

News & Views



John W Taylor - National Community Manager Co-op Funeralcare, John Blue - The Glasgow Phoenix Choir's Business Manager and David Hendry. See page 8

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**Spring 2010
No 191**



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Last Dates for News & Views Material

Summer issue - 30 April

It may not be possible to publish material received after this date.

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In the Chair

Dear Friends

A very happy, peaceful and prosperous New Year to you all! I do hope that musically you find everything you want in 2010.

This is the first Chairman's Chat I've done for News & Views, and I want to tell you a little about Conference, as well as giving you advance notice of a national event to take place in October.

First, though, I'd like to remind you about the annual Conference weekend. This will be held on 19-21 March, in Stevenage. You can find all the information on the NAC website, together with the downloadable booking form. Our headline



seminar presenter is Suzi Digby, star of the BBC's programme *Last Choir Standing*, and a well-respected choral director in her own right. There will, of course, be a variety of trade stands; quite a few new ones this year. The choirs and committee of

Thames North Group are in the final stages of organising a superb concert for the Saturday evening. All in all, a weekend not to be missed, so please do book as early as possible to ensure you don't miss out!



I promised you early information about a national event. I have recently attended a meeting to set up a National Singing Weekend. This has been planned for 1-3 October 2010. The project is still in the very early stages and will develop over the next few months, but the idea is simply to get as many people - singers and non-singers alike - to have a chance of singing together as possible. I will keep you up to date through News & Views and the website, but for now this is just to ask that you please earmark that weekend if you can.

Enjoy your singing, and I hope to meet many of you in Stevenage in March.

Regards and best wishes,

Celia Johns

From the President

Following a request from Tony Moore, when he came to the Gresley MVC concert during our London tour, we went to the Concert planned by the Choir and the Band of the Snowdown Colliery Welfare Organisation. The request was aimed at getting more interest in forming the Group. We were met by Tony and Lorie Stepney and talked with the Choir Chairman, Treasurer and MD who were pleased to meet us as representing the NAC. The occasion was the 80th Anniversary of the choir.

We were invited to the final concert of the Malcolm Lees Ladies Choir which was outstanding in spite of the sadness of deciding to disband due to the illness of Malcolm. The choir has always been active within the Group and we shall be sorry to lose them due to Malcolm's illness. Jan and I made a plea for them to continue as a tribute to Malcolm for the years of work he has done. He was the one who proposed that wealthy choirs could consider passing some of their funds to help the NAC to continue when funds were low, at a Conference in Laurie Butcher's time.

Jan and I were invited to the Group Concert at

Newcastle-on-Tyne on Saturday for their Choral Spectacular. We have attended their Group Concerts for many years and they have all been spectacular.

Recent visits made on behalf of the NAC

- 6 Sept Luton MVC Concert at Harpenden
- 26 Sept Newcastle Group Concert
- 3 Oct Midlands East Group meeting Derby
- 10 Nov Officers' Meeting
- 12 Nov Snowdown MVC 80 Years Celebration Concert
- 14 Nov Diamond Gala Dinner Orpheus MVC Grimsby & Cleethorpes
- 4 Dec Darwen Ladies Choir member's service awards presentation Concert where I was asked to present the awards and collect music donated to the NAC by the late Bob McVean
- 18 Dec Luton MVC Annual Dinner



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Music Review.



This Land of Ours - Karl Jenkins. TTBB, begins with a Cantilena - *Spirit of the Mountains*; an easy piece, chorally, with a simple variation of the choral parts in the accompaniment. There is a section for piano which re-states the previous choral parts.

Suo Gan - a well known folk tune is next with 16 bars a cappella opening the piece progressing into a simple arrangement of this much sung tune. *Pie Jesu* - modulates from F major to F# major. After the first fifteen bars there is a long piano interlude which follows the same modulating pattern.

The well known hymn tune *Hyfrydol* follows, with words which differ from the hymn book version. *In these Stones Horizons Sing* is followed by *Myfanwy* with fairly traditional harmonies but the words differ from the male voice choir version and C major to Db Major Modulations.

The last two pieces in this book are my favourites. Karl Jenkins' arrangement of his *Agnus Dei* and *Benedictus*. This is a well presented good value book at £7.99.

Further information: Annet Ferguson. Schott Music. 020 7534 0744. annet.ferguson@schott-music.com

New from Faber Music:

Eternal Light - A Requiem - Howard Goodall. Arranged for Soprano, Tenor/Baritone soloists and mixed voice chorus accompanied by keyboard and strings; this is a very demanding piece suitable for singers capable of singing at a very high standard. £9.99

Love's Philosophy - Alexander L'Estrange. SATB. Three pieces based on poems by Shelley, Tennyson and Byron. A beautiful work with a good accompaniment. £3.99 Also available for solo voice.

Angels - three pop classics arr Alexander L'Estrange. SAB and SA arrangements. £2.99

Queen Smash Hits. Arr Ben Parry. SAB.
Crazy Little Thing Called Love, *Don't Stop Me Now*,
We are the Champions. £2.99

Razzle Dazzle Arr Charles Beale. SAB
Razzle Dazzle, *We Both Reached for the Gun* and *All*

I Care About. Three good foot tapping pieces with a lively accompaniment. £2.99

Deep River arr Ben Parry. SA *Deep River* and a *Spiritual medley*; a beautiful arrangement; good for the repertoire of any ladies' choir. £2.99

Other Music from Faber's Choral Signature Series.

Sweet is the memory, Rest - Ken Burton,

For the Fallen - Brendan Ashe,

Ecce Concipies - Mathew Martin,

Adam Lay Y Bounden - Mathew Martin,

Dormi Jesu - Vladimir Godar

Jubilato Deo - Nigel Hess.

Further Information: Laura McDermott

Faber Music 01279828929.

laura.mcdermott@fabermusic.com

New Music from Barenreiter

Groove Sisters arr Martin Carbow. SSAA An interesting group of ten gospel type numbers. The arrangements are well written with a good piano accompaniment. They are set low in the female voice range to give 'The earthy vocal sound inherent in the pop genre'. The arrangements can be transposed by up to a third if required. These, set in a well presented glossy bound album, are good value for money at £12. (If you require large numbers try for a discount, many companies will do this for NAC choirs).

Contact: Chris Jackson. 01279828930

baerenreiter@dial.pipex.com

All these scores and others which I have received over the year will be available for delegates to view at conference 19 -21 March.

I think I should have no other mortal wants, if I could always have plenty of music. It seems to infuse strength into my limbs and ideas into my brain. Life seems to go on without effort, when I am filled with music.

George Eliot (1819 - 1880)

Festivals

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Copyright and PRS Matters.

I have dealt with many licence and PRS enquiries since the last issue and have had a 100% success. The music publishers have been very prompt with their responses. If you require help with copyright or PRS matters I will be able to help. Please refer to the last issues for frequently asked questions.

I was hoping to have an easy to understand advice sheet on copyright matters but I am awaiting a reply from the Music Publishers Association which is taking much longer than I anticipated.

NAC Library

I have now received the TTBB library list. Please contact me with any request to borrow or buy. We may have music you require.

**An intellectual snob is someone who can
listen to the William Tell Overture and
not think of The Lone Ranger.**

Dan Rather - US television newscaster

Barbershop Harmony is Expanding

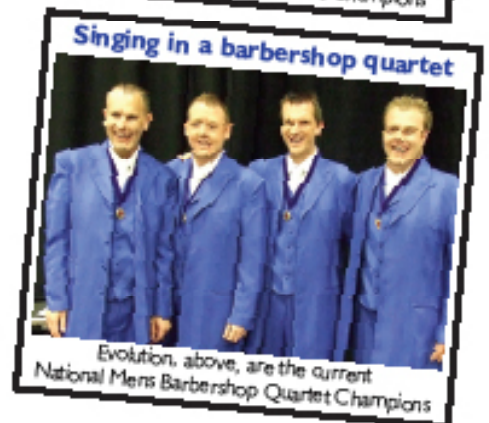
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Around the Choirs

The Glasgow Phoenix Choir Scotland West

Sponsored by The Co-operative Funeralcare

One of the highlights of the choir's current season was the release of the choir's 34th recording - Songs of Solace which was proposed by the choir's lead sponsors - The Co-operative Funeralcare and included a number of tracks selected by the Company from a its top 20 most requested pieces of music played at funerals.

