

NEWS & VIEWS

218 SPRING 2019



BOOK REVIEW
12 Oak Avenue
Christopher Wiltshire
Paul Gailunas - reviews

CONFERENCE 2019
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Jelf

Crawford's Corner



Well here we are in a new year and I'm certain you will all be getting down to some hard work improving and adding to your repertoire

before your first concert of 2019. Have you chosen something that will start your concert with a bang and how many times, so far, has your Musical Director reminded you to smile? A new year has come but things don't change.

I have tried a couple of new things for News & Views. The front cover is a bit different and I've tried a few changes to the contents page. I hope you like them. Nineteen choirs have contributed to this Spring Issue and I hope you enjoy reading about what they got up to last year. It is also good to hear about what you are planning for this year but you must remember to send your news in really early so that it can be read before it happens.

In early April we have this year's conference in Stoke. You'll find all you need to know on pages 14-17 so, go and look and get your place booked to avoid disappointment. I'll be disappointed if you're not there.

The Officers are thinking about and mak-

ing plans for the Centenary of the NAC next year. There will be a special concert in November of 2020 which will feature two of the choirs who were founder members of the association in 1920. There will be a song book to commemorate the anniversary and we are hoping that people will let us know of any memorable stories, anecdotes or histories that other members might find interesting. These could go into the Year Book and News & Views.

The association is a hundred years old next year and some of us officers sometimes feel we are not so far behind. We could really do with a few people who are full of energy to join us on the committee to help in keeping the NAC running smoothly. I know I worry that if I was suddenly unable to continue editing this publication then what would happen? I know there must be lots of people out there who have computer skills and could do what I am doing now, sitting in front of my computer screen and typing this ~~drive~~ interesting material. Come on, let's hear from you.

On 17 March 1911 a choir of 250 singers sailed from Liverpool at the start of its six month world tour. If you look on page 22 you can read a review of the book that Christopher Wiltshire has written from the letters of Henrietta May Midgley who went on the tour. I had a phone-call from Chris this morning to explain how choirs could benefit from buying his book so I have add-

ed the information after the book review.

You may notice that two of our member choirs have taken advertising space in News & Views to advertise for an MD and to sell choir uniform. You can get a special half page rate if you have a word with John Croft our PRO and Services Officer; contact details on the back page.

Crawford

Meeting Dates 2019:

Officers	5-7 April	Stoke
	11 June	Twin Oaks
	10 September	Twin Oaks
	12 November	Twin Oaks
	14 January 2020	Twin Oaks
MOF	7 April	Stoke
	29 June	TBC
	28 September	2021 Venue
	25 January 2020	Twin Oaks
AGM	6 April	Stoke

Chairman's Chat



I hope you all had an enjoyable festive season and welcome to 2019. I hope this year will lead to more successes and enjoyable concerts and tours for all our choirs.

We now look forward to our conference in Stoke On Trent in April. Full details can be found in the centre pages together with a booking form. Bookings are quite healthy already but there is always room for more so why not give it a try this year for what will be an informative, friendly and very enjoyable event. I hope to meet as many as possible of you in Stoke.

I always enjoy reading the achievements and experiences of our member choirs, they are so varied and memorable for the participants and audiences. One common

theme is how much choir members enjoy giving pleasure to others as well as themselves. These successes come as a result of the dedication and hard work of not only the choristers but also the back-room volunteers, your committees and musical teams.

All choirs need a strong and vibrant group of volunteers to organise events and ensure things run smoothly if they are to succeed and prosper. The NAC is no exception. As we approach our centenary year the NAC needs more volunteers to help with the running and organisation of this association. Your current group of officers is doing a fantastic job, but new blood is needed if we are to continue to grow and provide the necessary services into the future. Please give this some thought and discuss with any officer if you think you can provide assistance in the future.

John Croft
Chairman



6 ALLEGRA LADIES CHOIR

Wales South

In September 2018 Allegra celebrated its 7th birthday; in October the UK choir festival came to South Wales

7 BESTWOOD MALE VOICE CHOIR

Midlands East

Colin Pursglove, Chairman of Bestwood MVC, was delighted to handover a cheque for £1,000 to the Mayor of Gedling, Councillor Barbara Miller, at a recent visit to the University of Nottingham's Cancer Biology Unit

7 EREWASH PHOENIX CHOIR

Midlands East

Founded in 2004 as a community singing group; membership grew and the official ladies choir was founded in 2006

7 BARNSTAPLE MALE VOICE CHOIR

Devon

The choir accompanist is to retire in July 2019 after many years of reliable and loyal service; we are looking for a replacement for this vital post. An honorarium is available for the right person

9 MENDIP MALE VOICE CHOIR

South West -The Shining Project

Nearly a decade has passed since Kate Courage, former Musical Director, introduced us to an incredibly beautiful and moving song called 'Shining' for which she had written both words and music

10 COR MEIBION COLWYN

Wales North

A busy year with nearly 40 concerts rounding off with 10 events in the 7 weeks up to 18 December

12 DURSLEY MALE VOICE CHOIR

South West

The choir continued this year's 40th Anniversary celebrations with a special dinner attended by well over a hundred choristers, ex-members and friends

19 EAST FIFE MALE VOICE CHOIR

Scotland East

The start of our 2018/19 session got off to a rip-roaring start with our members all raring to go

19 SNOWDOWN COLLIERY WELFARE MALE VOICE CHOIR

Thames South

In 2019 the choir, who were originally formed by Welsh miners seeking work in the newly opened Kent coalfield in the 1920s, celebrate their 90th year of music making

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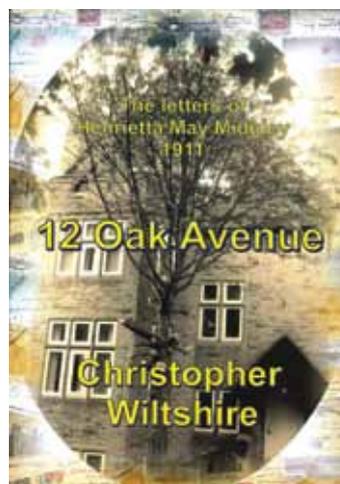
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REVIEWED BY PAUL GAILIUNAS



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20 | VIVA MUSICA CHOIR
Midlands South West

The Viva Musica Choir performed its concert 'Life is a Song' to a full house at The Ruskin Centre in Stourbridge. The concert commemorated 100 years since the end of the 1st World War

20 | HAMPSHIRE POLICE MALE VOICE CHOIR
Southern Counties

How many choirs can claim to have had the support and expertise of the same musical director and musical accompanists for over twenty years?

21 | WILLENHALL SINGERS
Midlands West

The choir has been performing for over 70 years, formed originally as Yale & Town and then from 1946 Willenhall Musical Society

22 | GLASGOW PHOENIX CHOIR
Scotland West

Phew! That was quite a first half to our season. We've sung, celebrated, wept tears of joy and tears of sadness. And it looks like we're in for more of the same in the New Year

23 | THURNSCOPE HARMONIC MALE VOICE CHOIR
Yorkshire South

With our impending 95th year anniversary fast approaching in 2019, here's a little update for our many friends around the country

24 | ORPHEUS MALE VOICE CHOIR GRIMSBY & CLEETHORPES
Lincolnshire

The choir has been part of the cultural and social life of the Grimsby and Cleethorpes area since soon after the end of World War II

27 | NEWQUAY MALE VOICE CHOIR
Cornwall

The summer of 2018 is likely to live long in the memory of all those associated with the choir. It must rank as the busiest and most extraordinary summer since the choir's reformation back in 1974

28 | OS ROCKS
Midlands North

We are a mixed voice choir of all ages (around 50 members), based in Oswestry, Shropshire

29 | PYE HILL AND DISTRICT MALE VOICE CHOIR
Midlands East

Tour of Cwmbân Male Choir to Derbyshire

**Last date for submissions for Issue 219
SUMMER 2019 - 30 APRIL**

Allegra Ladies Choir South Wales

In September 2018 Allegra celebrated its 7th birthday. In October the UK choir festival came to South Wales. The brainchild of Russell Scott the festival brings together different genres of choirs, regardless of age or standard, to take part in a range of singing workshops and activities.

When our concert secretary suggested we take part, no one really knew what to expect but, always willing to take on new challenges and seek out new singing experiences some 20 choir members decided to attend. So, battling against storm Callum, we made the short trip to Monmouth, a town in the Wye Valley.

Following registration, and an opportunity to meet other choirs attending, we were invited into the main hall. Adorned with the relevant colour wrist band were seated accordingly. Allegra were seated near the back but very visible due to our bright pink, relaxed, choir uniform T-shirts. Seated beside us was a children's junior school choir, the first to attend any of the festivals. This was indeed very good to see given recent press reports with regards to the demise of music opportunities in schools.

Following an introduction from Russell Scott and a brief history of the festival we did a vocal warm up and straight into the first workshop delivered by Ben Sawyer who was a judge on the talent show 'Sing: Ultimate A Capella' and is a member of A Capella group The Songmen. The session was truly inspiring with lots of new ideas around using our voices to make sounds as opposed to singing words, this included a very inventive use of the word gin, something us ladies know quite a bit about. Jen, our youngest member, represented the choir when Ben asked for a volunteer, her beat boxing was amazing. Look out for Allegra doing some a Capella with beat boxing sometime soon!



The second workshop was run by Russell Scott with a musical theatre theme. Russell asked us to consider how we convey emotions when we sing and invited on stage a group of participants to demonstrate. He asked them to consider a particular emotion, which he whispered to them, and to sing conveying that emotion. Following this we began to sing a very emotive song from Les Miserables, the iconic musical theatre stage show that has had a 31-year run in London's West End. This time our MD Emma took to the stage to partner up with a gentlemen singer to perform the opening of the finale which brings the show to a rousing but somber end. Following this the other choir members were guided through the finale and we sang it through in four parts. It sounded fabulous in the hall with hundreds of singers.

There followed a long lunch break which gave choirs the opportunity to rehearse for a short performance at the end of the day and the chance to socialise over a hot meal and a cup of tea. Choirs were also encouraged to busk around the venue whilst some groups booked extra master classes.

