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News & Views



The National Publication for all Choristers

Summer 2010

No 192



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Chairman's Chat



Finally as I write the weather is improving from the weeks of cold wind in what was laughingly called Spring! I do hope that you have managed to keep your voices in trim and are now looking forward to fantastic summer concerts.

We had a great weekend in Stevenage at Conference, and it was really good to see so many people both resident and dropping in to visit through Saturday and Sunday. You can see the Conference write-up on page 25. The Saturday evening concert was extremely entertaining and well-presented, and the organising Committee of Thames North Group are to be congratulated for their hard work and energy.

As usual we have a most interesting selection of contributions from member choirs in News & Views. I find the history of the choirs fascinating, especially the different reasons for the original founding of the particular choirs. And all the different places in which you hold concerts! You do get about – here and abroad, there is so much travelling involved....

We enjoy reading about the concerts you have staged, but can I encourage you to use the new website as well as News & Views to advertise your forthcoming concerts? So many times I hear people saying that if they had known about a concert they would have really wished to attend, but they don't find out until too late. Consider your audiences – could you do with more people listening to you? Advertising is sometimes a forgotten science, but thinking through it and making the right noises in the right places at the right time does pay dividends.

While I am talking about advertising, I can now tell you more about the 123Sing! weekend which is planned for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd October this year. We are collaborating with Classic FM and Making Music, among other organisations, to create a massive 3-day singing festival, which will attract national publicity, join the nation in song, and raise large sums for charity. Please look at the NAC website, in the Events section, where there is much more information about the weekend, with ideas about how your choir can take part, and get non-singers to join in singing. This is a most exciting event, as there is so much that can be done in all areas of the community – schools, workplaces, churches, local choirs, even in shopping centres! We are really looking forward to finding out what you are planning to do, and there will be opportunities to report back to the NAC, as well as to upload details and photos on a dedicated page on the Classic FM website in due course.

Going back to websites, it is good to see that so many of our member choirs now have their own websites – indeed there are now a few of our Groups who have also blossomed into technology!

I have to say though that our Membership Officer has a problem with keeping her database up to date with changes to web addresses, not to mention changes of NAC reps, phone numbers, email addresses.... You name it, and it can and does change! Please – and this is a heartfelt plea – do use the green forms which are sent out with annual renewal notices, and let Brenda have details of any changes to contact details for your choir. Or just drop her an email or a letter – we are not fussy about the method as long as we get the information. Just remember that if your contact details are out of date on our website and in the

Year Book, anybody who wants to find and join a local choir may not be able to contact you, and will either join another (perhaps non-NAC) choir, or give up and not sing at all.

Have a wonderful summer of music!

Regards and best wishes

Celia Johns

From the President

The year has been busy as usual and we are thankful that although we are all suffering recession we have managed to maintain membership numbers, losing some and gaining others.



Our change of insurance broker has been a factor offering equivalent cover less expensively and tailored to each choir's requirements.

My visits to various choirs as your President, accompanied by Jan have been rewarding. The presence of the NAC at these events has been well received and has helped cement the image of the association to the membership.

It is with thanks that I acknowledge the work of the officers who have contributed so much, freely given in time and effort on our behalf. Once again I must stress the need for choirs' representatives to support steering committee meetings. These bring together officers and membership to further the aims and benefits of our Association. I enjoyed our conference this year when we met so many friends in music. We appreciated the speakers and their contribution and the many trade stands we enjoyed.

It was sad that Frank Rhodes had to resign from the post as our General Secretary. We wish him well and hope that he will be able to enjoy more time for his other interests. Thankfully Lord James Ferrabee has agreed to take on this duty and we wish him all the best with such a hard act to follow.

Hopefully many of our members have got back from holidays abroad following the effects of the volcanic eruption in Iceland and the subsequent loss of air transport in Europe.

Looking forward to the busy times ahead.

Eric Jackson

*It only irritated Brahms
To tickle him beneath the arms.
What really helped him to compose
Was to be stroked on the nose.
E.C. Bentley 1929*



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W A Shearings Featherstone MVC Yorkshire West

Featherstone Male Voice Choir, originally called the Featherstone Methodist Male Voice choir was formed in the front room of Mr Irvine Malpass in 1963, and had around twelve members. Rehearsals were held at Irvine's house, with Irvine accompanying and conducting from the piano.

In 1993 the choir became known as Shearings' Male Voice Choir, after gaining the sponsorship of Europe's largest Coach Company, Shearings Ltd. When the company changed its name to W A



Shearings Ltd the choir accordingly became the W A Shearings' Featherstone Male Voice choir. The choir has sung in many places in and around the British Isles, with concerts in Cornwall, Scotland and Wales. Internationally it has visited Germany,

Austria, Switzerland, the Czech Republic and France as well as the USA and Canada.

The choir's first television appearance was in 1997 when it featured on Yorkshire Television's 'Tonight' Christmas programme. It appeared again in 1999 on the same programme performing Still, Still, Still. The choir has recorded three albums, the first in 1995, a second recording, 'Celebration' in 2003 and a third 'Comrades In Song', in 2007. Recently the choir appeared on the 'My Yorkshire' TV programme, singing in the Kinsley Hotel to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the 'Kinsley Evictions' of miners from their homes.

The choir now has over 60 singers and rehearses twice weekly. It has singers from ages 30+ to 90+ and has a welcoming and friendly atmosphere. The choir's musical repertoire is very varied and includes all types of music including songs from the shows, songs made famous by Elvis Presley and Westlife, calypsos and spirituals as well as songs written by the great composers such as Handel, Puccini and Verdi. It also performs traditional choral and Christmas music.

Concerts are performed in the local area and beyond, often supporting charities and good causes. We have supported many charities including The Prince of Wales Hospice, Yorkshire Cancer Research and more recently, Billie's Violin, a charity set up by Yorkshire TV presenter Ian Clayton in memory of his daughter Billie, who tragically died in a canoeing accident. In 2009 the choir raised £15,000 in total for a variety of charities.

The choir has a thriving Patrons' scheme, with in excess of four hundred patrons who give their support via an annual subscription. In appreciation of this support, an annual concert, held over two evenings, is performed for the patrons.

This year we have a number of interesting concerts line up. We are singing at The Rolls Royce Enthusiasts Club's, Summer Hog Roast. Also we are involved in a joint concert with Honley MVC and Greater Manchester MVC in the Wakefield Cathedral. A further joint concert with four other local MVCs and the Gurkhar's Regimental Band will be held in Leeds Town Hall, while we finish

the year singing at The Merchant Adventurers' Hall in York.

For more news about our choir log on to our web site: www.fmvc.co.uk

Richard Dunn

Exeter Police and Community Choir Devon

The choir was formed in 1963 by members of the former Exeter City Police Force, but increasingly the choir has been joined by members from the community.

Concerts are performed all over Devon and sometimes farther afield and the choir have appeared on television and radio in previous years. The choir regularly helps many organisations throughout Devon to raise money for their own charities during the year. In addition, the choir has raised tens of thousands of pounds for local causes through its major fund-raising Christmas charity concert. A total of £4,500 from the December 2009 concert has benefited MENCAP, which supports parents, carers and people with a learning disability to lead a full and valued life.

The choir is now 36 strong, having attracted four new members over the last twelve months; however, the choir is well aware of the need to keep attracting new members - and new audiences. Under its musical director, David Williams, and with accompanist, Peter Abbott (who retires in May), the choir has continued to develop a lively and varied repertoire including spirituals, hymns, songs from well-known musicals and other popular pieces.

There still remains a strong connection with the police force, as the Chief Constable, Stephen Otter, is currently president of the choir. Rehearsals are held every Monday September to May at Gladstone's



Police / Hospital Social Club at Heavitree, Exeter. If you like singing and enjoy good company, come along and see how you can reap real pleasure from singing.

Secretary Michael Keatt tel: 01392 832095
or email: mkeatt@talktalk.net

For more information, you can also visit the choir website
<http://beehive.thisisexeter.co.uk/policechoir>

Bruce Pell
Press officer

Kidderminster Male Choir

Seek

Assistant Accompanist

contact secretary on

kmcp44ugh@btinternet.com

Music & Festivals

New Music



A Parliament of Owls - Karl Jenkins, words by Carol Barratt: for Mixed Chorus, piano duet, saxophone and percussion.

The work is a celebration of collective nouns in three contrasting movements.

English collective nouns encapsulate in an intrinsic, attractive way something characteristic of the group eg 'a gaggle of geese', 'a piteousness of doves'.

Carol Barratt's text assembles these evocative expressions into hilarious nonsense poems entitled *Quietly Sitting Still*, *Irresistible* and *Noisy and Monstrous Mayhem*. £7.99 Contact – Annet Ferguson annet.ferguson@schott-music.com. Tel. 020 7534 07444.

PRS / Copyright matters.

On 29 March I had the pleasure of attending the Wales North and Cheshire West group AGM. I had a very interesting time answering many questions on PRS and Copyright matters. I also gave them my latest advice sheet on copyright.

As always I have to inform members that although I am very well informed and up to date on these matters, I am not a lawyer. All the answers I give are available online from PRS and MPA websites. I work only for the NAC and do not have any official connection with either PRS or MPA. My priority is to give the advice necessary to keep choirs within the law. If choirs wish to 'take a chance' that is up to them.

Production of CDs, Online clips for practice purposes, promotional CDs Musical arrangements, Public performances (Free Entry or Otherwise) all need a licence.