It was announced in the press in mid November and prompted Glasgow's Evening Times to title its article with the tongue-in-cheek heading 'Mourning Has Broken' which provoked many comments by the public in similar fashion. In it the choir has as guests The Co-operative Funeralcare Band - currently Scottish Brass Band Champions - conducted by Michael Fowles. The choir was, as always, conducted by Marilyn Smith and with accompanist, Cameron Murdoch, playing the organ at St John's Renfield Church. The CD included such items as Fields of Gold, You Raise Me Up, You'll Never Walk Alone, and Amazing Grace as well as more traditional items - Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring, Lloyd Webber's Pie Jesu, Ave Maria, and Jerusalem to name but a few.

This was the forerunner to the choir's Christmas season which began in the beautiful St Michael's Church, Linlithgow Palace where the packed audience gave the choir a marvellous reception. The St Michael's Christmas concert has been an annual feature for more than 12 years since the choir's first appearance there.

This was followed by the choir's Christmas Concert in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall with special guests - The Co-operative Funeralcare Band and Inverclyde Schools' Junior and Senior choirs. Always a popular event in the choir's calendar, this concert exceeded all expectations with every one of the 2,438 seats filled including the choir stalls behind the platform, and with David Hendry - Managing Director of The Co-operative Funeralcare and a number of senior staff of the Company in attendance. At this concert, Conductor, Marilyn Smith was presented with The Scottish Record Industry Association's Silver Disc award by Jack Scott, Marketing Manager of ScotDisc, in recognition of sales of the new recording Songs of Solace. The Band's Conductor - Michael Fowles and David Hendry of the Co-operative Funeralcare were also given Silver Discs



David Hendry, Jack Scott, Marilyn Smith, and Michael Fowles

for their part in the production.

The Festive Season ended with another regular Christmas Concert in Moncrieff Parish Church - East Kilbride.

In the early part of 2010 a number of concerts have been planned including Motherwell, Peebles, Ayr, Coatbridge, Newton Stewart and Lockerbie. The choir's Spring Concert in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall in April will have the best of Scottish youth as guests with the Ayrshire Fiddle Orchestra and West Lothian Schools' Brass Band both of which have been our guests previously and return by popular appeal.

The choir's May tour will be to Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State with two concerts in Belfast and one in Dublin where it will be good to renew old friendships after a few years absence from the Emerald Isle.

A busy season will finish in June with concerts in the Adam Smith Centre in Kirkcaldy, Freemason's Hall in Edinburgh and the West End Festival in Glasgow.

J Lawson Purdie - Publicity Officer

Her singing reminds me of a
cart coming downhill with
the brake on.

Sir Thomas Beecham
on an unidentified soprano in Die Walküre

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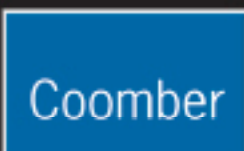
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Around the Choirs

Bristol MVC South West

What unusual request has your choir received? In my previous choir, we sang in the bowels of a cave complex, but recently, our choir was requested to sing just a couple of verses of a well known song on stage to bring a show to completion.

In line with some fourteen other choirs across the country, we were asked to provide a musical accompaniment for the production of 'Moby Dick', a story relating to the tale of Captain Ahab and the whale.

After a couple of music rehearsals, we met at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre on the first evening and were put through our paces on stage for an hour before the show. Then we were allowed to see the first half of the show - up in 'the gods', as the theatre was packed! The second half saw us in the green room awaiting our entrance. Dressed all in black, we each wore a sailor's neckerchief and hat and carried a lighted candle. The stage manager gave us our cue and we processed onto the stage in three directions. One member tried to solicit fame by tripping up as he entered through the cabin door!

All fell quiet and we sang two verses and chorus of Bright Eyes to a backing tape and followed up with an unaccompanied chorus, after which we received a standing ovation, as did the four actors of the play! Not bad for three minutes of song.

The four actors, three fellows and a girl were members of *Spymonkey*, a touring professional theatre group, who held the audience in stitches with their zany acting in the retelling of Hermann Melville's story.

One critic wrote, 'Must be the funniest show on stage in Britain at the moment'. We were pleased to be part of it.

Geo. Green

Bristol MVC

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Around the Choirs

Cor Meibion Brymbo Wales North/ Cheshire West

50th anniversary tour in Germany, France and Belgium,
October/November 2009.



Singing in a choir can transport you to places you might not otherwise see, and in the company of kindred spirits. This is what happened for Cor Meibion Brymbo choristers and their guests on a recent tour in Germany, France and Belgium as ongoing celebrations of their 50th anniversary year. What a week it was!

We set off from Wrexham on Thursday 29 October 2009, before dawn, for our journey under the Channel and a first night's stop in Rheims, en route to Kehl-Kork 5km. from Strasbourg, where we were to stay for three days of concerts in the Alsace region.

On arrival at our hotel, after quickly unpacking and enjoying a welcome evening meal, we set off for the nearby village of Kehl where a festival of unity between the churches of the French and German communities was taking place, and a bold wooden banner behind the stage proclaimed a warm *Herzlich Willkommen!*. This was to prove a brilliant and most generous evening for all involved: a large, chalet-style hall with long wooden tables laden with copious bottles of wine and beer awaited us, and a buffet of local cheeses, patés and breads stretched down the length of the hall. It was wonderful hospitality indeed for our choir and for everyone who had come to take part in this evening of fellowship.

Among the performers was a Youth Choir from Italy, with brass bands and soloists. Brymbo had diligently rehearsed *Muss Ich Denn*, and this was greatly enjoyed with everyone joining in and lending support to the

choir's quickly learned German language! The choir sang a rousing selection and the resulting applause and ovation called for an encore of their final piece, *Gwahoddiad*. The friendly welcome and appreciation given to our choir would appear to show that joining together in song fosters European unity far greater than many a political conference!

After breakfast next day our two coaches took us to Strasbourg for a full day in this historic city. The choir's first venue was St Thomas's Church, completed in the early 16th century and situated in the city's old quarter. After Strasbourg Cathedral had again become Catholic in the 17th century, St Thomas's Church was then seen as being the main place of Protestant worship in Strasbourg. Important features of St. Thomas's are its two organs, particularly the one built by Johann Silbermann in 1741 and on which Mozart played in 1778. The thrill of playing on such a notable and treasured instrument, and one on which the great composer had played, was an experience which will remain with our accompanist over many years.

The choir, too, thrilled to the sound of their voices in a church renowned for its acoustics; their singing of Beethoven's *Die Ehre Gottes* was sonorous and profound, as was Strauss's *Nuns' Chorus*, contrasting with the gentle strength of the Schubert *Sanctus. Nessun Dorma*, sung by a choir with organ accompaniment, was a rousing and vigorous variation on the more usual solo performances. Traditional Welsh harp solos and the flautist's Debussy solo, complemented well the selection of music from the choir: this was a superb concert and most enthusiastically received by a most appreciative audience filling the vast church.