After lunch we were joined by Russell again who warmed up with a run through of *Somewhere* from West Side Story. What followed was undoubtedly the most popular session amongst the Allegra Ladies' with Stuart Overington. Stuart is an

accomplished conductor and composer known for his engaging and informative style. The focus of this session was unity. Singers were encouraged to hold hands, close eyes and feel the music as we sang. We were stood on fold-away seating which was moving quite a bit, especially when we did the 'stomp' action. Sam, one of our 2nd sopranos, summed the session up well 'the Bulgarian chant caused vibrations that you could feel resonate through the floor and made 400 people feel like 1'. This session ended with all the singers dancing and clapping whilst singing a song of happiness. Our very own Becky took to the stage and contributed some fab riffs over the main choir singing.

This quite naturally led to the last workshop of the day on gospel singing with Ayo Oyerinde. Ayo was the creative/musical director of the London gospel choir for 10 years. His session centred around layering parts to build the sound, meaning we had to listen to each section's sound and pin point where our part was. We finished the day with a rendition of *Steal Away* which was very uplifting and gave our MD some ideas of fun ways for us to work on our own techniques.

What a superb way to spend a wet and windy Saturday. The next time the UK festival comes our way we will definitely be encouraging all choir members to attend so we can take part in the performance opportunity which ended the day.

Onwards to exciting plans for 2019. The first thing is a CD recording in early January and we are very proud to say that we have been selected to compete at the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod.

*Information on the professionals who led the choir workshop was found in the UK Choir Festival 2018 information booklet.



Angela Hiscocks
Social media manager

Bestwood Male Voice Choir Midlands East

Colin Pursglove, Chairman of Bestwood MVC, was delighted to handover a cheque for £1,000 to the Mayor of Gedling, Councillor Barbara Miller, at a recent visit to the University of Nottingham's Cancer Biology Unit.

The cheque was towards the Mayor's Charity supporting prostate cancer research, being undertaken by Prof Anna Grabowska, in the university's Division of Cancer and Stem Cells, in collaboration with Mr Hari Ratan and Mr Will Green, Nottingham University Hospital's NHS Trust (NUH). The sum was the proceeds from Bestwood MVC's Annual Gala Concert at the Nottingham Albert Hall in September.

Bestwood MVC was very pleased to be supporting research into prostate cancer, which is the most frequently diagnosed cancer in men and the second commonest cause of cancer death. Over 11,000 men die every year of prostate cancer in the UK and the number increases every year, with only a small proportion of these initially diagnosed with prostate cancer going on to develop an advanced state of the disease. The research team, under Prof Anna Grabowska, will focus on developing a blood test potentially to be used as a non-invasive test to identify patients most likely to progress to clinically significant prostate cancer and therefore most urgently needing treatment. As there are side-effects associated with treatment, it is important to focus treatment on those most likely to benefit.

Peter Fletcher
Publicity Officer



Front row left to right: Sharon Ellis (Mayor's Escort), Mayor of Gedling Cllr. Barbara Miller, Colin Pursglove (Chairman Bestwood MVC), Prof Anna Grabowska

Back row left to right: Peter Fletcher (Publicity Officer Bestwood MVC), Mr Will Green and Mr Hari Ratan of Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust.

Erewash Phoenix Choir Midlands East

Erewash Phoenix Choir was founded in 2004 as a community singing group. Membership grew and the official ladies choir was founded in 2006. The choir has taken part in NAC concerts several times and performs with Long Eaton Silver Prize Band, Sandiacre Male Voice Choir and Pye Hill Male Voice Choir. We also perform for local community groups and have held concerts to raise money for Children In Need.

Just over 2 years ago, Chris Knapp took over as our Musical Director. He has moved the choir forward and has introduced us to a wider, more modern repertoire. Unfortunately, due to greater work commitments, Chris is unable to continue in his role after Spring 2019. Consequently, we will be looking to appoint a new Musical Director. A more detailed advert will appear on our website.

erewashphoenixchoir.co.uk

Rehearsals are held at St Giles Church Hall, Church Drive, Sandiacre, NG10 5EE

on Wednesday evening from 7.30 – 9.30. We welcome new members of all abilities.

07914083911

phoenixchoir@outlook.com.

Pauline Edwards
Chair

Barnstaple Male Voice Choir Devon

The choir accompanist is to retire in July 2019 after many years of reliable and loyal service. Based in North Devon, we are looking for a replacement for this vital post. A negotiable, honorarium is available for the right person. The choir is approximately 50+ in strength and performs regularly throughout North Devon and beyond. In the past we have visited Germany twice, France twice, Ireland and throughout the UK. If you feel you could be the right person to fill this post, please reply to Tony McLoughlin on 01805 938262 tonymc147@btinternet.com

Under the leadership of our MD of many years, Derek Trewin, the choir celebrates its centenary year in 2019 with a very 'full on' year. Apart from the usual varied selection of concerts and appearances we have a few major events. In May we are part of the Cornwall International Male Voice Festival. In July we have our Centenary Concert with South Molton Town Band and soprano Rachel Phillips at RHS Rosemoor in Torrington. In September we join with three other local male voice choirs in St Peter's church Barnstaple, and finally in November we have our centenary dinner in Barnstaple with many local dignitaries present. So, a wonderful year to look forward to for our members and very many loyal supporters.

Tony McLoughlin
Treasurer



Erewash Phoenix Choir

Mendip Male Voice Choir South West The Shining Project

The membership of a choir has many benefits including the enjoyment of singing together, that terrific feeling after giving a great performance and the wonderful camaraderie of being part of a team. Another significant benefit is having the opportunity to raise a lot of money for charity. In common with many choirs, Mendip Male Voice Choir (MMVC) supports many local charities, the main one being Children's Hospice South West.

Nearly a decade has passed since Kate Courage, formerly the Musical Director of MMVC, introduced us to an incredibly beautiful and moving song called *Shining* for which she had written both words and music.

Dedicated to the Children's Hospice South-west (CHSW), *Shining* is written from the child's perspective and, most imaginatively and remarkably, it is the child who offers guidance, love, encouragement and solace to the parent. The words are very poignant with many glowing images of light as the title suggests and the performance of the piece arouses strong emotions both in the choir and in the audience.

Initially written with children's choirs in mind, Kate produced a four-part, male voice version of *Shining* which has been in the repertoire of MMVC since its launch. In 2017, following an acclaimed performance in Wells Cathedral by massed Somerset male voice choirs, which raised thousands of pounds for CHSW, the idea blossomed that *Shining* merited a much wider audience, possibly becoming a kind of nationwide anthem for Children's Hospices.

Members of the choir have formed a *Shining* Project Team to make this idea a reality and over the next six months the team intends to contact every male voice choir in the UK with details of how to get involved. To allow you to judge for yourselves the quality of the piece and its appropriateness for your choir, a recording of *Shining* will be placed on our website www.mendipmen.co.uk/Shining along with recordings of each part produced by

Jamie Knights, our Musical Director. We have also been in contact with BaBa Productions, who distribute the sheet music and they have agreed to put a sample copy of the sheet music on their web site, which can be downloaded free for your perusal. Baba Productions website is www.babaproductions.co.uk.

Should you purchase a set of copies for your library, there is the added incentive that a proportion of the royalties will go to your local children's hospice, thanks to the composer's generosity.

Do please consider joining us, in what we think is a very worthwhile and exciting project - to have *Shining* sung throughout the country.

