

NEWS & VIEWS

220 AUTUMN 2019



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CONFERENCE FORMS 2020

Kentwood Show Choir In Action

Front cover image



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Jelf

Crawford's Corner



Summer is on the way out and a new choral season is here. It has been wonderful over the past few days to read about all the things that our mem-

bers have been up to; visits to distant lands and celebrations of the past deeds of our elder members.

I have no doubt that the Gwalia Singers will be thinking of the people they visited recently who have been in turn visited by Hurricane Dorian.

The things our choirs get up to. Appearing on Antiques Roadshow, singing at Tyne

Cot and celebrating so many services of joyful singing. One choir has decided that the time is right for them to call it a day. While this is sad it is good that they are deciding to make a decision themselves rather than dwindling to nothing over time.

Contributors have been sending more than one photo with their writing and this is great especially when they send action pictures like the wonderful one from Kentwood that makes such an excellent front cover image. Keep it up.

Now that you are all moving into the new season please remember when you have had a successful concert that you can

share it with your fellow choristers in this magazine, and don't forget the photos.

Information and forms for next year's conference are available in this issue of News & Views. Join in with your Chairman and make a New Year resolution to book to be with us in Blackburn for a conference in our Centenary Year.

I actually heard recently that someone had successfully completed the crossword. Wow! I wonder how many of you actually do that?

Do read the piece from Colne Orpheus Glee Union complaining about an article from the last issue. I must get Bill Steiner copies of the two songs.

Chairman's Chat



Welcome to the autumn edition of News & Views. I hope you had an enjoyable summer and are refreshed as we prepare for our busiest season of choral singing. It is very interesting to read about the varied activities of our members; it is welcoming to read positive articles about successful ventures and achievements.

We are now approaching our centenary year and are making the final preparations for our conference in Blackburn in March which promises to be a very exciting and enjoyable event with top class speakers and a gala concert at St George's Hall. Full details and a booking form are in this issue. Why not make it your New Year resolution to attend this special centenary conference for what will be an informative, friendly and very enjoyable event. It will give you the opportunity to make new friends and contacts in other choirs in a relaxing and inspiring environment and join in some of our celebrations.

As part of centenary activities we are offering member choirs free advertising in our publications, which are the three editions of News & Views and the Year Book. Any choir can have a half page advert in any edition free of charge. Please contact the Services Officer to arrange.

This will be the last issue in 2019 so may I wish you all a very early Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year. Please keep sending in reports of your choir's activities, and enjoy your concerts throughout the festive season.

Meeting Dates 2019:

Officers	12 November	All Officer's meetings are held at Twin Oaks Hotel, Palterton, Chesterfield S44 6UZ
	14 January 2020	
MOF	25 January 2020	Twin Oaks Hotel, Palterton, Chesterfield S44 6UZ



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Keith Heywood Retires

Radcliffe Male Voice Choir - North West - Robert Peters

When a well-loved choir conductor resigns it is always a sad blow; when a well-loved choir conductor resigns because of an illness in the family it is quite tragic but for that conductor to be resigning after 54 years as conductor of one choir it is devastating.

This is the situation at Radcliffe Male Voice Choir as their conductor of 54 years, Mr Keith Heywood, has with much reluctance, had to resign so that he can deal more readily with a serious illness in his family. The choir is in its ninety-eighth year and was preparing for its 'Gala 98' concert in May. That has had to be cancelled, unfortunately, but the choir will certainly carry on with concert engagements later in the year and into the future.

Keith was born into a musical family and was in both his school and church choirs and also sang in pantomimes and concerts.

By his late teens Keith was singing solos in concerts, oratorios and cantatas with Bury Music Circle and was asked, even at that young age, to conduct the community hymn singing in Union Square on Whit Friday. This far from immodest start in conducting spurred him on and although continuing to sing in shows and concerts he trained and conducted various choirs for church anniversaries. Among the many societies Keith worked

with are All Saints Operatic Society, Bank Street Players and Ramsbottom Operatic Society. During this time Keith married an old school friend, May, whom he met while rehearsing for a church anniversary.

His 'day job' was at ICI Blackley and it was here he began singing with the ICI Choir under the baton of Maurice Handford, the then young, celebrated conductor of the Halle orchestra.

Whilst still singing and taking professional voice training and singing lessons Keith was prevailed upon more and more to conduct. He was conducting Ramsbottom Choral Society and did three shows as MD with Radcliffe Congregational Players. It was this connection which, in 1965, led to his being asked to conduct a concert of Radcliffe Male Voice Choir with Besses o'th' Barn Big Band. This was with only one week to go before the concert but Radcliffe MVC's conductor had suffered a stroke. Despite the time constraints upon him Keith conducted a concert which was a resounding success.

From there, standing in for one momentous concert, Keith has never looked back and has conducted Radcliffe Male Voice Choir ever since. A remarkable record. After his first year at Radcliffe MVC Keith resigned from the post of conductor at Ramsbottom Choral Society where he

had been for ten years and concentrated on his work at Radcliffe.

He was recognised in 2011 by being awarded the Edwin Kay Memorial Prize for Achievement and the choir recognised both 25 and 50 year milestones with them with presentations and awards.

Keith said, upon having to relinquish the baton after 54 years as a conductor, 'I feel privileged to have been MD of this wonderful choir for so many years'.

The men of the choir are obviously shocked and disappointed but fully understand Keith's decision. They are determined to carry on with their present concert programme and a new MD has been appointed to carry the choir forward, over its centenary and beyond.

A choir member summed it up with, 'Keith was outstanding; he was the easiest conductor to follow. The lads would have followed him to the moon and back. Our greatest regret is that he has not been able to carry on leading us at least until the choir marks its centenary in 2021.

Keith will be missed.'

After his last rehearsal on Wednesday 15 May there was a celebration party and Keith was fêted and presented with gifts which he graciously accepted: there wasn't a dry eye in the house.

Harmony in Europe Choral Festival

Thanet Male Voice Choir - Thames South - Roger Parker

Following months of meticulous planning members of TMVC embarked their coaches at three in the morning in early May to catch the first plane for Bologna in northern Italy to sing in the Harmony in Europe Choral Festival. The event, started in 1987, is jointly hosted every two years by the same choirs from Broadstairs in Kent, Cologne, Germany and Lizzano in Belvedere, Italy and TMVC is a founder member of

'the club'. This year it was our great pleasure to visit our close Italian friends in their small village nestling high up (900m) the Apennine Mountains. Their small, pretty village is a wonderfully close community that extends a most warm and generous welcome to its visitors.

Our German counterparts had arrived a day before us so we were delighted when our coach parties disembarked

in the piazza twelve hours later to the cheers of welcome in Italian and German and the melodious strains of the village's eighteen strong brass band playing *Roll Out The Barrel*, which was quite appropriate because the welcome drinks were lined up for us all.

The evening celebration was planned as an outside event in the piazza. However, rain put the mockers on that but before



Thanet Male Voice Choir at the Harmony In Europe Choral Festival

we knew it a large marquee was erected, the karaoke struck up, a twenty yard conga developed, the vino rosso flowed, the informal singing started and then it was midnight and a happy but tired Thanet group wended its way in dribs and drabs to their various hotels.

Saturday saw all guests ferried to the local cheese factory. A visit to a cheese factory sounded as if it might be less than interesting but just the opposite was the case. The community-run dairy makes the renowned Parmigiano Reggiano cheese which is one of the more sought-after in the Parmesan range. We had a very amusing introduction as we were issued with disposable hygiene-wear. Brits, especially our lot, seem to conjure up humour from the most innocent of activities and this episode was no exception: the white, one-piece boiler suit was kind of awkward for the ageing visitor without assistance, but having fought our way into this we were left with four items. What were these for? Then we twigged: two green bags for our shoes, a white net for our hair and a white surgeon's mask. The humour was compounded as a member inadvertently put a green bag on his

head and was left with one white shoe and one green - left and right? Eventually, looking like a team of forensic scientists on a murder case, we entered the world of community-based cheese manufacturing. It was fascinating and we were informed that the factory stock, carefully stacked in an air conditioned warehouse, has a wholesale value of 1.5 million euros. Our one hour tour ended and, in the sunshine of the yard, we and our German friends were treated generously to the usual excesses of vino rosso, Parmigiano Reggiano and fresh home-baked bread.

Arriving back in Lizzano around lunch time nerves were becoming a little frayed with the need to move out of party mode for the rapidly-approaching evening concert. Following lunch at the local sports hall/theatre it was rehearsal time. Thankfully we have a most meticulous MD and he fine-tuned our stage entrance and our six songs which were performed unaccompanied. This preparation was to pay off later that evening. The main event was due to begin at eight. However, it being Italian time, we got cracking around nine to a good-sized audience. TMVC was last on the bill; there had been speeches

in between each choir so by now the time was 10.30 and we were quite weary. You could hear a pin drop as our MD fixed us with the look and we hit *I'm Gonna Walk* in perfect timing.

Our initial apprehension for singing unaccompanied had dissolved by the end of this first number: it was the perfect choice to start out – speedy, rhythmic and with good harmonies - and we sang it well. We remained very focussed under our MD's watchful gaze and the ensuing five numbers were delivered with equal confidence and musical accuracy and the audience was very generous with its applause. All choirs then linked up for our two joint pieces: very emotional. Following the afterglow most of us retired at around one the next morning.

