

NEWS & VIEWS

208

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHOIRS

AUTUMN 2015

CONFERENCE 2016

Booking Forms inside

MANSFIELD & DISTRICT MVC

First time in News & Views

PUZZLES PAGES

Two full pages

LETTER FROM OZ

Can't Take My Eyes Off You

CONFERENCE 2017

It's all in the planning

Sing For Pleasure

Young Conductors Programme

Manvinder Rattan announces scholarships





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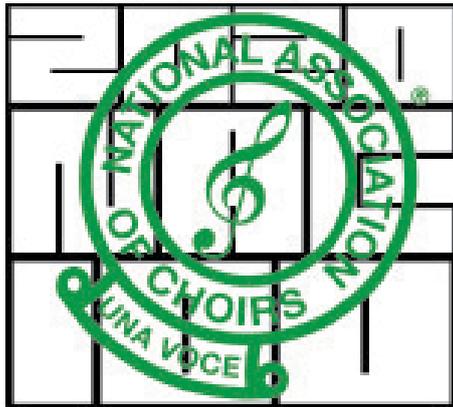
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National Association of Choirs

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Last date for submissions for Issue 209

SPRING 2016 - 31 DECEMBER

On your doorstep by 1 February

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Crawford's Corner



The Autumn issue of News & Views is here and I write this on the first misty morning since who knows when.

It is always an interesting problem putting together everything that goes into News &

Views and all of it must fit into a multiple of four pages. It often goes very easily but sometimes life is not kind. There can be too much material for 32 pages but not enough for 36. That's what happened this time. I had 35 pages worth. See if you can work out what I did to fill the 36th page.

There are reports here about when choirs travelled the country to sing with

each other. Some of these choirs have connections that go way back but some are new members looking to make new connections. This issue I started a Swap Shop where choirs could ask for other choirs to visit. Why not send more requests and see who would like to join you in song?

Crawford

Chairman's Chat



My, how time flies by. It doesn't seem that long ago since I chatted to you than here I am again.

Out of the many hobbies people may have, I wouldn't mind betting that belonging to a choir is at the top of the list because when I read how long choristers, accompanists and MDs have been with their choirs it is astounding, as the anniversaries in this issue are testament. I look forward to reading what you get up to on your choral travels, and the diverse venues you sing in, and that the reports will encourage other choirs to do the same and let us know of their exploits – which has happened this time. On my travels I have found that choirs are beginning to expand their repertoires and take on board genres they probably wouldn't have considered ten years ago, and Tim's review of new music is highlighting some new composers. If you do add these to your singing list, maybe you could let him know of your learning and

comprehension of the pieces and how you feel about its eventual performance.

We all quote people like Mark Twain, Oscar Wilde and loads of others in our everyday conversations, but I never thought I would get elevated to a position where I would be quoted, but choirs from my own group have done just that in the report of the Midlands East 2016 Group Concert and it does sum up what we are all about – one big family. I would like more groups to become as active as my own, because I know how the camaraderie and fellowship helps, inspires and assists choirs. I do realise that we are all very busy, and to organise a group seems like another job on the list which is already filled to overflowing, but please think about it and get in touch with me on how you can make your group active. The rewards are worth it, believe me.

We are already looking forward to next year's conference, and all the details and booking form are in this issue, along with outline details for 2017. We do see new faces but would love to see more. We don't bite – honestly. I went to my first conference on my own, and I'm shy with

strangers, but I was very quickly accepted by one person then another and before very long had a wider band of friends, then became Membership Officer and now Chairman. I'm not saying that you will be given a job by attending, I'm pointing out the meeting and friendship with people – other things may follow at any level and for whatever reason. Plus, we have the ever popular David Lawrence as our headline speaker.

Continuing on the conference mode, you will see a photo of Manvinder Rattan on the front cover, and you will remember he was our principal speaker when we were in Scarborough two years ago. He has just awarded scholarships to promising conductors, and who knows, some of these just might take on one of our member choirs in years to come. Keep a look out.

This is the last issue of 2015 and, although it is only September, it would be remiss of me not to wish you all the blessings of the Season when it comes. I won't use the C word – too early!

Brenda Wilkinson

SWAP SHOP

LOOKING FOR EXCHANGE CONCERTS WITH OTHER CHOIRS?

LOOK NO FURTHER...

Abertillery Ladies Orpheus Choir

Wales South

Our choir was established in 1911 and has played an active role in our local community for over one hundred years. Abertillery is a small valley town and has strong historical links with the coal mining industry.

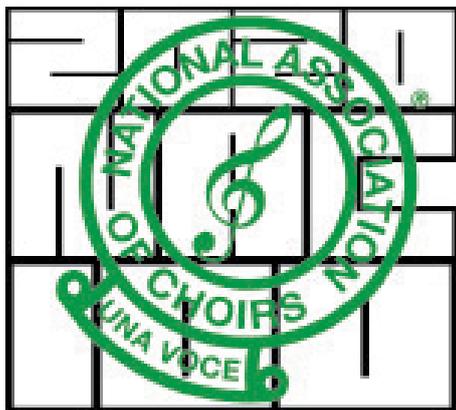
Over the years, the choir has raised many thousands of pounds for various charities and taken part in a wide range of festivals and celebrations. During recent years we have performed in Germany and in 2014 we had the enormous honour of singing at The Menin Gate in Ypres as part of the Great War Centenary commemorations.

At the moment the choir has 37 members. We enjoy making music together and have an active social life. We have a varied repertoire and would like to arrange a tour in 2016. The choir would be happy to consider a joint concert swap with organisations based within 150 miles. Please get in touch if you are interested.

mar52@hotmail.co.uk
www.abertilleryladiesorpheus.org.uk

Marilyn Allen
 Chairperson





NAC Centenary Celebrations We would like you to get involved.

The year 2020 will be our Centenary. Impressive! But what are we going to do to celebrate?

Various suggestions have been put forward, both by National Officers and by member choirs, and one of the best is that we should publish an NAC Songbook during that year.

The idea is that choirs should send us words – single words or phrases – which indicate

- NAC CENTENARY 2020 - National Song Book ?

the whole of the choral world to them. For instance, we thought of Celebration, Sing, Music... anything which means something to the members of your choir. We will take those words and phrases, and ask/commission/persuade some choral composers to provide us with songs incorporating the words and phrases. The final piece in the jigsaw will be to publish the songs, both to our member choirs and to the wider choral world, during 2020.

These are at the moment the bare bones of the idea, and over the next couple of years it will be developed and refined until we finally have what we want. Then there will be lots of publicity – maybe we can get all our choirs to sing one particular song at the same time, which would probably interest the BBC.

So – please help. Send us, by email, snail mail or whatever, your suggestions for

words and phrases that we can use to enthuse our composers. We would like these by the end of this year, so that we can get the next phase under way in early 2016. Any one of the National Officers will be pleased to receive your suggestions, but in default, please send them to Celia Johns.

general.secretary@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk

We will keep you informed as to progress, but in advance - many thanks.

Celia Johns

How about designing a decent logo that we could use during our centenary year. I'll see if I can scrounge a prize from our Treasurer if anyone has a go.

Letter from NAC in Oz

We have just had a glorious day of sunshine and the temperature has at last started to rise. It never gets to the bone numbing depths which happen in the UK but to us - now being acclimatised to the Australian climate - it has seemed very cold. In a few days we visit our son in Victoria which is going to be several degrees cooler than Sydney. Get out the winter clothes that we brought with us from the UK and have hardly ever worn. However Spring is on its way. The picture shows a group of Jewel Bugs on a tree just behind the beach at Newport - our nearest town/village. Aren't they magnificent? Harbingers of the Summer to come.

In a way you are lucky - maybe - to be seeing this missive from the Antipodes because if our plans had come to pass we would be in England now. However, the ills of winter caught up with us - flu for me and pneumonia for Jan. We decided it would be foolish to venture on to airplanes with those illnesses hanging over us, so now we will be in UK in your Spring next year. It will be Jan's sister's 80th birthday then so a good time to be there. Maybe we can meet some of our NAC friends while we are travelling around.



The Men's Shed Chorale - for new readers my current choir - is performing manfully despite also being hit with flu virus and being sorely depleted. Audiences have been very understanding and given the guys very good receptions. New music is being introduced. One of the latest pieces being the Frankie Valli song, *Can't take my eyes off of you*, chosen by our music sleuth. It is a little high for us poor first tenors - but of course he is a bass so he doesn't care. I

think there will be some tinkering with the key signature to avoid us exploding.

As usual if you wish to contact me please do so via email at

petefig@optusnet.com.au.

I always look forward to contact from the UK.

Peter Marshall

Sing Barbershop

Add some Harmony to your Life!

The British Association of Barbershop Singers (BABS), established over 40 years ago, is a registered charity and a specialist umbrella organisation supporting barbershop singing in the UK. BABS is the largest male barbershop organisation outside North America and has 60 registered choruses (choirs) and nearly 100 registered barbershop quartets.

As a charity, BABS provides educational grants totalling many thousands of pounds each year to anyone, male or female, to develop an interest in harmony singing and performance. Also, it provides financial support and resources to its member clubs for the running of Learn to Sing courses. Over 300 of these free courses have been run so far, each one designed to encourage individuals to get involved with singing as part of their leisure activities.

BABS also runs a 3-day residential college, plus training events and courses for musical directors, music teams, clubs, quartets and individuals. In addition, it has its own training programme for competition judges, many of whom are invited to adjudicate at non-barbershop festivals.

Make this the year you get involved

More and more people are experiencing the thrill of singing harmony in the distinctive barbershop style. Whether you are a musical director, choir, quartet, or an individual singer, we would like you to add some harmony to your life. Come and join in the excitement!

For more information visit our web site
or email: getinvolved@singbarbershop.com

www.singbarbershop.com

British Association of Barbershop Singers

Registered Office: 6 Corunna Court, Corunna Road, Warwick CV34 5HQ

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SING BARBERSHOP

It's the Harmony that makes the difference

Forthcoming Events

Events between this issue of News & Views and the next are in greater detail. The rest give only concert title, date, venue and contact. As the event date comes nearer they will be shown in more detail. Let us know when your events are happening so that we can let everyone know.

Send your event to

publications.officer@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk

November

Tamworth Male Voice Choir

Saturday 21 November

Venue: Tamworth Assembly Rooms, Corporation Street, Tamworth B79 7HR

Time: 7.30

The choir is celebrating their annual concert in the company of their friends Tamworth Ladies Choir.

Tickets £10 obtained from John Egan [Secretary] on 01827 69436

December

ROWLAND SINGERS

Christmas Celebrations Concert

Saturday 12 December

Venue: Emmanuel United Reform Church, Worthing

Time: 2.30

Tickets £9 adult £3 child.

The Rowland Singers perform their Christmas concert, with some community carols. The Emery Ensemble are the guest soloists.

Tuesday 15 December

Venue: Offington Park Methodist Worthing

Time: 7.30

Tickets £9 adult £3 child.

The Rowland Singers perform their Christmas concert, with some community carols. The Emery Ensemble are the guest soloists.

Thursday 17 December

Venue: The Assembly Hall, Worthing

Time: 7.30

Tickets £10 adult £3 child. Call 01903 238792 for tickets.

Christmas Celebrations. The Rowland Singers perform their Christmas concert, with some community carols. Guests will be a showcase of Helen's students.

BENSLOWMUSIC

Singing Day - With Jonathan Willcocks

Saturday 12 December

Tutor: Jonathan Willcocks

Distinguished conductor and composer Jonathan Willcocks leads this brand new Singing Day devoted to the choruses of Handel's Messiah and Jonathan's own work, Sing Africa.

Jonathan - who is well experienced in running such events will conduct participants as a choir throughout the day, ending with an informal performance. If you have copies of the Messiah please bring them along but we will have spares for those who don't, and music for Sing Africa will be provided. The day will begin at 10.30 and will end around 4.30. We will provide refreshments for break times but participants will need to make their own lunch arrangements. Depending on numbers the day will either take place at the Benslow campus or at a larger local venue. Further details will be available closer to the time. An event not to be missed!

Standard: Intermediate, Advanced

Fee: £20

Benslow Music, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG4 9RB

info@benslowmusic.org

01462 459446

www.benslowmusic.org

ROWLAND SINGERS

Christmas Celebrations Concert

Thursday 17 December

Venue: Assembly Hall, Worthing

Time: 7.30

Tickets £10 adult £3 child.