Roger Corrick
MMVC Shining Sub-committee



Mendip Male Voice Choir



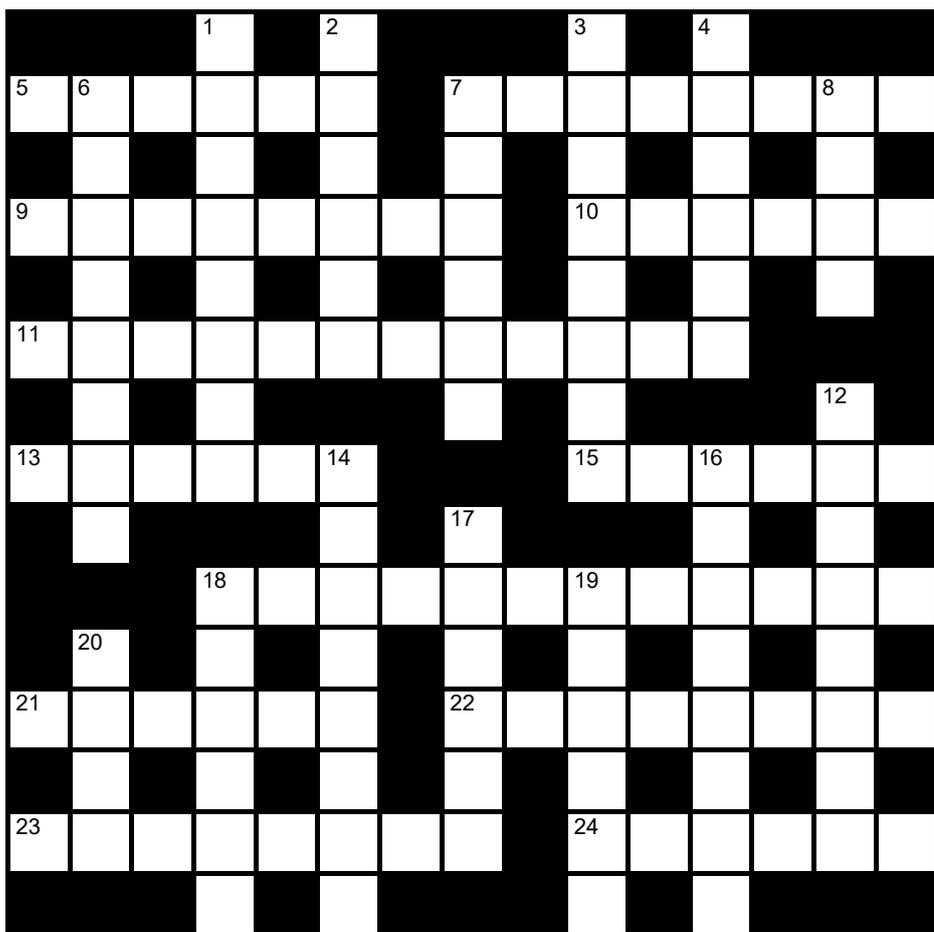


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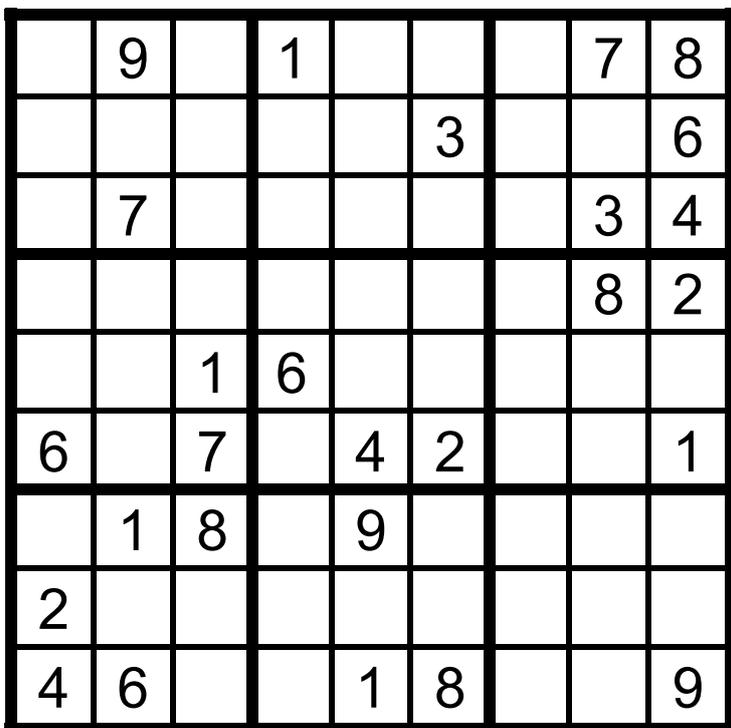
Across

- 5 Hearsay transformed our rum (6)
- 7 Falsely lecture a blister (8)
- 9 Loosely fold sofa to transfer data (8)
- 10 Dippers (6)
- 11 Carefree not heavy here Edward (5-7)
- 13 Swear off alcohol (6)
- 15 Such eery shows end happily (6)
- 18 Igniting a rat another way is charming (12)
- 21 Tannic cocktail container (3,3)
- 22 Tree fellow on the council (8)
- 23 Slice on the bias (8)
- 24 Ran after a maiden I hear (6)

Down

- 1 Do Hotels change the equipment storage? (8)
- 2 Sombre athlete holds puff of air (6)
- 3 Initial letters poetically matched (8)
- 4 Small cracks in the glaze were insane (6)
- 6 Dishonestly ran amok to ruin a fly (8)
- 7 Break open one French wax stamp (6)
- 8 Short antonym (4)
- 12 Negotiate and accomplish (8)
- 14 Using EEC designed genetic breeding (8)
- 16 Outermost exterior (8)
- 17 Erratic cat van is empty (6)
- 18 Within baggage (6)
- 19 Bring about urge (6)
- 20 Alcoholic catafalque we hear (4)

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

Solutions on page 31

Cor Meibion Colwyn Wales North

We have had a busy year with nearly 40 concerts and rounding off with 10 events in the 7 weeks up to 18 December. The choir has welcomed a number of choirs and a band in 2018. Colwyn's visitors performed entertaining and varied programmes in joint concerts in Llandudno. Colwyn's special visitors were the Gloucestershire Police Male Voice choir, the North Iowa University Male Glee Choir, the Werneth Concert Band from Stockport, the New Mill MVC from Huddersfield and the East Fife Male Voice Choir. Ten of Colwyn's 2018 concerts raised money for charities including St David's and St Kentigern hospices, Ty Gobaith (Hope House) Wales Air Ambulance and RNLI. Over the years Colwyn has raised around £150,000 for charities.

Côr Meibion Colwyn (Colwyn Male Voice Choir) toured the Ypres area in Belgium to pay their respects to the fallen of the First World War in late October/early November. It was privileged to sing as part of the Last Post Ceremony at the Menin Gate in Ypres where representatives of the choir also laid wreaths on behalf of the choir and the Bay of Colwyn Town Council.

Artillery Wood Cemetery was also visited to pay respects and hold a short service of remembrance, recitation, song and laying of a wreath at the grave of Hedd Wyn the bard from Trawsfynydd (Ellis Humphrey Evans) who was killed on the first day of the Battle of Passchendaele 31 July 1917. He was 30 years old. At the nearby Welsh

Memorial at Habegos a wreath was laid. This was followed by a meal and a Noson Lawen at Marc's Restaurant De Sportsman, a short walk from the memorial.

The choir held two concerts during the five-day tour, including one in the impressive St Martin's Cathedral with its amazing acoustics.

At that concert the choir met up again with a Belgian family, local to Ypres, who had been to one of Colwyn's summer concerts at St Mary's Church Betws y Coed. Some of the live performances in Ypres, Betws y Coed and Llandudno are on the choir's Facebook pages (see below). The last Concert on the eve of departure for home was in the historic St George's Memorial Church in Ypres as part of their impressive Poppy Cascade from the church tower and its external walls. We attended the service of commemoration and blessing of the Poppy Cascade followed by a reception in the memorial hall and the evening concluded with the concert.

The tour was an important part of the choir's commitment this year to show its respect for the lives lost during the war. The reception by the Belgian people was superb and the choir is left with very fond memories, both emotional and enjoyable and considered it a privilege to be involved in the week building up to the centenary of the end of the Great War.

To complete the week and closer to home on the following Sunday the choir took part in a Commemorative Service of dedication of a plaque with a further 26 names

of locals who died as a result of military conflict in war. The service was held in St John's Old Colwyn and the plaque was placed on the Cenotaph in Old Colwyn in time for the Armistice Service on the following Sunday.

At the end of November, Colwyn took part in the annual Tree of Lights ceremony in Rhos on Sea where 800 people sang carols out of doors on the Promenade and raised funds for local hospices. A contrasting carol concert was in the new RNLI Lifeboat station on Llandudno Promenade. This proved to have an excellent acoustic and good sight lines and facilities. The sloping floor designed to drain sea water off the boat also means that for the audience seating is raised the further they go back! The lifeboat was towed out and seating provided for 200 audience in the main lifeboat hall.

Colwyn will sing in aid of the RNLI again in 2019 in Llandudno and Colwyn Bay. To date Colwyn has around 15 concerts scheduled for 2019. One of the choir's main events will be competing in the National Eisteddfod in Llanrwst in August 2019. One of Colwyn's main 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. The church has an excellent acoustic, reputation and comprehensive website. The choir is also arranging joint concerts with visiting choirs. A short trip to Derbyshire will be to sing in aid of the Macmillan Nurses, Royal Derby Hospital and Air Ambulance on 22 June in Wirksworth Parish church. Other events will include singing at local weddings and organisations. The choir will welcome further concerts for 2019 and 2020 and will be pleased to discuss plans for joint concerts and welcome visiting choirs and visitors to the North Wales coast in 2019. The choir 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



Cor Meibion Colwyn

Charles Cooksley
Secretary



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Disney Performing Arts Presents - Let's Sing Christmas



Available performance dates:

- Saturday 9th / Sunday 10th Nov 2019
- Saturday 16th / Sunday 17th Nov 2019
- Saturday 23rd / Sunday 24th Nov 2019
- Saturday 30th Nov / Sunday 1st Dec 2019
- Saturday 7th / Sunday 8th Dec 2019
- Saturday 14th / Sunday 15th Dec 2019
- Saturday 21st / Sunday 22nd Dec 2019
- Saturday 28th / Sunday 29th Dec 2019
- Saturday 4th / Sunday 5th Jan 2020

Next Christmas at Disneyland® Paris a brand new musical show will take place in Videopolis Theatre. We invite you to join Mickey to be part of an unforgettable once in a lifetime experience: singing the Magic of Christmas. Legend tells that the power of uniting voices from around the world, is strong enough to light the brightest Christmas star!

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Dursley Male Voice Choir South West

DMVC Celebrates 40 Years

Dursley Male Voice Choir continued this year's 40th Anniversary celebrations (see NAC News and Views Summer issue), with a special dinner attended by well over a hundred choristers, ex-members and friends, with wives and partners at the Gables Hotel, Falfield, on Saturday evening, 27 October 2018. Pictured here from left to right are ex-chairman Tim Pearce with his wife Anita, current chairman Bryan Jones with his wife Valerie, DMVC President David Hand with his wife Carolyn and ex-chairman Brian Tocknell with his wife Margaret.

After the loyal toast, proposed by top tenor Mike Blackie, chairman Bryan Jones gave a speech recalling past tours and recitals, concerts and events that had featured large in the DMVC's past history. He reviewed the current year and outlined the choir's plans for the future, including the proposed issue of a commemorative CD spanning 40 years of the choir's music.

On welcoming the guests he highlighted the fact that the five founder members



attending the function were a testimony to the health-giving powers of music and choral singing. They are Chris Wintle, Wilf Burns, Mike Evans, who was the Dursley Male Voice Choir's very first Musical Director, Ellis Williams and Brian Wetton. Many old acquaintanceships were re-established, and special mention was made of life-member Wilf Burns and his wife Joyce, pictured here. Joyce celebrated her 92nd birthday the previous day and she and her husband Wilf had travelled down from Cheshire specially for the event. They previously lived in Wotton-under-Edge and had celebrated

their platinum (70th) wedding anniversary just a few days before. Remembered as an enthusiastic second tenor, Wilf participated in several competitions and overseas tours. He and his wife Joyce celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary during Dursley Male Voice Choir's tour to Canada in October 1998 and took their daughter Celia and her husband Alan with them so that they could celebrate as a family.