From there we made our way along the picturesque streets to the Cathedral of Notre Dame to see this strikingly beautiful example of Gothic architecture, and to seek an opportunity for the choir to experience singing in such a glorious building, although no prior arrangement had been made. The time which was free for our choir was limited by the Evensong service scheduled for late afternoon, but a slot was offered when they might sing. Their voices in *The Lord's Prayer* and in *Gwahoddiad*, sung unaccompanied and heard from the back of the nave, were spine-tingling within the majestic loftiness of the building. This had indeed been a most fascinating and stirring day.

Next day being a Sunday, we were to take part in the morning service at the evangelical church in the nearby

Around the Choirs



village of Legelshurst. The choir sang a full repertoire of Welsh favourites for the enjoyment of the German congregation, with flute and harp solos, and pieces from Verdi and Strauss sung by a visiting soprano soloist. It was interesting to be able to attend a service spoken largely in German, just as is celebrated each Sunday in the village.

From Legelshurst we travelled on to Colmar and enjoyed lunch in the pretty central square and an afternoon strolling along quaint streets. Our route then took us to Belgium which could, perhaps, be seen as the climax of the tour.

Staying in Ypres, we were not far from Poperinge and the Tyne Cot Cemetery. This cemetery is the largest on the Western Front and with a museum showing relics from the Great War: letters, medals, personal items, and even a boy's school report which spoke of him, one of the fallen, as being an 'excellent scholar' in a class of 41. This museum of remembrance presented an intensely moving and evocative record of their suffering, before we began to walk along the vast lines of immaculately kept graves. The day was cold and raining: more appropriate than any sunshine. On this raw, grey morning the choir stood in the rotunda of the Memorial, and the sounds of *Mansions of the Lord* and *Gwahoddiad* were carried over the lines of white gravestones.

Some 10km. from Ypres is the town of Poperinge which served as a place of recreation for soldiers going on leave or returning; a place near to, but separate from the suffering of the trenches. Talbot House was set up as a soldiers' club by an army chaplain and provided warmth and cheer for all, regardless of rank. It is preserved today as a living museum and the welcome now extended to visitors seems not to have changed over time. We were led to an upper room which had been the hub of the soldiers' wartime relaxation, and

which was now again to resonate in song; but now light-hearted and carefree, in contrast to the sombre remembrance of Tyne Cot earlier that day.

As we sat on wooden benches in that same room the Warden, known only as Dries, enacted the history of Talbot House, vividly bringing to life the past story of this place of refuge. Later we were treated to welcome refreshment of tea and plain biscuits, such as would have been enjoyed by those soldiers of the Great War. Down in the parlour, furnished as it was in early last century, Dries invited our accompanist to strike up on 'the old joanna' and so again it was home to a hearty singing of *Pack up your Troubles* and *It's a long way to Tipperary*. It was a very merry, but poignant afternoon.

The final day of Cor Meibion Brymbo's tour was perhaps the most memorable; the choir was to sing at the Ceremony at the Menin Gate, held each evening at 8pm precisely, when all traffic is stopped and silence falls. This was a great honour for Cor Meibion Brymbo: wreaths were laid by choristers who had served in the Forces, and the Exhortation delivered also by an ex-serviceman of the choir.

When the Buglers had finished playing *The Last Post* and then *Reveille*, the massive arches of the Menin Gate echoed to the choir's singing of *Psalms 23*, *Llef*, *Mansions of the Lord*, *Gwahoddiad* and finally the national anthems of Wales and England.

And so we returned to our hotel, proud to have been part of this time-honoured ceremony but it was not over yet: impromptu singing in the bar continued until late, despite an early departure next day for home.



What's the definition of an alto?

A soprano who can sight-read.

Around the Choirs

This had been a wonderful tour and yet another celebration of the choir's 50th anniversary and thanks must go to all those who helped to organise such an enjoyable week. This was the first tour with the choir's new accompanist, Dr David N Evans, who took up his post last May. We are indeed fortunate to have the services of such an experienced and talented musician to work with our director, Glyn Hughes MBE; we wish David many happy and successful years with Cor Meibion Brymbo. And back home that evening Brymbo MC had been on French TV News!

A friend in France had emailed to me a picture of the choir at the Menin Gate which she had captured on her computer screen. European fame for North Wales!

We warmly welcome new members and anyone interested may visit www.brymbomalechoir.co.uk for further details on joining the choir.

Wendy Beynon, choir secretary's wife.

Tideswell Male Voice Choir South Yorkshire

Tideswell Male Voice Choir, based in the heart of the Peak District, was founded in 1956. Just as the village has changed enormously in half a century, so have the personnel of the choir.

No longer are its members predominantly from the village, but from a wider geographical area. However, rehearsals are still held in Tideswell and the choir is planning a move into new headquarters there, where all rehearsals and management of the choir will be centred. Membership currently stands at forty and men travel from as far away as Sheffield and Stockport to sing with this renowned choir.

Dennis Kay, Principal Conductor and Director of Music, is a well known vocal coach in NW England. Appointed

in 2005, he demands passion and commitment from his men and has brought a new dimension to the choir's performances. Dennis, with his wife Helen, makes two return journeys of over 100 miles each week from Rochdale to Tideswell such is his commitment to the choir.

In 2009, Christopher Ellis, BMus London (Hons) was appointed as Principal Accompanist to the choir. Christopher is a major acquisition and now heads a musical team of four very fine musicians, Eileen Rigg (deputy conductor) Mary Cobbold (principal organist) and David Appleton LRAM ARCM (deputy accompanist) all of whom bring their own special talents to the ongoing development of this ambitious and progressive male voice choir.

Support from its principal sponsor, M. Markovitz Ltd. (Builders' and Plumbers' Merchants) is invaluable. This family owned company, founded in Tideswell over 100 years ago, and now with branches throughout Derbyshire, agreed a 5 year sponsorship with the choir in August 2007 and the support has allowed the choir to purchase vital equipment and new uniforms. It goes without saying how much the choir values this sponsorship, and the involvement of Managing Director, David Hopkins, himself a musician, is priceless.

A key theme of the choir's activities is supporting local communities by bringing its own brand of choral music to a variety of venues. TMVC has held a series of successful choral workshops throughout the Peak District. A close working relationship with the University of Derby, Buxton Campus and Hope Valley College is being forged and it is hoped this will give opportunities to work with young men, introduce them to singing, and the pleasure that can be gained from sharing music with others. This project will, hopefully, help to secure the future of Tideswell Male Voice Choir and also inspire others into helping preserve a great tradition.

Come and Sing led by the MD, and supported by the music team, a 26 week project is planned for 2010. The aim is to bring together between fifty and a hundred men and give them the opportunity to sing at a prestigious concert later in the year. A massive advertising campaign commenced in January and rehearsals will start in Buxton in April this year.



Around the Choirs

Already the University of Derby is lending support and a number of local businesses and the local council are showing great interest. This will be a wonderful opportunity for men of all ages, from 16 years upwards, to experience the joy and excitement of learning how to sing and then performing to an audience of over 900 people in one of the most beautiful theatres in the country, Buxton Opera House, on 24 October 2010.

In October 2009 the choir welcomed, as their guests, the famous Cantamus Girls' Choir. The Buxton Opera House was filled to capacity and the choirs, along with invited soloists Nicholas Bennett, Emma Hopkins and Megan Kelly, provided an unforgettable evening of top quality choral music and singing. The standing ovation and the call for 'more' said everything about this truly memorable concert.

Both choirs presented programmes of outstanding quality and the contrast in content only added to a programme which had everything. To highlight any particular song would be impossible, but not to mention the spine chilling finale would be remiss. Dressed all in black, with tricolor sashes carefully slung across the shoulder, TMVC presented a selection of songs from *Les Miserables* which concluded, when through a smoke-filled stage, the choir were joined by their guests for the final song *Do You Hear The People Sing*. 'Breathtaking! Exciting! Thrilling!' were just some comments made by the audience. This was the latest in a series of spectacular annual concerts given by the TMVC at the Buxton Opera House.