Sunday morning is reserved for the traditional church service at 11.00. The snow-storm started around 10.00. It looked fantastic from inside the hotel; trees sparkling, paths white with not a foot-mark in sight. Photos showed that the town had become colourless, just black and white. We made our way to the 11 o'clock church service dressed for the

weather because we'd been warned in advance. No waiting and chatting in the old piazza but straight in and close the door. A solitary snow plough driven by a Lizzano chorister rattled around the square fighting a losing battle.

The service commenced and each choir sang one hymn at various points in the service. TMVC sang *Steal Away* to a very attentive congregation and then there was a christening. The main service ended and we all assembled at the front and sang our two joint pieces. Then it was outside, by which time there was a thick layer of snow, for snowballs and sliding, then lunch which was very entertaining as we piped up with seasonal songs like

White Christmas and *Let it Snow* and back for a snooze to prepare for the final party.

By seven that evening a gradual thaw had set in and we wound our way to the Sports Hall dressed to the nines in our various fancy dress costumes. The first hour was awesome as the parade of costumed choristers and guests arrived. There were Mickey and Minnie Mice, ducks, dalmatians, dwarves, a Darth Vader, fairies, Prince Charmings & Cinderellas, pirates Cruellas, Woodys, Mary Poppins, three chimney sweeps and I think somebody arrived on Dumbo. Think of any Disney film and there was a matching character. We dined, drank and danced; speeches were made and gifts exchanged

with promises of the next event. Then it was midnight; Cinderella left minus her left shoe closely chased by the prince in a minibus and it was time for shuteye; a great ending to a fabulous musical and friendship weekend.

On the Monday we had arranged a casual visit to a local castle, which was much appreciated after the rigours of the weekend, and we arrived at Heathrow on Tuesday afternoon just in time to make rehearsal at 7.30.

In the group photo TMVC are in the green blazers. We're all enjoying a laugh at the expense of the Italian lady conductor.

BBC Antiques Roadshow

Côr Meibion Colwyn - Wales N/Cheshire W - Charles Cooksley



A busy year for Côr Meibion Colwyn beginning with singing at the Wales under 20 Rugby Internationals on 22 February and 15 March to several thousand at Parc Eirias Arena at Colwyn Bay. Several new singing experiences so far this year. On 30 March we sang at Chester Racecourse Hospitality Suite for the Royal Welsh sergeants and officers and the following day recorded for BBC2 Antiques Road Trip outside the RNLI lifeboat station on Llandudno promenade and inside the station. The TV show is scheduled for the Autumn 2019. On 27 April we joined tenor Rhys Meirion and soprano Eleri Woolford in a charity concert in the Pavilion Theatre, Rhyl organised by the North Wales Police Federation.

One of our main concert venues is St John's Church Mostyn Street, Llandudno in their Tuesday and Thursday Welsh Choirs season that runs from May to October each year. At a number of the Tuesday Llandudno concerts and at other venues we are fortunate to call on a range of seven contrasting soloists from within the choir: Hywel Roberts and John Roberts 1st tenors 2nd tenors Stuart Davies and Alf Gladman, 1st basses Gwyn Jones and Richard Thomas and 2nd bass Gordon Evans. Our concerts are conducted by Tudur Eames and accompaniment duties are shared by Anne Leavitt, Mary Darling and Richard Hibbs. At our Llandudno concert on

24 May we hosted the excellent Elizabethtown College choir from USA, who were on tour.

On 22 June we had a short trip to Derbyshire where our concert at Wirksworth raised over £1200 to the regional Air Ambulance and the Hospital in Derby. Five of our soloists gave short programmes in addition to the choir's concert programme in a sold out concert. It was good to link up again with Joanne Flint the Derbyshire organiser (who is a regular at our Llandudno concerts) and members of the Pye Hill Male Voice Choir who are fellow members of the NAC. July saw Colwyn sing at the historic Regency Estate at Bryn Bella, Tremeirchion, near St Asaph. The garden fete featured young eisteddfod winner soprano Tesni Jones, Welsh National Opera harpist Katherine Thomas, a local community choir and a duo as well as Cor Meibion Colwyn. The sun shone and concert income and refreshments served in the estate raised over £4000 for local charities. Bryn Bella, built in 1794, was the home of Hester Piozzi (formerly Mrs Thrale, a member of Dr Johnson's circle). The name means beautiful hill in mix of Welsh and Italian. Many Regency personalities visited the historic house and estate, which still has

magnificent gardens and distant views to the mountains of Snowdonia towards Hester's original home in Gwynedd.

At the National Eisteddfod at Llanrwst on 10 August, Côr Meibion Colwyn enjoyed being one of a record 'Grand National' field of 15 male voice choirs in the same competition. We had good comments from the adjudicators, TV critics and audience without gaining one of the first three places. We are now gearing up for our tour to Scotland, in October.

We will be singing on Saturday 26 October when we will be pleased meet up and sing again with the East Fife Male Voice Choir (NAC members) at the Old Kirk, Kirkcaldy, staying in Edinburgh and touring close by. The autumn of 2019 will also include a range of local concerts, including some for charities.

Côr Meibion Colwyn is pleased to welcome both visitors and potential new choristers to its rehearsals at Old Colwyn Community Centre on Wednesdays and Sundays.

For further details contact Charles Cooksley as below:

www.cormeibioncolwyn.co.uk

Charles Cooksley,
Secretary, Côr Meibion Colwyn
21 Allanson Road
Colwyn Bay LL28 4HN
01492 548670



charles@colwyn.plus.com

We have a new conductor

The Glasgow Phoenix Choir - Scotland West - Anne Kay



We have a new conductor! Following the announcement of her retirement by Marilyn J Smith, the choir had to begin the process of finding a replacement. Although we were fortunate enough to have an excellent Deputy Conductor, it was felt that, in the interests of fair play, we should advertise the post. Choir council were most impressed by the array of applications and felt privileged that so many fine musicians were interested in taking up the post. Of the many applicants, three were invited for interview and audition. I'm not sure how they felt about the process, but the choir thoroughly enjoyed the auditions of all three candidates. It was interesting to see the variation in style temperament

and energy of the three. Our final choice, based on comments and ratings from singing members and following a full and frank discussion in council, was to offer the post to our own Cameron Murdoch.

Cameron joined the choir 1987 when he was appointed as Accompanist and Deputy Conductor. Cameron is an Honours graduate in music from the University of Glasgow and also studied at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. He regularly plays harpsichord and piano with various musical ensembles and performs throughout the British Isles. He is also an organist of note and his playing can be heard on the soundtrack of the film 'Chocolat'. Cameron has broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and has appeared as accompanist in BBC Television's 'Young Musician of the Year'. He has previously been Musical Director of Glasgow Opera Group and Conductor of the Clydebank District Choir. Cameron teaches piano at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. He is also Organist and Choir Master of St John's Renfield Church in Glasgow's West End. Many of the pieces in the current Phoenix repertoire were arranged by Cameron and we are hopeful that he will add more of his own arrangements over the next while.

We have, however, had a sneak preview of life with our new conductor. For our tour to the Isle of Skye in May, Cameron stood in for Marilyn, who had some very important family events that prevented

her from coming with us. We had three excellent concerts over the weekend and had the privilege of being accompanied by the excellent Neil Shaw. Everyone - audience, singers, friends - really enjoyed the experience and it was clear that Cameron and Neil were having a great time too. One of our sopranos summed things up beautifully on her Facebook page in describing the final concert of the three. 'I've worked out why this afternoon's concert felt so special. It's because we were watching a virtuoso musician playing with a new instrument, working out what he can make it do, and taking visible pleasure from the sounds he created.' What a fitting tribute.

Cameron's appointment was ratified at our AGM in early June. In addition, by popular acclaim, it was agreed that the honorary title of Conductor Laureate should be offered to Marilyn J Smith in recognition of her 28 years of service to the choir.

Our new season begins tonight (Monday 26 August - we don't have a Bank Holiday in this part of Scotland) and I'm sure we are all excited to see what our future holds. We have a busy calendar between now and Christmas and will start by preparing for a tour in Argyll and Lochaber at the end of September. Whatever lies ahead, I know that the choir is looking forward immensely to the start of our 69th season when Cameron takes up the conductor's baton.

Beautiful, Beautiful, Barbados

Gwalia Singers - Wales South - Nigel Norman



The Gwalia Singers, a male voice choir based in Swansea, have just concluded a week-long tour on the island of Barbados. They had been invited by the Barbados Celtic Festival, which has been running for nineteen years, but had not had a male voice choir since the very first event. The party consisted of 42 choristers out of a total numbering some 70 altogether with wives, partners and friends.

On Wednesday we had our first concert at St Patrick's Cathedral, a lovely event where the local junior school choir sang Loch Lomond, in a wonderful Scottish accent, accompanied by headteacher Sister Pauline, and they also did a few dances. They then sang Beautiful, Beautiful, Barbados, which we had learnt and were able to join in with them. We then sang three items, which proved acoustically challenging; our musical director and accompanist also had problems with their music being blown around! The concert finished with the combined pipers from the Reading Scottish Pipe Band and the Strathallan School Pipe Band.