Stan Unwin

Snowdown Colliery Welfare Male Voice Choir

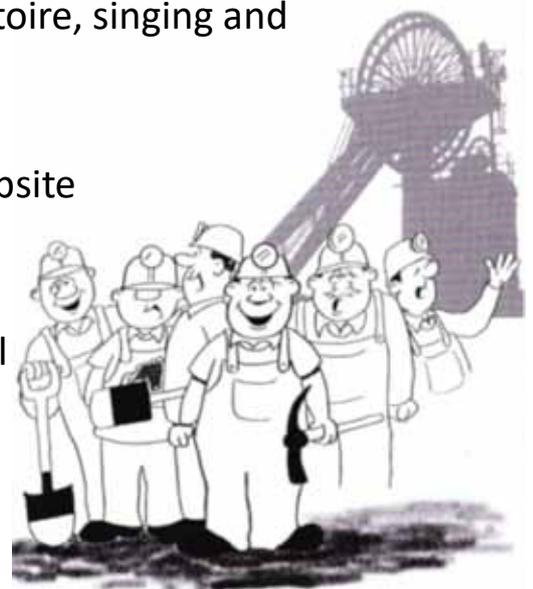
Based at Aylesham and serving much of East Kent, we are seeking an enthusiastic musician to lead this thriving choir of approximately 50 members, replacing its current **Musical Director** who retires at the end of 2019.

Founded in 1929 by miners who came to the Kent coalfield, we are celebrating our 90th year. Proud of our heritage, but looking to the future, we are keen for our new MD to take part in our review of the repertoire, singing and stagecraft.

For further information about the choir see our website www.snowdown-choir.co.uk

All enquiries, including 'How to Apply', please email mvc@snowdown-choir.co.uk

Closing date for applications: 31st March 2019



WE NEED FRESH BLOOD

NAC OFFICERS

Number of serving officers = 8

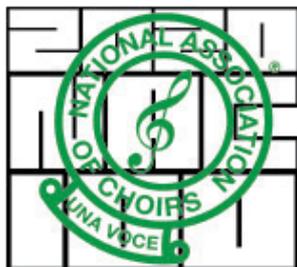
Officer positions = 11

We need new people to help us keep the NAC working for you.

**HELP
PLEASE**

Contact Celia Johns if you can help.

general.secretary@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk



The NAC is one hundred years old in 2020.

We are looking for anecdotes, stories, histories, images from our member choirs that might be included in News & Views and/or The Year Book in 2020.

Send Centenary Stuff to

Celia

general.secretary@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk

or **Crawford**

publications.officer@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk

**HAVE YOU
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**Don't miss out on a
weekend of singing,
fun and friendship.**

**Gala Dinner
Gala Concert
BOOK NOW**

See pages 14-17

91st Annual General Meeting 31st Annual Conference Weekend 5-7 April 2019

Conference Coordinator



The Moat House Hotel Festival Park near Hanley has been booked for the event. The hotel has more than adequate facilities for the conference, having free parking, large reception area for del-

legates to be greeted on arrival and issued with their delegate packs. There is a very large hall where a theatre style seating area will be constructed for the seminars with room for trade stands to be arranged around the forum. The room will be first used for our Gala dinner on the Friday evening and then transformed overnight for the Saturday and Sunday conference. Con-



ference 2019 Stoke on Trent at the Moat House Hotel is approaching very quickly and I would like to have an idea of who is planning to attend. This is in order to give the hotel an estimate of room types and numbers by the end of February. If you intend to come along please send in your booking forms and deposits now.

We have a varied and interesting line up of seminars this year which I feel sure will give us insights into areas we perhaps have not considered associated



with music and the art of singing. The subjects are listed on the timeline within this publication.

There will be several trade stands in attendance on Saturday and six will be presenting their products during our speed presentations.

Saturday evening concert is entitled

National Association of Choirs
- inspiring Voices.

The Douglas Macmillan Hospice will be the beneficiary of the concert.

Saturday evening is promising to be a pleasure at the Victoria Hall, Hanley. I am very fortunate to have the help of a young lady who is MD of two choirs in the area. Harriet Johnson has managed to attract several top rate choirs to the concert including my former choir Audley Male Voice Choir. I sang with them while living at a place called Loggerheads (yes it is really is on the map near to Market Drayton) before moving to Burton Upon Trent. Audley will be joined by Biddulph Male Voice Choir, the University Hospital Choir of Stoke on Trent, The Douglas Macmillan Hospice Choir, Stone Choral Society and Cantiamo Chamber Choir.

Clive Lawton

Conference 2020 Blackburn

The Dunkenhalgh hotel has now been booked for the conference together with the King Georges Hall in Blackburn. 2020 is our centenary year and we hope to bring a well-known guest speaker to the event. As the conference is some way off at present I have taken the arrangements as far as is necessary at this point in time with regard to booking accommodation and concert venue.

Brass and Voices for East Lancs Hospice.

Celebrating the centenary of the National Association of Choirs.

The hospice will be the beneficiary of the concert.

I recently received an update from Blackburn with regard to the concert at the King George's Hall. The event organisation is going very well with several choirs interested in performing. We wished two choirs to be in the line-up as they were both founder member choirs of our association back in 1920. They are the Colne

Orpheus Glee Union and Nelson Arion Male Voice Choir and will be performing joined by Rossendale Male Voice Choir, Rossendale Ladies Choir, Nelson Civic Ladies, Blackburn Peoples Choir, Vocalise and possibly Sing Together children's choir and Queen Elizabeth Grammar School Choir. The choirs will be joined by either Blackburn and Darwin Band or Rossendale Scout Band.

Conference 2021

In order to avail our organisation of the best venues for conference and concert I work two years in advance. Leaving the arrangements until the preceding year is often too late for some hotels and certainly for concert venues. With this in mind I am considering the location at the moment.

We have a membership spread far and wide so it is important to be fair in positioning the conference within reach of all parts at some point in the future. I should have more definite news for you in the next issue of News and Views.



National Association of Choirs

Joining the Nation in Choral Singing

National Conference Booking Form 1 5-7 April 2019

The Moat House Hotel, Etruria Hall, Festival Way, Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire ST1 5BQ

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 - Single £95 BB - Double/Twin (two persons) £115 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 2018, balance by 28 February 2019

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



Reg'd. Charity No. 1014630

National Association of Choirs

Joining the Nation in Choral Singing

National Conference Booking Form 2 5-7 April 2019

The Moat House Hotel, Etruria Hall, Festival Way. Stoke on Trent. Staffordshire ST1 5BQ

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

Guest 1

Title Mr/Mrs/Miss.....

First Name.....

Surname.....

Address.....

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

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

Email Address.....

Special Requirements

Diet [type].....

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

NAC group.....

Choir Name.....

Guest 2

Title Mr/Mrs/Miss.....

First Name.....

Surname.....

Address.....

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

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

Email Address.....

Special Requirements

Diet [type].....

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

NAC group.....

Choir Name.....

PLEASE PHOTOCOPY THIS FORM FOR MORE GUESTS IF REQUIRED

Please return your completed forms and deposits to

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

01283 569677 or 07939012458 conference.coordinator@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk



National Association of Choirs

Joining the Nation in Choral Singing

National Conference Provisional Timetable 5-7 April 2019

The Moat House Hotel, Etruria Hall, Festival Way, Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire ST1 5BQ

Friday 5 April

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
- 9.30 After dinner entertainment provided
- 12.00 Bar closes

Saturday 6 April

- 7.00 Access to trade stands to set up
- 7.30-9.00 Breakfast in main dining room
- 9.00-10.00 Seminar 1 Dr John Addison MBChB - Health Benefits of singing and the sense of belonging which being a chorister within a choir generates
- 10.0-10.30 Coffee and trade stand viewing
- 10.30-11.00 Annual General Meeting
- 11.00-12.00 Seminar 2 Tim Knight - How to keep your choir alive. How to attract new members and encourage them to take on roles within the choir
- 12.00-1.00 Trade stand presentations (Five 10 minute presentations from trade stands present at conference)
- 1.00-2.00 Lunch and trade stand viewing (Lunch included in full delegate package)
- 2.00-3.00 Seminar 3 Mental Health and Homelessness - How music can help?
- 3.00-3.30 Coffee and trade stand viewing
- 3.30-4.30 Seminar 4 Dr Douglas Coombes will exercise your vocal capabilities in an enjoyable hour of singing pieces of music from many genres
- 5.00 Two course dinner in main dining room
- 6.30 Coaches leave for the Victoria Hall, Hanley
- 7.30 Concert at the Victoria Hall, Hanley
- 10.00 approx Following concert, light refreshments will be provided back at the hotel
- 12.00 Bar closes

Sunday 7 April

- 7.30-9.30 Breakfast
For those delegates wishing to attend local churches, details will be available at hotel reception
- 9.30-10.30 Seminar 5 Dr Douglas Coombes continues his seminar of music and singing
- 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)



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The National Association of
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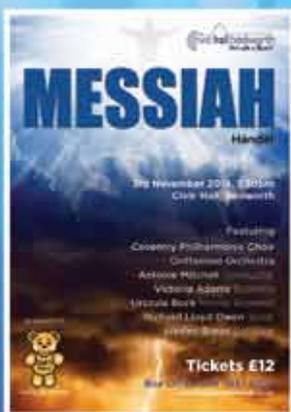
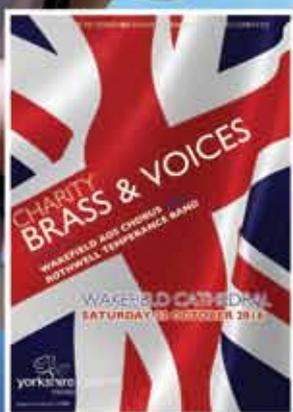


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East Fife Male Voice Choir Scotland East

The start of our 2018/19 session got off to a rip-roaring start with our members all raring to go.

Our planned trip to Llandudno on 18 October came around quickly and we left Fife early on a Thursday morning to arrive in Llandudno in time for dinner and a dram or two. Some of our members had been there before but those who hadn't were all impressed by the town and the wives all equally delighted with the variety of shops. Thankfully we had plenty room on our coach to accommodate the resulting purchases.

Our first concert was held on Friday 19 October in Cilcain near Mold and the church was impressive to say the least. The village itself was very picturesque and some of us vowed to return another time to see it in daylight hours. We had a reasonable turn out from the village residents and raised £350 for their church funds which was very warmly welcomed.