May 2016

Cor World Choir

Saturday 21 May 2016

Venue: Millennium Stadium, Cardiff

Time: 7.30

We are delighted to invite your choir to join Côr World Choir - the largest massed voice choir ever assembled. This spectacular event is scheduled to take place in the Millennium Stadium, Cardiff on Saturday, 21 May 2016.

The concert, combining male, female and mixed voice choirs (20,000 voices) from across the world will be accompanied by a major concept orchestra along with some of the world's finest solo artists and groups.

Led by renowned conductor Owain Arwel Hughes, who conducted the original concerts in '92 and '93,

Côr World Choir highlights the power of choral music both traditional and specially arranged modern pop that transcends culture and emotion.

Initial repertoire will include the following: *Jacobs Ladder, Steal Away, Hebrew Slaves, Hallelujah Chorus, O Fortuna, Zadok the Priest, Jerusalem, Were You There, Eli Jenkins's Prayer, Llanfair, Adiemus.*

Please complete the registration form for your choir to be included in this unique and memorable event.

All registered choirs will receive the Côr World Choir Music Pack with music, lyrics and CD's for your rehearsals. Our website www.corworldchoir.com will provide all updates, soloists and press releases which you may wish to pass onto your local media. Once you have registered you will be invited to join the Côr World Choir Community where you will be able to connect with all the participating choirs.

If you have any queries please e-mail info@corworldchoir.com

Wishing you and your choir the very best and hoping you will join us in Wales next year.

www.corworldchoir.com

Music & Festivals Officer



Having just been at the ABCD Conference I have come back with a bumper crop of publications for review, some of which appear here and the rest will feature over the next few issues.

Choral Music publishers, large and small were represented and many reading sessions took place so that some of the music could be sung through, an important part of choosing music for directors is hearing, and better still singing it through!

R Smith & Co Denington Choral series

In the face of a child (SSATTB/Piano) John Larsson

A Choral Symphony (SSAATTBB/Piano)
Richard Phillips

Christ's Part (SATB/Piano)

The publications in this series are all beautifully produced with their distinctive Yellow covers; they are available from

www.deningtonchoralseries.com though they don't appear to have code numbers so you will need to look for the titles concerned.

Christ's Part is a rather lovely setting of some words by Robert Herrick creating an atmospheric reflection on these words, In the face of a child (Christmas) has an unashamed nod to the world of popular music, not in a worship song way but a Gershwin-esque feel, very melodic and with lush harmonies, recommended, finally in the batch we received was a Choral symphony – this is a very different kettle of fish and is a full scale work which includes choral speaking as well as singing, it has an interesting selection of styles and has a wonderfully infectious upbeat opening and then continues through an arrangement of Nicea, the well known Hymn tune, movements 2 is more reflective in style as befits the words movement 3 likewise until its well-paced climax, movement 4 is suitably fast (very fast) and exciting.

The roots of the Salvation Army are clearly to be found in both selection of words and also musical style, (Denington choral series is a venture of Salvationist Publishing and supplies) and this final piece would make for a fine combined choir concert,

it combines enjoyment for singer and listener.

YouTube links to all three pieces are available.

Banks Music Publications

GCL007 The Everlasting voices SATB
Russell Hepplewhite

GCL011 The Christmas Bells SATB/Piano
Thomas Hewitt Jones

Next we come to Banks music publications 'Genesis' series featuring the works of three young composers, again beautifully produced with distinct covers, this series for me represents the new forward looking Banks and contains some very fine music.

I have chosen just a couple of the pieces to review this time, more will follow later, these two for me are original and fresh in style and a welcome change from the Whitacre/Lauridsden style of writing that appears to have many imitators.

The Christmas Bells is as good a carol as I have come across in many a year, its writing is lively, absolutely full of joy but approachable, it includes a short soprano solo and from the outset it bounds along with sheer delight. Singers and audiences will love this!



LYN OAKES



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The Everlasting Voices is a setting of three W B Yeats poems and the considered feel for the text is evident throughout, some of the choral colours created are captivating and yet the writing is not difficult for singers.

It's a soundworld that is difficult to compare with others and that's part of its charm, and for NAC choirs that are looking for a new non sacred concert piece that will engage both singers and audience, this is worth a serious look.

Tim Knight

Conference 2017



This will be staged in Gloucester. I travelled to meet up with Adrian Law to discuss thoughts on our conference in 2017. It is hoped The concert will be staged in Gloucester Cathedral. Adrian is

approaching the cathedral staff to make arrangements. This ancient building has staged many outstanding performances by some of the eminent names in the musical world. I can imagine the sound choirs from the region will produce in such a building and look forward to 2017 for the privilege of hearing them. I have looked at several hotels in the area but one stands out as the first choice. This is because of its position in relation to Gloucester and the facilities it offers. The Cheltenham Chase Hotel is situated about 1.5 miles from the centre of Gloucester with service buses to the city centre every 10 minutes from outside the hotel. It is a 4 star establishment and the tariff includes free car parking on the 200 space car park in the hotel grounds. The swimming pool and sauna/steam room is included in your booking cost. There is also a beautician available at an extra cost paid direct to the beautician. I will have several trade stands in attendance which will be in the seminar theatre with us. I do like to encourage this as our friends who come along to staff the stands always ask if they can be in the room with us. They enjoy the occasion as much as we do and it does promote a feeling of them being welcomed by us. I have some new ideas for stands in 2016 and hope to encourage these people to come along.

As you know from previous years, I insist when arranging tariffs with hotels that we have a flat rate for every delegate. I do not



agree with single room supplements. Many of our colleagues who are single may have lost partners and should not be penalised in this way. When negotiating the costings with hotels I drive a hard bargain. We are a large group and hotel managers will go some way to accommodating our needs. Keeping a straight face when the first offer is presented to me together with a sharp intake of breath usually obtains a significant reduction. My friend and colleague gave me a wonderful tip last year when she told me to push the 10% rule. This is a type of trade discount when a tour operator hires a hotel to accommodate their guests. I, therefore, present myself as a tour operator which technically speaking, I am. Once management have reduced the offer to a sensible figure I then ask for the 10% reduction on top. Works every time!

Thank you Tracey De Vere White for that advice. Using this ploy I managed to reduce the rate by £85 per person, enabling me to book this 4 star superior hotel for us in 2017. I think the quality of the venue is important as it conveys to our delegates and the world the status of the organisation and our expectations about quality. I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible both in Newcastle and Gloucester. Book now and look forward to an exciting and rewarding time with the NAC next year.

Clive Lawton

York Philharmonic Male Voice Choir Yorkshire North and East

In April 2015 the York 'Phil' held a celebratory weekend to mark its ninetieth anniversary. Also taking part was the Lochems Mannenkoor from the Netherlands, a choir which celebrates its eightieth anniversary in October 2015. York enjoyed a successful visit to Lochem in 2009 and this was the first opportunity for our Dutch friends to visit us.

A gala concert on the Saturday evening was followed on Sunday by an anniversary dinner in the medieval splendour of the Merchant Adventurers' Hall in York. Earlier in the day, members of the Lochem choir were guests of the Lord Mayor of York at a civic reception held in the Mansion House. At the celebratory dinner a presentation was made to baritone, Tony Sawyer and his wife, recognizing 50 years of membership and loyal support. Tony has sung with the choir for 52 years, he served a two year apprenticeship whilst his voice



settled before gaining full membership. In the present day, male voice choirs can only dream of younger voices so eager to join the choir that they are prepared to serve an apprenticeship, however YPMVC is fortunate to have a steady intake of newer, younger members who sing alongside the longer-serving voices. Of those members that may not be so young anymore there are plenty who are still young at heart and a good number of the choir can still be heard on a Monday night at the Snickleway Inn in York following their Monday rehearsals!

The 'Phil' will be taking part in a further international engagement this coming September. The cities of York and Münster in Germany twinned in the early 1960s and their two male voice choirs twinned in 1969. Since those times close bonds have been formed and many visits arranged between the two choirs. To commemorate the end of World War II, the city of Münster is hosting an international concert with many choirs from across the world. We have been invited to represent the UK in what will be a truly unique occasion.

Far from relaxing at the end of a busy year, YPMVC will continue the fine traditional Christmas season for which it is renowned. *Carols in Kirkgate* - a series of Victorian themed concerts from the famous Castle Museum in York ran for 51 years from 1962 -2012 before it transferred to the Merchant Adventurers' Hall and, now called *Christmas in Fossgate*, continues to attract sell-out audiences.

Our Christmas schedule is certainly busy (which choir's isn't?). Research into our 90 year history shows that in the 1920s and 30s carol singing only took place on Christmas Eve. In those days the choir would set out at midnight singing carols in the local neighbourhood until four in the morning with a break at 2.30 for some rabbit pie. If the singers were lucky they got home before their children had opened all their presents. Nowadays we have to have a full programme of Christmas music rehearsed and sing between 12 and 16 concerts throughout the festive period.

Having recently exhausted stocks of both Christmas and other regular CDs, and with no time available at the moment for a new recording, we have reprinted our most popular CD - *Let All Men Sing!* first issued in 2009. It contains 19 tracks and is now available for £5 plus postage. To find out more please contact us via the website www.yorkphilchoir.co.uk or find us on facebook.com/yorkphilchoir.

Colin Hockridge

Humberston Singers Lincolnshire

Humberston Singers in the Wirral

The Humberston Singers advertised in News and Views for a choir to engage in a twinning concert. The response was disappointing as only one choir responded. HOWEVER what a response it was from the Castle Singers in Cheshire. A relaxed exchange of ideas soon followed and this resulted in a wonderful part one of the twinning.

The Humberston Singers have recently made a weekend visit to the Wirral to join with the Castle Singers in concert.

The 45 strong Group left Humberston on Saturday morning to travel by coach to Cheshire to perform in concert with the Castle Singers at Prenton near Birkenhead. This was a new choir twinning friendship so the Humberston Singers had little knowledge of what to expect but any anxieties were soon dispelled by the warm welcome that they received from the host choir. After some light refreshments it was down to business with a joint rehearsal with the Castle Singers for the evening performance at Prenton Methodist Church.

Both choirs sang to a very high standard in front of a capacity audience who were delighted when the church was filled with a magnificent sound as the two choirs joined in two items to end the concert. The concert organisers were equally delighted as the evening raised a sum in excess of £1000 for Christian Aid. The concert was rounded up with a magnificent supper.

After a short journey the choir returned to the hotel where they were based to enjoy a relaxing drink before retiring to bed.

Sunday saw the choir in a buoyant mood as they travelled into Liverpool to enjoy a relaxing day looking at the many attractions that this former City of Culture has to offer. On return the evening was spent with an enjoyable meal in the hotel and the opportunity to spend time in each other's company.

Monday morning came all too soon and the Group departed for the journey home via a lunch stop at Bakewell in Derbyshire. The Humberston Singers are now looking forward to a return concert with the Castle Singers at St Andrews Church in Cleethorpes on Saturday 5 September. It is hoped that local people will give as much support and a warm welcome at this event as the Humberston Singers received in the Wirral.

The Humberston Singers performed under the Musical Direction of Richard Bradley and the visit was co-ordinated by choir secretary, Margo Bradley.

Margo Bradley
Secretary

The Viva Musica Choir Midlands South West

Viva Musica choir has been performing for over 25 years led by Musical Director Rosemary Phillips. The choir of around 70 mixed voices, accompanied by Andrew Biggs, has had the pleasure to host concerts with special guests that have included Alfie Boe, Wynne Evans and Amore. The choir has performed at Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Worcester Cathedral and throughout the West Midlands.

The choir's Spring Concert was held at the Salvation Army Citadel, Cradley on Saturday 16 May. The concert continued the choir's celebration of contemporary British choral





composers. The choir performed items by Will Todd, John Tavener and Karl Jenkins, as well as popular music composers Elton John and Paul McCartney. The highlight of the choir's programme was *Gloria* by John Rutter. The three movements were *Gloria*, *Domine Deus* and *Quoniam tu Solus Sanctus*.

The evening was compered by Jean Lewis Millward who, as always, was warmly welcomed by the audience and choir alike.