To find out more, visit our website

www.tideswellmvc.co.uk

Ashington & District Male Voice Choir North East

Male voice choirs and brass bands seem to be synonymous with coal mining and Ashington which was built on the industry and was seen as the largest village in the world is able to boast both.

Founded in 1916 by local musician Mr W H Batey, the Ashington & District MVC has had a long and interesting history and members are already looking forward to organising their Centenary Celebrations even though there is time to pass yet.

Like all choirs, the Ashington Choir has experienced its ups and downs but fortunately common sense has prevailed each time and they have kept on singing. Stability has been the order of the day since the 1950s except for the odd hiccup.

Miss Ella Hughes was appointed as pianist in 1960 and then took over the reins as conductor/musical director in 1969, positions she held until last year. 40 years of dedication, inspiration and enthusiasm were rewarded with the presentation of a Lifetime Achievement Award and this was truly deserved. The choir grew in strength during this era and the foundations laid are proving invaluable today. The name of Ella Hughes will always be associated with choral work in the North East and in particular with this choir.

Now to a new era; Neil Morton, like his predecessor was pianist for a number of years before being appointed as conductor/musical director eighteen months ago. Neil, a music teacher in a local school is bringing a new vision to the choir and is re-igniting the enthusiasm of members. Membership currently stands at 36 and new members are continually being sought to strengthen all sections and there have to be replacements for long serving members who can no longer sing regularly.

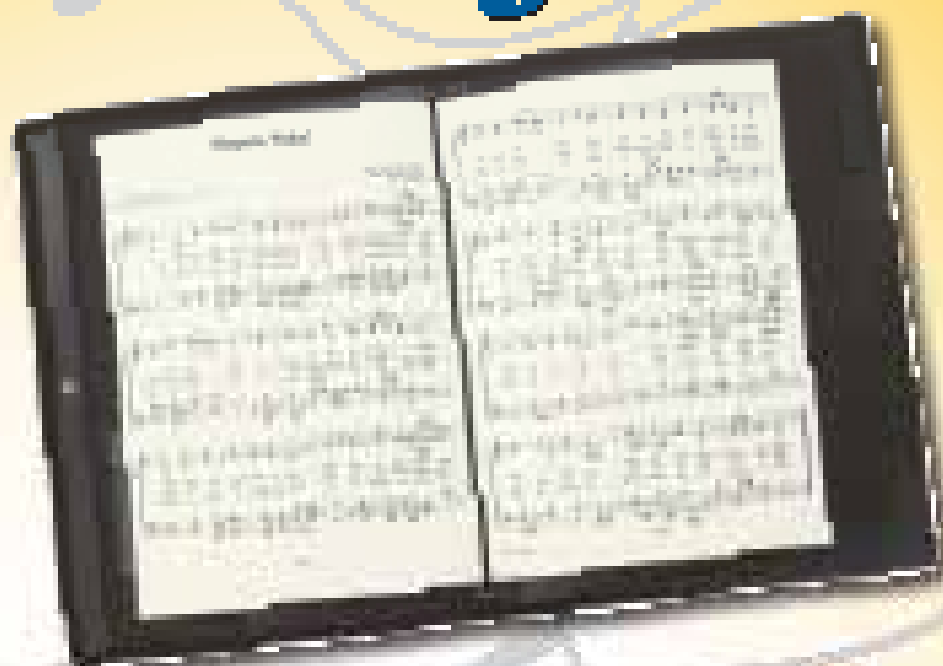
The ADMVC promotes its own Annual Concert which always features a guest artist but most of its other 'bookings' are for charitable events, local organisations or regional 'feature events'. This means that there is a dependency on generous donations to help maintain financial stability... nothing different to many other choirs of a like size!

The ADMVC's main objective is to enjoy our singing and to provide entertainment.

Bob Brind



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Around the Choirs

Retford Choir Celebrates 70 Years Yorkshire South

As war clouds gathered over Europe a small group of men gathered together at the Working Men's Institute, Union Street, Retford on 24 April 1939 in order to discuss the possibility of forming a male voice choir; the outcome of the meeting was to inaugurate such a choir.

The rest, as we say, is history with the choir this year celebrating 70 years of choral singing.

From such humble beginnings the choir, surviving the upheaval of war, has over the years reached the heights of choral singing never thought possible. As one member remarked, 'You would never understand the emotion that goes with it unless you had actually taken part'. The choir over the years entertained audiences near and far, and gained awards at festivals far and wide. It has forged links and lasting friendships with other choirs, Donaghadee Male Voice Choir in Northern Ireland, with the Gesangverein Sangerlust 1883 Choir in Germany; with the Lena Snowden Singers and the Thurnscoe Harmonic MVC.

The choir introduced to Retford the popular annual Celebrity Concerts and the Brass and Voices concerts; at these concerts choir members talk of the air being electric.

As you will appreciate none of this would have taken place without the hard work over the years of its dedicated musical directors, deputy musical directors, accompanists, committee members, choir members and not forgetting our patrons and benefactors who support the choir financially and at concerts with their vocal support. Without any of these the choir wouldn't be celebrating 70 years.

There is a booklet available *The First Fifty Years* thanks to Tom Pritchard, David Kilner, Keith Dowler (our late choir chairman) and Barrie Green, which covers extensively the choir's history and records the significant events and contributions which brought the choir to its first milestone.

We are looking forward this month to welcoming our friends from the Sangerlust Choir from Pfungstadt, Germany to our celebrations. As part of these celebrations we have a joint concert with Sangerlust at St Saviour's Church, Retford on Saturday 26 September at 7.00 pm.

The choir's Musical Director is David Bovill, our Deputy Musical Director is David Kilner and our Accompanist is Stephen Carey. To keep the choir alive and vibrant and hopefully to take it on to further success we urgently need new members to join the choir and swell its ranks. You can be assured of a warm welcome at our rehearsals which take place at the Methodist Chapel on Hallcroft Road, Retford at 7.00 pm. All we ask that you have a love of choral singing. For further information please speak to our choir secretary Ian on 01777 705092. You can be assured of a warm welcome and the spirit of friendship in singing with us.

Camborne Circuit Ladies Choir Cornwall

40 Years Of Music Making

Camborne Circuit Ladies Choir is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. It was formed in September 1969 by Winifred Wing FTCL, ARCM, ATCL, with Joan Hampton as Accompanist. Unfortunately in 1978, Winifred found it necessary to retire and Joyce Robson ALCM, LLCM, became Musical Director.

The choir enjoyed success at the International Festival at Cleveland, and at the Llangollan International Festival received the Cheltenham Gold Cup. At The Cornwall County Music Festival, we gained the highest points and were awarded the Edgar Kessell Cup. The choir also received the Bournemouth Cornish Association Cup for its contribution to music in Cornwall.

After the retirement of Joyce Robson, Winifred Wing found it possible to return as Musical Director, but ill-health forced her to give up the post.



Around the Choirs

We consider ourselves very fortunate to have secured the services of Mr David Bennett. David was educated at Truro School with the well-known Benjamin Luxon. He studied at Hull University under the composer John Joubert, and after graduating with a B.A. (Music), taught for a time in Yorkshire before returning to Cornwall. He is currently the organist at Camborne Wesley Methodist Chapel. David has acted as accompanist to Alan Opie, Stephen Varcoe, Wendy Eathorne, Rachel Luxon, and John Treleaven. He has also received the Cornish Gorsedd Shield for services to music.

The choir's Accompanist, is Valerie Pryor LTCL. Valerie is a well-respected Piano Teacher in the area and is Official Accompanist both for Music Festivals and Examinations.