Prior to our main concert on Saturday 20 October, we had an impromptu rehearsal on Llandudno promenade which drew a fair bit of attention from the people passing by. I like to think that maybe some of them came along to the evening concert after having had a small 'taster' in the afternoon. Then it was back to the hotel to have a quick dinner, change into our uniforms and a short walk to the St Johns Church Llandudno where we had a joint concert with the Colwyn Male Voice Choir. This was a real joy for us and the closing song, *Morte Christe* was an excellent ending to the concert and certainly raised

the roof. The total ticket sales amounted to £780 and Colwyn Choir kindly gifted £300 to our choir. As always, we finished the evening by inviting the members of Colwyn choir back to the hotel for a wee farewell drink. We had an uproarious time with several solo singers from both choirs and our usual dependable members who always keep the laughter going with their repertoire of jokes. A great evening was enjoyed by all.

This being the choir's 60th year, Fife Council held a civic reception in the town hall Kirkcaldy hosted by Mr Jim Leishman, Provost of Fife who presented us with a lovely certificate and plaque to commemorate the event. Unfortunately, the certificate is being reprinted as Male Voice Choir was spelt Mail Voice Choir raising a few smiles.

Up until Christmas we had a busy schedule with several concerts, the first being in Rosyth Parish Church. Then a concert held in St Fillans Church, Aberdour, where the large appreciative audience were on their feet calling for an encore! Then St James's Church, Cupar was our final concert before recording our latest CD.

At our AGM in November we had several changes as our chairman Roy Urquhart stood down after 8 years service and the position has now been filled by John Kilgour. John Horne and Sandy Scott who have acted as both trip advisors and organisers for our annual trips for the past 15 years have also taken a back seat to allow someone else to fill this role. Those who know Sandy and John will be glad to hear that they will still attend the annual NAC conferences on behalf of the choir.

In December we were privileged to sing in the Christmas Carol Concert held in the Caird Hall, Dundee with proceeds going to CLIC Sargent (Caring for Children with Cancer). This concert featured Tayside and Fife Health Services and Friends choir, the Mike Bennet Brass Ensemble, High School of Dundee Chamber Orchestra and a 15-minute performance from ourselves.

Our choir is always on the lookout for new members and anyone coming along to our rehearsals in Pathhead Church Kirkcaldy on Monday evenings at 7.00 will be warmly welcomed.

Aye sing!

George Paterson
Publicity

Snowdown Colliery Welfare Male Voice Choir Thames South

In 2019 the Snowdown C W Male Voice Choir, who were originally formed by Welsh miners who sought work in the newly opened Kent coalfield in the 1920s, celebrate their 90th year of music making.

The 50 strong choir uphold and cherish the traditions of the founding members and the choir is a member of the National Association of Choirs, and the Welsh Association of Male Voice Choirs. The choir is planning a series of events in their celebratory year, one of the highlights being a concert in South Wales with the famous Murrison Orpheus Choir.

This year, on the 2 November 2018, the choir will be giving a concert at Christ Church, Lille, and the next day 3 November the choir are honoured to be performing at the last post ceremony at the Menin Gate Ypres, in Belgium.

The choir has sadly recently received the news that its Musical Director, Michael Lewis will be retiring at the end of 2019 after over 20 years of service to the choir. Michael will be the proverbial tough act to follow, and the choir is now advertising to seek his successor. Any interested parties should contact Dr David Rance at

Scwmvc@gmail.com or

davidrance160@gmail.com

Peter Cosier
Publicity Officer





Viva Musica Choir Midlands South West

On Saturday 20 October the Viva Musica Choir performed its concert 'Life is a Song' to a full house at The Ruskin Centre in Stourbridge. The concert commemorated 100 years since the end of the 1st World War and reflected the music and events from the period of peace between 1918 and 1939.

The evening commenced with Parry's *I Was Glad* and Elgar's *Lux Aeterna*. During the concert there were readings by members of the choir, including excerpts from 'Cider with Rosie' by Laurie Lee, 'The Great Gatsby' by F Scott Fitzgerald and 'Private Lives' by Noel Coward.

There were solo performances by Matt Ter rado singing *Sea Fever* by Ireland, Elizabeth Heaney performing *I'll Follow my Secret Heart* by Coward and *Falling in Love with Love* by Rodgers performed by Debbie Wright.

The gentlemen of the choir sang *Stout Hearted Men*, with the solo performed by John Gripton. Accompanist Andrew Biggs performed his own arrangement of a medley of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* and *Embraceable You*.

The choir performed many wonderful songs throughout the evening including *Alexander's Ragtime Band* and *Blue skies* by Berlin, *Singing in the Rain* by Herb Brown, *The Way You Look Tonight* by Kern and a medley from Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*. The concert was raising money for the choir's charity of the year, Action Heart.

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

New members are always welcome - please see our website for full details.

Lorraine Newman

Hampshire Police Male Voice Choir Southern Counties

All choirs come to rely on their Musical Directors and accompanists to support them in learning music and creating wonderful performances but how many choirs can claim to have had the support and expertise of the same musical director and musical accompanists for over twenty years.

Terri Freeman LRAM LTCL FISM joined the Hampshire Police Male Voice Choir in September 1997 as musical director and this March becomes the longest serving musical director since the choir was formed in 1940. She will be leading a special concert to celebrate this achievement in the same venue as her first concert with the choir, namely All Saints Church Denmead on Saturday 23 March.

The concert will be supported by senior members of Hampshire Constabulary and other members of the community in Hampshire.

Terri Will be joined by Nigel Smith our musical accompanist who will have notched up just over 21 years as our accompanist supporting us in excess of 150 concerts. Sian Bibby Hsia joined as a second accompanist just over 20 years ago and then added the role of Assistant Musical Director to her portfolio a little later. The three have worked extremely well together as a team to ensure that the choir performs to a magnificent standard which is appreciated by all that support the choir and its performances.

The Chief Constable of Hampshire, Oliva Pinkney QPM MA, recognised the long service of all three to the Police Family in recent award ceremonies where the three were accompanied by friends and family.

Colin Swettenham
Chairman



The Chief Constable Of Hampshire Presents Long Service Awards

Willenhall Singers Midlands West

The choir has been performing for over 70 years, formed originally as Yale & Town and then from 1946 Willenhall Musical Society. In the earlier years the choir entered many competitions and performed in concerts around the country and, after reading some of our old press clippings I must say, very successfully. In more recent years and trying to move with the times, we mix our performances to include popular music, themes from films and musicals, along with secular music. In 2016 we had another name-change to reflect this and became Willenhall Singers, under the direction of our MD, Justine Clarke, and accompanied by Nick Jeavons.

This has been a good year for us, performing in various venues around our area, helping our local communities and churches raise funds for their good causes. On 8 October we performed our 'Caring Round the Clock' concert to raise



funds for Marie Curie, supported by The Sedgley Strummers, a local ukulele group thoroughly enjoyed by both choir and audience. Over the last few years the choir has raised over £42,000 for local charities as well as unknown amounts we have helped to raise for other community groups and their good causes.

On 10 November we have been invited to support a remembrance service in our town park whilst the 'Soldiers Tale'

is being told, then 8 December we are performing 'Night of Miracles' at one of our local churches at the request of The Co-operative Society to raise funds for The Royal British Legion. As you can see we have a busy schedule running up to Christmas. We will also be out carol singing in various places in the town, any money raised from this will go to the amount raised for Marie Curie.

We are also looking forward to the New Year and have several concerts already booked. You can tell we all enjoy our singing.

As ever we are always looking for new members so, if you are reading this and you would like to try us out, please contact Pam on 01922 408553

willenhallsingers@virginmedia.com
www.willenhallsingers.org

Pamela Proffitt
Choir committee member



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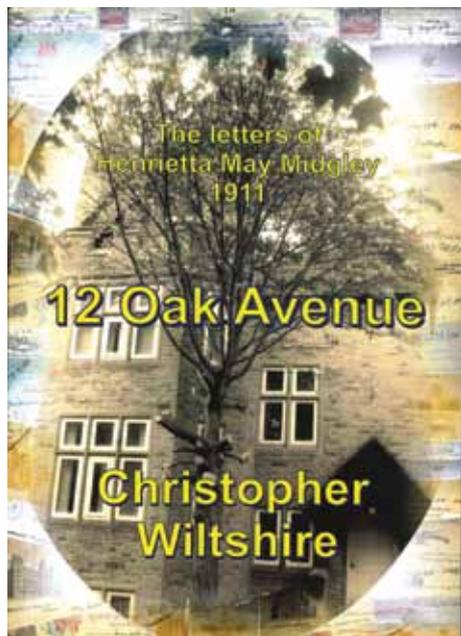
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Wath Court,
Hovingham, York
YO62 4NN

BOOK REVIEW

12 Oak Avenue

Christopher Wiltshire

2018. ISBN 978-1-5136-3531-6. £6.50



On 17 March 1911 a choir of 250 singers sailed from Liverpool at the start of its six month world tour. Its core was the Sheffield Choir, conducted by Henry Coward, but it was augmented by members of many other choirs throughout the North of England. At the time the tour received a lot of public attention, and any book that deals with British musical culture in the early twentieth century will mention it. This book presents extracts from the letters of Henrietta May Midgley, one of the singers on the tour and a member of a well-known musical family in Sheffield at the time.

The letters are interesting because of the insight they provide into everyday experience in an amateur choir that was exceptional, even at a time when choral singing was probably at its most popular and large choirs were not unusual. Often the most commonplace aspects of life at other times are not accessible to us now because they never seem worth mentioning, and May provides many glimpses into how it was to travel in the British Empire at its height. Official accounts including Coward's own recollections of the tour are necessarily guarded in commenting about the personalities on the tour, but private correspondence could be more open.

The extracts from the letters are accompanied by commentaries and explanations that will help readers who are not familiar with the historical context of the tour and might never have heard of some of

This book is available from the author

chriswiltshire262@btinternet.com

01142302401

For customers who buy through their choir (ie payment handled by Treasurer or other officer), I will donate £1.50 of the £6.50 cover price to the choir concerned.