It is your responsibility to check.

At conference I took the trouble to make available many sets and part sets of music. Free! I brought over 30 lots. This was music donated to the NAC. I had to bring most of it back home with me. I have given some of it to local choirs and the rest has gone to charity shops.

I also had the chance to display music submitted for review from various music publishers. I hope that delegates found something of interest. I enjoyed playing the piano for Bob Barrett's seminar and liked *My Foolish Heart* and have bought it for my U3A choir. My thanks to Helen from the Rowland Singers for once again sharing the

piano playing with me for our informal but very well attended after concert sing.

Thank you all for your company. Please give me a call if I can help with any PRS/Copyright matters.

Eric Cooper
Music and Festivals Officer.

Here's to music, joy of joys:
One man's music is another man's noise.
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Bestwood MVC Midlands East

The choir was formed in 1952 by Mr Len Hogg (1915-2005). At the time, he was the colliery manager at Bestwood Pit and he realised that, despite other social activities, there was no choir, so he posted a notice inviting interested colliery workers to a meeting in the Miners' Welfare. 36 colliers attended and Bestwood Colliery Male Voice Choir (later to become Bestwood Male Voice Choir), was born. As a result of his enthusiasm, drive and inspiration, the choir grew bigger and better, achieving many musical successes. The choir is a registered charity and has a proud tradition of raising many thousands of pounds for numerous worthy causes during its 57 years in existence, including 'Rainbows Hospice', 'When You Wish Upon a Star', 'Framework' (supporting the homeless), 'Macmillan Cancer Support', 'The Ian West City Hospital Dialysis Machine Project', 'Victim Support Service' and, presently, 'DAST' (Derbyshire Asbestos Support Team), to name just a few.



The last two years have seen the choir involved in some noteworthy highlights. In November 2008 we took part in two very special events. First, we were proud to participate in Eastwood Collieries' Male Voice Choir's "Sounds Sensational" Concert at Nottingham's Royal Concert Hall, involving massed choirs from our region. Later that month, we accepted the generous invitation from Basingstoke Ladies Choir, to share their Annual Concert with them. One of their choir had heard us perform in Nottingham and was sufficiently impressed to invite us to sing with them in concert! Good music was sung and everyone had a very enjoyable experience. We look forward to singing, with the ladies, in Nottingham in 2010.

In May 2009, we performed at the Mansfield Town Football Club, as part of an initiative to get youngsters involved in the sport and later, with the highly rated Ransome Brass Band at Hasland Village Hall in Derbyshire.



In August this year a very special event took place and the second instalment of a new twinning link between Bestwood MVC and the town of Rotenburg an der Fulda

(twinning with the Gedling Borough Council in Nottingham). Having experienced an amazing first visit to Rotenburg in 2007, we were delighted to host not one, but two of their choirs: the senior Rotenburg Stiftskirche Kantorei and their Jugend Kantorei (junior choir). We performed together in two local concerts, singing to a packed house on both occasions (a truly amazing sight!) The youngsters also had the privilege of performing at the acclaimed choral setting of Southwell Minster in Nottinghamshire. We are

all looking forward to our return visit to Rotenburg, singing with these highly accomplished German choirs and enjoying wonderful hospitality.

The month of October saw two memorable performances. Singing at the Southwell Methodist Church to raise funds for the Victim Support Service and, later, as a result of one of the members of BMVC being a Supply Teacher, we combined to sing with the Choir of Carlton Central Junior School, formed in September 2008, here in Nottingham. This was particularly memorable as the school had invited 'Dream', a deaf signing (not singing) choir to perform, something none of us had experienced. They had started ten years ago after two of their members got together and decided to create a pantomime for deaf people in their own language. It is only recently that they have included Signed Singing as part of their repertoire. It was a truly memorable evening!

The following month we performed the choir's Annual Concert at Nottingham's Albert Hall, alongside our guests, The Thoresby Colliery Band and Major Oak Chorus, a close harmony ensemble. This event raised a fantastic £2,500 for our nominated charity, DAST.

Forthcoming concerts in 2010 include a visit from Basingstoke Ladies Choir (who appeared in the spring issue of 'News and Views') in April. In May, a massed choir concert in Mansfield with Mansfield MVC, Forest Singers and Greasley Singers and, on 30 October, the big one at Nottingham's Royal Concert Hall, when we will be singing alongside 6 of the best MVCs in the East Midlands and the Band of the Blues and Royals; should be a great night.

So, if you're ever in the Nottingham area, visiting on a Tuesday evening, why not pop in and meet us. We rehearse every Tuesday at Bestwood Village Social Club, Nottingham, on Park Road, from 7.30 until 9.30pm. So, if you like singing, don't be shy, why just sing in the bath? Join us and you will be made very welcome.

Contact Barry Heath on 01159 177083 or email us at bestwoodmvc@ntlworld.com.

Derek Mill (Publicity Officer).

Côr Meibion y Traeth, Ynys Môn Wales North/Cheshire West

Monday 1 March, St David's Day saw the launch of a book to mark forty years of the choir's foundation. Entitled 'Deugain Dan Ganu' – 'Forty Years of Song', the book describes the development from its initial membership of ten, to become one of Wales's premier choirs.

It contains photographs and bilingual anecdotes by existing members of travels and performances undertaken in the past four decades. Currently the choir performs in a series of concerts at Henllys Hall, a prestigious holiday complex in Beaumaris. In August, we hope to compete in the Royal National Eisteddfod of Wales Choral Competition at Venue Cymru, Llandudno.

The event is sponsored jointly by Conwy County Borough Council and Stena Line, attracting choirs from all parts of the United Kingdom and Ireland. By Easter, the Choir's third CD will have appeared on the shelves and as the membership continues to increase, we look forward with enthusiasm to the next forty years.

Will Owen

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Eastwood Collieries' Male Voice Choir Midlands East NAC Group

The Eastwood Collieries' Male Voice Choir is this year celebrating its 90th Anniversary Year. One of the oldest surviving original colliery choirs in the country the Eastwood Collieries' MVC was formed by a group of enthusiastic colliery officials from the Barber, Walker & Company who were the owners of the Eastwood Collieries'.



This group of men met one night in their local pub and talk was a plenty, eventually the topic of conversation turned to singing and from there on in the choir was a reality. Some weeks later the choir met for the first time with around a dozen voices, all taken from the five collieries owned by the company. They were called the Eastwood Collieries' Officials Male Voice Choir, and the membership of such a choir was made up of officials and numbered around a dozen men, within a year the choir dropped the word officials from its name and in doing so membership increased to around forty voices.

Primarily the choir concentrated on music festivals and competitions and did very well, however the focus changed some years later when the choir began advertising their availability for concerts performances. These days the choir concentrates all of its efforts on providing concert performances nationwide.

During the early years the membership was made up solely from the mining community, but as the local industry reduced its size so members from outside the industry were welcomed into the ranks of the choir. The present membership of over sixty voices is now made up of representatives of many trades and professions, and now only a few retired members of the coal industry remain within the choir. When the last of the Eastwood Collieries' at Moorgreen closed in 1985 the committee briefly considered changing the choir's name but the membership felt proud of its roots from which the choir had developed and it wished to continue as the

'Eastwood Collieries' Male Voice Choir'.

During the ninety years of song the choir has performed at numerous concerts and festivals with a great deal of success, with performances given by this choir at prestigious venues such as the 'Royal Albert Hall' in London, the Royal Concert Hall in Nottingham and the De Montfort Hall in Leicester, to mention just

a few. Also being well known for its singing and technical ability, the choir has also appeared on both television and radio with equal acclaim as well as entering music festivals and winning!!! The choir's repertoire is varied and includes traditional male voice arrangements as well as pieces from other countries and languages including German, Latin and Welsh as well as countless others.

Since 2005 this illustrious and dynamic choir has helped many charities, groups and organisations raise the combined amount of almost £950,000 a figure that speaks for itself.

To celebrate the 90th Anniversary Year the choir has a series of events planned with many concert engagements to complete, the crowning glory for 2010 will be 'Sounds Sensational – Voices and Brass in Harmony'. A massed male voice choir will take to the stage of the Royal Concert Hall in Nottingham on Saturday 30 October 2010 to perform alongside the world famous Band of the Blues and Royals. The concert will support to major charities – Cancer Research UK and the Royal British Legion. This concert is a follow up to a very successful concert in 2008 where again a massed male voice choir performed on stage at the Concert Hall this time alongside the award – winning Grimethorpe Colliery Band.

Demand for tickets is expected to be high so if you would like to attend this magnificent event and see the might of the band and choir in action do contact the box office for further details 0115 989 5555.

Also to mark this milestone in the choir's history the choir has purchased new uniforms which were rolled out at its first concert in April, other events will be a celebratory dinner and many concerts throughout the year for charities and organisations that have helped Eastwood Collieries' MVC survive and grow over the years. We look forward to the next 90 years.

Happy singing to you all.

James Ferrabee



Kidderminster Male Choir

Seek

Deputy Musical Director

contact secretary on

kmcp44ugh@btinternet.com

The Silver Ring Choir of Bath South West

Exciting times are ahead celebrating sixty years of making music in 2011, a new young vibrant conductor Ruth Mckibbin and a full diary of concerts in 2010.