Three members of the choir performed solo items. Baritone Wesley Biggs performed *Questo Amor* from Edgar by Puccini. Wesley, who is the eldest son of our accompanist Andrew, has recently graduated from The Conservatoire in Birmingham. Soprano Debbie Wright performed *Waltz of my Heart* by Ivor Novello and Alto Jo Welch performed *Old Devil Moon* by Burton Lane from the musical *Finian's Rainbow*.

The choir's next concert 'The Last Night of the Proms' will be on Saturday 17 October at Dudley Town Hall when they will be joined by Sovereign Brass and the choir of St Margaret's at Hasbury Church of England Primary School. The evening will celebrate 70 years since VE Day.

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

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

Lorraine Newman

The Appledore Singers Devon

30th Birthday of the Appledore Singers

Having been formed in 1985, the Appledore Singers approached their 30th Birthday this summer with joyful anticipation.

We had worked long and hard, rehearsing for our summer concert on 5 July, after a season filled with performing all over North Devon in halls and churches both large and small. This would be the final concert of the season and a chance to celebrate.

The concert was full of arrangements of songs from the '80s to the '00s, with the chance for audience participation in *Amarillo* and *You'll Never Walk Alone* (not a dry eye in the house!), plus screen projections of photos from past and present. Even the small group of singers: the 'Apple Pips' were not left out and performed a choreographed version of *Sit Down You're Rocking The Boat* on stage, complete with rubber dinghy and soap bubbles!

There were also two magnificent celebration cakes, made by one of our members, for all to enjoy. Much fun was had by a packed, appreciative audience and choir alike.

The day following the concert was the special 'Choir Outing' and many of the choir climbed aboard a coach at Bideford Quay and journeyed to Totnes, where they boarded a pleasure boat for a pleasant trip along the Dart to Dartmouth. After disembarking they all made their way to The Royal Castle Hotel, where they ate a splendid lunch together.

Getting the choir together, afterwards, for a 'choir photo' was rather chaotic but we all managed to fit in the bandstand posing and singing to the accompaniment of a busking guitarist playing various salsas in front of the bandstand.

A short ferry ride across to Kingswear brought us to the steam train and a carriage to ourselves all the way to Paignton to pick up the coach home.

We all agreed that it was a wonderful way to end our 30th Birthday.

Many thanks are due to our Musical Director, Pam Beechey, who has conducted us from the beginning, and her husband Chris, our accompanist - both talented musicians in their own right - who have worked so dedicatedly towards every concert we have done. We look forward to many more years together.

Viv Zussman



Taunton Deane MVC South West

Chairman Tony takes his final bow In Taunton

At what was described by many as probably their best ever end of season concert, a packed Tacchi-Morris Centre in Taunton thrilled to songs sung in concert by the 60 strong Taunton Deane Male Voice Choir led by Musical Director Nick Thomas. Wagner's Roman War Song, an interesting variation of the shanty Drunken Sailor and Mozart's Ave Verum were among those works which were delivered with style and confidence.

The cream on an already delightful cake was the appearance of guest mezzo soprano Louise Innes who delighted the audience with some very beautifully delivered arrangements including Mozart's *Voi Che Sapete* from the Marriage of Figaro, Rogers & Hammerstein's *If I Loved You* from Carousel and Cole Porter's *Every Time I Say Goodbye*.

The evening was tinged with a little sadness however, as Tony Slavin took his final bow as chairman of the choir, a position which he had held for over a decade. President of



the choir David Gill said that the choir had grown in size, stature and ability on Tony's watch. To thunderous applause, Tony was presented with a gift of £460 along with a caricature portrait and Certificate of Life Membership.

Incoming Chairman John Capell was pleased to report that Tony would remain in the ranks of the tenors as well as taking on the role of Secretary to the *Friends of the Choir*, a role to which he was admirably suited.

The audience also heard that the choir had helped organisations raise nearly £8000 this season and a staggering £43000 over 4 years, much of which was attributable to the clear direction and hard work of outgoing Chairman Tony Slavin.

Picture: Outgoing Choir Chairman Tony Slavin receives a caricature portrait from Choir President David Gill.

Steven Reed

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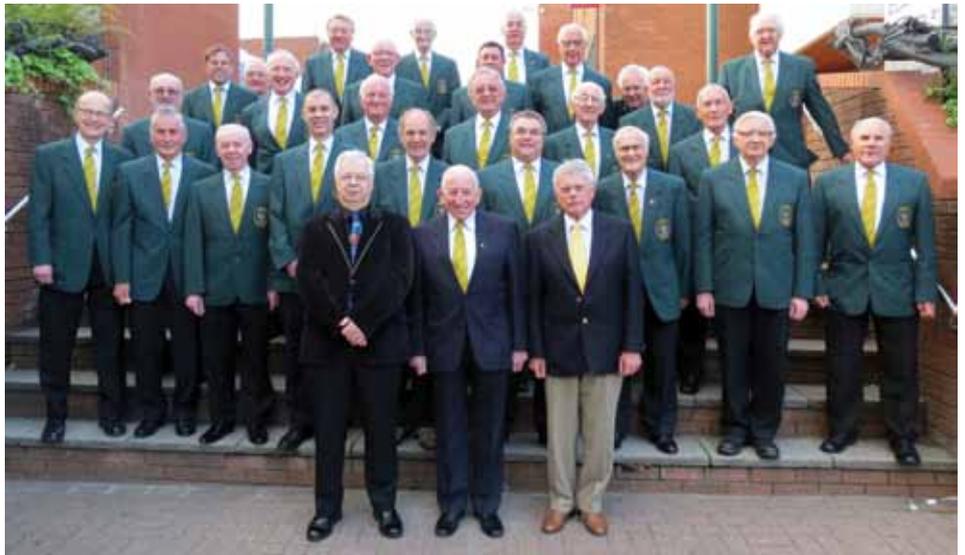


Alfreton Male Voice Choir Midlands East

We are sorry to announce that our accompanist of many years Mary Orton died recently, we all wish her relatives and friends our sincere sympathy.

Alfreton Male Voice Choir have had a busy time of late, we have been rehearsing for our main concert this year which will be in October and for our attendance at the Albert Hall for the Cancer Research concert on the 14 November and an open air concert at the Scope on the South Bank, London on 15 November. We have of course kept up with other local concerts including taking part in Ripley (Derbyshire) Music Festival, Belper River Gardens and Alfreton Community Hall. We have noticed that it has become popular to request a choir at weddings.

The Belper River gardens concert held in the open air bandstand was a real experience this year. The afternoon started fine, warm with intermittent sunshine and all went well until our mid concert break. After the break things seemed to be continuing as before but suddenly it became very overcast, the wind became exceedingly strong and then from nowhere we experienced a torrential downpour. Despite this our soloist and comedian, Mick Mullarkey, carried on as usual, raising his voice and cracking his jokes as he went. The audience gradually disappeared but due to Mick's perseverance some of the audience remained and five minutes later the weather cleared and we continued as if nothing had happened.



Our annual concert this year will be on Saturday 17 October in the Grange School, Alfreton. Our theme for this year is 'Songs From Screen, Stage And TV' Our charity this year is to be the Air Ambulance (DLRAA) that covers Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Rutland plus (WNAA) that covers Warwickshire and Northamptonshire. Together they attend about six incidents per day at a cost of an average £1,700 per occasion. They rely entirely on public donations so every little helps. At last year's concert we raised £1,000 for The Alfreton Branch of the Royal British Legion and we are hoping for a similar amount this year. The concert will also feature the Shirland Brass Band and female vocalist Lily Taylor-Ward both are excellent and with the choir we are sure will make another perfect concert.

During the year we are spending some time travelling to Huddersfield in Yorkshire for rehearsals for the Cancer Research concert, called Festival of Brass and Voices 2015 at the Albert Hall. We shall then be travelling down to London on Friday 13 November for a final rehearsal in the Albert Hall. Then on Saturday we will be taking part in the concert. For those who have not been there are some 1400 choristers taking part, both male voice and ladies choirs all supported by an excellent brass band. One of the features of this concert is the dimming of the lights during the singing of a hymn and then all that we shall see will be the hundreds of little pinprick lights from small pin badges that everyone will be wearing, these are purchased and all proceeds go to the charity along with the profits from the concert etc. On Sunday 15 November we will be attending the Sunday Singalong at the Scope. This is an open air amphitheatre opposite the Tower of London. This performance will last for about an hour and fifteen minutes and will also feature a brass band and a piano.

For the remainder of the year we will sing as and when invited but we have our next booked concert, which is a Civic Service in St Martin's Church on 27 September, followed by a Christmas singalong at the South Wingfield Social Club on 16 December. Besides that during December we will be singing Christmas carols and songs to entertain shoppers in Alfreton and Ripley.



Next year we have so far booked, on Saturday 16 April, a concert at Derby Cathedral with the Derbyshire Constabulary Choir there will also be about four other choirs yet to be nominated. On the 21 May 2016 we are hosting the National Association of Choirs Midlands East Group Concert at The Grange School, Alfreton.

The three photographs

Mick Mullarkey at Belper River Gardens

Recent indoor group photo

Recent outdoor group photo

Any further detail please either email or phone 01773 829248.

1943les@gmail.com

Les Dorey

Ashington & District Male Voice Choir North East

Formed in the turbulent times of 1916 Ashington & District Male Voice Choir is now approaching its Centenary, an achievement of note. The trials and tribulations of the war were not the only ones to be felt in what was known as the World's Largest mining Village. Ashington had been built because of the coal industry and 1916 saw its most dreaded fear, the Woodhorn Colliery Disaster, a most awful experience for up to 10,000 men and boys working in the 5 local pits.

Music and art were prominent in everyday life in this bleak time and they cost very little. As in so many mining communities men got together to form choirs and so AMVC was formed. Later other local men became interested in art as a hobby... only to lead to the now famous Pitmen Painters. The choir, despite its precarious beginning and 'ups & downs' over the years, has survived and is now about to celebrate a 100 year birthday.

Many of the early performances were local in the churches and some of the many social clubs which were springing up. The mine owners were not in favour of public houses, hence the clubs. A working relationship with the Ashington Operatic Society resulted in the men being involved in operettas. There were even the odd occasions when a 'charabanc' had to be booked to take the choir a little further afield.

Steady progress was maintained during the inter-war period with interest and membership growing. Fortunately this enthusiasm was able to be maintained throughout the Second World War despite membership numbers being reduced but things started to improve again in the later 40s. One enthusiast had brought his family from South Wales to live in Ashington and had joined the choir. His daughter qualified as a music teacher and then followed her profession in Ashington and soon made a name for herself. Ella Hughes was eventually invited to take over the 'Choir's Baton' in the 1950s and with the help of an established accompanist, Henry Abbot, put the name of AMVC right in the public eye resulting in membership going up to around 50, not bad for 'a village choir'. Competitive singing became a feature of the choir's activities but local concerts were still the mainstay of the programme. Two major promotions



helped the finances. A Christmas Concert and the Annual Celebrity Concert are still key features of the choir's programme. The latter, as the name suggests brought big names, to Ashington and at the same time two local ladies were becoming prominent, Janice Cairns and Sheila Armstrong were beginning to move into the major opera circles. Janice had a very good relation with the choir and enjoyed singing with the men. The developing Mid-Northumberland Arts Group (MidNag) also helped in the promotion of choral music. A little later two local men, Derek Hobbs and Mike Kirkup wrote an operetta 'Fell-em-Doon', a history of the local mining industry and AMVC played a major role in its production and this was reproduced a couple of years ago with AMVC again featuring prominently. Some of the songs are stock pieces in the choir's repertoire. Mike Kirkup was honoured with the Presidency of the choir, a post he was delighted to hold until recently when he stood down on health grounds.

The choir has seen changes in the last 10 years or so. Ella Hughes retired after many years of devoted service and was succeeded by Neil Morton who had joined the choir whilst still at school, studied music at Newcastle University and started teaching locally. He was asked to be the choir's accompanist and then took over the MD role. Neil has now had to stand down and his mantle is being passed to Jonathan Shaw, another Newcastle music graduate. His task is to lead the choir into its Centenary Celebration.

Many of the choir's concerts are still for charitable purposes but the two main promotions are still the major sources of income. Members enjoy joining the

NAC's North East Choral Spectacular. The Centenary Celebration Concert is booked for 14 May 2016 with a programme featuring guests who have supported the choir in recent years, a children's choir and a tribute to the Woodhorn Colliery Disaster with songs from 'Fell-em-Doon'.