The choir has toured Brittany, Austria, and the Czech Republic giving concerts in a variety of venues thereby gaining much experience. The Choir's repertoire includes both Sacred and Secular works by a wide range of Composers. Many accomplished soloists have been accompanied by the choir in performances at a

number of concerts and festivals.

To celebrate the choir's 40th year, we will be travelling to York in June, spending a week taking in the history and scenery of that beautiful area. We have a concert booked in Pickering Methodist Chapel and are hoping to give another concert in York Minster. Our final celebration will be a local concert with Guest Artiste, Rachel Luxon.

Betty Johns, Publicity Officer

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Around the Choirs

The Rowland Singers Thames South

We are now well into our 40th Anniversary Year and cannot believe all the things which have taken place already. In November we had our 40th Anniversary Dinner and were delighted to welcome Paul Emery, founder member whose idea it was in the first place to start a choir and some past Rowland Singers whom I have not seen for over 30 years! One of our very early tenors, Maurice Kane and his wife Christine recently moved to the Isle of Wight. They joined us for the evening and enjoyed it very much as we all did. They readily agreed to be our contact and ticket sellers for a special performance of Handel's Messiah on Saturday 13 March at 7.30pm in the beautiful All Saints Church, Ryde.

In December we gave two carol concerts in local churches one of which was completely new to us and had an excellent acoustic as well as a very versatile area for us to set up our brand new staging. We were well received and will be there again next Christmas, we hope. In the meantime the vicar asked if we would sing at their flower festival in July. Our final concert was on 17 December in the glorious Assembly Hall. We were delighted to have the Worthing Youth Big Band as our soloists and they pleased everyone with their spirited playing and added another dimension to Helen's piano accompaniment in the community carols. Our raffle was in aid of the RNLI and a very worthwhile total of £364.60 was presented to coxswain Peter Huxtable MBE. We are about to receive a brand new lifeboat at Shoreham Harbour and are in need of a boat house which is big enough to store it and provide all the necessary accommodation and training facilities for one of the country's busiest ports.

By the time you receive this *News and Views*, Helen will have given her first workshop of the Messiah on Saturday 9 January. At the time of writing, we do not know how many people will attend but we are already up to about 55 participants and we expect some more to come on the door. Should be good fun and I am hoping that some singers from the Thames South Group will make the journey and join us in what we hope will be a fulfilling day. Most of the Rowland Singers will be there and we are hoping that this will give them a feeling for the work especially as some of the newer members have never sung it before. We are giving

one performance in Ryde on 13 March during a choir trip to the island and two performances in Worthing on Wednesday 17 and Thursday 18 March. With the NAC Conference due on the following weekend, we are going to be very busy indeed!

In June we will welcome Three Valleys MVC to a concert at the Assembly Hall and I'm sure that will also be great fun. The programme still has to be finalised but Helen and I have interesting and lively ideas for Dave Martin to consider and then for both choirs to learn. Again we are hoping that some of the Thames South choristers will attend as the newly active group has a concert pencilled in for the following June (2011) when we hope to get several choirs to take part in a joint concert.

We are very pleased with our first professional recording (by John at Reelsound) and it is now on sale for £8. The title of our CD, *Singing4Decades* was suggested by Keith Allchin, one of our newer members and Helen then used it as the title for our 40th Anniversary Souvenir Programme. The outer cover with choir photos, biographies of all the soloists for the whole year and their photos too will remain constant as will adverts which have helped to offset the huge cost involved. A double-sided A3 folded to A4 insert will change to reflect the different content at each concert. Consequently Thames Valley programme notes have already been in the public domain and I hope that will enhance our audience in June.

During the Anniversary Dinner, I was inaugurated as Honorary Life President and now have a medallion to wear at appropriate events. I was very touched and will do all in my power to ensure a vibrant and healthy future for the Rowland Singers of whom I am inordinately proud.

Jacky Hetherington



Letter from NAC (OZ Branch)

Letter from NAC (Oz Branch)

It is the end of another eventful year in Australia. We can't believe that we have been here almost 4 years. We have made so many friends and are still in love with the country. It really feels like home and even when we visited the UK this year for the first time since moving here it was Australia that felt like home. We continue to miss our friends and relations who live in England and it is true that English beer tastes better and they certainly don't have pubs here in the same way as in the 'old' country. However there is a lot to redress the balance!



The Sydney Male Choir is on its summer break now with the last of almost 25 concerts behind it. As usual the variety has been very wide with concerts in churches, concert halls, retirement villages and RSLs. The last, as far as I know, a uniquely Australian institution, originally devised for ex-service men and women, but now open to the general public for eating, drinking and 'pokies', ie slot machines as well as entertainment. We have performed with audiences ranging in size from less than 100 to well over 1,000 and for a range of causes. One of the most poignant was to raise money for the bush fires that devastated parts of Victoria in February 2009. Unfortunately the prospect for this year does not look good with fires already fairly widespread in New South Wales and other states. No fatalities so far but it's going to be a hard, long summer for the 'firies'.

The next year is going to be a momentous one with it being the last full year for our long time Musical Director, Alan Thrift. He has been our maestro for over 20 years and he will be a very hard act to follow. Our annual City of Sydney concert in September, 2010 will be the signal for Alan to hand over the reins to another. If we find anyone that is! The scouts are out and the adverts are being placed, so hopefully we will find a successor to fill the onerous but rewarding position. At this year's Remembrance Service in Martin Place, Sydney Alan's contribution to that event over a period of 20 years was recognised by the Master of Ceremonies to well earned applause from the large crowd that attended. The picture shows Alan and some of the choir at the service. Some sharp eyed readers may recognise the distinguished looking gent in the panama -Yes it is me.

Although there are some vacant slots the concert calendar for 2010 is starting to look interesting with concerts all over NSW and a return to our long time venue, Sydney Town Hall, for our City of Sydney concert. We also welcome the Australian Male Choirs Association to the same venue for the second bi-annual concert since the Association's rebirth.

As always if you wish to contact me please do so via email at petefig@optusnet.com.au I always look forward to contact from the UK.

Peter Marshall

Around the Choirs

Huddersfield U3A Yorkshire West

This mixed choir continues to go from strength to strength and has now passed the magical 100 membership mark.

In fact the choir, under the dual directorship of Eric Cooper and Malcolm Fairless, now has 102 members, most of whom attend their Monday morning rehearsals at the Gledholt Methodist Church in Huddersfield.

The choir is now looking forward to its annual concert in April - the venue and date has yet to be fixed - and has re-arranged the concert it was to have given at St John's Church in Birkby. It has to be cancelled almost at the last minute over Christmas because of heavy snow and so it has been decided to put a concert on in its place at the church at the end of March.

Stan Solomons

Around the Choirs

Honley Male Voice Choir Yorkshire West

The choir will be celebrating its 75th anniversary in 2011 and the aim is to increase its membership to 75 from its present 60 by the time that momentous occasion comes round.

With that in mind a special committee has been set up to launch 'Action 75', the title of the recruitment campaign which has as its main theme 'If you can talk you can sing' backed by publicity in local newspapers and on radio and leaflets delivered to thousands of homes.

The committee is also working with the choir's energetic Ladies Circle in preparing a list of events, both money raising and social in 2010 and next year.

Following a 'sell-out' Christmas concert with world champions Cory Band at the Huddersfield Town Hall the choir is now looking forward to another celebration this year - the 75th birthday of its popular organist and deputy accompanist George Marsden.

George, who joined Honley in 1974, was born on St Valentine's Day 1935 and on 21 February the choir will be joining the congregation at a special Songs of Praise to celebrate his birthday at the Salendine Nook Baptist Church - one of the three local churches where George plays the organ for services every Sunday.