The Choir is entertaining audiences with its diverse and innovative programmes. Its wide repertoire embraces music from around the world, including songs from stage and screen, sacred music, spirituals and operatic choruses. The choir's traditional values based on its heritage remain unchanged. The choir continues to focus on its charitable purpose, welcoming and encouraging new singers and enhancing the quality and balance of mixed voice singing. As a registered charity, thousands of pounds have been raised over the years for good causes.

Jo Campbell


Crawford writes:

The choir were so keen to let me know about their exciting times that they sent me their submission for the Autumn issue of News & Views so early that I decided to print a taster in this issue. So keep looking out there is more to come with information of a new CD and a major concert with jazz star Jamie Cullum singing the first public performance of a song written by his brother multi-million selling composer Ben Cullum.

Look at this photograph of the choir. Isn't it great? I love to be able to include wonderful, thoughtful pictures of choirs rather than the usual 'everyone in their rows' choir pictures. Unless something amazing comes along, expect to see this on the front cover of the Autumn edition of News & Views.


Crawford









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Kelsborrow Choir

Wales North/Cheshire West

On Tuesday 12 January 2010 a catastrophic earthquake hit the Caribbean island of Haiti. The epicentre was only 16 miles from the capital city of Port-au-Prince and it was followed by over 50 major aftershocks in the next two weeks. The death toll was over 200,000 and one and a half million were left homeless and in desperate need of help from the rest of the world.

On Wednesday 20 January the committee of the Kelsborrow Choir held its regular meeting in the home of our social secretary, Irene Wilkinson. The meeting finished around 10.30pm with coffee and cakes all round, when someone happened to mention 'Are we going to do anything about Haiti?' We all had in our minds the amazing concert held in the Northgate Arena in Chester after the Asian Tsunami in 2005 which raised a huge sum of money. There was general agreement that we should do something similar and that it should happen very soon, so Alan Wilkinson was called from the back room where he had been watching the football! Alan had organised our hugely successful Christmas concert in December in Chester Cathedral with the Grimethorpe Colliery Band, and on that night the Cathedral was filled to capacity.

The suggestion was made. Alan blinked twice, took a couple of deep breaths and said 'OK!' By Friday breakfast time the Cathedral had been booked for Sunday 31 December, all for free, and the evening service cancelled. Four choirs and three bands had agreed to take part so we had a concert. There followed an intense period of publicity involving word of mouth, local papers and local radio. Lucy Meacock of ITN news was persuaded to come and make the appeal. Entrance to the concert was to be by paper money or cheque donation on the door. It was to be a truly 'nil cost' evening so absolutely all the proceeds would go to the earthquake fund.

During the concert Lucy introduced the Rev Marcus Torchon to the 800 or so people in the audience. He is a Haitian working as a Methodist minister in the Wirral and he described how he eventually discovered that all of his family in Haiti were safe and also the suffering of his friends and others on the island. He said that he was planning to visit Haiti in about two weeks time.

The choirs taking part were A Handbag of Harmonies, The City of Chester Male Voice Choir, Chester Ladies Choir and The Kelsborrow Choir. Also taking part were The Farndon and District Brass Band, The City of Chester Band and Philip Rushforth who played the Chester Cathedral organ. The evening opened with Karamba Samba, a tumultuous procession of drums which was



All four choirs and the band performing Abide With Me



Marcus Torchon, Concert Organiser Alan Wilkinson and Lucy Meacock of Granada News

much like an earthquake in itself. Each group of performers then presented a short programme and at the end the 200 strong choir came together to sing Abide With Me, You'll Never Walk Alone and The World in Union. It was a really moving experience for all who were there.

The event raised around £8000 after Gift Aid was taken into account. A truly remarkable amount of money. Great thanks are due to the concert organiser, Alan Wilkinson and his small team and also to the numerous other people who contributed in any way whatsoever to the success of the evening.

Images by Ian Clowes www.goldysolutions.co.uk

Alan Hibbert
Kelsborrow Choir Secretary

Almondbury Ladies Choir

Yorkshire West

It was a slow start to the year because we had to cancel two rehearsals due to the snow as our rehearsal room is 900 feet above sea level and it was impossible for the ladies to get there. However, we did get the road open in time for us to hold our Annual Christmas Party and a splendid time was had by all. Now it is time for serious work in preparation for our concerts.

We are looking forward to our return visit to York Minster on Saturday 15 May. It is a wonderful experience to sing in such a magnificent building with visitors from all over the world stopping to listen. We follow this with a lovely day out sightseeing with our colleagues and families.

Two wedding engagements follow. More and more couples seem to rely on choirs to lead the singing as sadly fewer and fewer people know the hymns.

Our big concert this year will be Saturday 9 October at Hall Bower Chapel when we will have as our guest artist, Simon Wood, well known in the area for his flute playing. The money from this concert will be donated to Yorkshire Cancer Research, as this is our charity for the year, and will be added to money from our Christmas activities for 2010.

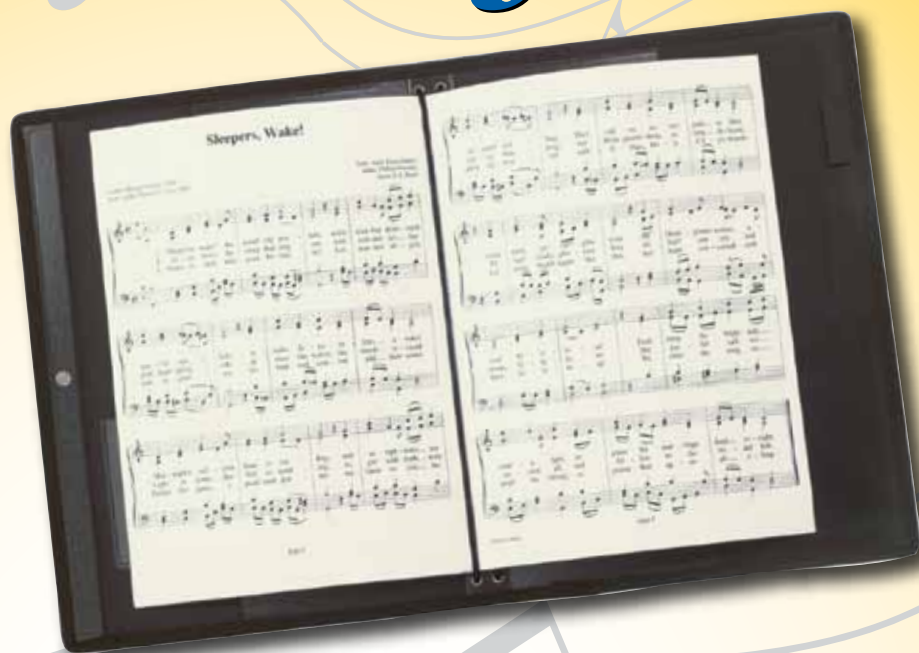
Joan Ford

If one hears bad music, it is one's duty to drown it out by one's conversation.

Oscar Wilde

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Celia Johns

Chairman of the National Association of Choirs



Celia was born in London during January 1944 and lived there for the first ten years of her life before moving to Slough in 1954. At an early age she discovered classical music through watching the original version of the film 'Fantasia' and built on this by learning to play the recorder under the influence of her best friend at Emmanuel Primary School in London. This initial

interest was built on at High School by extending her recorder playing, learning to play the clarinet and joining the school choir. Because she could read music Celia became an alto (an interesting conclusion!) and took part in various school operettas performing on one occasion as Aeneas in 'Dido and Aeneas'.

When Celia moved to Slough she continued her primary education at James Elliman Junior School before moving to Slough High School for Girls where she completed her 'O' and 'A' level examinations. From there she attended Phillipa Fawcett Teacher Training College in South London. Celia then went on to complete a BSc (Hons) degree with the Open University and also a Music Diploma.

For about thirty years Celia worked with HM Revenue and Customs achieving promotion to HM Inspector of Taxes. From September 2003 she was seconded to Business in the Community as the Cambridgeshire Area Manager and remained in this position until her retirement in 2008. Her experience in this capacity has proved invaluable to her work with the National Association of Choirs. Working with a vast range of business people in various positions brought a wealth of experience to her original role of NAC Treasurer but also supports well her current position as Chairman.

Celia is married to Ray who is a member of the Gildenburgh Choir in Peterborough and has a daughter, Fiona, and son in law, Simon, as well as a son, Steven, who is married to Cressida. She also has two grandsons, Jack and Harry, and granddaughters, Karya and Tallia with another grand child expected in July 2010.

Celia sings in two choirs although only one of them, The Gildenburgh Choir in Peterborough is a member of the NAC. She has been a member for over twenty nine years and has served as the Secretary for about fifteen years and Assistant Musical Director for twenty-six years. She has also served as the Chairman between 1989 and 1991. Celia became involved in the activities of the Anglian Group in 1993 and over the years has served as Group Secretary and is currently the Group Treasurer.

Celia first developed an interest in the NAC at national level in 2000 when she began attending Steering Group Meetings. She was co-opted onto the National Executive Committee when it was being reorganized and took on the role of Honorary Treasurer. This then led to her being the first lady to be elected to the position of Chairman in 2009.

Celia has a wide ranging interest in music and listens to most genres apart from garage/rap types. She has a love of many forms of instrumental music including orchestral, folk, country and rock as well as choral music. She will 'sing anything anywhere' if invited.

Celia's interests apart from music include bird watching, photography, reading, driving, cooking, babysitting, working and browsing on the computer as well as travel both in the UK and abroad.