Our main concert of the tour was held on Friday evening at the Walled Garden Theatre, Barbados Museum. The event was organised by the Rotary Club of Barbados South and started at 'about' 7.00. The concert was opened by Donny Hughes, a well-known Scottish DJ, and we sang our normal items and included *Yellow Bird*, which we had learnt for the tour. The concert also featured a local group 'Sing Out Barbados', who were beautifully dressed in colourful costumes and sang a variety of Caribbean songs, many being acted out and very funny. They finished with *Beautiful, Beautiful, Barbados*, a song which was far more popular than we thought, when we learnt it. We were going to sing it as our penultimate item in this concert, so our MD, Nick, made a bit of a joke about the fact that we had learnt this song, had been beaten to sing it, twice already, and had travelled 4,000 miles. We were not going to leave without singing our version - so we did, and the audience loved it. We ended with *An American Trilogy* and received a standing ovation from the large audience. Attending the concert was the British High Commissioner to Barbados, Ms Janet Douglas, CMG, who enjoyed it very much.

For our last official concert, we travelled to St Thomas Church, in the district of St Thomas. We had a few problems when we arrived: with the keyboard and lack of staging. Singing with us were three

combined church choirs who opened the concert. We started with *Cwm Rhondda*, which was enthusiastically received - a number of the church choir members were singing along with us as well. This was a lovely, intimate evening with the locals thoroughly absorbed with the unique sound of a Welsh male voice choir. There were further problems with the keyboard later on, when it suddenly went 'honky-tonk' halfway through one of our items.

On the final afternoon of the official tour there was a farewell party at the hotel. There were a few presentations made to the Scottish pipe band MD and to Gwalia Singers MD. The choir gave a few more impromptu renditions and the pipers also played. Further entertainment was provided by some Scottish fiddlers, and the choir sang *Three Little Birds* around the pool accompanied by them. All then went down to the beach for a final 'photoshoot' and sang *Beautiful, Beautiful, Barbados*, accompanied by our own ukulele band. See the Youtube clip. We finished with the Welsh National Anthem *Mae hen wlad fy nhadau*. This brought the scheduled trip to an end, as the next day about half of the group were going home and the rest staying for another week. On the day of departure there was a flash of inspiration at Grantley Adams International Airport. In the corner of the departure lounge was a piano and the



idea arose to attempt a 'flash mob'. Although some had their doubts, we did it and immediately people were recording it on their phones. Of course we sang *Beautiful, Beautiful Barbados*, and the fellow travellers and locals loved it. Before we knew it, someone had put it on Facebook and, after a week, it had 30k views. <https://www.facebook.com/Gwaliasingers/videos/673827623062039/> It has also appeared on many other Facebook sites, including the main 'Visit Barbados' page. A great end to a fabulous week.

If that wasn't enough, during the second week, when about half the group stayed

on, Sir Gary Sobers, the legendary all-round cricketer, who has a home in Barbados, visited the choir at the hotel to spend a few hours chatting, and ended up singing with them. Sir Gary of course has historical links with Swansea after his record-breaking 6 sixes off one over at the Swansea St Helens ground in 1968.

This tour has enhanced the choir's now international reputation, which has grown in recent years with trips to Germany, France, the Netherlands, Belgium and Italy. At home in South Wales the choir has become much sought after for weddings and corporate events with their

unique blend of Welsh standards and more modern numbers with the Welsh choral sound. Now approaching some 70 choristers the choir is always open to new member enquiries for any of the four sections (top tenor, second tenor, baritone, bass). They rehearse every Tuesday evening, 7.15-9.15 at the Linden Christian Centre, West Cross, Swansea, SA3 5LD.

For more details of the tour and further information see

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

90 years and still going strong

Hull Choral Union - Yorkshire North & East - Gaynel Munn



It is now 90 years since the Hull Choral Union was formed following the merger of the Hull Harmonic Society (founded 1842) and the Hull Vocal Society (founded 1850). Since then, HCU has brought high quality choral events to the City of Kingston upon Hull performing an ever-expanding repertoire from oratorios to contemporary works. Each season consists of an autumn and a spring concert, with performances at Christmas ranging from *Messiah* to singing carols in Hull museums. Members are from a broad range of ages and backgrounds, with one thing in common, a love of singing amazing choral music.

During our 90 years we have had a number of chorus masters/conductors

including Alec Redshaw (1959-1974), Alan Spedding (1974-2000), Martin Hindmarsh (2000-2010) and Sam Gardner (2010 – 2015). Our current chorus master/conductor is Paul Dewhurst, the Director of Music at Leeds Minster. He also conducts the Wakefield Festival Chorus and is a very busy freelance musician. We are fortunate to have such an inspirational leader.

We have always attracted soloists of international reputation and the first season's soloists included Heddle Nash and Isobel Baillie. Early records show the eminent names of Kathleen Ferrier, Norma Proctor and Peter Pears. Many well-known soloists have sung with the choir whilst learning their craft including

a young Dame Lesley Garrett in 1980 and Elin Manahan Thomas in 2006.

To celebrate the opening of the Humber Bridge in 1981 a past President of HCU commissioned Anthony Hedges to set a poem by Philip Larkin to music. The world premiere of *Bridge for the Living* was performed by HCU in April that year. Appropriately, we performed it again, with choirs from both banks of the river Humber, as part of a choral spectacular 'Voices Across The Humber' in Hull City Hall on 1 April 2017, the first day of Hull City of Culture's Roots and Routes Season. More recently we have ventured further afield performing *Elijah* with Lincoln Choral Society in the magnificent setting of Lincoln Cathedral.

Our first concert is in Hull Minster on Saturday 9 November 2019 at 19.30 - Brahms: *German Requiem* (Op 45) and Chilcott: *Songs and Cries of London Town* with soloists Joyee Cole & Edward Thornton and pianists Julian Savory & Pritiva Attiken. HCU is a Registered Charity – No 1071325. For more information about the choir and our future concerts, please visit

www.hullchoralunion.org

We are delighted to be celebrating our 90th anniversary and look forward to many more years of choral singing.

Top Tips for first time travellers

Jenny Dalton - Corporate Member - Tim Knight



Tim Knight Composer and Choral Director

Tim has worked with choirs large and small and held posts with Wakefield Festival Chorus, Vocalis, The York Rose Singers, Thornton Vocal Union, and provided choral workshops for many other choirs and choral organisations. He also founded and runs two choirs based in Leeds: The Heritage Singers and Masterworks Chorale. A veteran of music touring, here he shares some of his 'music tour' experiences and offers some tips for first time tour coordinators.

Why do you tour and what do you think are the main benefits?

The immediate advantage is the excitement that builds up over a fair period of time; the sharpened sense of purpose in rehearsals, the almost holiday like atmosphere that takes over the choir. It bonds

choir members and the travelling moulds them together. They make new friendships and become a stronger choir.

In your experience do tours help bond ensembles?

Absolutely, the choir becomes bigger than the individual singers and takes on a life of its own, so somehow it becomes your lifeblood and you live and breathe the last concert, hanging on its intimate memories, until it is overtaken by the pull of the next one. The music becomes etched in the choir's consciousness in a way it never was before, and you strive to do it better each performance.

How did you find your music tour operator?

It was through word of mouth the first time, then talking to them at trade fairs after that.

What are the main challenges when planning a music tour?

Whether it's a few days in your home country or two weeks overseas, going on tour is a wonderful and exciting experience. But it's essential that the choir nominates one brave person to be the tour coordinator to liaise with the musical director, and the tour company. He/she is the person who supplies personal details in advance to hosts, carries them in the event of emergency, checks people on and off the coach etc. They are the person in charge full stop. They also field all singers' questions and forward them to the musical director. This leaves the musical details in the hands of the musical director, free of all other worries. (Tour Coordinator, Joanne Shaw, Masterworks Chorale).

What have been the highlights of your many music tours?

Singing Rheinberger's Music in Vaduz, the city of his birth, in front of the Royalty of Liechtenstein; singing Fauré's *Requiem* in the Madeleine to 400 people; singing in a tiny church in the outskirts of New York and being collected by the organisers in a Big Yellow American school bus in the thick snow; singing at the Menin Gate and Tyne Cot cemetery. I could go on, there are 25 year's worth to bring to memory.

Tim's top ten tips for first time leaders:

1 Think where you want to go and your reason for going. Perhaps your destination will be determined by cost, or by a choir exchange, or by going somewhere that your town is twinned with. The possibilities are amazing.

2 The size of your choir will determine the cost; the type of music you sing will determine the venues.

3 Decide what you will sing. This will determine some of your venues because repertoire, especially in large European and American churches, needs to be vetted and approved. Plan carefully. Learn about your venues before you arrive. Even the most experienced of us find an 11 second delay in a church acoustic difficult!

4 Take repertoire you are absolutely sure of. Practising in venues will be to crowds of people and acoustics will make you hear things differently. Organs may be reluctant to work, sight-lines may have disappeared. Learning music while on tour is bad form. Don't take the most complicated music unless you are happy with it.

5 Tours involve a lot of travelling and travelling is very tiring; so build in adequate rest and relaxation breaks.

6 Appoint a stage manager. This will ensure that when arriving in a strange venue with very limited rehearsal time, the

stage and seating is sorted.

7 Try to rehearse in a church similar to the venue before you leave the UK. This way plans can be tried out. On tour leave nothing to chance!

8 Appoint a tour coordinator. The conductor will have many musical issues to deal with, finding the elusive organ key is a popular European game for example. Leave all the day-to-day issues to someone else.

9 Ensure that your tour coordinator will take care of everything non-musical. Pick the right person for this role; your tour coordinator must be familiar with the internet, be patient and absolutely unflappable.

10 Remember that audiences abroad can be huge, well informed and very critical. Only your best should do at any time, but in some places it's absolutely essential that you are giving 129.2 %.