The problem of delivery is mine, though delivering ten copies to the John O' Groats Choral Society may mean some negotiation over the donation to help me with postage.

I cannot over-emphasise that this is not a business venture in the sense that the object is profit. I just want to share these letters with like-minded people, at the same time seeing my investment returned.

Chris Wiltshire

the major players. At first I thought that the device of printing the text of the letters in a script font, to distinguish it from the commentary, would be a distraction, but it is actually very effective, allowing a smooth flow from one to the other.

The editorial task of selecting passages that might be of general interest a century after the events described can not have been easy, and then finding a structure into which they would fit naturally would present another problem. The easiest solution might have been to use a chronological sequence but instead the material is organised into themes based around personalities. Where these are more or less well-known, such as Elgar or Coward himself, the letters are at their most revealing. I was less concerned with May herself and the various members of her family that she met during the tour, but such details do provide another context that might help a general reader to relate to the letters, and will certainly interest any living relatives.

This short book can be read in a few hours, and anybody with a background in choral singing will have little difficulty in relating to the personalities and events described. If you are interested in musical life before the First World War you will like it.

Paul Gailunas

The Thurnscoe Harmonic Male Voice Choir

Yorkshire South

It has been a long time since I wrote to let people know what's happening with our choir. So, with our impending 95th year anniversary fast approaching in 2019, here's a little update for our many friends around the country.

Since the sad passing of MD Colin Leech in January 2008 after 45 years as MD, the choir has struggled to maintain membership and keep Colin's legacy alive.

However, thanks to the solid commitment of its committee, officials and members, the choir is singing better than it has for many years. We now have 44 members, having picked up a few members from Kimberworth MVC, sadly now disbanded.

Under the directorship of Tony Jermy (member for 38 years, MD for 10 years), accompanied by Irene Hill (member for 65 years) and our newly appointed assistant accompanist, Stephen Carey, the choir are entertaining audiences at a variety of new and old venues.

The Barnburgh Village Singers and ourselves travelled to Belfast at the invitation of our good friends Donaghadee Male Voice Choir; performing in Crumlin Road Gaol, Stormont Parliament Buildings and the Ulster Hall. A brilliant time was had by all.

We were invited to replace a brass band (who had double booked) in an open-air concert at Harlow Carr RHS Gardens in Harrogate in 2017 and that further developed to a Christmas light event and a further open-air concert in the gardens in July 2018.

We were invited to perform a fundraiser for Wentworth House Restoration Trust in 2017 and have performed twice in the Marble Hall since in this wonderful historical building, raising in excess of £7000 with further concerts planned.

We have continued to support Wentworth Church Music Festival week, being the only performers to have attended this none competitive celebration of music, every year in its 20 years of existence.

We perform Christmas concerts at Wentworth Garden Centre for their 'Candles and Carols' three course dinner event each year; also free carol concerts for residential homes and senior citizens teas.



Thurnscoe Harmonic Male Voice Choir

Along with members from Barnburgh Village Singers and Barnsley U3A, we travel annually internationally to perform as 'The Yorkshire Mix'. So, if you are near Loch Lomond in July next year, keep an eye open for our visit.

As with most choirs, I assume, we have been very busy rehearsing for the plethora of 100th year ending of WW1 commemorative concerts. A highlight of which was a concert and service for Cpl Tommy Jackson VC awarded posthumously 100 years ago on 26 September 1918. The choir learned a special piece for the event, *Song for the Unsung Hero*, words by Pamela Stewart, music by Joseph M Martin.

More information available at our website.

www.thurnscoe-hmvc.com

John Keating
Secretary

Glasgow Phoenix Choir Scotland West

Phew! That was quite a first half to our season. We've sung, celebrated, wept tears of joy and tears of sadness. And it looks like we're in for more of the same in the New Year.

Our first big concert events of the season saw the choir head off for a long weekend to the Highlands. The first concert of the series took place in the lovely town of Strathpeffer, where we were staying in the Ben Wyvis Hotel with its ever-patient staff - they put up with a lot when we vis-singing, having to have meals at odd times, more singing, talking, drinking, further singing - sometimes not quite as tuneful following the consumption of alcoholic beverages, though occasionally better! I'm sure others have had similar experiences. Our guests

at our first concert were our good friends of the Dingwall Gaelic Choir, for whom our conductor, Marilyn, had provided a singing masterclass on the evening before our visit. They had really enjoyed the experience and were in great voice at the concert. They are such a good choir that you don't really need to understand Gaelic to enjoy what they do - they sing so expressively. The second concert of the weekend took place in the beautiful Dornoch Cathedral, where we were helping to raise funds for the restoration of the church hall. Then on the Sunday of the weekend, we performed in St Andrew's Episcopal Cathedral, Inverness in a concert to raise money for Marie Curie. All three concerts were very well attended and raised a goodly sum for each cause supported. In addition, our social committee inflicted a quiz on the travelling singers and raised £125.00, which was added to the total for Marie Curie.

In October, we had yet another long-service award ceremony, when Anne MacDonald, Janette Walker, Ken O'Donnell and Stewart Moir were each presented with a glass 'wave' to commemorate their 25 years each of service to the choir. Quite

an achievement and one that the choir enjoyed helping them to celebrate.

November saw us return to St Michael's Parish Church in the amazing town of Linlithgow - birthplace of Mary Queen of Scots - the church itself is very beautiful and has an amazing acoustic. As we've previously sung Christmas concerts in St Michael's there'd been a bit of concern for the Rotary Club organisers that we might not attract a big audience. In fact, the attendance was much better than it has been before, a surprise since there were so many other events on in the town that evening. Later in the month, a small group from the choir took part in the BBC's Big Sing, televised on 23 December - they had a great time, and we're hopeful that on a future occasion the timing might work better for us so that more people can take part.

That brings us to December and Christmas. We had the great pleasure of taking part in two carol singing events in Glasgow; the first in the Blythswood Hotel, which is a very swanky venue and the following day in the Savoy Centre, a small shopping mall in the city centre, which has recently been refurbished. We were led in these events by Cameron Murdoch, who manages to play piano and conduct simultaneously - and they say men can't multi-task! My funniest moment of the two events was seeing the expression on Cameron's face when an elderly lady approached him as he played and conducted to try to give him some money - he's good, but he does only have two hands, both of which were very busy at that moment. Thankfully, a helpful Savoy shop-keeper came to the rescue of both. Later on the same day, we had the pleasure of taking part in a concert with



Friar Alessandro, a Franciscan monk from Assisi in his first visit to Scotland, in St Mary's Church, Calton – the historic home of Glasgow Celtic FC, as the club was set up by the church's parish priest in 1887 in an attempt to alleviate poverty in the East End of Glasgow. It was an uplifting affair and was hosted, much to her own surprise, by Marilyn. She did a great job, especially as she'd had to step in at very much the last minute.

We ended our Christmas season with our usual round of three concerts in East Kilbride, Edinburgh and in Glasgow Royal Concert Hall. All three were most enjoyable to take part in and greatly appreciated by our audiences. The final concert of the series allowed us to honour, formally, Bill Forrest's 60 years with the choir – Bill says he's just keeping up with Sir Cliff!

And so, we're in holiday mode for the moment and looking, as you do at this time of year, to the future. Changes lie ahead for us – firstly, we move to a new rehearsal venue from the middle of January: St. John's Renfield Church becomes our new home, having served us in a variety of ways over the years and we're looking forward to settling in there.

Our second change is much more significant. After 28 years, our much-loved conductor, Marilyn J Smith, will be leaving the choir at the end of this season. The news was met with shock and sadness, but with the realisation that things cannot always stay the same. I have the feeling that the next six months will be very special as we all strive to make the remainder of Marilyn's time with us as memorable, and tuneful, as possible. I will keep you informed!

Anne Kay
Publicity Officer

Orpheus Male Voice Choir Grimsby & Cleethorpes Lincolnshire

NEARLY 70 YEARS OLD!

The Orpheus Male Voice Choir has been part of the cultural and social life of the Grimsby and Cleethorpes area since soon after the end of World War II. It was founded in 1949 in response to the wishes of local men, many recently returned from service in the armed forces, to sing together as a male choir. Remarkably, six of the founder members were still actively singing with the Orpheus when its 50th anniversary was celebrated in 1999. Many of us recall the names of Frank Jobson, Bert Bantock, Vic Dumelow, Stan Wray and Alan Burton, who all had 50 years continuous service. Harry Graham, who was widely known in local music circles and was also a founder member, had returned to the choir after a short break.

Most of the choir's major concerts on home ground have been given at the Grimsby Central Hall in Duncombe Street, with its splendid acoustic for musical events. This feature has been commented on by nationally known professional performers. Grimsby Town Hall has also hosted a number of the choir's concerts. Others have been held at many local churches, often to raise funds for the churches themselves and various charitable causes.

Many concerts have featured well-known local guest performers and also prominent visiting artists of the highest calibre: soloists both vocal and instrumental, small groups, choirs, brass bands and jazz bands. These are too numerous to name them all,

but over the decades they include: Phyllis Sellick, Keith Swallow, Angela Brownridge and Richard Markham (pianists); Marion Studholm, John Lawrenson, Linda Strachan, Charles Daniels, Maryetta Midgely, Michael Dore and Frances Brookes (singers); RAF Cranwell Band, Black Dyke Mills Band, Brighthouse and Rastrick Band and the British Steel Band; Leo Solomon Trio, Humphrey Lyttelton and his Band, and the Best of British Jazz, the last with such illustrious names as Kenny Baker, Don Lusher, Jack Parnell, Roy Wilcox, Lennie Bush and Brian Lemmon.

The Orpheus has also presented visiting choirs from all over the country as guest performers. These have included some of the most outstanding male voice choirs as well as mixed choirs. Such links have led to the Orpheus travelling to concerts in other areas: more locally, to Hull, Beverley, Scunthorpe, Caistor, Market Rasen and Louth. Examples of visits further afield have been to Thurnscoe (West Yorkshire), Nottingham, Newcastle, South Shields, Wimborne (Dorset), Dore (Sheffield), Berriew and Garndiffaith (both Wales). Involvement in the choral movement generally has been greatly helped by membership of the National Association of Choirs, of which the Orpheus Musical Director, Richard Bradley, was chairman for several years and is a vice-president. The Association's Lincolnshire Group arranges joint concerts and workshops for the member choirs in its area.