In her spare time Celia is a volunteer in the Voluntary Sector and works as a Director of Fenland CVS. This is a challenging role as funding has recently been cut by the local District Council so the organization is facing the challenge of cutting back on activities and becoming divorced from statutory authorities which will lead to it being run by the Trustees as volunteers. Celia is also the Chair of Trustees of Camtrust, a Registered Charity in North Cambridgeshire which is a training centre for young people aged 16 to 25 who are physically disabled and mentally challenged.

We can feel confident that with Celia's wealth of experience in business, the Voluntary Sector and in the Choral Movement the leadership of the NAC is in capable hands.

Richard Bradley

Charvil Girls' Choir

Thames North

Charvil Girls' Choir started 2010 in fine style with a concert at Norden Farm Centre for the Arts in Maidenhead. The Mayor of Maidenhead joined us for the evening.

The girls sang a wide variety of songs including *It Don't Mean A Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing*, *Sing, Sing, Sing*, *Shule Agrah* and *For Good* from the musical 'Wicked'. Some of the older girls sing in a chamber choir called 'Step on Stage' and they sang a beautiful arrangement called *When The Sun Goes In* and the *One Minute Madrigal* which we had to sing in a minute! We were also joined by four young soloists - all pupils of Suzanne Newman - the choir's Musical Director. Two played piano pieces by Beethoven and Einaudi and the other two sang two duets. Also joining us were 'Enigma' - a ladies barbershop quartet - who delighted the audience with their choice of songs.

The choir is now busy preparing for four important events. They are taking part in the National Festival of Music for Youth, the finals of the Barnardo's Choir Competition at the Royal Festival Hall, the BBC Radio 3 Choir of the Year competition and a concert with the Reading Male Voice Choir. The choir is booked up now until the end of 2011 but would love to hear from any choirs wishing to do a joint concert from 2012 onwards.

Suzanne Newman

'Ladies of the choir, I want you to sound like twenty-two women having babies without chloroform.'

Sir John Barbirolli

rehearsing R Vaughn Williams, 'Sinfonia Antarctica'

The Glasgow Phoenix Choir Scotland West

Since the beginning of the year the members were saddened to hear of the passing of two esteemed former members and two serving members. Contralto - Flora Harrison had been an active office bearer for many years being secretary latterly until she retired some years ago. Sam Marshall, a leading baritone had served the choir for many years until he too retired. John Jaap, a second bass whose bottom notes we could feel through the soles of our feet and second soprano – Maureen Kelly, a lady of great energy, humour and commitment - both passed away while still members. All will be sadly missed by everyone who knew them and the choir's sympathies go to their families.

As noted in the previous issue of 'News and Views' 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 its top 20 most requested pieces of music played at funerals, gaining the Phoenix a silver disc award. At the choir's Spring concert on 23 April in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, Conductor Marilyn Smith accepted on the choir's behalf a gold disc, only six months after its release. This is probably the first occasion in recent times that this has been achieved by an amateur choir in Scotland.

At this concert two superb youth groups joined the choir – the West Lothian Schools Brass Band (currently Scottish youth champions), conducted by Nigel Boddice, MBE, and the Ayrshire Fiddle Orchestra, conducted by Wallace Galbraith, MBE. Their

contributions greatly enhanced the concert. One of the highlights was Verdi's "Anvil Chorus" when the choir was accompanied by the band, and at the end both band and orchestra joined with the choir in a stirring finale of accompanist Cameron Murdoch's arrangement of "Highland Cathedral".

In the early 2010 a number of concerts took place including Motherwell, Peebles, Ayr, Coatbridge, Newton Stewart and Lockerbie.

The choir's May tour will be to Northern Ireland with concerts in Glenmachan Church of God as guests of Donaghadee Male Voice Choir, and St George's Church, Belfast. On the choir's return home it will give a concert in Kirkcudbright Parish Church. This will be the Phoenix's third visit to Northern Ireland and the members are looking forward to meeting up with old friends there.

A busy season will finish in June with concerts in the Adam Smith Centre in Kirkcaldy, and St Peter's Church as part of the West End Festival in Glasgow.

Looking forward to the next season, the choir will be guests of the Widukind Chor, in Enger, Germany in late September. The association with this mixed choir goes back 25 years and this connection will be well celebrated in true Scottish/Germanic style.

View the choir's website – www.phoenixchoir.org

J Lawson Purdie - Publicity Officer

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The Dalesmen Singers Male Voice Choir North East

As we look back over the last 12 months the Dalesmen Singers Male Voice Choir from Danby, North Yorkshire reflect on what has been a busy year. In February the choir gave a concert in the Botton Village Theatre; this was to say thank you for letting us use the venue to record our latest CD. During the year the choir gave concerts over a wide area, celebrating a 'Centenary of Worship' at Thornton Dale Methodist Church and the Anniversary Service at Danby Methodist Chapel.

The choir gave a concert in Masham Methodist Church. The men took the opportunity to visit the Blacksheep Brewery while they were in town. Washington Tyne and Wear was another venue where the choir performed a joint concert with the Shiny Row Male Voice Choir.



One of the highlights in the year was the Dalesmen Singers visit to Keswick. The trip came about after one of the singers met a member of the Keswick 'Mountain Singers' while on a bowling trip to Keswick. The choirs

made contact and a concert was arranged for 25 April in the local Methodist Church. The Dalesmen took the opportunity of making it a social weekend taking wives and partners with them.

Other concert venues in spring and summer were at Great Ayton, Moorsholm, Whitby Spa and Danby Moors Centre. The choir was pleased to invite two young sopranos to take part in their concerts. Rowan Pierce from Saltburn sang at Whitby Spa and Kirsten Maltby sang at Danby.

Two concerts in October, the first at St Hedda's in Egton Bridge. This was a joint concert with 'Renaissance' in aid of Zoe's Place Children's Hospice raised over £700 for the charity. The Dalesmen Singers Gala Night Concert had as their guest artist, Vincent Billington, the International Concert Pianist from Scarborough. Sadly Vincent passed away in January. The Master of Ceremonies for the evening was Stewart McFarlane MBE. The nominated charity for the concert was the 'Esk Valley Lifeline' and £1,178.50 was presented to Dr Giles Horner from the charity by choir president, Mrs Audrey Smith.

In November at a concert at Sneaton Castle, Whitby the choir was joined by music students from Caedmon School Whitby. The Dalesmen aim is to encourage young musicians. The concert was in aid of the Marie Curie Charity and £443 was raised.

During the year a total of £4500 has been raised at the concerts where the Dalesmen have performed.

Where would the Dalesmen Singers be without their



Musical Director Steve Maltby and Accompanist Ann Hartley? They work tirelessly encouraging the members and are greatly appreciated.

The Dalesmen Singers look forward to visiting Sweden in August where they will be guests of the Skara Manska Choir and to performing with them. They will also spend time in Stockholm.

Keep up to date with The Dalesmen Singers activities on our web site. www.dalesmensingers.net

John Thompson

Aughton MVC North West

The choir started the New Year with a concert in February for a local church with a request, since it was near to Valentine's Day, to sing some romantic songs. A strange request, but we managed it.

We then sang for our President (Lord Mayor of SW Lancashire) at his at home, for local voluntary organisations. The choir performing two half hour spots from which a number of requests for concerts were forthcoming.

We then sing at the church of our MD which is celebrating 100 years (the church not our MD).

There are then a number of other concerts, before the choir travel to Clitheroe to sing at a wedding. It seems the groom heard the choir and booked us. Rather than just sing at the wedding we are hoping to arrange a concert with one of the local churches for the evening.

In May, we make a new recording, 'Let Music Live', which will be available for sale at concerts or from the secretary as and when available. Visit the web site for more details. www.aughtonmvc.co.uk

We have a bursting concert year ahead with more bookings than we have had for a number of years, which it is felt is the change of music and style that the choir have adopted since Neil Williams became MD.

This brings me to September when we are performing 'Aughton Sing Elvis' as part of the choir's fund raising and the new Mayor's charity. When Neil first suggested the idea we thought he was joking, but we are getting there, singing a number of new song arrangements, made especially for the choir. You never know we may even have a visit by the 'King' himself at some point during the evening. Lord James Ferrabee has accepted an invitation to attend. We then prepare for the visit of Newquay MVC in October.

Neil

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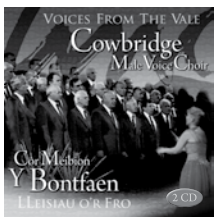


Cowbridge Male Voice Choir Wales South

Cowbridge Male Voice Choir Celebrate Their First 40 Years! In November 1970 a group of three singing enthusiasts distributed hundreds of leaflets throughout the Vale of Glamorgan in South Wales with the aim of starting a male voice choir in the central market town of Cowbridge.

Cowbridge Male Voice Choir gave their first concert in Cowbridge Town Hall with David Richards as Musical Director and Sandra Williams as Accompanist. Sandra has performed in this capacity ever since - a remarkable record of service and dedication. During the 1970s the young choir grew rapidly in reputation and confidence, staging a number of joint concerts with leading brass bands, competing in the televised HTV series "Corau Meibion" (Male Choirs) and appearing in the Royal Albert Hall with Dame Vera Lynn and Larry Adler for a Burma Star Association reunion. In 1979 under the musical direction of Iwan Guy the choir undertook their first overseas tour to the province of Saskatchewan in Canada, giving seventeen concerts in sixteen days - a fine example of youthful enthusiasm and endurance!