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Fairburn Singers

"The decks were full of passengers enjoying the sunshine and relaxing in the pools. We chose the Lido deck for a spontaneous 'flash mob' of 'One Voice' (a choir favourite) to the surprise of the sunbathers, and received rapturous applause in return for our impromptu performance. This proved to be a good advert for our on-board concerts. The standing ovation at the end of each performance and the feedback we received was fantastic. I think it is safe to say that our enjoyment of these cruises increases every time we go and therefore, it will not be long before we are planning our fourth sojourn with Fred Olsen and his wonderful cruise liners and fantastic staff and crew."

Amici Singers

"As a tour leader it could not have been easier to organise. Friendly, helpful staff made the process very easy. The cruise was a terrific experience and exceeded everyone's expectations. The choir performance rehearsals and shows were pre-arranged, additional equipment provided and were a huge success with guests on-board. We received such positive feedback and interaction from other guests. Truly great service, excellent on board facilities and fabulous food. A tremendous experience."

The South Wales Male Choir

"We experienced full capacity audiences as we delighted fellow passengers during two formal concerts (in addition to many sporadic outburst of song!) whilst on board and received standing ovations at the end of each concert. The whole tour party was most impressed, not only by the standards of service that they received but also the polite efficient and cheerful manner of the friendly staff."



Choir Group Benefits:

Group Cruise Fare • Free places for group escorts • Funding towards transport to and from the port • Private rehearsal space • The opportunity to perform concerts • Private choir drinks party • Group dining • Specialist shore excursions

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Going further afield?

East Fife Ladies Choir - Scotland East - Lynne Urquhart

We are a choir of all ages of around 40 members. We have been a choir now for 50 years. We are now wanting to take the choir further a field by travelling to other parts our country.

Is there a choir out there who would like us to share a concert or who could organise a venue for us to come and sing?

We have sung in many venues in our County of Fife and have entered many times in our own Fife Festival of Music. We have sung in The Royal Albert Hall and the Usher Hall in Edinburgh.

We are a happy bunch of ladies and happy to sing for any charities or leaky church roofs.



We have two men in our choir, and they are our Musical Director and our Accompanist.

Should you be able to help us in any way please contact us via the website.

eastfifeladieschoir.org.uk

150 years of song

Saddleworth Male Voice Choir - North West - John Watts



Following their weekly rehearsal on the 28 August 2019, members of the Saddleworth Male Voice Choir congregated in the Uppermill Conservative Club to honour three of their members with long service awards.

John Lapworth who sings with the bass section has served 40 years. In 1979 John was a member of the Bamford Chapel Choir in Rochdale and was invited to join SMVC by Walter Brisk who was musical

director of both choirs. He has really enjoyed his time singing with the choir, both at concerts and festivals in the UK, and the overseas visits to Germany, Holland, Italy and Slovenia.

Stuart Iles joined the first tenor section of the choir in 1969 and has completed 50 years service. Stuart has held several posts on the choir committee, having been choir secretary for 10 years, membership secretary for 11 years and is currently the choir librarian, a post he has

held since 2002. He has also sung with the Colne Valley Male Voice Choir for the past 33 years and was made an Honorary Life Member of SMVC in 2013.

John Redfearn has completed an astonishing 60 years membership with the choir. John's father was a founder member of the choir and John became a member when he completed his post school studies. He has had a phenomenal relationship with the choir, having served in every position on the committee and even marrying the choir's founding MD Denis Jones's daughter back in 1967. John says several members and friends of both our families have been involved with and supported the choir on many occasions. I recall one particular performance of *Messiah* conducted by Denis when I, my father, brother, wife, her mother, uncle and cousin all took part in the chorus. John was made an Honorary Life Member of SMVC in 2012.

The event concluded with a presentation to Mr Malcolm Hill, who has completed 35 years as the Choir President.

CLC Celebrates 50 years

Camborne Ladies Choir - Cornwall - Pauline Gregory - Secretary

Camborne Ladies Choir was founded in 1969 and celebrates fifty years from September 2019 to August 2020. We start our year with a 50 year anniversary concert on the evening of 12 October, 2019 at Camborne Wesley Church. Our guests are Four Lanes Male Choir with whom the choir has a long and happy association. And Rachel Luxon, Soprano, daughter of Ben Luxon, a Cornish Bard, a singer of international reputation, and a Camborne Boy. The choir will be participating in Camborne Music Festival as we always do. This runs from 12-16 November, 2019. Details can be found on Camborne Festival website. Other events will include: Carols at Wesley on 1 December 2019, in tandem with Four Lanes Male Choir.

We are attending Trevithick Day held on the last Saturday in April 2020 when we are part of the day's celebrations to commemorate Richard Trevithick, who invented the steam engine.



We shall also be holding a charity concert in June 2020, and hopefully, a trip away in May to round off this very special year.

We have founder members who are still singing with the choir, life members that have completed over 40 years, plus re-

tired members. Many musical successes have been achieved over the years in festivals at Cheltenham, Bath, Llangollen, Blackpool, as well as our own County Music Festival and Camborne Music Festival. The choir has travelled abroad singing in Brittany, Austria, and the Czech Republic. Musical Director, David Bennett, has been with us since 2002. He and our accompanist, Valerie Pryor, have both taught and encouraged young singers and musicians who are included in our concert programmes. Since 1969, Camborne Ladies Choir has raised thousands of pounds for charities and good causes.

Camborne Ladies Choir is a special group of ladies bound together in friendship and love of singing.

Long may they continue!



Choral Quips

Q: How do you tell when your lead singer is at the door?

A: He can't find the key and doesn't know when to come in.

Q: Did you hear about the female opera singer who had quite a range at the lower end of the scale.

A: She was known as the deep C diva.

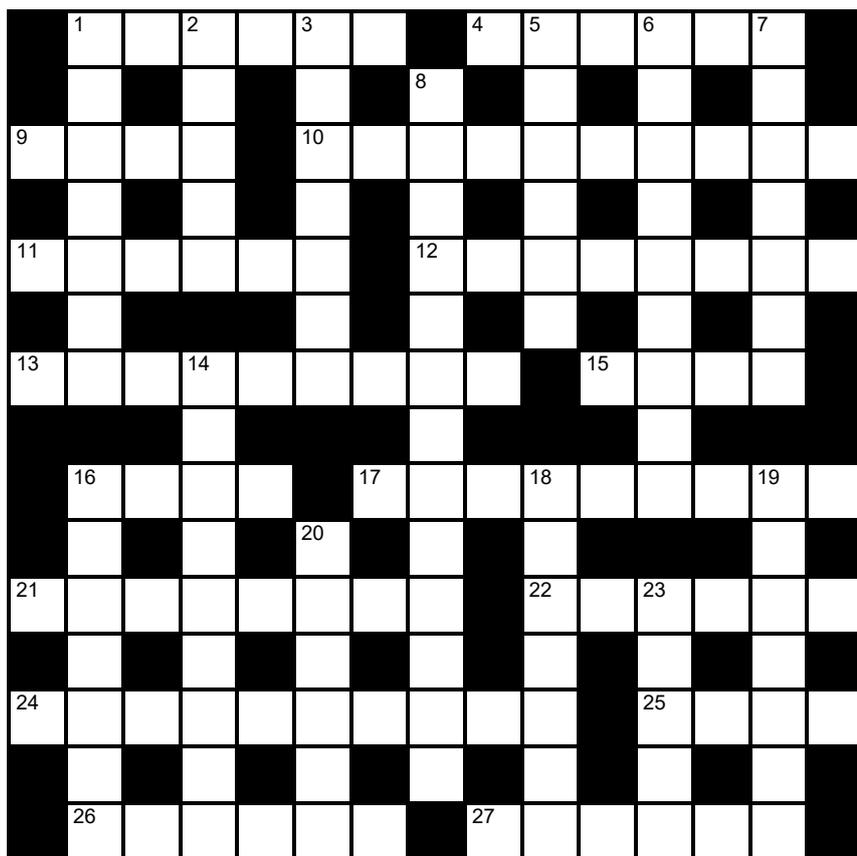
Q: What is the missing link between the bass and the ape?

A: The baritone.

Q: How can you tell when a tenor is really stupid?

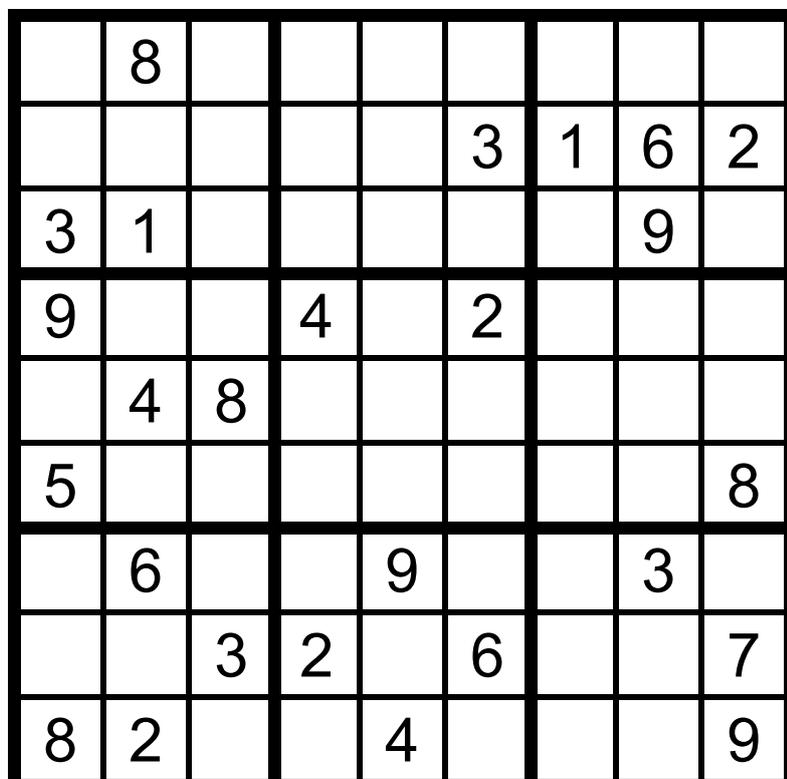
A: When the other tenors notice.