It would be nice to again have a 50 membership and hopefully a recruitment campaign will help us move in this direction.

Ashington & District Male Voice Choir is proud of its history and is looking forward to launching itself into another 100 years.

Bob Brind
Chairman

The Cannock Ex-Service Men's Club Choir Midlands West

Our membership goes through peaks and troughs caused by age, illness and, sadly, deaths. But we manage to maintain a balanced group of 17 including Accompanist Hazel Hailstone and Musical Director Dorothy Bates.

Being a small choir gives us the advantage of performing at smaller venues such as Weddings and Care Homes.

Choirs do not seem to be fashionable today for our younger generation. Plus Cannock and surrounding areas are blessed with a variety of other choirs and arts related community groups. So it has become a little more difficult to recruit new members.

Having other local choirs allows us to join



forces for the occasional concerts which add variety and powerful performances of combined voices.

The last couple of years have seen the choir in great demand, especially during the festive season and at times like this it seems we are doing too much. But the choir finds it difficult to refuse especially if

it is for a good cause.

The choir was fortunate in obtaining a community grant from the Co-operative Society which enabled us to purchase music sheets to replace old copies and new pieces for updating our repertoire. Another generous donation from our choir president allowed us to purchase trousers

for all the choristers so we are now looking extra smart and professional.

We all look forward to our subsidised annual dinner where we are often joined by some of our retired choristers and after dinner entertainment consists of solo performances by members of the choir doing folk and comedy songs, singalongs and monologues etc.

The choir has relocated to a new practice venue with practice night remaining on Monday evenings at 7.45 at the Churchill Victoria Working Men's Club, Hednesford WS12 1BQ. In moving the choir had to alter its name by dropping the word club from its previous title.

With our small friendly easy going ethos the choir continues to enjoy its singing and performing for our local communities, clubs, and care homes.

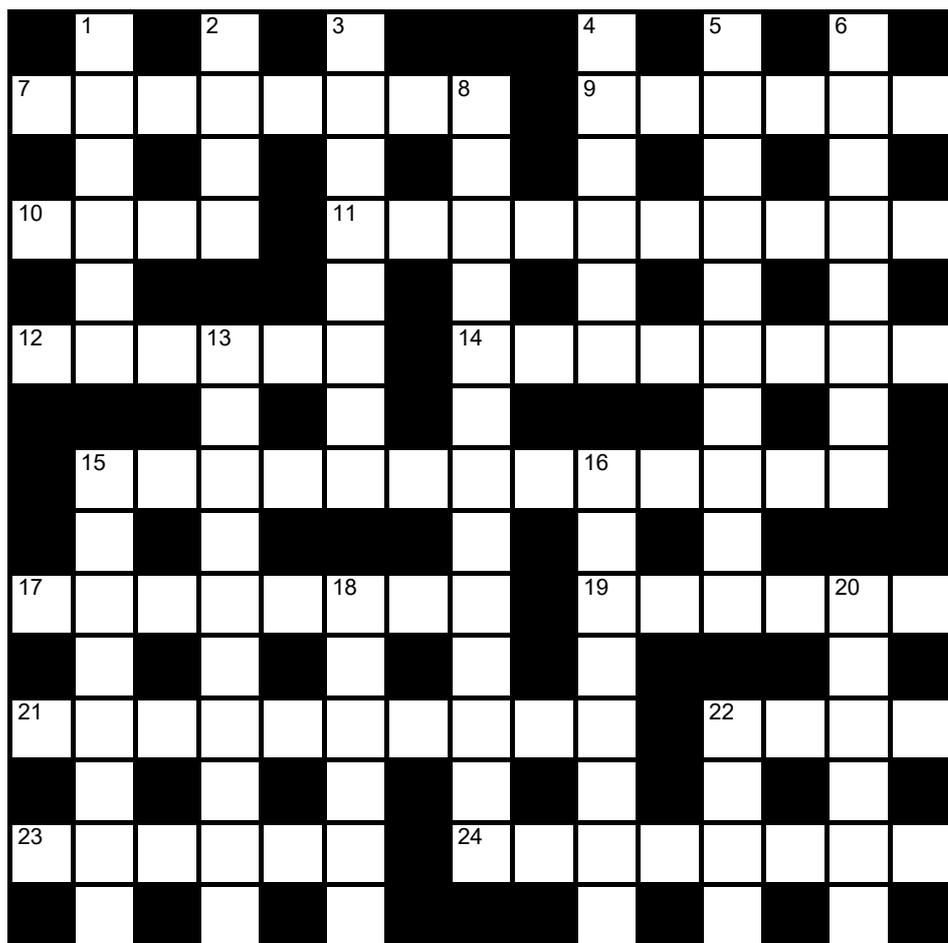
Patrick Warren

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PUZZLE PAGES



Across

- 7 Ditchdigger fills his plate (8)
- 9 Unusual cave to find a shore-bird (6)
- 10 Place where a robust Scottish fellow was removed from Carlisle (4)
- 11 In tutelary unrest, not going to war (10)
- 12 Dishcloth gourd (6)
- 14 Odd looking queen hen makes ropes etc (8)
- 15 No place for xenophobes to work (7, 6)
- 17 Hot dry grass (3, 5)
- 19 Revolutionary army if it may spread out (6)
- 21 Change netballs in case we change the game (6, 4)
- 22 Back on a horse without a saddle (4)
- 23 Found in the bath? (6)
- 24 Sport for Rod Stewart (8)

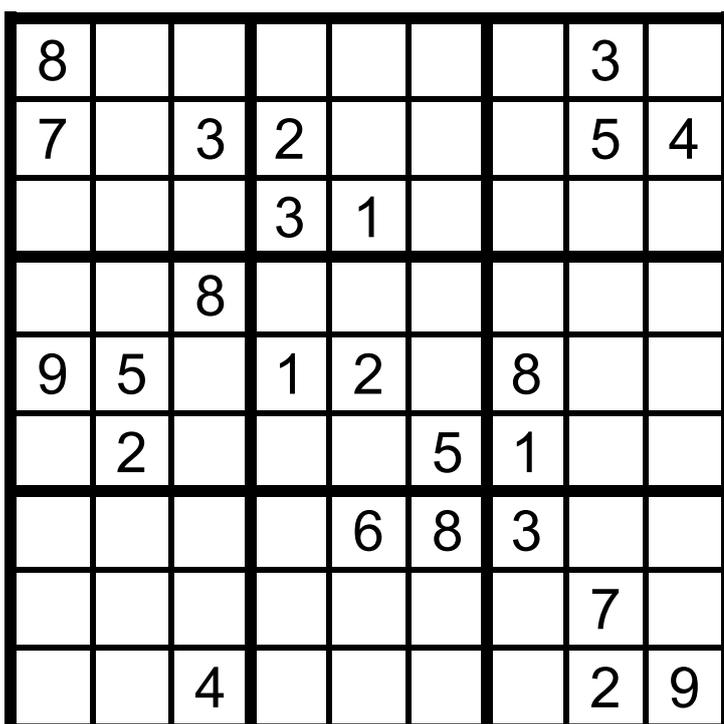
Down

- 1 Fresh picture from fluctuating forces. (6)
- 2 Somewhere to bury a heart? (4)
- 3 Highjack a seaport in east China. (8)
- 4 Contains pre-war rent for crowded quarters (6)
- 5 Academic seminar (10)
- 6 Capriciously tease the man who loves music (8)
- 8 Perversely adored a hungry man good enough for the purpose (5-3-5)
- 13 First digit (10)
- 15 To fall asleep design a flute OK (5, 3)
- 16 For a touch of respect perhaps (8)
- 18 Exchange a vessel for a feudal servant (6)
- 20 Hungarian florin (6)
- 22 Moderate, restrain (4)

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

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SOLUTIONS ON PAGE 35

WORD SEARCH

I have hidden all the choirs who have contributed to this issue of News & Views in the word search grid. how many of them can you find?



ABERTILLERY
ALFRETON
APPLEDORE
ASHINGTON
BESTWOOD
CANNOCK
CHURCHDOWN

COLWYN
DONAGHADEE
HARROW APOLLO
HUMBERSTON
MANSFIELD
OZ
PENN

ST EDMUNDSBURY
STEVENAGE
TAUNTON DEANE
VIVA MUSICA
WORCESTER
YORK



Arrangements for our 2016 conference at Newcastle are all in place and we look forward to an excellent conference.

Renewing acquaintances and forging new ones with people who share your love and interest in music is always rewarding and a pleasure. There will be plenty of opportunity for this. I have taken note of your suggestions from Open Forums and comments made while in Worthing this year. Some of the requests will be met in 2017 as it was not possible to accommodate them in the 2016 conference as dates were already fixed. I refer to the suggestion we move from our traditional template which is that, if Easter falls in March we have the conference two weeks later, if in April, two weeks before. This arrangement does not suit many of our delegates who cannot request leave outside the Easter break.



The booking form and costings for the conference in Newcastle are included in this publication of News & Views. I would encourage all our delegates to send in their forms as early as they can, including the deposit in order for me to book rooms at the hotel.

This is a modern spacious hotel with lifts to all floors. There are no stairs to worry about. Parking is not possible on the roads outside the hotel and therefore I have arranged for parking in the multi storey opposite the hotel. Anyone who has

difficulty with walking or coping with their luggage should drive to the hotel reception and make it known you need assistance to be brought back to the hotel from the car park once you have parked your car after booking in at the hotel. I have arranged that the car park staff will drive you across to the hotel in the car park shuttle car. The cost of parking is £8 per 24 hours and is not included in the conference tariff.



Our main speaker is David Lawrence who will cover conducting technique and developing choral sound performance. His last half hour will be covering his work and expectations in his chosen field.

Tracey de Vere White will cover Social Media in her seminar, giving advice from her extensive knowledge in this field.

Karl Harper is a Musical Director, voice coach and instrument repairer. He is a robotics engineer and sound technician. He will be giving insight into the world of sound management and control. Beth Emery has entitled her seminar 'Choral Identity in the 21st Century'. A resumé of her talk is attached to this report below.

Our Gala concert will be staged in The Sage at Gateshead. I have arranged coaches to transport us to the venue for this outstanding event where I believe twenty seven choirs will perform in groups for our



entertainment. As always, I have arranged a supper on return to the hotel following the concert.

Our Gala dinner on Friday evening will be in the main hotel restaurant followed by entertainment arranged by the North East Group.

Clive Lawton

CHORAL IDENTITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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National Association of Choirs

Joining the Nation in Choral Singing

National Conference Booking Form 1 8-10 April 2016

The Jurys In Hotel, Scotswood Road, St James Gate, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4AD

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 £220

Stay an extra night - Single £72 BB - Double (two persons) £82 BB

Day Delegate [Saturday]

Please circle requirements

Refreshments and lunch included £40.00

Evening meal Saturday add £20.00

Concert ticket Saturday add £10.00

Gala Dinner add £30.00

Payments

Full Conference Stay

Deposit of £70 [non refundable] by 30 November 2015, balance by 28 February 2016

Final payment reminders will be sent

Day delegates

Payment in full when booking [non refundable]

Amount Submitted £ _____

Please return your completed forms and deposits to the address below

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

You must inform us in writing of any cancellation by 1 March 2016
[cancellations after this date will incur a charge of 50% of the total fee payable]

However substitute guests will be welcome

Cheques should be made payable to the National Association of Choirs

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

Please return your completed forms and deposits to

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

07939012458

conference.coordinator@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk



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National Association of Choirs

Joining the Nation in Choral Singing

National Conference Booking Form 2 8-10 April 2016

The Jurys In Hotel, Scotswood Road, St James Gate, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4AD

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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National Association of Choirs

Joining the Nation in Choral Singing

National Conference Provisional Timetable 8-10 April 2016

The Jurys In Hotel, Scotswood Road, St James Gate, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4AD

Friday 8 April

- 2.00 Delegates arrive and register
- 4.30 National Officers' meeting
- 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 by the North East Brass Ensemble
- 12.00 Bar closes