International exchanges have taken place with choirs in Europe, with many personal friendships developing as a result. It all began with a visit to Eindhoven, Nijmegen and Boxmeer in Holland in 1967, following an initial trip to the Orpheus by the Eindhoven choir the previous year. Contacts were later made with Meinerzhagen and Rauschendorf in Germany. Rauschendorf is a village near the beautiful town of Konigswinter (on the Rhine, near Bonn), with which Cleethorpes is twinned. Further links were made with Alingsås (Sweden), the Dutch National Male Voice Choir and Pessac in France. Concerts were also given with guest choirs from Norway and South Africa.

The Orpheus Male Voice Choir has had many successes at competitive musical festivals over the years, both locally and in other parts of the country. Perhaps the most prestigious first prize was won



Orpheus Male Voice Choir Spot Crawford

at the Biddulph Festival in 1990, beating several top rank choirs.

In June 1960 the choir took part in the BBC 'All Together' programme, from the Pier Pavilion in Cleethorpes. The Orpheus also featured in a Christmas broadcast from Hull City Hall in 1984. Along with other choral groups the Orpheus were invited to sing at a special concert, broadcast on Radio 3, to mark the opening of the new Grimsby Auditorium in June 1995. The work performed was Carl Orff's 'Carmina Burana' which was accompanied by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and conducted by Owain Arwel Hughes. The choir also sang in BBC Television's 'Songs of Praise' in 2001, when they performed from the bandstand outside the Grimsby Fishing Heritage Centre.

Various events are being planned to mark the choir's 70th anniversary year in 2019. Already scheduled is a celebrity concert on Saturday 30 March at Grimsby Central Hall, with piano duo David Nettle and Richard Markham. Both are renowned soloists in their own right. Richard, who grew up in Grimsby, gave his first public performance with the Orpheus in the late 1960s, and he went on to become a pianist of world class. He has never forgotten his roots and frequently returns to Grimsby to support local musical activity. Richard has played with the Orpheus on a number of occasions.

Over the weekend of 17-19 May 2019 the choir will be travelling to Wales to sing as guests of the Tonna Male Voice Choir, who were in Grimsby for a concert at the Minster in September 2017. Members enjoy the social side of these visits, and their wives, who are part of the choir 'family', are always welcome to go along too.

New members are welcomed by the Orpheus at any time. Although previous singing experience and the ability to read music are obvious advantages, they are not requirements for joining. We have a very varied repertoire, including uplifting hymn tunes, spirituals and other sacred music, arrangements of operatic choruses, traditional songs, items from musical shows and even pop songs. If you think you would like to be a part of this most enjoyable activity, and, if you wish, also share in the social life of members and their wives, please contact the choir Secretary, Alan Jacklin 01472 502833.

alan.jacklin@ntlworld.com.

Alan will be happy to provide further details, including venue and rehearsal times. Alternatively, visit the choir's website

Orpheus-online.org

Do get in touch if you think you might be interested. We hope you will decide to give it a try and be part of this friendly organisation.

Ian Robinson
Assistant MD

A Choristers' Guide To Keeping Conductors In Line

The basic training of every singer should, of course, include myriad types of practical and theoretical emphases. One important area which is often neglected, however, is the art of one-upmanship. The following rules are intended as guides to the development of habits which will promote the proper type of relationship between singer and conductor.

1. Never be satisfied with the starting pitch. If the conductor uses a pitch-pipe, make known your preference for pitches from the piano and vice-versa.
2. Complain about the temperature of the rehearsal room, the lighting, crowded space, and of a draft. It's best to do this when the conductor is under pressure.
3. Bury your head in the music just before cues.
4. Ask for a re-audition or seating change. Ask often. Give the impression you're about to quit. Let the conductor know you're there as a personal favour.
5. Loudly clear your throat during pauses (tenors are trained to do this from birth). Quiet instrumental interludes are a good chance to blow your nose.
6. Long after a passage has gone by, ask the conductor if your C# was in tune. This is especially effective if you had no C# or were not singing at the time.
7. At dramatic moments in the music (which the conductor is emoting), be busy marking your music so that the climaxes will sound empty and disappointing.

8. Wait until well into a rehearsal before letting the conductor know that you don't have the music.

9. Look at your watch frequently. Shake it in disbelief occasionally.

10. When possible, sing your part either an octave above or below what is written. This is excellent ear-training for the conductor. If he hears the pitch, deny it vehemently and claim that it must have been the combination tone.

11. Tell the conductor, 'I can't find the beat.' Conductors are always sensitive about their 'stick technique' so challenge it frequently.

12. If you are singing in a language with which the conductor is the least bit unfamiliar, ask her as many questions as possible about the meaning of individual words. If this fails, ask her about the pronunciation of the most difficult words. Occasionally, say the word twice and ask her preference, making to say it exactly the same both times. If she remarks on their similarity, give her a look of utter disdain and mumble under your breath about the 'subtleties of inflection'.

13. Ask the conductor if he has listened to the von Karajan recording of the piece. Imply that he could learn a thing or two from it. Also good: ask, 'Is this the first time you've conducted this piece?'

14. If your articulation differs from that of others singing the same phrase, stick to your guns. Do not ask the conductor which is correct until backstage just before the concert.

15. Find an excuse to leave the rehearsal about 15 minutes early so that others will become restless and start to fidget.

Make every effort to take the attention away from the podium and put it on you, where it belongs! *****





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A representative group of Côr Meibion De Cymru (The South Wales Male Choir) choristers took part in the Fred. Olsen "Fjords, Mountains and Glaciers" cruise in August of 2016 on board MS *Black Watch*.

The choir thrilled fellow passengers with two formal concerts (in addition to many more sporadic outbursts of song) as the *Black Watch* travelled from Harwich in mid-August to three ports in Norway and through some of its most picturesque fjords.

The cruise was blessed with excellent weather and the party responded accordingly. Both of the "formal" concerts aboard *Black Watch* were performed to

full capacity audiences and the delighted fellow passengers gave the choir a standing ovation at the end of each concert.

The whole tour party was most impressed, not only by the standards of service that they received whilst on board *Black Watch*, but also the polite, efficient and cheerful manner of the friendly staff. Choir vice-president Phil Howells thanked Captain Danielsen and his team for making the cruise on his "Happy Ship" such an enjoyable and memorable experience.

Barri Hurford, Choir Compere, South Wales Male Voice choir.

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Newquay Male Voice Choir Cornwall

Summer Of 2018

The summer of 2018 is likely to live long in the memory of all those associated with Newquay Male Voice Choir. It must rank as the busiest and most extraordinary summer since the choir's reformation back in 1974.

It all began on a warm sunny evening in July in the ballroom of the Atlantic Hotel when the choir, together with their guests, Eight in a Bar, presented a gala concert in aid of the local Cormorants Swimming Club. The audience was entertained by two choirs at the top of their game who sang a programme which covered the full range of the male choral repertoire while helping Newquay MVC to fulfil its stated intent to help to support local initiatives which engage with young people in the town.

Just three weeks later the choir found themselves, again in bright sunshine, singing in the open air and entertaining a large wedding garden party at Tresillian House, just outside the town. It had been a while since the choir had enjoyed an event such as this and they took the opportunity to sing a lighter programme of music which was clearly very much appreciated by the invited guests.

What was expected to be the highlight of the summer followed just a few days later when the choir performed on the main stage of the huge Boardmasters Festival, the only male voice choir in Cornwall to have done so. What an experience it proved to be working with a professional production team and a stage manager who has worked on some of the largest stages in the world. Everything seemed to be so much larger than life, from the huge speakers that were to project the choir's sound across the festival site to the massive expanse of the sound stage itself which seemed to swallow up the choir as we positioned ourselves. Of course it rained but this did not dampen the spirits of the choir nor the sizeable group of hardy people who donned wet weather gear and came to hear us. All but one of the choir's full singing membership were able to be there, some being very enthusiastically encouraged by family members to do so. We now appreciate the nature and influence of something we called 'grand-



children power'. And the choir nailed it! MD Richard Braebrook put together a high octane programme of bright and energetic pieces which cut through the misery of the weather to have people dancing and clapping along with every song. The choir even featured for a brief moment on the Chris Evans Radio 2 Breakfast Programme in the following week.

Following an experience such as this was likely to be difficult but Newquay MVC was able to do so with two outdoor performances. The first was only the following day at Padstow where we sang on the bandstand at the harbour side and the second came just a few days later when we were invited to sing as part of a new initiative, the Newquay Sessions, on the Killacourt in the town. Both occasions proved to be really enjoyable, offering the opportunity to entertain local people as well as those on holiday. The Killacourt concert took some of the singers back in time to a gentler age as we sang to an audience arranged in deck chairs in front of the bandstand; but on a warm sunny afternoon it all seemed to be very appropriate.

With September still not in sight the choir was then invited by Thames TV to audition for 'Britain's Got Talent'. At this stage the choir would probably have tried anything and so on the last Wednesday evening of the month we found ourselves in St Michael's Church singing in

front of a television camera. We know that many other choirs will have been auditioned so we are retaining a sense of proportion about any prospects of actually appearing on the show but 'you have to be in it to win it' and, at the time of writing this piece, we have at least received what we have judged to be an encouraging response so watch this space. We may yet see 'grandchildren power' in operation again.

One might have expected that to be the final act of a very busy summer. However, for Newquay MVC over recent years that experience has always been reserved for the town's Fish Festival down at the harbour. This year was no exception as once again we took to the stage in the large bar and events marquee with a programme that entertained those singing as much as those listening. A good time was definitely had by all.

And there we have it, the summer of 2018, a summer full of excitement, enjoyment and experiences. Now, where have I put my Christmas music?

Newquay Male Voice Choir can next be heard at a concert commencing at 2.00pm in St Michael's Church on Sunday 14 October. Admission to this concert will be free. Further details are to follow.