Puzzle Page



Across

- 1 Caspian leaves smear campaign as a light weight (6)
- 4 Count on it (6)
- 9 To count on envelopes (4)
- 10 Greek roof lizards (10)
- 11 Quick military look around (6)
- 12 Frozen paper (3,5)
- 13 Altered poetry Tom used help see better (9)
- 15 Carve (4)
- 16 Sympathy and sorrow (4)
- 17 Bewildered brigadier helped to reach the plane (3,6)
- 21 Fabricated to infect wedding celebration stuff (8)
- 22 Shiny surface (6)
- 24 Speaking of sisters and cousins and aunts (10)
- 25 Once was Persia (4)
- 26 Don't mind us capriciously taking clothes off (6)
- 27 Correct line up (6)



Down

- 1 Pushing badly armed helicopter (7)
- 2 Reserved and distant (5)
- 3 Huge vases I'm vague about (7)
- 5 French missile (6)
- 6 Strands in the restaurant (9)
- 7 Awful noise in the well-ordered crèches (7)
- 8 Elder resident (6,7)
- 14 Beyond control (3,2,4)
- 16 Type of show (5-2)
- 18 Awestruck insect (3-4)
- 19 More than the sum of its parts (7)
- 20 Southern county with a lisp (6)
- 23 Ta-ta, bye-bye, so long (5)

SOLUTIONS
PAGE 31

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

Grenoside sing at Tyne Cot

The Grenoside Singers - Yorkshire South - Alan Walton



The choir was formed in 2007 from the remaining members of the Grenoside Male Voice choir plus the wives, girlfriends and friends under the direction of Chris Lamb from the male voice choir.

Our first concert was in Saint Oswald's Church Filey in August of that year as part of Filey's Victorian Festival.

Membership has gradually increased over the years and now, under the baton of Christian Young who took over from Chris in 2016, we now have a contingent of 50 plus regular singers.

Our repertoire includes all types of music from classical, such as Vivaldi's *Gloria*, to pop music such as Pharrell Williams' *Happy*.

Over the years we have performed many concerts in churches, community halls, nursing homes, pubs and such venues, with our year culminating in an annual Christmas Concert with Oughtibridge Brass Band.

The highlight of this year, however, was a trip in May to Ypres in Belgium. The original plan was to sing in the BCWG cemetery at Tyne Cot and in the German equivalent at Langemark.

A party of 40+ singers, family and friends left Grenoside on 17 May via coach and

ferry to arrive in Ypres in time for some of us to attend the Friday Last Post Ceremony, where we heard a mixed voice choir about 100 strong perform. It was at this point we discovered that we were expected to perform in the ceremony on the Saturday evening.

Saturday morning dawned bright and fair and immediately after breakfast we boarded our coach and headed for the first of our singing events at Tyne Cot cemetery. This is the largest Commonwealth War Grave site in the world with the scale of sacrifice being immediately apparent when looking across this vast expanse of gravestones in their lovely and now peaceful setting.

We assembled in front of the memorial wall and sang three pieces: *A Flower Remembered* by John Rutter, *I Vow to the Thee My Country* by Gustav Holst and *Ave Maria* by Giulio Caccini. Before leaving two choir members laid a wreath of remembrance.

Following this we moved on to Langemark cemetery which commemorates the German war dead. This is a much more sombre place with tablets of black stone laid flat on the ground with up to twenty or thirty names on one stone. Whilst we were there we sang three pieces; *A Flower Remembered*, *Ich Hatte*

Einen Kameraden which is a German song of mourning for lost comrades and *Ave Maria*. A second wreath of remembrance was laid before our departure.

Perhaps the most memorable and slightly nerve-wracking part of the day though began at 7 o'clock that evening when we assembled under the magnificent stone arch of the Menin Gate to prepare for the ceremony. As 8 o'clock approached a large crowd had gathered and as the church bells struck the hour the volunteer buglers of the Last Post Association played the call to attention. We then sang our first piece, *A Flower Remembered* which was followed by the buglers sounding the Last Post; then began a minute's silence. After this it was our turn again and as we sang the *Ave Maria* we laid our final wreath of the day. The reveille was then sounded and the ceremony ended. It had been an incredibly moving experience to sing there surrounded by the names of thousands of Allied soldiers who had never made the journey home.

Choir members with friends and family then walked back into Ypres to find restaurants and bars and enjoy the rest of the evening and as we made our way homewards the next day it was clear that everyone in our party had had an experience which will live with them for the rest of their lives.

Honour for D Day hero

Bestwood Male Voice Choir - Midlands East - Peter Fletcher

At a special rehearsal on Tuesday 3 September, 95 years old George Durant, a member of Bestwood Male Voice Choir for 45 years, was honoured to be appointed to the rank of 'Chevalier in the Ordre National de la Legion d'Honneur'.

The award was presented to George by the French Consul in Nottingham, M. Jean Claude LaFontaine, who thanked him for his incredibly brave service to France, Great Britain and the world in general at Sword Beach on 'D Day'. Before the medal presentation, Sir John Peace, Lord Lieutenant of Nottinghamshire, also paid tribute to George and expressed what a huge amount we had to thank him and his fellow comrades for, many of whom were so young.

George recounted how, as a Royal Marine, he arrived at Sword Beach in a land-



ing/assault craft attached to the Commandoes in the thick of the fighting on 'D Day'. He described himself as one of the 'lucky ones', having seen many of his comrades slaughtered, including men of various Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire regiments. He also remembered the horror of some tanks not making it off the landing craft and their crews drowning. After only 7 days leave, George continued his war service by being sent off to India, Burma and Singapore before eventually ending up in Bangkok.

Around 100 people attended the special event, including the Deputy Mayor of Gedling, Meredith Lawrence, Mrs Wendy Lawrence, Councillor Christopher Barnfather, Mrs Tracy Barnfather, three generations of George's family, two Royal British Legion standard bearers, as well as members of Bestwood MVC, their wives and partners.

During the evening, George was also presented with a certificate of Honorary Life Membership of Bestwood MVC by its Chairman, Colin Pursglove.

Long service honour

Northampton Male Voice Choir - Midlands East - Mick Bowerman

At its AGM on 25 June Northampton Male Voice Choir's elder statesman, 85 year old Mike Davis, retired from his post on the Executive Committee and was presented with a large, framed photo of the choir signed by the members in recognition of the magnificent service he has given.

Mike, a Vice President of the choir, began

singing at the tender age of seven as a chorister in his local church. He joined the former Northampton Men's Own Choir in 1953, aged 19, and when, like many a teenager, his thoughts began to turn to other pursuits the choir's then Musical Director, George Goode, recognised Mike's great singing talent and persuaded him to remain with the choir. Some 66

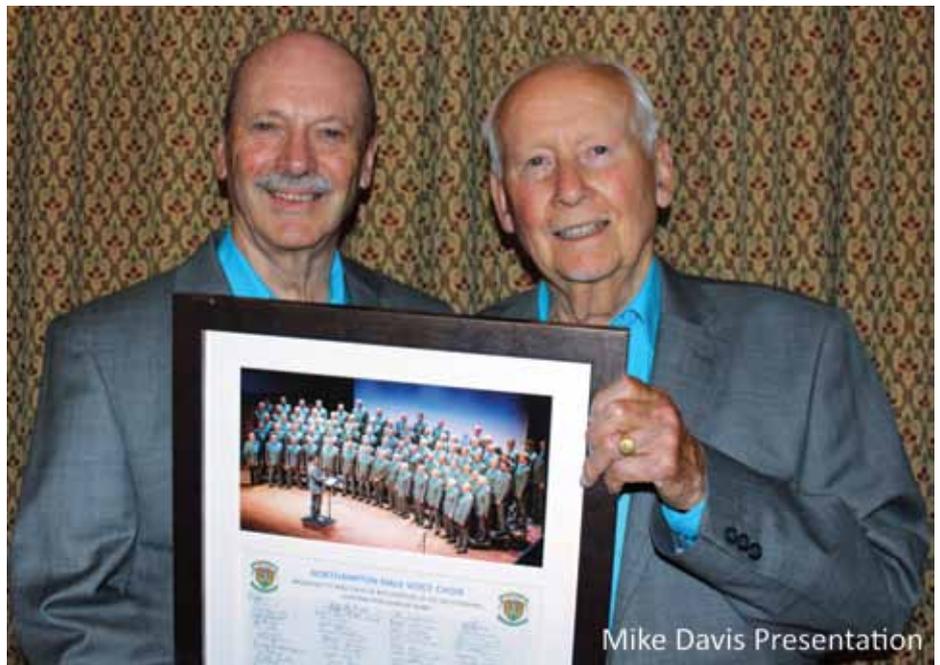
years later and Mike is still singing with the choir, which was renamed Northampton Male Voice Choir (NMVC) in 1980.