Saturday 9 April

- 7.00 Access to trade stands to set up
- 7.30-9.00 Breakfast in main dining room
- 9.15-10.15 Annual General Meeting
- 10.15-10.30 Comfort break only
- 10.30-11.30 Seminar 1 David Lawrence - Conducting Technique
- 11.30 Coffee and trade stand viewing
- 12.00-1.00 Seminar 2 David Lawrence - Developing Choral Sound/Performance
- 1.00 Lunch and trade stand viewing (Lunch included in full delegate package)
- 2.00-3.00 Seminar 3 Tracey De Vere White - Social Media.
- 3.00 Coffee and trade stand viewing
- 3.30-4.00 Seminar 4 David Lawrence - What Makes Him Tick In The Musical World
- 4.15 Buffet meal before concert (included in full delegate Package)
- 6.15 Coaches to Sage depart hotel
- 7.00 Concert at the Sage - Massed Male Voices (10 choirs) Massed Mixed Voices (7 choirs)
Massed Ladies Voices (7 choirs) Finale (All choirs)
Interval 20 minutes at about 8.00
- 10.00 Return from concert - Light cold buffet (included in full delegate package)
- 12.00 Bar closes

Sunday 10 April

- 7.30-9.00 Breakfast
For those delegates wishing to attend local churches, details will be available at hotel reception
- 10.00-10.45 Karl Harper Sound technology, Inc amplification, rhythm tracks, backing tracks and much more
- 10.45-11.30 Beth Emery Choral Identity in the 21st Century
- 11.30 Coffee and trade stand viewing
- 12.00 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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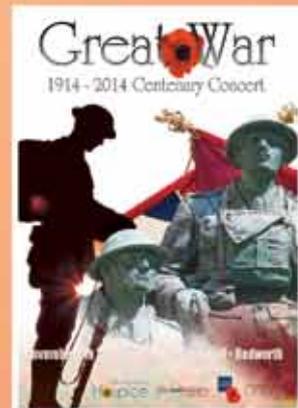
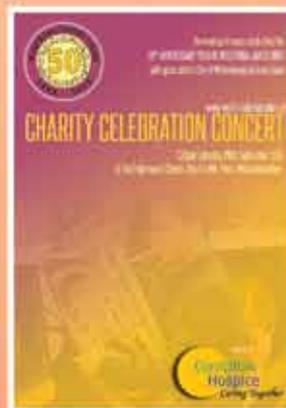
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Churchdown Male Voice Choir South West

Concert for LINC and Cobalt – 4 July All Saints Church, Cheltenham

'What a completely amazing evening and I think one of the best performances I've been to. Everything was just fabulous and I just can't thank you enough for singing Angels, it's probably up there with one of the most lovely things that I have had the privilege of enjoying. A mere thank you is not enough, I was completely and utterly overwhelmed.'

Karen Organ, LINC Appeals Fund Manager

The choir was in celebratory mood in a concert on Saturday 4 July in this its 50th anniversary year. The concert was staged in the beautiful surroundings of All Saints' Church Cheltenham and was in support of two charities, LINC (Leukemia and Intensive Chemotherapy) and The Cobalt Unit. The choir has performed and has also recorded in the church before and is aware of its lovely acoustic.

The compère, Barry Woods, told the audience that part of the choir's programme was an unashamed dip into its musical history combined with some newer pieces. Thus *Comrades in Arms* from about 40 years ago, sat alongside *Anthem* from the musical *Chess* and *Bui Doi* from *Miss Saigon*. Many of the choir's favourites were on show. *Rhythm Of Life*, *When The Saints Come Marching In*, *The Rose*, and *The Lord's Prayer* in the setting by Malotte; each piece representing part of the choir's musical history.

Barry told the audience that *Lily of the Valley* was popular with the choir because it was the piece that the late and much missed Charlie Roberts used to start singing in the pub after concerts. He would begin to sing it quietly and then a few of the lads would join in until all the members were singing. At that point the whole pub would go quiet and the atmosphere would be spellbinding as the customers listened to the gentle strains of the lovely song.

Also celebrating was the choir's favourite soprano, Sue Black, who this year has been singing for the choir for 30 years. With choir accompanist, James Quinn, at the piano she delighted the audience with her lovely voice and her sparkling performance. In the first half she sang *In Trutina* from *Carmina Burana* and *Nella Fantasia* from *Gabriel's Oboe*. In the second half she sang *Vilia* from *The Merry*

Widow and *Summertime* by Gershwin. Finally she was joined by Musical Director, Ralph Barnes, in the duet *All I want from you* from *Phantom of the Opera*, enhanced by the two of them dancing around the pews.

Sue was then joined by the choir in *Laura's Song* from *Casanova* by Strauss and finally, *Morte Criste*, her voice soaring above the choir. Colin Acton, who has been with the choir for over 48 years, then presented Sue with a Dartington Crystal Bowl on behalf of the choir for her support, friendship and wonderful performances over the years. Karen Organ, appeals manager of LINC, then presented her with a bouquet and a vote of thanks was given by Dr Gill Rouse on behalf of both charities. She said that for LINC alone the choir had raised over £10,000 in the last few years and she wished it every success in its 50th year.

An extra piece, *Angels* by Robbie Williams concluded the concert. This was especially chosen for Karen Organ who herself has been celebrating her 50th birthday

Guide Dogs for the Blind – 11 July Salvation Army Hall, Gloucester.

'It is my privilege and indeed enormous pleasure to advise you and your fellow choristers that, on the night in question we raised the astonishing sum of £1342.12, a truly amazing result by any standard.'

Reg White Severn Vale Group, Guide Dogs for the Blind Association

For the second time in two weeks the choir was performing, this time in Gloucester in support of Guide Dogs for the Blind. Despite the closeness of the two events the organisers had pulled out all the stops and a large and enthusiastic audience greeted us as we took the stage. The programme again consisted of pieces from our last 50 years of performing together, including *The Song of the Jolly Roger*, which, as compère Barry Woods said, was the very first song that the choir performed in public at its first concert in December 1965.

A welcome addition to the programme was euphonium soloist, Mandy Scot, with Cliff Matthews at the piano. In an entertaining way Mandy introduced the instrument to the audience, told us some of the history of the instrument and even included its maintenance, down to the removal of moisture from the mouthpiece. She then demonstrated her fluency of the euphonium in a performance of a traditional song developing into cleverly

woven variations. Thank you Mandy.

In the second half the choir sang *Bring Him Home* from *Les Miserables*, and *Lily of the Valley* which again has been a choir favourite for many years. The soloist was the choir's own Jeff Bourton, who delighted the audience with his lovely voice and relaxed manner. *The Hungry Years* by Neil Sedaka and *Somewhere over the Rainbow* by Harold Arlen were two of his choices. The concert concluded with *Cwm Rhondda* and *Morte Criste* and we were delighted to be called to give an encore of *When The Saints Go Marching In*.

The vote of thanks was given by Julie, herself registered blind and owner of a guide dog. Rarely can the choir have had such a moving vote of thanks as she went on to tell us of the struggles she had overcome as a young girl. She was a normal teenager doing all the things that teenagers do, but slowly her eyesight deteriorated until she became totally blind. At that point she thought that her life was over. She imagined that someone would have to look after her, feed her, take her about; in short she would have to be totally dependent on others. Then one day, she said, she made the phone call that changed her whole life. She could not put into words what having a guide dog meant to her. Within a very short time the dog was able to take her about, guide her between the bins and into the park where she could hear children playing. It completely transformed her life and now she was able to stand up and tell other people about her experiences.

As a result of this splendid concert a grand total of £1,342 was made for the charity.

The choir's Christmas Concerts will be in Churchdown Community Centre, Churchdown, Gloucester on Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday, December 14/15/16. Tickets are £8 from Colin Acton on 01452 714360 or on the door.

Barry Woods



Côr Meibion Colwyn (Colwyn Male Voice Choir)

Wales North/Cheshire West

2015 International Success for Côr Meibion Colwyn.

Côr Meibion Colwyn gained further international success on 11 July 2015, when the choir was awarded Third Place at the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod in the Male Voice category. Competition was close between Cor Rhosllanerchrugog, Côr Undebol ar ol tri and Colwyn. Singing in front of an international audience of thousands and three adjudicators, Colwyn's success followed on from their two wins at the International Pan Celtic festival in Derry in April 2015 (in the male choir and unaccompanied folk song competitions). Earlier in March 2015 we gave a charity concert in St Asaph Cathedral with international singers tenor, Rhys Meirion, and soprano, Elin Pritchard. Elin has just sung Lucia in Lucia di Lammermoor in the July 2015 Buxton festival.

Before going on stage at Llangollen, the choir met Eisteddfod president Terry Waite (see photographs). After competing, we sang in the open arena, before greeting Rhys Meirion and his fellow artists who were completing their charity event to raise awareness of medical organ donation.

On 8 August 2015 we sang at the National Eisteddfod of Wales at Meifod (mid Wales). Our competition repertoire included



Ceilio Ffesant, a song we had specially commissioned from Mared Emlyn. Mared is a young composer, who has already won prizes for composition, as well as being harpist and a PhD graduate of Bangor University music department.

On Saturday 3 October 2015, we host the Vancouver Orpheus Male Voice Choir in a joint concert in St John's Church in Llandudno and we are looking forward to singing with them again when we tour Western Canada in August-September 2016. We have taken up the invitation to be the guest choir at the North American Welsh Association annual festival and cymanfa ganu in Calgary, Alberta in 2016.

A large part of our success is down to Tudur

Eames who joined us as MD in September 2014. Tudur has an extensive background in Music Theatre including preparation of West End productions, as well as being an accomplished harpist and adjudicator. Tudur has done much to extend and widen the repertoire. We are indeed fortunate that he has chosen to return to North Wales. Our accompanists are Richard Hibbs and Mary Darling. We give around 20-25 concerts a year, large and small, public and private and at least 5 a year for charity. In earlier years we have sung on tour in places as diverse as the Palau de la Musica Catalana in Barcelona, Montserrat Abbey, Toronto Caravan Festival, Cardiff Millennium Stadium and St David's Hall and London's Albert Hall (both as solo guest choir and in massed choirs).

We are a choir of 52 voices, aged from 18 to about 82 and in recent years we have grown in number. We welcome both new and experienced choristers to join us and visitors from near and far to come to our rehearsals. We rehearse twice a week on Wednesdays and Sundays at the Community Centre, Green Hill, Old Colwyn.

For further details and for concert events contact Charles Cooksley, Choir Secretary, Côr Meibion Colwyn, 21 Allanson Road, Colwyn Bay LL28 4HN

charles@colwyn.plus.com 01492 548670

Charles Cooksley



Donaghadee Male Voice Choir Northern Ireland

Robert Wilson MBE

On Saturday 16 May 2015 Robert Wilson MBE passed away after a very short illness, and left the members of Donaghadee Male Voice Choir, and the wider community in Northern Ireland, utterly stunned and saddened. Robert had been conductor of the choir for 47 years.



Robert Wilson came from a musical background. His father David was a distinguished tenor soloist and Conductor of North Belfast Male Voice Choir. In his youth Robert was a boy soprano, singing at church services, concerts and Musical Festivals, before becoming a member of Victoria Male Voice Choir, where he attained the position of Deputy Conductor.

In 1968 the committee of Donaghadee Male Voice choir appointed Robert Wilson as their new Musical Director. At his first practice there were 18 members present. Robert immediately instilled a new enthusiasm in choir members and within 6 weeks the number had grown to 38. Today there are well over 70 members in Donaghadee Male Voice Choir, making it easily the biggest male voice choir in the whole of Ireland.

One of Robert's first tasks was to maintain and improve the choir's success at music festivals and within 6 months of his appointment he guided the choir to success in the 1969 Belfast Music Festival. This was the start of the choir's illustrious period of accomplishments as they went on to win an amazing total of 47 first places over the 1970-2006 period at festivals in Morecambe, Whitby, Cheltenham, Chester, Wharfedale, Cork and New Ross in addition to the local festivals of Belfast, Carrickfergus, Portadown, Bangor, Portstewart and Coleraine. In 2013 the

choir won the Male Voice Section at the Navan Choral Festival, and repeated that success by retaining the Male Voice Cup in 2014. It should be remembered that this success came about as a result of the dedication and commitment of the members and the Musical Director during 'the troubles', the most unsettled time in Northern Ireland's history. That the choir continued to expand in both success and numbers over this period is a remarkable achievement, and a credit to Robert's leadership and enthusiasm.

One of Robert's goals for the choir during this period was to achieve success in Festivals in mainland UK. The choir entered and won the Morecambe Festival in 1970; the Eskdale Festival of Song at Whitby in 1972, again in 1973, and more recently in 2014; the Wharfedale Musical Festival in 1978; the Cheltenham Gold Cup in 1980 and again in 1990; and the Chester Choral Festival in 1996.