Since then the choir has toured extensively in the USA and Europe (including Cyprus, Malta, Hungary and the Czech Republic) and hosted numerous overseas choirs from such far-flung places as Russia, Hungary, Iceland, Canada, the USA and New Zealand.



It currently has three CDs available - 'In Lighter Vein' and a double CD 'Voices from the Vale/Lleisiau'r Fro'. Specimen downloads can be obtained through the website and copies of the CDs from the choir Secretary.

The choir's extensive repertoire covers a wide range of music embracing the traditional Welsh favourites and ranging through popular songs and medleys of beautiful music from London stage shows right up to the present day. Many of these pieces have been specially arranged for the choir by its current Musical Director, Shelley Thomas Brown. Shelley joined the choir in 1985 and still holds the post - yet another example of exceptional dedication and loyalty to the choir.

Over the years the choir has always supported worthy causes throughout the UK and abroad, raising hundreds of thousands of pounds including over £20,350 in the last year alone. Charities that have benefited include the Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital in London, the Salvation Army, Rotary International, Guide Dogs for the Blind, Barnardo's, the Radcliffe Infirmary in Oxford, Leukaemia Research, National Children's Homes, Action Duchenne and Charing Cross Hospital, London.

The choir also perform at weddings and private functions such as the Annual Dinner of the Rolls Royce and Bentley Club of GB.

Our photograph (top right) shows the choir standing by Brunel's famous iron ship (now moored in Bristol Docks) - Cowbridge being the only choir ever to have sung in this unique venue.

Cowbridge MVC is supported financially by some seventy Vice Presidents. Their Honorary President is the renowned Welsh Soprano, Iona Jones, who has sung as a soloist all over the world including the Carnegie Hall and the Sydney Opera House. Its Deputy Conductor/Deputy Accompanist is Ryan Wood who in addition has his own mixed choir in Maesteg and is in great

demand as an accompanist for soloists and other choirs.

Now in its fortieth anniversary year the choir look forward to the future with confidence. To celebrate this momentous event the choir will be having brand new uniforms - changing after 20 years from maroon blazers and light grey slacks to green blazers and black trousers.

For further information please contact the website at www.cmvc.co.uk. The choir's official photographers are Niki Wood and Ray Pritchard.

Bob Whitaker
Publicity Officer



Midlands West Group

The group is busy settling in to the year's activities with new committee members which were voted into office in February at its AGM.

Secretary, Mr Steve Melia (Walsall Harmonic Choir), John Raybould Vice Chairman (Shelfield Male Voice Choir) Major Paul Mulingani (rtd) remained as finance officer and I remain as Chairman. The AGM was hosted by Shelfield Male Voice Choir who provided a wonderful venue and the ladies provided a lunch. The workshop which followed the meeting was taken by Sheila Harrod who put the members through their paces with a great deal of enthusiasm and lots of tips. A good time was had by all.

Our thanks to Mrs Stella Winfield who decided to retire as secretary following years of service to the NAC. Stella will be a hard act to follow; her dedication to the group was there for all to see.

Our plans for a mass concert in September 2010 are well underway, and Shelfield Male Voice Choir will plan another mass concert event in 2011. The funds from these events are needed by the group to provide group activities for all.

Dorothy Bates
Chairman

*Though opera is a noble craft
Most operatic plots are daft*

Ron Rubin

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Letter from NAC (Oz Branch)

At the time of writing it's late April and autumn is upon us, except that today the sun is shining and the temperature is at 20°C and heading for 24°C. The Sydney Male Choir is well on its way through a very busy schedule for 2010. Four very successful concerts in venues to the south and west of the city of Sydney as well the annual ANZAC Day Dawn Service at the Sydney Cenotaph on 25 April. The last is always such a poignant and moving occasion with many thousands of people braving the rain to show their respect for all the fallen Australian and New Zealand women and men who have served their countries in conflicts far and wide. We got very wet but it felt good.

What about the rest of the year? Well there are a total of another 13 firm concerts and several more in the pipeline, including a week long tour of towns in northern New South Wales, should be a total of 28. We are helping to celebrate the centenary of the railway arriving in the fantastically named Dunedoo, joining with the wonderful Australian National Brass Band in Sydney, having a joint concert with the Orange Male Choir as well as returning to our spiritual home of the Sydney Town Hall for our 11th Annual City of Sydney concert on 12 September. Finally we are hosting the second massed concert of the recently re-formed Male Choir Association of Australia in Sydney in November and are busy learning an ambitious programme of music, including a specially commissioned piece which celebrates life in the outback.

If you want to see and hear what the Sydney Male Choir are all about please visit YouTube where you will see *When The Saints Go Marching In*, an excerpt from our recent DVD, recorded at our last annual concert, together with jazz musicians Andy Firth and Adam Miller.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=QOwtgbSAFo

As always if you wish to contact me please do so via email at petefig@opusnet.com.au

Also see our website
www.sydneymalechoir.com.au

Peter Marshall



Willenhall Musical Society Midland South West

The Society was formed in the 1940s by employees of the Yale & Towne Manufacturing Company (Yale Locks) as a mixed choir. The choir has performed regularly at concerts in the local area and further afield. In an average year, we put on between six and ten concerts, of which two or three are festive Christmas ones.

We arrange concerts to support many charities and charitable organisations in the West Midlands and hold an annual concert, usually in November, for members' chosen charity of the year. We often invite guest artistes to share the stage for this Annual Concert and have welcomed some terrific performers over the years from junior school bands to polished semi-professional singers.

Shel MacRae of the Fortunes made an excellent guest in November 2009, when £1,400 was raised for the Wolverhampton Coronary Aftercare Support Group.

Our concert on St George's Day was well-supported and the patriotic numbers were particularly enthusiastically received. There was much flag-waving and joining in with gusto from the audience, particularly with *Land of Hope & Glory*, *Rose of England* and *Jerusalem*. Our guests on this occasion were Jigsaw, a talented local children's choir, and a young soloist of our acquaintance, Isobel Bickerton, aged 12. So the age range on the stage that evening was far reaching - from young children to a founder member of the Society, an 84 year old stalwart of the contralto section!

Over the years the choir has flourished and the current membership numbers a little over 40, but in common with most mixed choirs, there is a predominance of ladies (gentlemen are currently outnumbered 4 to 1!).

We all believe that every effort should be made to preserve the British choral tradition, and we actively encourage the recruitment of younger members. Our rehearsals are held on Monday evenings, 7.30 to 9.30, at Portobello Methodist Church, New Street, just off the Keyway Island in Willenhall. They are always fun, and fairly painless. Anyone who likes to sing and can hold a tune will be warmly welcomed, particularly gentlemen and contraltos.

Margaret O'Callaghan
Hon. President

We are now looking for a new Musical Director for January 2011
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Dore Male Voice Choir Yorkshire South

Dore Male Voice Choir was formed in the village of Dore in South West Sheffield in 1964. We have a proud record in competitions over the years (a large board listing our successes can be found in the Devonshire Arms in Dore), but we're also a friendly group who enjoy social events as well as singing.

Our Music Director, Paul Green, has been an inspirational leader of the choir for 10 years. As well as leading us in concerts and rehearsals, he is a composer and arranger and a fine pianist and organist. Paul's wife, Margaret, has organised music theory classes to help choir members learn to read music. Paul retires this year, and our new MD will be Elizabeth Hampshire, who was MD for Worrall MVC for a number of years. Elizabeth has also been a recitalist who has sung in many concerts, and a music teacher, both in school and as a private tutor. The choir have also an excellent accompanist in Adrian Jordan, who is Director of Music at Birkdale School in Sheffield.



In 2009, as usual we sang in many concerts, including our choir Gala Concert in Ecclesall Church, Sheffield (where our friends from Wigston and South Yorkshire Police Choirs joined us on stage), a performance at the Crossing, a fine modern venue in Worksop, the BBC Radio Sheffield Carol Concert in the 'Church

of the Crooked Spire' in Chesterfield and two Christmas concerts at Dore Church. We also went on tour to Cyprus, giving several concerts, including one at the Cathedral in Nicosia.

In 2010 we are singing for the second time in a '3 Choirs Concert', organised by our friends from Wigston MVC, in Rugby School. We are told by members of the audience that the sound from the massed voices of the three choirs in the first concert was truly awesome – in a good way!

The Choir, often accompanied by spouses and friends, enjoy many social events – our annual dinner, an annual reunion dinner with Wigston MVC, day trips by coach or train to Whitby and elsewhere, bowls matches against the local bowling club (many of us are members), and, most important, the pie and pea supper!

We have made a number of CDs. The latest, 'Gonna Rise Up Singin'', is available at £5 plus p&p. Please see our website for details.

We are a registered charity and are proud to have contributed many thousands of pounds to worthy causes over the years.

We welcome new members. For more information visit us at www.doremalevoicechoir.com

Chris Marley

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Newquay Male Voice Choir Cornwall Group

Newquay Male Voice Choir started 2010 by making ten of our members guests of honour at our Annual Dinner and to award them with Long Service Certificates. Combined they had served the choir and the community for 350 years. When asked how they had been members for so long, they all agreed that not only was it their love of singing, it was and is a great way of meeting others in your community and enjoying the fellowship that goes with it. The choir's aim is not only to recognise what these men have achieved but also to populate this feeling of community and fellowship to potential new members of all ages.