A dedicated member of the first tenor section, Mike has been a member of the choir's Executive Committee for 55 years. He was choir Secretary from 1961 to 1993 and, before the age of computers and word

processing, would conscientiously write out all the committee minutes by hand. Through his contacts at Northampton Borough Council, Mike was personally involved when, in 1980, the choir was granted the privilege of incorporating the Northampton coat of arms into its uniform badge.

Speaking at the AGM, NMVC Chairman, John Waller, said 'Mike Davis is the perfect male voice chorister. He has a great voice and an infectious love of singing. His commitment is one hundred per cent and he is a great role model for all choristers. He enjoys the camaraderie; likes a pint and is a leader in afterglows - usually with a broad smile on his face. His contribution to the choir over 66 years as a member and by serving 55 years as a committee member has been immense and will probably never be repeated.'

NMVC Musical Director, Stephen Bell, added 'Mike Davis is solely responsible for asking me to become MD for the choir. It's all his fault. Mike's constant encouragement and support has been invaluable to me during my tenure as Musical Director. I would go so far as to say that,



without Mike Davis, the catalyst for recruitment campaigns and growth would simply not have happened.'

Mike, whose favourite song is *What Would I Do Without My Music*, said 'I'm thrilled and honoured that my involve-

ment with the choir has been acknowledged in this way. It's always been my wish for Northampton to be the home of a great male voice choir. Being a member of this wonderful choir has become a huge part of my life and I will strive to remain a member for as long as I can.'









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We go out with joy

The New Greasley Singers - Midland East - Ruth King

On a joyous but poignant evening in mid-July, The New Greasley Singers gave a concert with their friends the Eastwood Collieries Male Voice Choir, which celebrated the Singers' 40th anniversary but also marked the end of their farewell season. Elaine Wilson, the choir's MD, chose a range of pieces to showcase the group's versatility and to highlight significant elements of their history. Said Rob Edwards (Chairman) 'I felt so proud for the New Greasley Singers; we sang with spirit and went out with joy (referencing John Rutter's *I will sing with the Spirit* and Dale Grotenhuis' *For you shall go out with joy*). The programme also included Thiman's *Gloria in Excelsis Deo* in honour of the choir's founder, the late Gloria Preece and *Roads* by Alan Simmons (which we learned some years ago



for a massed choir item in an NAC concert at which Alan was present) to symbolise the closing of one chapter and the prospect of a new one. After the concert, Ian Webster (ECMVC's MC for the evening) said: 'It's always a great thrill to share the stage with other choirs; The New Greasley Singers put in a stellar and very fitting performance.'

The New Greasley Singers would like to use the pages of *News and Views* to thank everyone who has contributed in every way over the last 40 years to their success, and we especially thank the Eastwood Collieries Male Voice Choir for their support over many years and for everything they did to help make our final concert such a success. Thank you, and joyous singing to everyone.



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92nd Annual General Meeting 32nd Annual Conference Weekend 27-29 March 2020

It is over twelve months since I started to plan the conference at Blackburn in our centenary year. Time seems to race along and this is now the publication where I give you a draft time-line for the weekend and information on the hotel facilities and directions. I like to give you some detail about the speakers and proposed content of their seminars, together with the location and content of the conference concert.

I am very aware that 2020 is a special year for the association as it is its centenary year. To that end I have made every effort to ensure we have the best hotel for our conference base and a superb venue for our concert in Blackburn. In coming to a decision to recommend Blackburn as our base to the executive I have been mindful that there are two choirs in the area which were founder members of the association in 1920. These two choirs are the Nelson Arion Glee Union and the Colne Orpheus Glee Union, both of which are very much alive and successful choirs. After visiting and considering hotels in the area and taking local advice there is no doubt that the Dunkenhagh hotel Blackburn is by far my best choice.



Well-appointed a short distance from town and on a bus route, access is easy for those wishing to tour the area. It is a spacious hotel having ample four-star accommodation, free car parking for 250 vehicles on site and a flat park like campus surrounding the building. Formerly a manor house, it has several annex extensions. One of these will be our accommodation wing having lifts to all three floors and easy access to the breakfast and conference areas.

We are fortunate in having David Lawrence as our guest speaker for the three Saturday seminars. We have asked him to include a resumé of his work and aspirations for the future particularly with his involvement with Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and Young Voices. He will include conducting techniques and knowing David there will be a great deal of singing and laughter. He is a great speaker who gets easily with his audience. He will include singing techniques and a great opportunity to pick up skills from a composer, conductor and musician at the forefront of his field of expertise.



Our speaker for the Sunday morning seminar is yet to be finalised. I will let you know name and content in the next issue.

Our concert will be held at the King George's Hall Blackburn and coach transport is arranged to transfer from our hotel and later return. The mandatory bacon rolls will be patiently awaiting our arrival back at base. The hall is a 1500 seat auditorium in the centre of Blackburn and ideal for our centenary concert. The two choirs already mentioned will be joined by Nelson Civic Ladies Choir, Blackburn Peoples Choir, Rossendale Ladies Choir, Rossendale Male Voice Choir and Vocalise Youth Choir. The Second Rossendale Scout Band will also be in attendance to complete the line-up. The beneficiary of the concert will be the East Lancashire Hospice who have been so enthusiastic about the concert and are helping with advertising.

I have reduced the number of seminars this year to four to give a little breath-

ing space for delegates. It will give you all more chance to view the trade stands which will be present on Saturday. It seems we are quite popular with companies who wish to be included. To date I have 14 interested covering many aspects of choral singing, touring and equipment.

Friends, this is **Centenary Year** and a conference not to be missed. It would be so good to see as many as possible take the opportunity to be involved in this special year. It is an achievement for any organisation to survive for a decade. To have one that you are a member of celebrating its centenary is remarkable. Please take the plunge and come and join us. I have been able to freeze the price of the weekend at £230 which is the third year at this costing. This includes your ticket to the concert on Saturday evening and coach transfers. Two nights bed breakfast and evening meal and Saturday lunch. Full use of the hotel's swimming pool is also included on your package.



The booking form is included in this issue. £70 ensures your place at conference with balance due in early February 2020. So do it now and send it to me with any request for extra night's stay which I can book for you at a special conference rate.

You are assured a great time and wonderful experiences with likeminded people who enjoy the art of singing.

Clive Lawton



Reg'd. Charity No. 1014630

National Association of Choirs

Joining the Nation in Choral Singing

National Conference Booking Form 1 27-29 March 2020

Mercure Blackburn Dunkenhalgh Hotel & Spa
Blackburn Road Clayton le Moors, Accrington, BB5 5JP,

Conference Costs

Full Conference Stay

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

There are no single room supplements

Price per person for whole conference includes admission to all lectures
two nights bed breakfast and evening meal

refreshments and free admission to Saturday evening concert per person **£230**

Stay an extra night -

Thursday Single £83 BB - Double £90 BB

Sunday Single £58 BB - Double £60 BB

Day Delegate (Saturday)

Please circle requirements

Refreshments and lunch included £40.00

Evening meal Saturday add £25.00

Concert ticket Saturday add £10.00

Gala Dinner add £35.00

Payments

Full Conference Stay

Deposit of £70 (non-refundable) by 30 November 2019, balance by early February 2020

Final payment reminders will be sent

Day delegates

Payment in full when booking (non-refundable)

Amount Submitted £ _____

Please return your completed forms and deposits to the address below

Extra nights can be booked both before and/or after the conference through the NAC at a favourable rate. If you wish extra nights to be arranged for you please add a note to the booking form and I will book these on your behalf

You must inform us in writing of any cancellation by 1 March 2019
(Cancellations after this date will incur a charge of 50% of the total fee payable)

Substitute guests will be welcome

Cheques should be made payable to the National Association of Choirs

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

Please return your completed forms and deposits to

**Clive Lawton - Conference Coordinator, 20 Arthur's Court, Stretton, Burton upon Trent Staffordshire DE13 0GS
01283 569677 or 07939012458 conference.coordinator@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk**



National Association of Choirs

Joining the Nation in Choral Singing

National Conference Booking Form 2 27-29 March 2020

Mercure Blackburn Dunkenhalgh Hotel & Spa
Blackburn Road Clayton le Moors, Accrington, BB5 5JP,

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

Guest 1

Title Mr/Mrs/Miss.....
First Name.....
Surname.....
Address.....
.....Post Code.....
Telephone Home.....Mobile.....
Email Address.....
Special Requirements
Diet [type].....
Disability [wheelchair user/handrails required etc.].....
NAC group.....
Choir Name.....

Guest 2

Title Mr/Mrs/Miss.....
First Name.....
Surname.....
Address.....
.....Post Code.....
Telephone Home.....Mobile.....
Email Address.....
Special Requirements
Diet [type].....
Disability [wheelchair user/handrails required etc.].....
NAC group.....
Choir Name.....

PLEASE PHOTOCOPY THIS FORM FOR MORE GUESTS IF REQUIRED

Please return your completed forms and deposits to
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Reg'd. Charity No. 1014630

National Association of Choirs

Joining the Nation in Choral Singing

National Conference Provisional Timetable 27-29 March 2020

Mercure Blackburn Dunkenhalgh Hotel & Spa

Blackburn Road Clayton le Moors, Accrington, BB5 5JP,

Friday 27 March

On Arrival enter your car registration number into the pad at reception to gain free car parking for your stay.