One note of sadness; the choir's Subscribers Secretary, Malcolm Wilson, a non-singing member, died in December after a short illness. Malcolm had been a choir supporter for many years and will be sorely missed. Our condolences go to his son and daughter and two grandchildren.

Stan Solomons

**Don't bother to look,
I've composed that already**

Gustav Mahler to Bruno Walter, who had stopped to admire mountain scenery in rural Austria.



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Around the Choirs

New Harmony Ladies Choir Bristol South West

Our Chairman, Mrs Margaret Pearson, would like to invite all choristers who knew him to attend a memorial concert to mark the tenth anniversary of the passing of her late husband, Morris Pearson. This will be held on 27 March 2010 at 7.30 pm at St Teresa's RC Church, Gloucester Road North, Bristol. This will be a joint concert with Bristol Male Voice Choir, formerly Filton Male Voice Choir, of which Morris was MD from 1981 until his untimely death in 2000. Morris became the first MD of New Harmony Ladies Choir Bristol on its formation in 1994.

Morris was born in Risca, South Wales, and started his interest in music at the age of three, singing solos under the guidance of his sister Jacqueline. At seven he played cornet in Pontymister Salvation Army Band, changing to euphonium a little later and at age 15 he was Deputy Conductor. At 16 he joined the Royal Engineers Staff Band and started playing the trombone as well as the euphonium. He joined Risca MVC and soon became deputy conductor under the leadership of the renowned Alwyn Humphries.

In 1978 his work took him to Kidderminster and the West Midlands where he soon became conductor of Cradley Heath and Kidderminster Male Voice Choirs.

In August 1981 he was asked to guest conduct three concerts for the Filton Male Voice Choir. Two months later he became their permanent conductor and for nearly seven years he travelled from Dudley to Bristol every Thursday evening, until 1987 when he moved his family to Bristol to be nearer his 'lovely boys'. Under his leadership the Filton MVC grew to over 90 voices. He helped organise their first tours to Germany and Canada and started the ball rolling for a tour of Poland.

In the English Association of Male Voice Choirs Morris was a much loved and appreciated conductor by all choirs taking part.

In the almost 20 years Morris conducted Filton MVC their 25th Anniversary held at the Colston Hall, Bristol, with the Band of the 1st Battalion of the Gloucestershire Regiment 28th/61st, along with seven other choirs, was a night Morris was very proud of. It was a full house and received a standing ovation for *Zadok the Priest* with the arranger there, the late Ken Dinham giving him '10 out of 10' for his performance. (Morris was known for only giving a maximum of 7)

In October 1994 Morris formed New Harmony Ladies Choir Bristol. Starting with 19 ladies, some of whom had partners in Filton MVC, it wasn't long before the choir grew to 54 ladies, singing in three-part harmony.

Morris's untimely death on 27 March 2000 at just 57, left not only his family grieving for a much-loved funny, intellectual family-man, it affected a lot of people in the music world. Others have passed since Morris so I am sure he has a great big choir in heaven and is still making wonderful music.

We look forward to meeting you at this very special event in the history of both our choirs. You can find more details on our website: www.nhlcbristol.co.uk or on Bristol MVC's website: www.bristolmvc.org.uk

Joan Lovell, Secretary



New Harmony LC
sent this to

crawford.nac@ntlworld.com

Around the Choirs

Churchdown Male Voice Choir South West

The Help for Heroes Concert held in Gloucester Cathedral on Wednesday 7 October was one which the choir was immensely proud to have taken part in. Like the other two contributing choirs, the Cotswold Male Voice Choir and Churchdown Choral Society, this concert was in addition to our very busy programme but there was an excellent turn-out on the night.

All three choirs were on top form and our own choir's contribution of *The Battle Hymn of the Republic*, *Comrades in Arms* and *The Soldiers' Chorus* with Ralph Barnes on the stand and Pam Taverner at the piano was well received by the 1000 strong audience. Churchdown Choral Society gave a stirring performance of *Psalm 122* by Gloucester composer Hubert Parry and an equally impressive delivery of *In Paradisum* from Faure's *Requiem*.

The Band of Gloucestershire Constabulary were in sparkling form with an up-beat arrangement of JS Bach's *Tocatta in D Minor*, and their choice of *Hymn*

to the Fallen, from the film *Saving Private Ryan* fitted well with the atmosphere of the concert. The final song, *Bring him Home* by all three choirs and the band with cornet solos was particularly poignant following as it did a speech by the Mayor of Wootton Bassett, Steve Bucknell. The audience had listened in silence as he described in some detail how the people lined the streets of this small town to pay their homage to the service personnel being brought home for the last time.

The compere Ian Mean told of the tremendous efforts of the main concert organiser, Pat Grant-Hudson to put the concert together in such a relatively short time and Pat was presented by with a bouquet of flowers as a small token of thanks for all her hard work.

A truly memorable evening which will live long in the memory and from which the proceeds will, in a small way, help to aid members of the armed forces to get their lives back together after suffering in the war in Afghanistan.

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Around the Choirs



Plymouth Area Police Choir Devon

The Choir was formed in 1972 and currently has 55 active members. The Musical Director, Brian Gerry, is a highly acclaimed local director of musical shows as well teaching singing to pupils, many of whom have made significant progress in the music world. Accompanist Rosemary Fox is, similarly, a highly regarded member of the local musical scene.

The choir comprises serving and retired police officers, special constabulary and civil staff from the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary and other forces, the Ministry of Defence Police and the British Transport Police; additionally, some guest singers are valued choir members.

The choir undertakes a regular programme of concerts for charitable purposes in the City and elsewhere. It has visited Weisbaden, Celle, Bielefeld and Enschede in Europe as well as biennial visits to Brittany. Demand for its Christmas concert became such that it now has to be held in the large Methodist Central Hall on two evenings. The season concludes with a major concert in the splendid Plymouth Guildhall, this year in the presence of the Lord Mayor and some 800 supporters. The choir pursues a wide repertoire of sacred and secular items. Its current showpiece is the Hallelujah Chorus, without copies!

The choir occasionally enters national and local music festivals. It has twice won the Gold Cup at The

Cheltenham Music Festival. After many awards of 90 marks in various competitions, at the Saltash Music Festival in 2009 it finally achieved its ambition of being awarded a mark of 91.

In early July 2010 the choir is one of six foreign choirs to have been invited by the Associazione Pro Musica Cantata Domino to participate in the Grande Festival Corale estate 2010 (Italia) in Verona; a festival that attracts some of the finest choirs and ensembles from around the world. The choir will perform concerts in churches or theatres in Verona, Vicenza, and Sirmione

Anyone with police connections interested in male voice singing and retiring to this area, as many do, we shall be pleased to hear from you.

Secretary: Geoff Anderson 01752 751310.

Brian Phillips

Tamworth Ladies Choir
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Around the Choirs

Budleigh Salterton Male Voice Choir Devon

The Boyhood of Raleigh is our choir badge. It was painted by Sir John Everett Millais, PRA on the beach at Budleigh Salterton in 1870.



The choir is now 37 years old and has grown steadily to a present membership of 64, but like most Male Voice Choirs the membership is steadily increasing in

age which does mean that it is difficult to get a 'full house' on stage but I do not think we are alone with this problem.

We have had a busy year starting in March and finishing in late November and some of our concerts have been really well supported although others were disappointing. Again in 2009 we entered the Cornish Festival for Male Voice Choirs and had a most enjoyable few days singing and meeting other choirs. Whilst in Cornwall we did concerts, way down west, in Porthleven and Helston with other choirs, but the highlights were in the open air in the 'Lost Gardens of Heligan' (where those of us with little hair suffered sunburn) and in the Mediterranean Biome at the Eden Project, where the acoustics are surprisingly good. We entered the contest for over 41 voices but suffered with only 43 singers against much larger choirs, nevertheless it is a worthwhile experience and the adjudicators comments will help us in future. We went to Bristol to perform with the Bristol MVC and had a most enjoyable performance and afterglow, thank you Bristol, also a joint concert with the Brixham Orpheus Choir held in Paignton was enjoyed by all who took part.