On the 20 February many of our choir supported a Massed Choir Concert organised by the Cornish Federation of Male Voice Choirs. The concert took place at St Michael's Parish Church, Newquay. The aim of the concert was to support those of Cornish descent affected by the bush fires of last February 2009 in Victoria Australia. 155 voices came together to delight the audience with a menu of universal pieces such as *Calm is the Sea*, *The Lord's Prayer*, *My Lord what a Morning*, *American Trilogy*, *True Love*, *Speed your Journey*, *Gwahoddiad*, *Deus Salutis*, *Morte Criste* and finished with a rousing rendition of *Trelawney*. What a wonderful evening was had by all.

Newquay MVC events diary is very healthy this year.

Venues are to include

Cathedrals: a four choir concert with Newquay MVC, Marazion Apollo, Imerys Mid Cornwall and Stithians Male Voice Choir helping to raise funds for their Aspire Appeal.

Church Halls: 8 May, joint charity concert with the ladies of the Looe Valley Singers.

Parish Churches: 4 June joint concert with their guests Reading Male Voice Choir.

Pub Gardens: 25 June concert for a local charity.

Preaching Pits: 3 July St Newlyn East Preaching Pit.

Chapels: 9 July as guests of the West Looe Ladies Choir Vocal Group Keltique.

Beaches: 16 July, Porthcothan Beach. A Massed Choir celebration to bring to a close 18 months of celebrating the work of local playwright, Nick Darke.

Botanical Gardens: 19 September, Eden Project. A joint concert with Vox Pop a lively community choir from the Isle of Wight. The list of events and venues is forever growing.

Newquay MVC has been actively involved in a community outreach project over the last few years, working with youngsters in schools. Our aim is to actively encourage younger members into male voice singing in the county. Members of the choir have helped out with morning assemblies, after school choir practices, Christmas carol events. We have local primary and college choirs singing at our concerts. We live in hope that sometime in their future they will join a choir and rejoice in singing.

Newquay MVC practices every Wednesday evening 6.45 for 7.00 at Claremont Hall, Beachfield Avenue, Newquay. All potential new members are welcome.



For further information please contact our Honorary Secretary Mr David Bendall on 01726 860193 or visit our website

www.newquaymalevoicechoir.co.uk .

You can become a fan of the choir by visiting Newquay Male Voice Choir on Facebook.

Andy Pappin

The trouble with opera is that there is always too much singing.

Claude Debussy

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Y	T	N	P	V	S	I	L	V	E	R	R	I	N	G	N	J	D	F	E
S	B	F	V	N	O	T	H	G	U	A	M	W	U	I	Z	W	P	E	H
E	R	O	D	E	L	P	P	A	B	X	O	S	Q	G	B	V	S	A	O
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V	N	W	Q	H	H	G	P	K	R	E	A	B	S	E	R	O	I	H	D
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E	C	W	V	R	P	L	B	F	L	W	F	L	G	Y	L	L	R	R	G
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C	P	Y	C	W	X	O	Z	H	W	I	S	E	T	H	E	S	J	O	R
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Hidden in this grid you will find the names of many of the choirs who have contributed to this issue of News & Views. Can you find them all?

- | | | | |
|------------|-----------|--------------|-------------|
| ALMONDBURY | BURE | DORE | NEWQUAY |
| APPLEDORE | CHARVIL | EASTWOOD | SILVER RING |
| AUGHTON | COWBRIDGE | FEATHERSTONE | TRAETH |
| BESTWOOD | DALESMAN | KELBORROW | WILLENHALL |

There are no prizes for this wordsearch but you may find the solution to it on page 28

Crawford's Conference Cwiz Cwestions

After my rant at conference about the fact that no-one had sent me an entry for the competition a few people took pity on me and sent in entries. Every entry was correct, which shows how easy the quiz was. I put all six into my best trilby hat and drew out the name of David Sankey, Orpheus Male Voice Choir, Grimsby & Cleethorpes.

Now those of you who know me know that this is one of the choirs that I sing with but since four out of the six who sent in entries are known to me it was quite likely that one of them would come out of the hat. I shall give David his prize at our next rehearsal evening.

The answers to the quiz were:

1. Skegness (Did you spot the sailor from the 'Skegness is Bracing' advert?)
2. Suzi Digby
3. Ashington and District MVC

I haven't given up on it; I hope to have a larger quiz in the next edition. Look out for it in October.



Heyl St Piran Singers Cornwall

This is a ladies' community choir in Hayle, Cornwall and was formed by musical director, Ann Birch, in 2008.

The Heyl (Cornish spelling) St Piran Singers is a very happy and friendly choir who concentrate on the lighter music but also include some sacred music, which is the first love of the director. Occasionally the ladies' choir joins the Praise Hayle Male Choir in concert and both choirs have gained a considerable reputation. In November 2009 the ladies' choir participated in the Camborne Music Festival and was delighted to win the Novice Cup.

Ann has always had a great interest in music and started learning the piano at the age of 4, reaching the final grade at 17 years of age. She attended a boarding school where music played a very important part and this is where her interest in choral music began. At 21 she travelled to Vienna as part of a piano trio in a concert.

Once Ann married and had children she did not have a lot of time for music but later she became accompanist to a mixed voice choir and went on to learn various other instruments, including the cello and the trombone. She was accompanist to Redruth Amateur Operatic Society, official accompanist for the County Music Festival and accompanist to the Chacewater Male



Voice Choir thence becoming the musical director in 1985. This choir subsequently amalgamated with Carnon Vale Male Choir and had considerable success in competitive festivals. In 2007 Ann became musical director to Praise Hayle Male Choir.

Accompanist, Una Skellington, has played the piano since the age of 6 and was fortunate enough to attend a very musical school. Later she was involved in Abingdon Operatic Society for 15 years, playing for rehearsals, singing, dancing and also sang in choirs and choral societies.

In 1991 she joined the Hayle Ladies' Choir and became the deputy conductor and accompanist, then in 1994 was asked to be accompanist for the Praise Hayle Male Choir. A couple of years later, together with a group of six ladies and two gentlemen, she started the Pentowan Singers. When the Heyl St Piran Singers started up Una became accompanist to the choir.

Heyl St Piran Singers and Praise Hayle Male Choir, under the direction of Ann Birch, are travelling to Holland in October and will be giving two concerts, so everyone is looking forward to that. The ladies are very enthusiastic and look forward to many more concerts in the future.

The choir welcomes any new members and for further details please contact Ann Birch on 01736 752335. The choir is in the process of creating a website.

Geraldine Maas



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Conference 2010

The Ramada Hotel, Stevenage 19-21 March



Those who read my reports on conference, of which this is the fourth, know that I seek a musical reference to begin the report. This year conference was held in one of the ruins that Cromwell knocked about a bit. It was the Ramada Cromwell and I found it rather comfortable and not really knocked about at all.

This year a change had been made and we didn't have the AGM on Friday so everyone had loads of time to arrive, settle into their rooms and prepare for dinner at eight. This is the first year that I was hosting a table, officially, and Julie and I met some interesting and friendly people with whom to enjoy our roast beef.

The after dinner entertainment was provided by The Busking Sharks who quite quickly had those who were sound of wind and limb gyrating on the dance floor. Those disinclined to dance took another glass or sought out a quiet place to talk. Late into the evening the usual suspects made good use of the keyboard provided.

Suitably breakfasted on Saturday morning we snatched a quick look at the trade stands before assembling for the first seminar led by Erica Crump. This is a very useful seminar, the second that Erica has presented for us. She offers help with those aspects of the law that we, as amateurs can feel unsure about when we are giving performances and running our choirs. Once you get past the first feeling of panic, the feeling that you must be about to be taken to court for infringing lots of rules and regulations you didn't know existed, you begin to understand that most of the things your choir does are quite legal but you need to be aware that there are things that need to be done correctly. Erica kindly agreed last year to be our legal consultant so if your choir has any queries let James Ferrabee know and if we, as a committee, can't help we'll be in touch with Erica for you.

Suddenly it was time for a cup of coffee, a rather tasty cookie and a look around the trade stands. There were more stands than you could shake a stick at this year. James had really excelled himself. Two music publishers, four tour companies, two staging companies, four recording companies, Lyn Oakes for uniforms, TIP and several stands where my wife could browse for Christmas gifts and useful stuff like a Chopin board for the caravan (No I didn't spell that wrongly).

Seminar 2 was to be presented by the delightful Suzi Digby. It began with some very helpful ideas on warming up and stance. Then we sang a song in four parts which was entitled, *Liverpool Street Station*. The climax of the song is when all the parts, singing in canon suddenly all sing the title of the song together. Rather clever. Then things got more difficult, for me anyway. I am not the best at sight reading and some of the music we were given to sing left me far behind. It was all by well known composers like David Willcocks, Howard Goodall and such but I found it hard to pitch and hold my part. The problem is that the members of conference range from semi professional musicians to people whose only musical ability is what they have gained when singing in their choirs. I'm afraid I was relieved when that part was over.

The final seminar of the day was led by Liz Whitehead with a lively question and answer session about festivals.

After an early dinner we boarded a coach to travel to Princess Helena College for an evening with choirs from the Thames North Group of the NAC. As stage manager of my own choir I always have an eye to the way that others manage moving choirs on and off the performance area and how the choirs are presented. With six choirs performing it promised to be interesting logistically. The concert began with a massed choir piece. All the choirs took to the stage like clockwork and sang *The Rhythm of life* with great gusto. *With a Voice of Singing* began Luton Male Voice Choir's section, followed by *Rock Around the Clock*, *African Prayer* and *American Trilogy*. Three Valleys MVC gave us *The Rose*, for starters and closed lustily with *You'll Never Walk Alone*.