- 2.00 Delegates arrive, register and collect delegate pack
- 4.00 National Officers' meeting
- 4.30-6.00 Come and Sing with Celia Johns and Karl Harper
- 7.30 Delegates and guests assemble for dinner
- 7.30 Reception National Officers and guests
- 8.00 Dinner is served - 3 course Gala dinner with wine
- 9.30 After dinner entertainment provided
- 12.00 Bar closes

Saturday 28 March

- 7.00 Access to trade stands to set up
- 7.30-11.00 Breakfast in main dining room
- 9.30-10.30 Seminar 1
- 10.30-11.00 Coffee and trade stand viewing
- 11.00-12.00 Seminar 2
- 12.00-1.00 Trade stand presentations (Six 10 minute presentations from trade stands present at conference)
- 1.30 Lunch and trade stand viewing (Lunch included in full delegate package)
- 2.30-3.00 Annual General Meeting
- 3.00-4.00 Seminar 3
- 5.00 Early evening two course meal
- 6.45 Coaches leave for the concert
- 7.30 Concert at the King George's Hall Blackburn
- 10.00 approx Following concert, light refreshments will be provided back at the hotel
- 12.00 Bar closes

Sunday 29 March

- 7.00-11.00 Breakfast
For those delegates wishing to attend local churches, details will be available at hotel reception
- 9.30-10.30 Seminar 4
- 10.30-11.00 Coffee and trade stand viewing
- 11.00-1.00 Members Open Forum
- 1.00 Conference closes (Lunch available in dining room at members' own expense)
- 1.00 National Officers' debrief meeting (guillotined after one hour)

A tale of two Colnes

Colne Orpheus Glee Union - Lancashire North - Eric Beardsworth

Ecky thump and ee bah gum! In the summer issue of News and Views, your correspondent Bill Steiner made the unfor-givable error of mixing up his Colnes: the Lancashire one and the Yorkshire one.

In the final paragraph of his report on the annual conference at Stoke, he informed your readers that Colne Valley Male Voice Choir would be performing at the NAC's 2020 centenary event in Blackburn. Wrong!

It's actually Colne Orpheus Glee Union, founded in 1886 and one of the country's longest-established choirs, who will be performing at the centenary concert, along with several other choirs from our neck of the woods in Lancashire.

Our Colne, you see, is a market town in East Lancashire, straddling Colne Water, not many miles from the Yorkshire border and noted as the birthplace of Wallace Hartley, heroic bandmaster of the ill-fated RMS Titanic.

Colne Valley, on the other hand, is in West Yorkshire, with the River Colne running through it, and incorporates several towns and villages, including Kirklees and Slaithwaite.

Both areas are united in their proud tradition of choral singing going back many decades but divided by some rather large



hills and an age-old rivalry dating from some right royal battles between the Houses of Lancaster and York.

We don't wish to get involved in a modern-day battle with the Colne Valley men (there are more of them than us anyway) and we wish them every success, but we would like to reaffirm that it's Colne Orpheus and not Colne Valley who will be singing at Blackburn in 2020.

Perhaps a suitable punishment for Mr Steiner would be to make him stand on the naughty step and sing alternately *She's a Lassie from Lancashire* and *My Girl's a Yorkshire Girl* until he falls over.

By the way, here's the plug: An NAC centenary concert will be at King George's Hall, Blackburn, on Saturday 28 March 2020. It will be a 'Brass and Voices' concert in aid of, and supported by, the East Lancashire Hospice. Colne Orpheus will be joined by Nelson Arion Glee Union (our fellow NAC founder members in 1920), Nelson Civic Ladies' Choir, Rossendale Ladies' Choir, Rossendale MVC, Blackburn People's Choir adults and juniors, and the celebrated 2nd Rossendale Scout Band. Tickets will be a very reasonable £10 for adults, £1 for accompanied children up to and including 16. Please put the date in your diaries and watch out for further information.

If you want to lift yourself up...

Kentwood Show Choir - South West - Penrose Shackel

'If you want to lift yourself up, lift up someone else' Booker T. Washington

David Gates wrote these marvellous lyrics for *Guitar Man* in 1972.

'Then you listen to the music
And you like to sing along
You want to get the meaning
Out of each and every song
Then you find yourself a message
And some words to call your own
And take them home'

They resonate so well with the people who come to listen to The Kentwood Show Choir. So many say how moved they are by a song or what a blessing they take home from a concert. Recently, the renowned Jazz Promoter Evie Em-Jay said 'I am always inspired and impressed by the energy and passion of Kentwood Choir. They are the perfect example of how singing, particularly community singing, can be so beneficial for your soul. Attending a concert of theirs always makes you

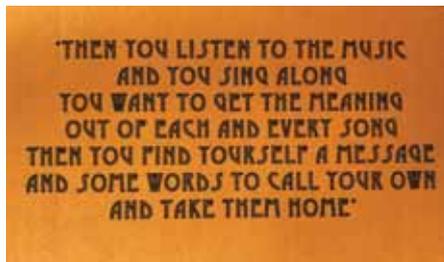
feel part of something and it is no surprise that the choir have been the centre of lifelong friendships across the generations for over 50 years.'

Some of the magic comes from choosing songs with meaning to start with and, of course, a lot from the delivery itself. In rehearsals, we often speak through a new song before learning the music to get a greater sense of its meaning.

When designing a programme Sheila Harrod, Kentwood's indomitable Music Director, always puts on some songs with an uplifting message. We have many in our repertoire of around 175 songs. A favourite end-piece is *You'll never walk alone* with the wonderful message that there's always a brighter place at the end of the storm. Often Sheila will dedicate it to all those who may be finding things a little difficult and, as everyone stands to sing, it is a sure-fired way of getting a standing ovation.

Kentwood has a number of repeat bookings each year, often for a particular charity like Macmillan Cancer Support or for a fundraising organisation like The Rotary. This year, on Sunday 24 November, will see our 26th consecutive Christmas Cracker in aid, this year, of the Open Door Centre charity.

Barbara Parry, Mayoress of Swindon said, 'The Kentwood Show Choir has brought



and continues to bring so much joy and happiness to so many people here in Swindon and far, far beyond. I personally never tire of watching them perform, listening to their beautiful harmonic voices and getting so much enjoyment each and every time. My Husband (the Mayor of Swindon) and I are very much looking forward to the Kentwood Show Choir Christmas Cracker at the Wyvern, Swindon – we both can't wait.'

On the programme are some truly wonderful songs to share our sense of hope with our supporters. Top of the list is a beautiful arrangement of *Sometimes*

from the film *The Champions* with its promise of love and the incredibly powerful *There will be God* written by Salvationist Joy Web.

Of course, it is not only from words that one can find meaning. Music itself is a healer and can offer its own sense of uplifting. Amidst the words of hope and renewal, Kentwood's Christmas Cracker is a chance to sing along, have a laugh and to ask your neighbour if they are having a lovely time. Yes, we really do that!

If you would like to join the Kentwood family, our Christmas Cracker tickets are available from the Wyvern Theatre <https://swindontheatres.co.uk/Online/tickets-kentwood-cracker-swindon-2019> or get in touch via our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/thekentwood-showchoir/>

We would love to hear from you!

75 Years old and going strong Coalville Male Voice Choir - Midlands East - Brian Wardle



Coalville Male Voice Choir was formed in 1944, and it does not take a mathematician to realise that 2019 makes us 75 years old and still going strong . Of course, like other choirs, we are always on the lookout to welcome new members into the "family".

The choir rehearses on Thursday evenings, and we enjoy giving concerts in the surrounding districts, either by ourselves, or with another choir. We also enjoy visiting and entertaining people who are

maybe not as fortunate as we are, and are quite looking forward to getting involved with the initiative of the NAC toward music and the helpful effects that it can have with forms of mental illness.

Recently we went on a weekend tour in Worcestershire. Unfortunately, one of the places where we were due to perform, pulled out just a couple of weeks before we went. Luckily The Evesham Hotel where we were staying, managed to fix

us up with another venue . We were not sure what we were going into, but when we got there, what an experience .It was like walking into a time warp. The concert was to take place in a restored medieval barn, in the grounds of The Fleece Inn at Bretforton , both National Trust properties . Once we had helped the local people fix up a stage, the concert went ahead to one of the smallest audiences that I have ever performed before. There was plenty of room outside however for all those who could not fit in, and the pub was very handy obviously. The people were great and we had a wonderful time. The next night we performed in the village church at Bardsey, this was a great concert too. Between the two venues we raised over £700 for their each particular cause.

We are proud supporters of the NAC, and it is my fervent hope that we will be taking part in next years Midlands East concert celebrating 100 years.



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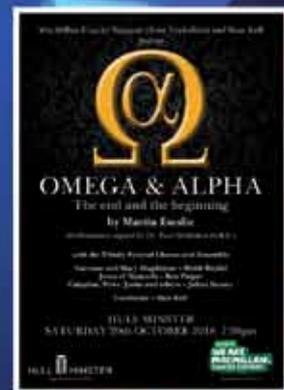
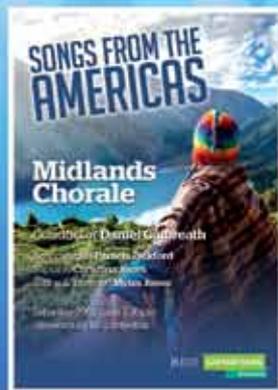
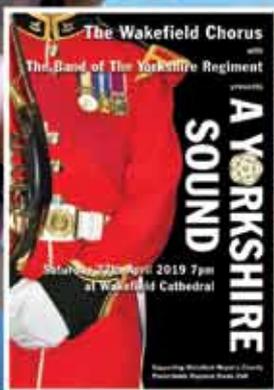


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'Pure Sound' at Llanstephan

Persain - Wales South - Moira C L Evans



Persain, based in Tycroes, Ammanford, Carmarthenshire, has had a busy time again over the last few months, led by our enthusiastic Musical Director Anne Wheldon and talented accompanist Catherine Morgan.