Participation in The National Male Voice Choir Championships in Huddersfield in 1992 and 1993 was a learning experience for the choir where the adjudicators were placed in a 'box' and unable to either see or identify each performing choir. Another of Robert's ambitions was realised when the choir's application to enter the International Eisteddfod at Llangollen was accepted in 1991. Robert returned with the choir to compete in Llangollen in 1997 and 1999.

In May 2009 Robert led the choir to the Cornwall International Male Voice Choral Festival where there was a magnificently organised competition and series of concerts for participating choirs. This was followed by a return to Eskdale in April 2010 for the Festival of Song competition.

Another of Robert's goals was to undertake a concert tour further afield. In 1987 Robert led the choir to Georgia and South Carolina, USA, for a 2 week tour of twenty-eight public performances. The choir was proclaimed Honorary Citizens of Georgia by the State Governor in recognition of outstanding achievement in the music field, and was also presented with the Ceremonial Key to the City of Columbia, the State Capital of Carolina, by the City's Mayor. The choir returned to Georgia in 1989, 1995 and again in 2005. In addition to these USA tours Robert took the choir to Ontario, Canada in 1998 and 2000 for extensive concert tours.

In between these festivals and USA/Canada tours Robert took the choir to

several overseas Music Festivals. In 1981 the choir took part in the XIV International Choral Festival in Varna, Bulgaria; the Malta International Choir Festival in 1992 and 2002; the Athens International Choir and Lyric Soloist Festival in 2007; and the Lake Garda Music Festival in 2010. More recently the choir competed in the Krakow International Choir Festival in June 2012 and June 2013, and the International Music Festival in Barcelona in October 2014.

In 2008 Robert led the choir to New York where it had the honour and privilege of performing in Carnegie Hall and singing in St Patrick's Cathedral.

Robert was in his 47th year as Musical Director at the time of his passing. His dedication and determination were undiminished, his vision for the future of the choir was without equal and he remained THE inspirational driving force, striving for the excellence which continued to take the choir to greater heights and further horizons. In 2008 Robert was awarded the MBE for services to music.

The current well-merited esteem by which Donaghadee Male Voice Choir is held today in the world of Male Voice Choirs is a reflection of the hard work, supreme skill, leadership and dedication of Robert Wilson.

Michael Pritchard
Honorary Secretary



If you are looking to join a new choir, we would love you to come along!

We have an extensive repertoire from classical/choral music to jazz/popular/gospel and African music

We rehearse from 7.30
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St Stephen's Church
Lansdown Road, Bath, BA1 5SX

01225 707370

secretaryatCitySound@hotmail.co.uk

Exeter Police and Community Choir Devon

It was a very special occasion when Exeter Police and Community Choir staged their end-of-season concert in front of a capacity crowd in Exeter on Saturday, 9 May.



Choir accompanist, Margaret Chave, made her last appearance with the choir, as she has retired from the post, while Musical Director David Williams celebrated 20 years with the choir.

To mark the occasion at St Boniface Church, Whipton, Exeter, Margaret played some special piano pieces of her own to warm applause.

'Margaret has played a pivotal part in our success as a choir in the last few years, and we wish her health and happiness in her retirement,' said Graham Bulford, Chairman of the Choir. 'At the same time, we proudly acknowledge David's



achievement in raising the standard and profile of the choir.'

Margaret, who lives in Crediton, Devon, has performed as accompanist with many choirs and groups in the South West and elsewhere, ranging from Northampton Regional Opera to smaller ensembles and solo recitals. She was a piano lecturer at Rolle College, Exmouth, for fourteen years and also taught individual piano and singing at Clifton High School, Bristol, and at several schools in Devon and Somerset. She has encouraged many young pianists and singers.

David Williams has been involved in church music for most of his life, starting as a choirboy at St Mary Magdalene, Upton, Torquay, where he served in various capacities for over 46 years and was both Church Administrator and Organist and Choirmaster.

He has been Musical Director of the Exeter Police and Community Choir since 1995 and fulfilled the same role for the Torbay Police Choir from February 1980 until September 2000.

The concert raised £870.00 for choir funds.

The choir also supported the outgoing Lord Mayor of Exeter, Percy Prowse - a top tenor with the choir - during his mayoral year and congratulated him on raising an amazing £42,000 for his nominated charity, the Exeter Leukaemia Fund (ELF). The money will go towards a suite of rooms for patients and their families so that they can be together whilst still receiving the tailored medical care at hospital.

Bruce Pell
Choir Publicity Officer

Harrow Apollo Male Choir Thames North

This year the Choir, which will celebrate its 75th Birthday in 2016, acknowledges the remarkable achievement of its principal accompanist, Philomena MacRae, who has fulfilled that role for no less than 50 years. Equally remarkable are the circumstances that led to her becoming our accompanist.

It was at a concert given by the choir in 1965, that the accompanist at that time, Gwyneth Lawrence, made a late phone call to say she was fog bound many miles away and would not get to the venue in time. The Music Director turned to the audience with the plea 'Is there a pianist in the house?'



The guest of honour at that concert was Alderman MacRae, the Mayor of Harrow, but he had another engagement and was, therefore, represented by his wife, and daughter Philomena. Mrs MacRae thrust her daughter's hand into the air with the proud announcement that 'She can play' and Philomena proceeded to accompany the choir for the whole concert, from sight and has continued in that role from that moment on.

What we did not know at the time was that she had first played the piano on stage at the age of 5 and given her first public recital at the age of 6 - not Chopsticks but Chopin! And this was recorded by Pathé News and is still available to witness on YouTube.

She has broadcast on radio in Germany, Ireland and for the BBC and given recitals in the City of London and around the Provinces. Philomena became an ARCM at the age of 19. Her first teacher was her mother, a cellist, and she later studied under several teachers notably Iris Loveridge, the celebrated concert pianist. Philomena's father was Scottish and she is immensely proud of this fact.

The choir marked Philomena's achievements and outstanding services to the choir with a presentation to her at its recent Annual General Meeting.

David Heasman

The Glasgow Phoenix Choir Scotland West

Sponsored by The Co-operative Funeralcare

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

In the final part of our 2014-15 season, Glasgow Phoenix Choir was privileged to perform a concert in the beautiful setting of Methil Wellesley Church in Methil, Fife. Not only was it a most enjoyable concert for all concerned, but the tea was superb... especially the Empire Biscuits. A fellow alto and I are on the lookout for Empire Biscuit perfection and these came pretty close.

The season ended with a series of concerts with our special guests, the Dublin Airport Singers, a long-established choir of approximately 50 members based in North Dublin. The choir was founded in 1991 by the late Tony Madden and under his direction developed an excellent reputation nationally and internationally winning many awards along the way. Under the guidance of current Musical Director, Paul Deegan and Assistant Musical Director, Celine Kelly, the choir performs regularly and has a diverse repertoire

encompassing sacred, secular, ancient and modern music from many countries and cultures. It has won numerous awards at music festivals in Ireland and has taken part in choral festivals in Vienna, Verona and Krakow. Together the two choirs sang three concerts in Carfin, Greenock and Govan; the modern church of St Francis Xavier in Carfin offered a peaceful backdrop, with excellent acoustics, for the first concert. In Greenock we were also joined by our close friends, Inverclyde Voices – an adult choir which arose from the Inverclyde schools' choirs, directed by Palma Allen MBE. Our final gala concert took place as part of the Glasgow West End Festival in the Old Church at Govan and included a host of singers: The Govan Gaelic Choir, conducted by Donald Feist, The Glasgow Philharmonic Male Voice Choir with Principal Conductor William Barr and accompanist Anna Mavromatidi, and, last but not least, the youthful voices of the Govan Combined Schools Choir. I was unable to sing in the final concert but joined as an audience member. What a great experience! The range of music covered was very impressive and the singing from all choirs was superb. I highly

recommend sitting out occasionally to hear your own choir to help you realise how good you are.

So now that summer's here – in theory if not meteorologically... we're all enjoying a good break and preparing for a busy year ahead. We kick off the new season by attending an investiture for the Knights of St John, a privilege we undertake every couple of years. In late September, we're off to the north of Scotland and Orkney, singing concerts in Thurso and Kirkwall. In addition, we'll be recording a new CD in the magnificent St Magnus Cathedral and a postcard CD in the beautiful Italian Chapel to raise funds for its restoration. We'll also be celebrating some very special anniversaries including 25th and 30th anniversaries for our conductor and depute conductor and, amazingly, a fiftieth and two sixtieth singing anniversaries. More on all of those in my next report.

All the best from Glasgow Phoenix Choir to all other choirs for your next season.

Anne Kay
Publicity Officer



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MENSWEAR AND FORMAL HIRE

NAC Midlands East Group Five Choir Concert

The Bulwell Academy's concert hall in Bulwell, Nottingham echoed to the sound of five wonderful mixed and diverse choirs on Saturday 23 May 2015.

The NAC's Midlands East Group's annual concert was this year organised by Bestwood MVC and, in particular, its Concert Secretary, Gary Hallam.



Nearly 200 people in the very appreciative and responsive audience enjoyed a feast of choral music performed by Mansfield and District MVC, Greasley Singers, Carlton MVC, Sonara Singers and hosts, Bestwood MVC. The spine tingling finale performed by all five choirs and the audience of Jerusalem resulted in a standing ovation!



This seemed to confirm the comments by Brenda Wilkinson, Chairman of the NAC in her welcome message in the concert programme – 'The choirs join together in friendship and song with the aim of entertaining you giving you a feast of music, upholding the strong choral tradition throughout the land.'



The intended compère for the concert, John Woodhouse was unfortunately delayed by his late return from holiday

and so Bestwood MVC Chairman, Colin Pursglove, boldly stepped up to the plate at short notice to do a sterling job.



Mark Brown, Bestwood MVC's Webmaster, produced a very professional poster as well as a visual presentation of all five choirs displayed on the screen, as seen on the attached photographs.



All in all, a thoroughly enjoyable and successful concert.

Peter Fletcher

Bestwood MVC Annual Gala Concert Midlands East

Bestwood Male Voice Choir is delighted to announce that they will be joined this year in their Annual Concert by special guests, the Royal Air Force Waddington Voluntary Band.

The band is the largest of the RAF's eight Voluntary Bands and has been based at RAF Waddington for a number of years, although it was previously based at RAF Scampton. It currently has a membership of approximately 60 musicians under the leadership of Bandmaster David Jackson.

In the history of Voluntary Bands, membership has only been open to serving members of the RAF, who would play as a secondary duty. Modern Voluntary bands have a wide range of members, including serving members as well as retired service personnel, students and many dependants.

This year's concert is in aid of the choir's chosen charity for the year, the Lincs and

Notts Air Ambulance, which is also based at RAF Waddington.

The concert takes place in the Albert Hall in Nottingham on Sunday 27 September, commencing at 3.00. Tickets cost £10 (or £5 for 16 years and under) and are available from Gary Hallam on 07971 441682 (or 01623 487279 after 6.00).

Peter Fletcher
Publicity Officer

Penn Singers Midlands South West

Penn Singers is a mixed voice friendly community choir with approximately 70 members who sing under the enthusiastic and imaginative leadership of its musical director Helen Smith. The choir performs a wide repertoire of music ranging from classical, spiritual, folk and musicals. Helen has been with the choir for nearly 5 years. She studied music at Birmingham University where she began conducting, working with choirs, orchestras, wind bands as well as musical theatre productions. Helen was a member of the CBSO Chorus and has performed with them throughout Europe.

Our aim as a community choir is to foster the cultivation and enjoyment of good music. We are keen to support local charities by raising funds at our concerts. We have long been a keen supporter of Compton Hospice and look forward to maintaining a long and fruitful relationship with them and their remarkable work. Our concert Voices for Hospices will support Compton Hospice and Mary Stevens Hospice, Stourbridge on 10 October 2015 at Dudley Town Hall.





Singing a wide variety of songs which include *Be Still My Soul*, *Bogoroditse Devo*, *Come What May*, *Like A Singing Bird*, *Nimrod* and *Seal Lullaby* to name but a few.

Joining us on this occasion will be tenor soloist Russell Painter and the full Jackfield (Elcock Reison) Brass Band.