Hertfordshire Community Youth Choir is a young choir in more than just the age of their singers. It was formed on 23 April last year. They haven't sat around and done nothing in that short time as they entertained us well with four numbers including a medley from *Mary Poppins* and a lovely version of *Oh Happy Day*.

Lots of well organised movement filled the stage for a massed rendition of *Battle Hymn of the Republic*. At the interval I was plied with red wine. I could get used to this.

In the second half Stevenage MVC and Chess Valley MVC gave us their offering which included *Salut d'Amour*, *Nessun Dorma* and *You Raise Me Up*. Stevenage Ladies was the sixth choir and my wife rather enjoyed *Unchained Melody* as 'Ghost' is one of her favourite films. One more time the well oiled wheels turned and the massed choirs of Thames North closed with *One Voice* by Barry Manilow. Off to the Ramada for a late supper and bed.

On Sunday we took breakfast and a last look at the trade stands before enjoying a singing session with Bob Barratt, one of our Vice Presidents. We were given a taste of some of his wares. It was helpful that he brought recordings of the songs so that we could hear them before we attempted to sing them. If you've read this magazine properly you will know who accompanied our singing. You can't keep a good Music & Festivals Officer down.

After a coffee and those oh so delightful cookies we got a little more serious with the AGM and steering group meetings. All the present officers were continuing to offer their services except for Frank Rhodes who had decided to stand down as Secretary. I shall miss his sartorial elegance at Officer's meetings and am hoping to continue his wearing of bow ties. One must have some continuity. Conference was pleased that he was offered and accepted a vice presidency and we hope to see him at conference for many years to come. Lord James Ferrabee added the role of Secretary to that of Conference co-ordinator and I am sure we will be well served by him. Geoff Goldthorpe had shown an interest in serving the NAC and he was co-opted onto the committee. I hope he has a happy and fruitful time with us. The officers presented their reports and there were a number of probing questions as one might expect.

The steering group meets at the end of conference and gives members the opportunity to comment on what has happened over the weekend and to suggest what might happen in the future then the officers take the comments away and mull them over in a meeting afterwards that has a guillotine of 1300. The guillotine is important because once we get started... Well you know how it is.

There, another conference report completed. I can't include everything that happens. I can only give a flavour and a subjective view. I am keen that others have the opportunity to give their view. Come to conference at Shrewsbury next year and send me a report.

83rd NAC Conference 19-21 March 2010 Ramada Cromwell Hotel, Stevenage

Friday saw the start of the conference and delegates started arriving in the afternoon ready for 1930.

Dinner was served at 2000. We all moved in and took our places on tables made up from all choirs. The wine came round and then the food was brought in: trio of melon with a wild berry coulis, then the main course of roast beef and yorkshire pudding, roast potatoes, and a selection of seasonal vegetables followed by a homemade fruit crumble with custard or cream, tea or coffee and mints. During the dinner we had background noise of the men fixing the disco up and learning to count 'testing 1, 2, 3'. After the dinner they started playing and I've never seen a room clear so quickly (loud) - most of them went into the bar but the younger ones stayed - I went! When the disco time was over most of us moved back for a sing-along, with Eric Cooper from Huddersfield MVC and Helen Emery, from the Rowland Singers, on the keyboard.

Saturday, after breakfast, there were Trade Stands to look round. The first seminar was Erica Crump, a solicitor from London on the legal side of running Choirs and insurances including copyright.

The next two seminars were by Suzi Digby. She sat on the panel of TV's Last Choir Standing. She took us through the warming up and posture of singing and sang several pieces of music which really wanted months of rehearsal, not just two hours.

The fourth and last seminar of the day was by Liz Whitehead on what choirs should expect of festivals. It was questions and answers on what we thought of festivals - were they fair and judged fairly? There was no shortage of tea, coffee and cookies between each seminar.

Later that evening we were taken by coach to the concert at a college near Hitchin. It was a lovely concert with four MVCs : one ladies choir and Hertfordshire Youth Choir, all choirs from the Thames North Group,

Chess Valley, Luton Stevenage and Three Valleys Male Voice Choirs and Stevenage Ladies Choir. On Sunday, after breakfast, there was a last chance to look at the Trade Stands and go to the last seminar by Bob Barratt, demonstrating Ba Ba Productions, taking us through some of his sheet music which choirs later purchased.

Coming to the end of the conference, it was time for the AGM and Steering Group meeting. Everyone held their seat bar one; Frank Rhodes NAC Hon General Secretary and Mixed Harmony Midland North, stood down and was made a Vice President. Lord James Ferrabee was elected to take his place. He now is NAC Conference Co-ordinator and NAC Hon General Secretary and comes from Eastwood Collieries' MVC Midland East.

The conference was closed at 1300 and most of the delegates made their way home, except for the Lincolnshire group who did their own thing in the afternoon and met up in the evening and had a good meal in Wetherspoons. It was good value for both the food and drink.

Monday morning, after a very enjoyable weekend, we had breakfast and left. For anyone interested, the next NAC Conference is at Shrewsbury in 2011.

Thomas Clayton

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The Appledore Singers

Devon

We started 2009 with the presentation of a cheque for £600 to Macmillan Nurses being the money raised from our most successful annual gala concert held just before Christmas.

Old friends, past members of the singers and many others joined the audience for an afternoon of Christmas music, carols, a brass quintet, solo artists and more – this is always a very popular occasion and we held a huge raffle of Christmas hampers and the occasion ended with tea and mince pies for all.

Our New Year dinner was once again held at the local Golf Club – a delicious meal was enjoyed by members and we allowed husbands to come and join in the fun.

We started a new venture in 2008 and cut our first CD at Easter which went on sale in the autumn in time for Christmas shopping – we also produced our first calendar full of pictures of the singers at work and play; this was designed and produced by one of our members who is a talented photographer and she now runs a little stall at all our concerts selling these products and others to be introduced this coming season; this raises valuable funds for the on-going need for new music.

We already have many bookings for concerts in 2010, including two weddings so are going to have a very busy year. Our website,

www.theappledoresingers.co.uk,

which has now been up and running for two years, is regularly kept up-to-date by one of our members and is proving most successful. We have recruited several new members during this last year as a result and it receives many hits.

As usual we are planning an Open Evening again, in early spring, when anyone interested is invited to come to a regular practice night and sing with us to see if they would like to join although we had to cancel because of dreadful weather last year. This always proves a popular evening.

The Committee is always trying to think of new and innovative ideas to attract new members and new venues for concerts and we also plan a very active social life so members can mix and enjoy each other's company.



Our splinter group the Apple Pips are a small group, culled from the choir, who sing a cappella and barber shop. They have also invited two husbands to join them for some of their numbers. They practise almost weekly, and have a lively and fun programme and always perform three or four items at each of our concerts.

With our numbers at just under 40 ladies we feel we are keeping up-to-date and interesting by singing lots of modern music, music from the shows, light classical and lots more.

Jane Hayman

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The Art of Choral Singing

Last September John Hayward sent me the words of a choral piece that he had written and hoped I would be able to find room for in the autumn edition. The way that he had set the words out meant that it would have taken up too much space to have fitted

easily into News & Views. I told him that I would like to include it but would need it in a more compact version. Well here it is, John's humorous ditty on the Art of Choral Singing. He is happy to send anyone full instructions and music absolutely FREE!

Crawford

The Art of Choral Singing

We are the perfect chorus	Our pitch is A-four-forty	Our breathing is outstanding
To hear us is a treat.	And never causes panic	And reliably deferred_
Conductors beat time for us but....	Until, when unaccompanied....	To always breathe together_
We'd rather (stamp) use our feet.	It emulates (semitone flat) Titanic.	In the mi -(loud breath)- ddle of a word.
Our diction is quite perfect	Of entries we are masters	Because we are so musical
So our speech is never slurred	Because, when there's a rest,	It's not easy to take in
Except when we find esses	We carry on regardless.	Why we don't win at festivals.
On the end of lengthy wordssss.	We're sure its for the best.	Can it be platform discipline?
People come from miles around	Musicians come from miles around	(Front row parts to reveal card school)
To hear our glorious choral sound.	To hear our glorious choral sound.	But Audiences pay many a pound
		To hear our glorious choral sound.

In the unlikely event that anyone is foolhardy enough to sing these lyrics, four-part settings are available without charge by e-mail

request to john.haywood@newholm.eclipse.co.uk

Please specify filetype (.sib or .pdf) and SATB or TTBB.

Holman-Climax MVC

Cornwall

Formed in 1940, in the turmoil of wartime, in response to the needs of the citizens of Plymouth who were suffering from German bombing, Holman-Climax MVC is 70 years old this year.

The choir has an illustrious history and has been consistently among the top male choirs, both within Cornwall and nationally. Its link with Cornwall's mining past was recognised in February when it was featured on national television on the Breakfast Programme.

The choir was formed by the renowned Edgar Kessell MBE, and has had only four MDs to date. Edgar was followed by George Smith and he was succeeded by Roger Wills. Under Roger's leadership the choir gained honours at home and nationally, with the possible highlight being the titles of best British Choir and Best Cornish Choir at the International Male Voice Festival at Truro.