An advertisement for Reelsound mobile recording service. The background is a gradient of red and pink. In the foreground, a silver condenser microphone is mounted on a stand. A yellow diagonal banner in the upper right corner contains the text: "visit our website www.reelsound.co.uk for our best ever package deals". The main text reads "THE COMPLETE mobile recording service". At the bottom, the Reelsound logo is displayed in a stylized font, followed by contact information: "Phone: 01482 474054 • Email: mobile@reelsound.co.uk • Web: www.reelsound.co.uk".

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Around the Choirs

The Barnstaple Ladies Choir visited us, again we had a full church and some people could not get in for the concert. We also have had a visit from the Casterbridge MVC for a joint concert and a good time was had by all.

In 2010 we have a visit from an Australian MVC from Wagga Wagga, the father of one of their members is in our choir and we are looking forward to this as they will be with us for three days including our rehearsal night. The Caldicot MVC is coming down in July to do a joint concert with us for the Budleigh Salterton Festival this of course will be a good evening. In October we travel the 50 odd miles to Barnstaple to do a joint concert with the Ladies choir. 2010 is almost fully booked and we have many bookings into 2011.

Our Musical Director, Allen Coles, is still managing to put up with us, after eleven years, and we look forward to many more years with him at the helm. Two years ago we were lucky to obtain the services of Sandra Jepps as our accompanist, and we now realise how lucky we were as we find her so easy to work with besides her being a brilliant pianist who manages to get sound lovely sounds out of some very poor pianos as we travel around, this is made up for when sometimes we get really outstanding instruments at some of the better venues and she then feels 'in Heaven'.

We have applied to enter the Cornish Festival in 2011, our third visit to that beautiful county, what pleasure we get when singing there.

During 2009 we have had a wide range of soloists at our concerts from sopranos to saxophones from baritones to brass bands. We start a fresh season on 6 March in Exmouth. Visit our website

for concert dates and venues. www.budleighmvc.co.uk

Our rehearsals are held on a Tuesday night at 7.30 in the Peter Hall behind St Peter's Church in Budleigh Salterton and any visiting male voice choir member will be made most welcome if they care to come and join us. If you to attend one of our concerts please do make yourself known to us and join us for *Morte Christe* as we always finish with that piece. Of course if you move down to this area we will be only too happy for you to come along and increase our numbers.

Brian Hart



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Around the Choirs

The Swift Singers Thames North



The Swift Singers celebrated their 20th Anniversary in 2009 with a busy, momentous year. We have been entertaining audiences in the United Kingdom and Europe and we have grown in reputation as well as members. At our inception, it was decided to call the choir S.W.I.F.T. (an acronym for South Woodham In Feminine Tune) but that was dropped because we had enough to cope with learning all new words and music let alone explaining to everybody why we had dots in between the letters! So the Swift Singers Ladies Choir was formed with 22 members at our first concert a year later (consisting of all Andrew Lloyd Webber numbers) in 1990. Dave Brooker was our Musical Director.

Since that inauspicious beginning the Swifts have gone from strength to strength.

In 2008 the Swifts enjoyed a certain amount of success in the Television Programme 'Last Choir Standing' when we reached the last 60 choirs from hundreds of applicants and actually went to London to sing in front of a panel of music experts including Russell Watson, with Nick Knowles and Myleene Klass as presenters. Our new CD 'Reflections' was also released and includes such favourites as *Memory*, *Send in the Clowns*, *Fields of Gold*, *You Raise Me Up*, *Ave Maria* and many more.

Our Anniversary Year began with our regular afternoon concert, in February, for our Over 60s residents in South Woodham Ferrers and surrounding areas, where we provide tea and cakes and tickets are at 'give away' prices. This concert is always popular and we struggle to accommodate.

Our next concert was in Maldon, Essex and we were joined by the Honley Ladies Choir from Yorkshire and the Cavender Singers from Clacton, Essex. The Swifts

had visited the Yorkshire ladies in 2008 where we were warmly welcomed and we wanted to reciprocate with our own unique form of Essex hospitality. Rumour has it that everyone had a good time, not forgetting the audience!

The climax of our year was a little bit self indulgent. The ladies and a few of our own special VIP guests were treated to a magnificent lunch in The New Hall School, Chelmsford. Dressing up in our finery was the order of the day and we had various speeches. It was lovely to see some familiar faces and listen to guests recalling their own particular memories. We also unveiled our new uniforms for the evening concert where guests arrived at 6pm to be greeted with wine and canapés in the grounds and a harpist playing. The Mayor and Mayoress of Chelmsford enjoyed a wonderful concert with a mixture from our repertoire past and present ranging from Stage and Film and Renaissance to Elgar with a few surprises on the way! This was followed by more wine and chatting!

Since September we have been learning a complete new repertoire and as we have now grown to over 70 choristers, it has helped the new ladies to have several rehearsal nights of pure note bashing!

We have several concerts planned for 2010 and hopefully a few outings along the way, so I will report back in a later issue. In the meantime if you wish to get in touch or would like to have a concert with us, do please ring our concert secretary on 01245321920 or see our website (which is in the process of being updated/overhauled) www.swiftsingers.co.uk

*Linda Coley
Publicity Officer*



Around the Choirs

Aughton Male Voice Choir North West

October was a busy month for the choir. We had a concert at the Community Centre in Skelmersdale, a new venue for the choir. Our guest soloist was the daughter of our accompanist, 15 year old Francesca Fairclough, who delighted both choir and audience with her singing; she could have a big future.

We then had to finish off our preparations for the visit by Churchdown MVC. We performed 2 joint concerts on the Friday and Saturday. On the Friday we sang for the Mayoress of West Lancs Charities in the Medical Lecture Theatre at Edge Hill University. Both choirs showed that they could sing a concert to suit all tastes. From the opening joint item *With a Voice of Singing* to the finale *Rhythm of Life* the audience was treated to *African Prayer*, *Bohemian Rhapsody* and *Back to the 60s* just to mention three of Churchdown's items conducted by Ralph Barnes with Pam Taverner at the piano. Aughton sang a mixture of old and new from *Sine Nomine*, *Let It Be Me* to *I'm going to Walk* to name but a few, accompanied by Joanne Fairclough the choir's talented accompanist and Neil Williams our MD who also compered the evening. The soloist was Rachel Ashton who thrilled the audience with her selection. The concert was introduced by the Town Crier.

Unfortunately due to driver's hours Churchdown had to return from the afterglow early, but Aughton struggled on.

On the Saturday we moved to Southport to Christ Church on Lord Street. Lord James Ferrabee from the NAC had accepted an invitation to attend and we were looking forward to meeting him.

Churchdown offered a slightly different programme with such favourites as *Some Enchanted Evening* and *You'll Never Walk Alone*. Aughton went to a more popular programme with *Let the River Run*, *The Wonder of You* and a new item *The Awakening*.

The soloists for the evening came from Churchdown, Ralph Barnes and Jeff Boulton.

The concert closed with *Morte Criste* the singing of both choirs drawing the audience to their feet for a standing ovation. The afterglow in the hotel afterwards was a fun and enjoyable ending to a great weekend of music and friendship making, which we hope to renew

in 2011. Lord James was unable to attend the afterglow, but he still got home before the writer.

Aughton now prepare for their next three concerts one of which is for the Children of Chernobyl followed by their own fund raising Christmas Concert.

In 2010 the choir will be making a new CD recording and we still have some of our first CD for sale at £5.00 plus p&p from the secretary, Colin Baxter at

cj@baxter24.wanadoo.co.uk.