Jim Christophers
Secretary

Os Rocks

Midlands North

We are a mixed voice choir of all ages (around 50 members) based in Oswestry, Shropshire. We rehearse on Tuesday evenings from 7.30 until 9.00. Formed in March 2018 we have gone from strength to strength and are asked to perform at many different events. We support a different small local charity each year - donating money from concerts and organising fund raising evenings. This year we have raised around £1000 for our chosen charity.

The choir was started by Jan Ellis, who, on moving down to Oswestry from Huddersfield in Yorkshire, decided that she wanted to do something different. After holding a meeting in a local pub and taking her husband with her because she thought no-one would turn up (about 60 did), Os Rocks was born.

We focus mainly on rock and pop music from the 1950s up to present date and like to think that we are a little bit alternative.

Our main emphasis is on fun, the choir is accessible to all, although we do take it seriously, having just entered our first competition which was a great experience.



Jan plays piano for the choir and she is ably assisted by Nikki Hughes who conducts. Both Jan and Nikki would like to sing in the choir (they are not Musical Directors). What the choir really needs is a talented Musical Director who can take us forward on our journey. We would also like a pianist, although Jan doesn't mind carrying on this role if no-one can be found.

We would be very grateful if you could mention us in your publication. Having

tried many different ways of trying to attract people, we have been unsuccessful.

Anyone interested can email Jan

osrocksadmin@btinternet.com

Jan Ellis
Choir founder and current pianist



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Pye Hill and District Male Voice Choir

Midlands East

Tour of Cwmbrân Male Choir to Derbyshire

On Saturday 29 September, Pye Hill and District Male Voice Choir together with special guests, Cwmbrân Male Choir from South Wales and the highly talented tenor soloist, Jason Darnell, held a concert at St Andrews Church, Swanwick, which was greatly enjoyed by all present in a church filled to capacity. This raised the staggering sum of £1,607 for the Poppy Appeal.

The concert had taken a year in planning and involved the Pye Hill and District Male Voice Choir hosting the Cwmbrân Male Choir in a long awaited return tour to Derbyshire, this time augmented by members of the Garndiffaith Gleemen, making it even more special.

The fun started on the Friday evening when members of both choirs met each other in the restaurant adjoining their accommodation at Ripley and inevitably began singing. This was to continue throughout the weekend at every available opportunity.

Cwmbrân Male Choir have travelled extensively throughout the UK, Europe and as far afield as the USA, but also have a long-standing friendship with the Pye Hill & District Male Voice Choir going back to 1986. This concert was the fourth exchange visit between these well-known and successful choirs.

'It must be the Welsh accent that makes Welsh Male Choirs sound so distinctive and wonderful', commented one member of the audience, and then went on to say 'she did not realise also how talented the Pye Hill and District Male Voice Choir are'.



The 'icing on the cake' for the concert was the four songs performed by Jason Darnell who was universally greeted with rapturous applause after each of his varied performances. Jason is now an international professional tenor and amongst other engagements has sang before the Pope this year and will also be singing at York Minster before Christmas.

Both choirs joined forces to open the concert singing *Stout Hearted Men*. This is the signature tune of both choirs and was performed with great gusto and pleasure.

Cwmbrân Male Choir then took centre stage singing *Let All Men Sing*, which is greatly enjoyed when performed as well as this accomplished Welsh choir. *Calon Lân* was a song everyone wanted to hear and the masterful rendition was such you did not want it end. *My Lord What a Mornin'* was sung with great sensitivity and their rendition of *Jesus Paid It All* reminded everyone present why every seat had been taken.

This was followed by Jason Darnell singing *Sweet Chance* by Michael Head, which

held the audience's attention in such a way that they were eager for what was to follow.

The Pye Hill & District Male Voice Choir opened their account with a rousing but precise rendition of *The Song of the Jolly Roger* followed by the melodious and contrasting *Calm is the Sea*.

Jason Darnell's rendition of *Every Valley* from the Messiah by Handel can only be described as a virtuoso performance of this long and challenging piece.

The Pye Hill & District Male Voice Choir completed the first half of the concert with one of their most requested and popular songs *Unchained Melody* and then for the first time *Ghost Riders in the Sky* and was surprised by the immediate reaction and involvement from the audience.

Following the interval, the Pye Hill & District Male Voice Choir provided a powerful but sensitive rendition of *Morte Criste* followed by *Softly As I Leave You*.

Jason Darnell's rendition of *Danny Boy* by Weatherly was proof that the best voices are those which are clear, beautiful and capable of great variation without the need to be focused on volume for effect.

The Pye Hill & District Male Voice Choir completed their set with the evocative *American Trilogy* and *When the Saints Go Marching In* which was universally enjoyed.

Jason Darnell's final song *The Holy City* by Adams can only be described as a breathtaking masterpiece which captivated the audience.

The Cwmbrân Male Choir completed their set with an absolutely brilliant choice of songs, reminding the audience of the quality this Welsh choir led by their MD, Matthew Harrison who had recently been confirmed as the best young MD in South Wales. *What Would I Do Without My Music* was sung with the same freshness of voices as when the concert began. The Welsh classics *O Gymru* and *Gwahoddiaid* were greeted like old friends and not wanting their presence to end, such was the quality of performance. The arrangement of *Shenandoah* by contrast was the best that I have ever heard and brought the song alive in a way that makes you cling to every word.

No concert of this nature could be a success without quality accompanists who play such a vital role for all the musical



performers. This concert had three of the best in the vastly experienced Rosemary Jones for the Pye Hill and District Male Voice Choir, the very talented Lucie Bebbington-Lewis for Cwmbrân Male Choir and the outstanding Stephen Wall for Jason Darnell.

'I can't remember a concert which seemed to pass so very fast' said several members of the audience and the choice of *Bring Him Home* jointly performed by both choirs led by the very accomplished Linda Darnell, MD of the Pye Hill and District Male Voice Choir could not have been more appreciated and a fitting finale to a wonderful evening.

Both choirs exchanged gifts to mark this prestigious occasion. The Pye Hill and District Male Voice Choir was presented with an inscribed brass miner's lamp and the Cwmbrân Male Choir were presented with a vase decorated with poppies. Both choirs are to receive certificates of achievement from the Royal British Legion who were present with their standard together with several civic dignitaries, including the mayor and consort of Amber Valley.



The Pye Hill and District Male Voice Choir

As you will imagine the end of the concert was only an interruption to the continuation of the singing. Both choirs, family and friends followed on to the Dale Club at Jacksdale, the home of the Pye Hill and District Male Voice Choir, where a buffet was provided and following a well earned drink, or two, the singing continued to midnight including impromptu solos and renditions to add to the fun with Cwmbrân Male Choir finishing the evening by singing *There Will Be a Welcome in the Hillside*, which could not have been a more fitting end to a wonderful and enjoyable occasion.

The following day both choirs visited Chatsworth House and Gardens before saying a fond farewell to each other and joined voices for the last time at 'Floras Temple' to sing before a delighted Duke of Devonshire. *Tan y tro nesaf!*

Full details of recruitment, bookings and concert arrangements for the Pye Hill and District Male Voice choir can be found at www.pyehillmvc.co.uk

Malcolm Hill
Concert Secretary
and Publicity Officer



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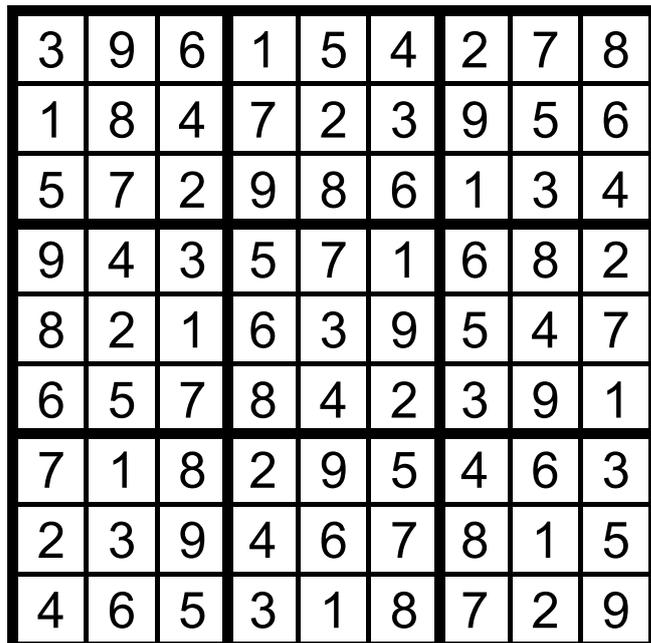
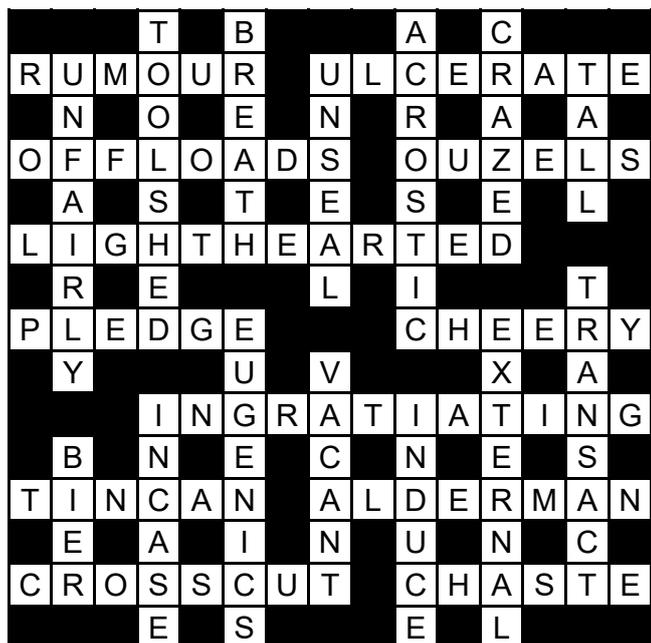
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Many of our contributors love to show their prowess by sending in wonderful finished articles with **coloured** headlines, five different fonts and many **underlinings**, *italics* and **bold** bits. Then, of course, I have to spend time taking them all out before I can set their article up the way you will see it in the magazine. KEEP IT SIMPLE!

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