Russell Painter started singing as a chorister in St George's Church, Kidderminster. He moved to London to study at the prestigious Guildhall School of Music and Drama. He is now a freelance singer and has made his mark up and down the country. He is a keen concert recitalist and after dinner entertainer. He is a regular guest with our choir and enjoys a loyal following.

The Jackfield Brass Band has a long illustrious history dating back to the end of the nineteenth century. It maintains a strong presence in Jackfield village (near Telford) and continues to entertain audiences. In 1998 Chris Lewis became the band's musical director and under his leadership the band qualified for the National Final's Great Britain. Coming back up to date the band comprising of approximately 40 talented musicians got off to a flying start in January 2015 at the Butlin's Mine Workers Concert. The band put on a great performance coming third out of nineteen bands. It has recorded several CDs the latest 'Feeling Good' received critical acclaim from the Brass Band Press. Anyone who has heard the Jackfield Band will have had an unforgettable experience, contributing to their loyal following throughout the West Midlands.

Glo Stocken

St Edmundsbury Male Voice Choir Anglia

The first extended tour the choir has undertaken since 2008 saw SEMVC travelling to Belgium, Germany and France. The choir had two distinct musical challenges: the first to sing sacred music in beautiful buildings, the second to entertain.

In Hasselt Cathedral, in Belgium, with its wonderful acoustic, the choir excelled, singing Welsh hymns, spirituals, Elgar's *Ave Verum* and Johannes Schweitzer's *Sancta Maria* with conviction. Mark Jefferson, the conductor, pulled every ounce of passion from the men, using the musical climaxes and ensuing silences to great effect.

A similar feeling was created from the organ loft in the Basilica at Kevelaer, but this time all the men had to climb a steep, spiral, stone staircase before singing!



The choir had been invited to Germany to celebrate various anniversaries of the choirs in Werdorf and the hosts certainly put on a festival of choral singing in Ehringshausen. There is already a strong link between SEMVC and Werdorf. While the men went to rehearse, the ladies entered a large hall at 6.00. By 8.15, eleven choirs having performed, it was the interval. Luckily Rob Bream, one of our leaders, and Richard Leveritt, the treasurer, provided us with extra refreshment tokens at this point to sustain us through the next nine choirs. The final choir of the evening was SEMVC and they were definitely worth waiting for.

Sporting gold waistcoats but no bowties looked casual but their performance was totally disciplined. The lighter repertoire of this evening included *You Raise Me Up*, *Embraceable You* and *Mustang Sally*, a real highlight. The audience was suitably impressed.

Another joint concert was held in Marl, this time with a German choir put together for the occasion. Both choirs gave their all to a capacity audience and a joint performance of *You Raise Me Up* raised the roof. Outside the choirs continued to entertain in the warm night air until our coach appeared.

Back in Belgium SEMVC sang under the Menin Gate in Ypres. A piece specially written for the choir by Ben Mason uses words from Rupert Brooke's poem 'The Soldier'. Beginning with a solo, beautifully sung by David Sadler, the angular melodic lines blend together supported by rapid movement in the keyboard part. A second performance was heard by a war memorial in a field in Le Cateau in France.

The younger men must be mentioned here for carrying the heavy keyboard up to the organ loft in Kevelaer and along the rough track to the war memorial.

The age range of the men spanned nearly fifty years, but together with the ladies a feeling of friendship and wellbeing permeated the group. A choir tour is not for the fainthearted as hours of coach travel, different hotels, packing and unpacking, wearing the correct outfit and then performing to a high standard is a tall order. I would applaud all the men for their hard work and commitment.

Tony Farr

Stevenage Ladies Choir Thames North

For those seeking an alternative to the Eurovision Song Contest on the evening of 23 May 2015, there could have been no better choice than to head to St Michael's Church for the joint concert given by Côr Meibion Caerwys and their guests, the Stevenage Ladies Choir. A choir conference two years previously had introduced the two groups and the St Michael's concert was the happy outcome.

Under their Director, Ann-Marie Knight, ably accompanied by Graham Pointon, the Stevenage Ladies presented an appealing programme showing that they could both swing and dance with panache with *It don't Mean a Thing* and *Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy* and also tug at the heartstrings with *Wherever You Are* and *We'll Gather Lilacs*. The audience was particularly appreciative of their inclusion of two verses of *All Through The Night* in Welsh. It was heartening to see the commitment and polish of this large choir, with all age-groups represented.

Although only a fraction of the size of the Ladies Choir, Côr Meibion Caerwys

BASINGSTOKE LADIES CHOIR PUT THE HE(A)RT INTO HERTFORDSHIRE



under the direction of Helena Thomas, accompanied by Margaret Williams, also presented their own repertoire with conviction and flair, particularly the Welsh items in the first half.

The audience joined in lustily when invited to swell the chorus of *The Hippopotamus*



Song and the concert ended with the choirs giving a rousing combined performance of *The Rhythm of Life* before a well-deserved buffet awaited them at the Golf Club.

On Saturday 27 June the Basingstoke Ladies Choir were invited to join the Stevenage Ladies Choir in a concert in Stevenage to raise much needed funds for the National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society (NRAS).

This proved to be a wonderful musical occasion and a very large audience

including local North Hertfordshire VIPs and representatives from both NRAS and the National Association of Choirs were treated to something special.

Stevenage, under their musical director, Ann-Marie Knight opened the concert and accompanied by Ben Ward, gave the audience a great rendition of the Ellington/Mills classic *It Don't Mean A Thing*. They then ran through some other well-known songs culminating with *I'm Gonna Wash That Man Right Outa My Hair* by Rogers/Hammerstein.

The Basingstoke Ladies under their musical director Margaret Brackenborough, and accompanied by Jonathan Hedgecock, then showed how well Hampshire 'lasses' can sing, performing six pieces including Sana Sananina and Ye Banks And Braes both arranged by their talented accompanist.

In the second half Basingstoke again excelled particularly with the Billy Joel number *And So It Goes* but left the best until last with *Eternal Flame* again arranged by Jonathan Hedgecock.

The Stevenage Ladies then really showed their best, particularly with the Showboat Medley before both choirs took to the stage to bring the house down with the very popular *Wherever You Are* and also *The Lord Is My Shepherd* – Vicar of Dibley version by Howard Goodall.

A fantastic concert and even a closure on the M25 on the way home could not diffuse the euphoria of some very tired ladies who had again done Basingstoke proud.

Graham Ling



CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED YOUNG CONDUCTORS' PROGRAMME ANNOUNCES 2015 SCHOLARS

Sing for Pleasure has announced the recipients of its critically acclaimed Young Conductors' 2015 programme, a year-long scholarship for choral talents aged between 20 to 25.

After completing a robust interview process this year's chosen scholars are: Caitlin Mayall; Saul Jones; Matthew Roughley; Emma Barnes and Jack Apperley.

Beginning in summer 2015, under the tutorship of Manvinder Rattan, the course comprises three training weekends, a week long summer school, a choir placement and one-to-one tuition. Over a 12-month placement they will work towards an Advanced Level Sing for Pleasure accreditation, conducting complex a capella and orchestrally accompanied works, with an endorsement towards the ABRSM Diploma in Choral Conducting.

SfP's Head of Conductor Training, Manvinder Rattan commented: 'As the Young Conductors' programme enters its third year we can already see how previous attendees have gone on to really start making their mark in the conducting world.'

'Former scholar Nick Graham now conducts the choir at Croydon Minster and also holds the post of Organ Scholar. Similarly, fuelled by his experience with Sing for Pleasure, Neil Balfour has progressed to a Masters degree at the Royal Northern College of Music'

'Sing for Pleasure is dedicated to investing in the future of choral music and providing a platform for young talent. Our 2015 scholars have already shown excellence in their chosen fields, working together we will continue this education.'

Caitlin Mayall is a previous member of the Halle Youth Choir and is in her final year of a Music and Spanish degree at Leeds University. She is currently working as Singing Teacher for Stagecoach Theatre Arts in Leeds and directed the University Chorus in 2012.

Saul Jones is a Physics MSc student at York University where he conducts the College Chamber Choir, a chaplaincy group and a Barbershop Quartet.



Left to right Emma Barnes, Caitlin Mayall, Matthew Roughley, Jack Apperley and Saul Jones. Manvinder Rattan, Head of Conductor Training, Sing for Pleasure, is front of picture.

Matthew Roughley is an Assistant Conductor with the Halle Children's Choir and is an Assistant Conductor of Junior and Youth Choirs in Wigan Music Service.

Emma Barnes is reading Vocal Performance at Chichester where she conducts four choirs. Her passion is to teach music and develop choirs for children and young people.

Jack Apperley is a music student at the University of Birmingham hoping to use the scholarship to further a post graduate career in choral music.

The Young Conductors scholarships were launched in 2013 and funded by donations from grant giving trusts and foundations. Eleven scholars have so far been through the programme.

Sing for Pleasure, registered charity number 270384, was launched in Bristol in 1964 as a musical society that celebrated all stages of choral and conductor development. The charity, which celebrated its golden anniversary last year, has a national reach and has built an excellent professional reputation. Sing for Pleasure has been delivering high quality accredited training courses for over 45 years.

For further information please contact Manvinder Rattan
07957 838197

conducting@singforpleasure.org.uk

or Gayle Derrick

07920 527722

fundraising@singforpleasure.org.uk

Sing for Pleasure is a registered charity, launched in Bristol in 1964. The charity runs a respected conductor training programme and has trained over 300 conductors to date. SfP also runs a variety of nationwide singing events, offers a wide range of publications and provides national curriculum compatible teaching resources and INSET training.

Grant funding was obtained for these places from the following sources: The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust, The Fenton Arts Trust, The Angus Allnat Charitable Foundation and the John Lewis Partnership.

www.singforpleasure.org.uk



Worcester Male Voice Choir Midlands South West

April/ May saw the choir on tour for the Cornwall International Male Voice Choral Festival. What an outstanding tour! Not only was the choir able to participate in the international competition for choirs in the 41 voices and over category but it was able to enjoy many aspects of the true spirit of male voice singing.

New venues, joining with other choirs in concert, enjoying substantial time with friends, singing to packed audiences, warm welcomes from all our hosts, historical and acoustically excellent Cornish churches, wonderful afterglows with mandatory Cornish pasties and singing in more modern venues such as the Hall of Cornwall, Truro and the Eden Project, then a final traditional end of tour dinner when our home spun entertainment surpassed all expectations! A truly great tour. More specifically we sang in Egloshayle at St Petroc's Church with our Cornish hosts Wadebridge MVC and international visitors the Son's of Lafelle from the USA. They were just bowled over by our singing of *American Trilogy*.

Next was St Endillion Parish Church where we were hosted by Imerys Mid Cornwall MVC and joined by Sussex Gruffs and Choir Musica from Canada. Our final church concert was in Hayle at St. Elwyn's hosted by Bulith MVC and joined by Praze Hayle Male Choir and Chor Musica again. It is fair to say that our performance in the competition was not up to our true standard. There is certainly a technique in competition singing which many choirs were able to use. Nevertheless it was an enjoyable experience and we received some very positive feedback from the judges on our three chosen pieces- *Cantique de Jean Rancine*, *Climbing up the Mountain* and *The Impossible Dream*.

Then back to earth by the end of the month with a concert in Shirehampton near Bristol in aid of church funds. Nice venue and if you ever you get an invite the splendid tea provided is worth the visit by itself. Recent months have seen the implementation of a chorister recruitment campaign despite the choir over a few years increasing its choristers from 50 to 75. However our age profile has remained too high and already we have seen a small decline in membership. A number of initiatives have been tried including



links with two comprehensive schools and the local university but these have not brought any short term results. The recent campaign involved leaflet drops to 10,000 key housing areas in parts of Worcester as well as using social media, our website and local press and radio. As well as inviting potential members to our regular twice weekly rehearsals we have taken the choir to meet the public by singing in the city centre on a busy Saturday and going to a Hub Centre in a major modern housing development on the east side of Worcester. We were trying to take the choir to the potential choristers! However whilst we gained much publicity we did not succeed in our aim of recruiting 20 new members. Efforts will continue and we are convinced that performing in the city centre on a Saturday is well worth the effort.

The age profile remains a challenge but also celebrate the wonderful contribution of our older members and we were very pleased to celebrate the 90th birthday of Bowen James on 7 August. This year was also Bowen's 25th year in the choir and he was presented with his certificate of membership by Dave Bradley Choir President.