In April, we paid a visit to Northern Ireland where the choir took part in the International Choir Festival at Bangor. On the Friday evening, Persain participated in the Festival Concert, where we sang several items from our repertoire and joined with the other choirs in the final piece of music, *Morte Christe*. A large number of choirs took part in the Festival which has now been taking place annually for over twenty-five years.

During the competitions the next day – the first competitions that the choir has entered – Persain (our name is Welsh for 'pure sound') was successful in gaining Second Prize in the Newcomers section with *Every Time I Feel the Spirit* and *The Prayer from Hansel and Gretel* and received very favourable comments from the adjudicators. We were very pleased indeed to have been involved in this prestigious event within a very welcoming and friendly atmosphere.

The choir stayed in Belfast and members were able to spend time in this lovely city and visit the surrounding area, including the Giant's Causeway on the north coast and the city of Dublin in the Republic of Ireland before returning home after a very enjoyable experience.

In June, Persain performed in a lovely concert at the little village of Talog, out-

side Carmarthen. We sang a variety of Welsh and English music and enjoyed the singing of beautiful soprano, Catrin Ann, and the versatile Penybont Young Farmers, the first placed choir in Wales at the 2018 Eisteddfod and winners of the Carmarthenshire Excellence in Music Award, 2019, who entertained us with song and dance – Talog is famous for its traditional clog dancing. We also appreciated the refreshments after the concert, kindly provided by the organisers. It was a very pleasant evening for us all.

Later in the month the choir sang at the Mock Mayor's Garden Party in the grounds of Llanstephan Castle. It was a pleasure to take part in this delightful event in such a lovely setting, overlooking the estuary into Carmarthen Bay. We strolled up the hill or were conveyed to the castle from the village by free taxi - or in the back of a pick up truck - on a beautiful, hot day and we enjoyed performing to a large audience picnicking in the sunshine. We were entertained by the music throughout the afternoon, finishing with ice creams on the beach.

At the end of June Persain travelled to Caldicott on the Welsh borders to sing in a concert with the Severn Tunnel Brass Band. The cost of our coach was covered by a 'Collaborative Event' grant, kindly awarded by Tŷ Cerdd, and we were very pleased to be invited to sing with this excellent band in Choir Hall. We received a warm welcome, performing to an appreciative audience on a very hot summer evening which ended with a lovely buffet laid on by our hosts.

The following week we sang nearer home, spending another enjoyable summer's evening with the Gwaun Cae Gurwen Brass Band. We performed a number of items from our repertoire, old and new, and were entertained by the excellent senior and junior sections of the band, which included a variety of accomplished soloists.

After our summer break Persain meets again for rehearsals in September when we begin our Autumn programme with a concert at nearby Saron Chapel with the acclaimed Welsh tenor, Rhys Meirion, as part of his twentieth anniversary tour, and in October the choir will be taking part in the Royal British Legion Charity Gala Concert at the Lyric Theatre in Carmarthen.

In June, 2020, Persain will be celebrating twenty years since the formation of the choir with an Anniversary Concert at All Saints Church, Ammanford. Unfortunately, our celebrations will be tinged with some sadness, as we will be saying goodbye to our Musical Director, who has been with us for ten years. Anne has been hard-working and thoroughly committed to the choir, and we shall be very sorry indeed to see her leave.

We are now faced with the task of seeking a new Musical Director and would welcome enquiries. We, too, are a hard-working group of ladies, who love our singing. We have a large and varied repertoire and regularly perform locally and travel further afield, having sung also in Stoke, Cornwall, Sheffield, Oxford, Devon, the Republic of Ireland, Spain and in the Houses of Parliament, at the invitation of our Honorary President, MP Nia Griffith.

We practise in the warm and comfortable vestry of Moriah Chapel, Tycroes, with our main rehearsal on Tuesdays and an extra practice on Sunday evenings. If anyone has an interest in conducting Persain from next June onwards, please contact our Secretary, Rhian Thomas, on 01269 851171. We look forward to many more years of singing!

www.corpersain.co.uk

An invite at last

Churchdown Male Voice Choir - South West - John Friend

After singing in aid of good causes for 54 years it was rewarding for Churchdown Male Voice Choir to finally get an invitation to take part in the Three Choirs Festival when it came to Gloucester Cathedral this summer. Having accepted the request to perform as a fringe event the men found their stage was a stone built circle in the cathedral precincts. Due to the climb up some members opted to stay at ground level.

The plan was to present a wide variety of songs to our audience in an hour. So the performance started with *Anthem* at 13.00 to the sounds of the cathedral clock. Then the musical bells in the tower were activated and another choir began rehearsing in the building. However, we bravely battled all these wild sounds, brushed off the wasps, stood firm against a strong breeze and attracted a good crowd.

In fact our audience, made up of all ages from infants to grandparents was pretty loyal. Some stayed for the whole time as we gave them 14 songs introduced by MD, Ralph Barnes, and accompanied by James Quinn on electric keyboard. We



showcased everything from male voice choir standards such as *Cwm Rhondda* to show tunes like *Love Changes Everything*, and film music with *My Heart Will Go On*. Some listeners moved away after recording us on smart phones and tablets, and applauding what they heard. The best received numbers were those such

as *Is This The Way To Amarillo* and *Amen* where everyone was encouraged to join in by clapping along. We made many new friends in our 60-minute slot. One group, after listening to us, went into the cathedral to hear a rehearsal for the evening concert. They were very soon back, and telling us they preferred our style of music.



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35 x small

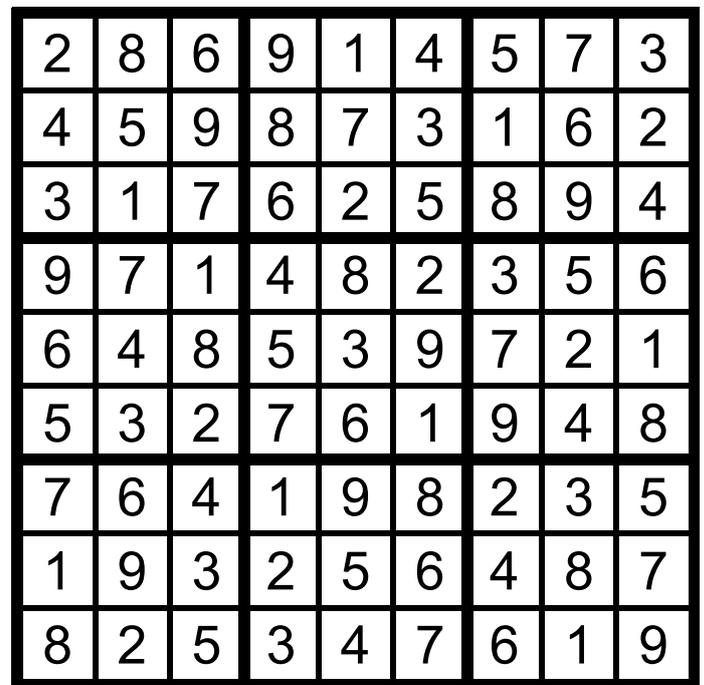
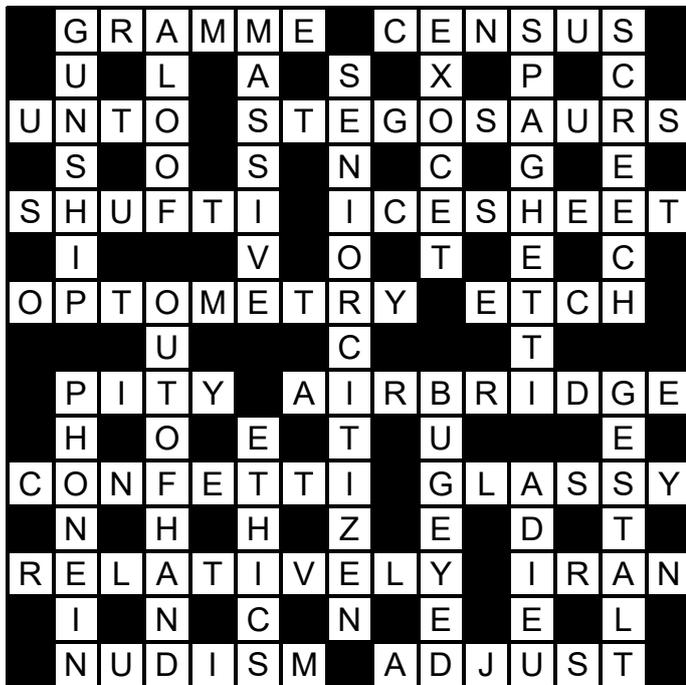
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We would like £250 for all of the jackets. If you are interested and want to know more, please contact Margaret Tickle ☐ mtickle50@yahoo.co.uk or call on 07817446661





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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. I'm afraid I also have a thing about exclamation marks. I allow one per article. Any more I remove.

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Attach them to an email.

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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 the NAC group your choir is in.
- Write your article.
- Sign off with 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'

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