Neil Williams

Basingstoke Ladies' Choir Thames South

Never before has the Basingstoke Ladies' Choir's Annual Concert been the setting for a very public proposal of marriage but this was the case on Saturday 7 November when their guest star, Robin Scott, from Björn Again proposed to Nicola Irving - a proposal which was happily accepted.

During the concert Robin entertained the audience with



a wide variety of music, from Gershwin's *Someone to watch over me* to songs by Elton John and the Beatles and Leonard Cohen's *Hallelujah* made famous by Alexandra Burke. In the second half he joined the choir with an excellent arrangement of Abba songs.

The choir themselves, under the direction of Margaret Brackenborough, and accompanied by Jonathan Hedgecock, performed some of their favourite pieces, such as *The Rose*, *Send In The Clowns* and *Eternal Flame*.

Around the Choirs



They also sang the haunting *Fields of Gold* and the stirring *You Raise Me Up*. Items performed, for the first time by us, in Basingstoke included *Panis Angelicus*, *Hava Nageela* and *Bonny at Morn* (an old Northumbrian folk song). Our town should be very proud of this fine choir, who sang every song up to competition standard.

The concert was compered by Keith Reynolds, a Vice President of the choir, who stood in at short notice because of the illness of the President, Paul Connolly.

The whole evening was a huge success, with that extra bit of romance thrown in!

Graham Ling, PRO



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Around the Choirs

The Eastwood Collieries' MVC Midlands East

We are both pleased and proud to announce the appointment of our new Principal Accompanist and Principal Conductor.



Left to right, on the piano Ian Webster (Vice Chairman), William Jones (Chairman), Franklin Baker, Ron Wadsley, Alan Carlin.

Paul Hayward has been appointed Principal Accompanist and is the choir's youngest accompanist since the choir began in 1920 and has a wealth of experience and expertise under his belt. Graduating from the University of Wales in 2006 with a Bachelor of Music with honours, Paul is no stranger to either traditional choral music or music of a more modern repertoire; with experience gained from being former Director of Music of St Peter and St Paul's in Mansfield and former Principal Conductor and Director of Music of the University of Wales. Paul is also an accomplished and talented soloist. Paul comments, 'I am looking forward to working with the men of the choir and the new Principal Conductor, the choir is well known throughout the area and has a great reputation, I am proud to be the new accompanist to the choir and I am looking forward to continuing to help the choir be the best they can be.'

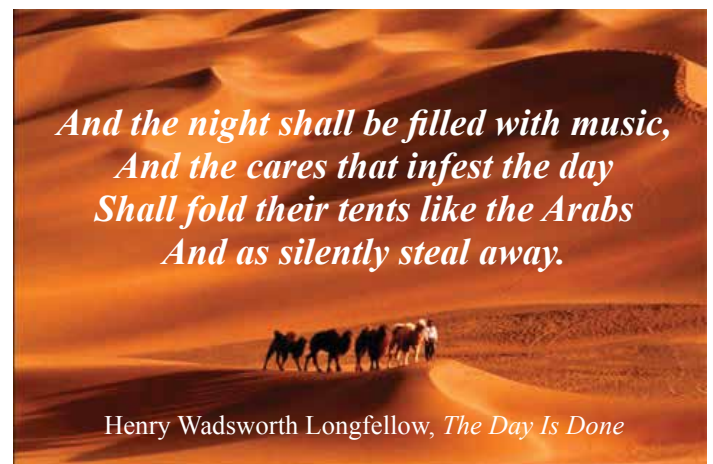
Liz Moulder is the choir's seventh Conductor since the choir began in 1920 and has a wealth of experience and expertise under her belt. Graduating from the Royal Manchester College of Music now the Royal Northern College of Music Liz is no stranger to choral music with extensive experience gained from being the current Director of Music of the Alfreton Ladies Choir and during her working life was formerly Head of

Music at various schools and Director of Specialism at Mill Hill Arts College where Liz successfully applied and received the Gold Artsmark Award for schools - the highest award given by the Arts Council of Great Britain to schools who excel in the arts.

On being appointed to the role of Principal Conductor Liz said, 'I started singing at the age of five when I auditioned for the school choir, throughout my time with the school's choirs my love of singing and making music has only grown deeper. I have throughout my career had the great fortune to work with some great and well known and respected people within the choral world which has enabled me to pass this knowledge on freely to my choirs. My appointment as Principal Conductor at Eastwood Collieries' Male Voice Choir is one challenge I am looking forward to immensely. The choir has a fantastic reputation locally and I am excited about being part of the team here and helping to ensure that the choir goes ever forward in pursuit of excellence.'

William Jones the choir's Chairman said 'I'm always astounded at how wonderfully this choir can sing, and it feels like such a triumph to have reached almost 90 years of music making and song and having achieved so much - and we're still getting better! The two new appointments of Liz and Paul to the roles of Principal Conductor and Accompanist will go on to strengthen the choir and we are all looking forward to working together. It just goes to show what you can achieve if you are truly passionate about what you do.' The picture shows some of the choir's members welcoming the accompanist and conductor following their appointments.

Lord James Ferrabee



*And the night shall be filled with music,
And the cares that infest the day
Shall fold their tents like the Arabs
And as silently steal away.*

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *The Day Is Done*

Around the Choirs

Cheddar Male Choir South West

A Short Tour of Tuscany.

We have recently returned from six sunny days in Tuscany with the Cheddar Male Choir. The tour was arranged mainly so that the choir could sing in three different churches in the region. However, the 80

strong party, consisting of choristers, wives and friends, were also able to enjoy visits to several interesting cities, art galleries (including the Uffizi) and a vineyard!

The choir sang its first concert in the beautiful St Mark's Anglican Church in Florence. The programme included *Va Pensiero*, sung in Italian and *Ave Verum*, sung in Latin. The remainder of the programme was sung in English, and included songs such as *Autumn Leaves*, *Ave Maria* and *All In An April Evening*.

The second concert was presented in the Basilica di Santa Maria Assunta, in Montecatini Terme. This is a modern church in the spa town which was also where the choir party was staying in an interesting old Italian hotel.

The third concert of the tour was held in the hill-top town of San Gimignano. This town dates from the 10th century and is famous for its thirteen towers which were built to look over the valley below, watching for invaders! The church was called the Chiesa di Sant'Agostino, and was very extensive with an inner cloistered courtyard. The tour was a short introduction to this beautiful part of Italy, and wonderful experience for the choir and those who travelled in support.

John & Ellie Haynes.



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Since you are reading this you must have already read the rest of the magazine. I hope you enjoyed it. If you did why not write and tell me what you enjoyed. If you didn't I would certainly like to hear what

you didn't like and what can be done to improve your magazine. How can we improve? If enough people write we can start a letters page. Would that be good?

You may have noticed that we have filled up some little gaps with a musical quotation or a joke. Send in quotes you found amusing or inspiring; share them with us. We would welcome jokes that are vaguely musical but they will only appear in print if they are printable.

Never let it be said that I don't know my place. I gave up the early spot to Celia Johns, our Chairman, so now I'm going to lurk at the back for a while. I've got this space because I've taken out all that stuff about how to send in articles, pictures and advertising. I never liked the way it was set out so I decided to change it.

Crawford's Column

What I hope is that people will email me if they need advice then I can send them more information than could easily be squeezed into half a page. I will also be able to explain our 'House style' so that when you are sending in copy you can save me lots of time making little alterations.

You work so hard sending such wonderful articles with fancy headings, coloured text and embedded pictures. Some of them are real works of art. Unfortunately I have to get rid of the colour, change the text to 'Times New Roman' and strip out the pictures before I can include it in News & Views. Send me an email and let me advise you.

See you at conference.

Crawford

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