRISTOL CHOIR South West Mixed voices</p> <p>Tim Jackson 9 Sandstone Rise, Winterbourne, Bristol BS36 1BB
01454 250482 secretary@cityofbristolchoir.org.uk
www.cityofbristolchoir.org.uk</p> | <p>READING A440 CHOIR Thames North Mixed voices 28 choristers</p> <p>Gill Leishman 23 Copse Drive, Wokingham, Berks RG41 1NA
077666 72781 readingA440@gmail.com www.a440choir.com</p> |
| <p>CONCOURSE SINGERS WalesN/CheshireW Mixed voices 75 choristers</p> <p>J Kieran 30 Melloncroft Drive, Wirral, Merseyside CH48 2JB
0151 625 0650 jjkieran@fastmail.fm</p> | <p>RSNO CHORUS ScotlandW Mixed voices 160 choristers</p> <p>Christine walker RSNO Centre, 73 Claremont Street, Glasgow G3 7JB
0141 225 3553 christine.walker@rsno.org.uk
www.rsno.org.uk/chorus/RSNOchorus.php</p> |

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

publications.officer@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk

'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.

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PLEASE DO WRITE IN

Crawford