Mid-June saw the choir joining six other choirs in the Midlands for the Annual Concert of the English Association of Male Voice Choirs, hosted this year by the Hadley Orpheus MVC. Not a competitor to the National Association rather a regional association in the Midlands which aims to facilitate performing together and accessing prestigious venues which any individual choir might not be able

to justify. An excellent concert was held in Oakengates Theatre, Telford where the massed choirs performed very well and were joined by some extraordinarily talented youngsters including an outstanding pianist Lauren Zhang who we will all hear much more about in the future

The theme of young soloists was continued at our next Concert at St Georges Church, Worcester in early July where we were raising funds for Macmillan Cancer Care. The choir was joined by Penny Ashmore a harpist and singer who performed with some help from two of her singing friends. We were so impressed that a group of choristers and wives/partners will be supporting these young people, part of the Elgar School of Music, in their involvement in a production of a Gershwin Musical *Crazy for You* at the local Swan Theatre in Worcester. These and the talented youngsters at Telford restored our faith somewhat after a series of articles in the press bemoaning the nevertheless undoubted demise overall of music in schools.

Our final event in this quarter was at Old St Martins Church in the centre of Worcester raising funds for a Church which was due to close in 1910 but still remains active! Next time we will report on our involvement in a major concert for the Prince's Trust at the prestigious Colston Hall, Bristol where the compere will be the broadcaster Moira Stuart.

Terry Dillingham
Public Relations Officer

Mansfield and District Male Voice Choir Midlands East

The choir was formed in the Nottinghamshire coalfields in 1944 by the merging of two local choirs and has a long and illustrious history in the musical tradition of Mansfield with numerous prizes winning performances at National and Regional level.

With over 50 enthusiastic members under the Musical Directorship of Meryl Chambers, accompanist Margaret Ball and Deputy MD Ian Grice the choir performs not only in our local area, regularly raising thousands of pounds for local and national charities, but country wide. We have long been members of the NAC Midlands East Group and have more recently become more active in supporting this worthwhile body.

Choir highlights over the last few years include singing in 10 Downing Street and on two occasions being one of the few English choirs to sing at the Royal Albert Hall and the Manchester Evening News Arena with the Welsh Association of Male Choirs, Joint Festival of Welsh Massed Voices. Our association with other local choirs has led to our involvement in massed choir performances with The Syd Lawrence Orchestra and The Band of The Royal Marines. In 2014 we raised a record £11,000 for charities, performed in many concerts, auditioned for the UK Choir of the Year competition and have been delighted to welcome four young choristers into our membership; we now have choristers aged from 15 to 91.

What these cold facts cannot convey is the sheer pleasure we get from singing together and sharing this enthusiasm,

at our sell out concerts, with our audiences. Clearly evident is the sustained camaraderie and sense of unity for those belonging to this choir.

Recent experiences...

NAC Midland East Annual concert

We would like to share with you our experiences of two recent concerts. The first was on Saturday 23 May when five choirs joined together in a fabulous evening of music and friendship in the NAC Midlands East Region Annual Concert.

We were honoured by the attendance of The National Chairman Brenda Wilkinson in the capacious and modern Bulwell Academy near Nottingham having excellent facilities including a restaurant area, large changing rooms and tiered seating in the auditorium for the audience. The event was managed to a fine level of detail by Gary Hallam the Concert Secretary of the hosts, Bestwood Male Voice Choir. The participating choirs in order of appearance were Mansfield and District Male Voice Choir, The Greasley Singers, Carlton Male Voice Choir, The Sonara Singers and finally Bestwood Male Voice Choir.

Mansfield & DMVC arrived on stage just before 7.00 and we looked resplendent in our new summer uniform of Kingfisher blue waistcoats and an open necked white shirt. The comparative informality (we usually wear our red burgundy jackets and choir ties or dinner suits and a burgundy bow tie) in our dress made for a more relaxed presentation but did not dilute the attention to detail in our stage presentation and technical accuracy.

Our nineteen minute set consisted of *Onward Ye Peoples* by Sibelius, *Yesterday* Lennon and McCartney, *Make You Feel My*

Love Bob Dylan (and well done to one of our new young choristers Joe Higgins for his mellow baritone solo in this song), *Deus Salutis*, a favourite of Brenda the National Chairman and our rendition of *Counting The Goats* sung in Welsh ably supported by three goatherds with their placards which raised a few smiles in the audience.

Being first on stage allowed us to sit back and enjoy the following four choirs and we were treated to some sensitive and boisterous singing from each of the choirs. I set myself the very difficult task of attempting to choose one song as a favourite from each choir. I have looked again and again at the programme and, for me, I come up with: *Deus Salutis* from Mansfield; a great arrangement of *Chattanooga Choo Choo* from Greasley; Carlton's *Tribute to Matt Munro* (a medley of three pieces arranged by Alwyn Humphreys); Sonara's *Da Doo Ron Ron* (engaging and technically challenging) and, not least, Bestwood with *Skyfall* (new, fresh and beautifully delivered).

Of course, one of the best things about participating in such regional events is the networking opportunities with other choirs. We all love what we do and it is really pleasant to re-meet choir members, MDs and accompanists from all the choirs involved and to chat about the event, the music and the ambitions of choir members. Exchanging stories and news helps us perpetuate the life of singing in the Midlands East as part of the National Association. As a final honour, Brenda has asked Mansfield to host the event in 2017. We last did this in 2010 and we are delighted to be selected again from a region having 45 choirs. Thank you Brenda – it didn't take long to say yes!

Finally, I would like to register my sincere thanks to the good folk at Bestwood for inviting us to participate (thank you Colin Pursglove, Chairman) and more specifically to Gary Hallam who managed the occasion with professionalism and good humour amidst the inevitable changes and frustrations. Without the dedication of a few hard working individuals we wouldn't have an event. Well done to all involved in each participating choir. Roll on 2016.

Concert with Hull Male Voice Choir

Our second experience was a new one to two participating choirs in that we have not previously sung with a group from Yorkshire. This was a concert with Hull



Male Voice Choir at Queen Elizabeth's Academy, Mansfield on 6 June 2015.

Once again we assembled in the magnificent oak panelled hall dating from 1561 at the Queen Elizabeth's Academy in Mansfield for an evening of song. We were joined by our guests Hull Male Voice Choir who had travelled especially for this event after months of planning and rehearsal. After the National Anthem there was a one minute silence to mark the recent death of 13 year old Amber Peat who was a pupil at the Academy. The venerable hall with its massive acoustics accommodated an audience of over 250 who were delighted by the range of repertoire from both choirs and the quality of singing. It is only with male voices choirs that such depth, resonance and delicacy can be reached and we know from the feedback that our audience were swept away. One of our friends from Hull said that it was a really emotional experience for him... and this from a gritty Yorkshire man.

The audience were foot tapping and clapping along with Hull's rendition of *Is This the Way to Amarillo?* and laughed out loud at Mansfield presentation of *Counting the Goats* (Sung in Welsh) with the three dancing goats portrayed on our placards. On a more serious note the male

voice choir standards *Gwahoddiad* and *Morte Criste* were spine tingling; each of our two conductors (Julian from Hull and Meryl from Mansfield) guided us through these two pieces which left some of our choristers and audience breathless – absolutely beautifully done guys.

Thanks must go to the Mansfield Supporters' Group for providing refreshments and generally supporting the logistics aspects of staging the concert. Paul Bennett, as compère, and Paddy Crabtree, as choir Marshall for both choirs, did a great job providing an entertaining and professional performance. This is what it is all about isn't it? Thanks to all involved in what was a very successful concert.

The future...

The Hull Male Voice Choir have invited us to join them in concert to help celebrate the award of European City of Culture 2017 which has been bestowed upon the city of Hull. We look forward to singing the magnificent Guildhall on 3 June 2017.

We have decided to stretch out and enter a competition for the first time in many years. We have entered Willmott Dixon North Wales Choral Festival, to be held on 6-8 November 2015 and expect to stage

over 40 choristers in the male voice section.

A weekend to look forward to.

A very important date for us is 13 March 2016 when we will be staging a concert at the 700 seat Albert Hall in Nottingham. We will be joined by the talented and popular Notts Police Band and a girls' choir called The Singers, all of whom are pupils of our MD Meryl Chambers. This is a big event for us and we have been helped with advice from two of our local colleague choirs (Carlton and Bestwood) who stage successful concerts at this venue every year. Look out for our advertising.

So there we have it, our first article in the NAC News & Views. We are very lucky to be surrounded by so many like minded folk in the East Midlands; we attend each other's concerts and very often team up for a concert together; precisely the spirit behind the NAC strap line of 'Joining the Nation in Choral Singing'.

Geoff Mansfield
Chairman

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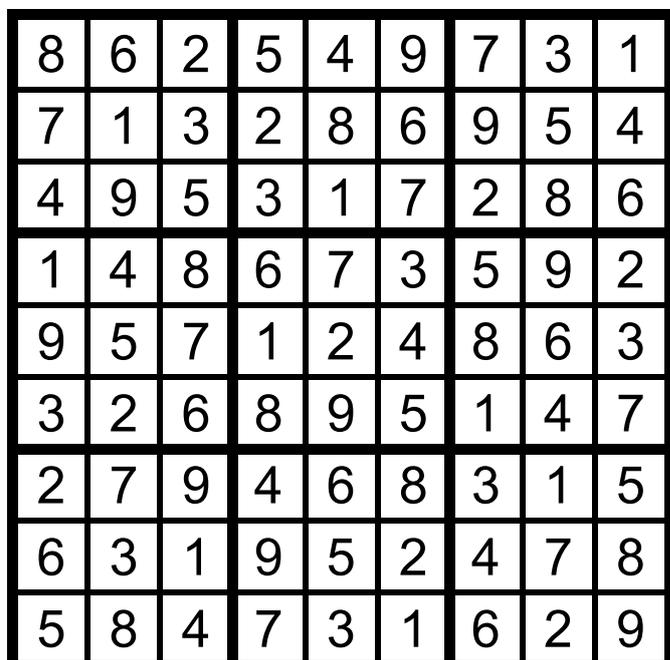
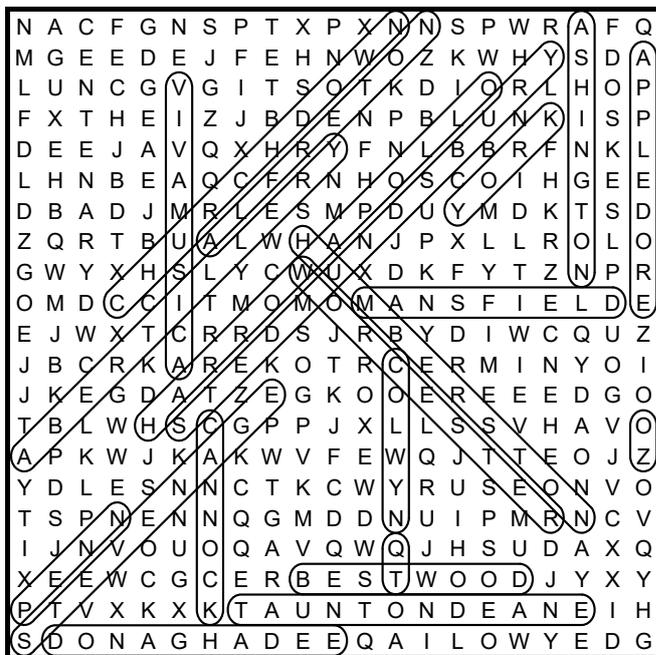
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"Before I heard you play it, that used to be my favorite piece."



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

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'Wow! that is a long email address', I hear you say. Yes it is but you will find that once it's in your computer you can just start to type it and your computer will offer to finish it for you.

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- We use Calibri 10pt in News & Views. (If you don't have this, don't worry I can soon change the one you use.)
- Set your paragraphs to single space with no spacing before or after paragraphs.
- Start with the name of your choir.
- Then say the NAC group your choir is in.
- Write your article.
- Say who has written it.
- Quotes use single speech marks (same key as @ but without the shift).
- Dates do not include st nd rd or th
- Abbreviations do not have full stops.
- Song titles are shown in *italics*.
- Do not put photos in the text.

- Don't use am or pm in times.
- Unless the word 'choir' is part of a title it should **NOT** have a capital letter.
- Your choir is singular so 'the choir is' not 'the choir are'.

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