The choir is now led, for the first time, by a lady, Angela Renshaw, who is in her second year with us. Angela was already known nationally for her work in encouraging boys' singing and Holman-Climax feels fortunate to have someone of her calibre to keep up the choir's high standards. Under Angela, the choir is breaking new ground in its 70th year pioneering outreach work in local schools to ensure the Cornishman's love of singing is carried on by future generations. Under her leadership, the choir swept the board at the 100th Cornwall Music Festival with best male voice choir, best adult choir and winner of the choir championship sing-off. The most pleasing of these trophies was the Edgar Kessell Gold Award, in memory of the choir's founder.

Also in March the choir gave something back to the community by organising an evening of music and memories, free of charge, for ex-workers of the two firms whose name the choir carries and will take part in a number of prominent concerts during this celebration year, culminating in its gala concert in September when it will be joined by the Four Lanes Male Choir, the Treverva Male Choir, Mabe Ladies Choir and the Camborne Ladies Choir. Guest singer, Suzanne Emmanuel will also perform.

One very special feature of this choir is that its renowned accompanist, Agnes Jane, has been with the choir for over half those seventy years and is still in fine form despite having passed her eightieth birthday!

The choir has toured extensively in Britain and in Europe and has made a special feature of its contacts with Cornish communities in United States – the most recent being in 2007 when it visited Cornish communities in Detroit, Mineral Point in Wisconsin and Calumet, in Michigan's 'Copper Country' where it performed to capacity audiences, in the Opera House, drawn from those of Cornish origin from all over North America. With some sixty members, the choir is thriving and looks forward to many more years of singing success.

David Oates

*There are two golden rules for an orchestra:
start together and finish together. The public
doesn't give a damn what goes on in between.*

Thomas Beecham

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- 'The Hills Of The Valley' by Peter Barratt
- 'Shining' by Kate Courage
- 'Whispers In My Mind' by Peter Barratt
- 'My Foolish Heart' by Washington & Young

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Bure Valley MVC

Anglia

The Bure Valley Male Voice Choir was formed in 1972 and meets every Tuesday evening, currently from September to June, at the Cawston Road Chapel, Aylsham from 7.30 to 9.00pm.

The membership of the choir had always been strong but in recent years has experienced a slight decline due to ill health and advancing years and its Director of Music has recently moved to pastures new.

Under the Chairmanship of its sole lady member, Barbara Downes, who is also the Choir's accompanist they are now embarking on an ambitious recruiting campaign to increase both the membership and to recruit a long term Director of Music.

The Choir is currently under the temporary direction of Ron Sallis, a well known local musician and Director of Music of the Musical Friend's Choir. He will be supported by Jack Barratt, a valued member of the choir. Both have agreed to see the choir to the end of the current season in June in order to fulfil concert commitments throughout North Norfolk.

The Choir's repertoire of music is varied and includes sacred and classical pieces, popular music and songs from the shows. New music is constantly being added to the repertoire.

Are you interested in singing with the Bure Valley MVC? We welcome men of all ages and musical ability as members and we would love to meet you.

Are you the person who could become our new Musical Director? If you want more information about joining or wish to discuss leading our choir in the coming years, please contact:

Barbara Downes 01263 733325, David Watts 01263 722159 or Ed Burgess 01263 722693

David Watts

Charvil Voices

Thames North

We are enjoying a quiet term learning lots of new songs including *A Is For Alto* and *Benedictus* by Brian Lewis.

The ladies choir is working towards two events later in the year. The first is a Sing, Supper and Quiz Evening and then the ladies will be travelling to Oxford to take part in the regional heats of the BBC Radio 3 Choir of the Year. We are in the process of sorting out a new choir uniform so we look our best for these events.

Suzanne Newman

'My dear fellow, a tenor isn't a man it's a disease!'

Hans von Bülow

New Mill Male Voice Choir



A vacancy for a new **Musical Director** exists at this award winning West Yorkshire Choir.

Our current MD is retiring at the end of 2010 and the Choir is looking to appoint an enthusiastic and dynamic replacement to take us forward in to 2011 and beyond.

We value our Musical Director highly and pay appropriate remuneration.

Rehearsals take place weekly on Tuesday at New Mill Club from 7:00 to 10:00 pm.

Anyone interested in this post should contact, in strict confidence, our Secretary Andy Johnston on 01484 690580 who will be happy to give further details.

Information about the Choir and this post can be viewed at www.newmillmvc.org.uk

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Crawford's Column



I hope you have noticed a few more changes to the look of News & Views in this issue, different font, lighter titling. I was hoping to go to a three column format but couldn't make everything work out this time. I would welcome your comments and suggestions. There are only 36 pages to this edition and I'm not sure whether that is good or bad. It is certainly cheaper than

the bumper 44 page edition from last autumn.

It would be nice to have more reports from groups. There is only one this time out of twenty-five. There are some great photographs being sent in. I've already chosen one for the front page next time (If the front page doesn't change completely by next time) unless you have an even better one.

Richard Bradley has provided a profile of chairman, Celia Johns, and I hope that others will follow over the next few issues. That reminds me, I must fill in the pro-forma Richard gave me. It is good to hear how our officers came to be where they are. Well I think so.

I hope you all enjoyed conference, I know I did. What? You didn't go? Shame on you! You don't know what you are missing. Please read the conference report if you would like to know what you have been missing. And while I'm on the subject of conference report, it's the fourth one I have written and I think it is probably time someone else gave a report from a different perspective,

so how about it? Just to show it can be done, I've asked Ernie Clayton if I may include the report he wrote for the Orpheus after they sponsored him to represent them at conference. You might notice his name is down as Thomas. It's a conference thing.

Now summer is not too far away and by the time you see this I will probably be in Oberammergau watching the mystery plays. I think I'll look for my shorts and see if I can squeeze into them.

Crawford

Thinking of sending me your choir/group story/report?

I have produced a helpsheet for you which, I hope, will make it easy for you to send me a submission which is in the right format to save me time and help you get your work into print for over 500 choirs to read.

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or by sending an email to me.

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Churchdown Male Voice Choir (Gloucester)



Musical Director Required

We are a Choir Of 70+ members with a reputation locally and within the NAC and EAMVC of a very high standard of performance.

The appointed MD can assume the support of both Choir members and an enthusiastic and committed committee.

Ideally we would wish to appoint a musician who has experience of singing, teaching and directing a choir.

The Choir rehearse on Monday evenings at The Churchdown Community Centre.

Our repertoire is widely varied - operatic choruses, religious items, folk songs, and popular songs from stage and screen.

Suitable remuneration will be through negotiation.

Applications in writing with a CV outlining formal music qualifications and experience to date should be sent to the Secretary:

Mike Beresford, 12 Meads Close, Bishops Cleeve, Cheltenham, Glos. GL52 8JX

*Closing date for applications
Friday 25th June 2010*



Cheddar Male Choir Appointment of Musical Director



Cheddar Male Choir is a friendly, enthusiastic, well established and thriving male choir numbering over 65 members. It was established in 1995 and has a mixed repertoire of traditional male voice numbers, religious pieces, folk songs, spiritual numbers and songs from the shows. The choir gives approximately 12 concerts per year as well as entering competitions and touring overseas.

We are seeking a new Musical Director, to commence in September 2010, suitably qualified, energetic and inspirational to maintain our high standard and continue our development.

Applicants should have suitable conducting experience, musical leadership, good communication skills and a sense of humour. Remuneration will be by arrangement and agreement.

The successful applicant will be an ex-officio of the choir executive committee and will work closely with that group.

Rehearsals take place on Tuesday evenings 7.30 to 9.30 at Draycott Memorial Hall, Draycott, Cheddar.

Applicants requiring further details should contact:

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The Officers

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Bob Barratt - *Music Publisher*

Alan Simmons - *Music Publisher*

Ken Hone - *ret. Group 11 Chairman*

Doris Williams - *Music and Festivals Consultant*

Frank Rhodes - *ret. General Secretary*

Helplines

General Enquiries	James Ferrabee /Celia Johns
Advertising (Year Book/News & Views/ Website)	Richard Bradley
Areas/Groups	Brenda Wilkinson
Banking for Charities (CAF Bank Ltd)	Paul Gailiunas/Celia Johns
Charity Status	Celia Johns
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Hotel Accommodation for Choirs	Richard Bradley /James Ferrabee
Insurance	Richard Bradley
Legal Advice	James Ferrabee
Music Library	Eric Cooper
Membership Matters	Brenda Wilkinson
Music – purchase or locating	Eric Cooper
Performing Rights Society Fees	Eric Cooper
Reports/Articles for News & Views	Bob Swallow
Subscriptions	Brenda Wilkinson
Trade Stands at Conference	James Ferrabee
Website	James Ferrabee

Officers Meetings

Tuesday 8 June 2010 11.00	Twin Oaks Hotel, Chesterfield
Tuesday 10 August 2010 11.00	Twin Oaks Hotel, Chesterfield
Tuesday 9 November 2010 11.00	Twin Oaks Hotel, Chesterfield
Tuesday 11 January 2011, 11.00	Twin Oaks Hotel, Chesterfield

Steering Group Meetings (Open to all members)

Saturday 11 September 2010, 11.00 in the hotel of Conference 2012
Belsfield Hotel, Kendal Rd, Bowness-on-Windermere LA23 3EL

Saturday 22 January 2011, 11.00 at a venue to be found

*'I sometimes wonder which would be
nicer – an opera without an interval
or an interval without an opera.'*

Sir Ernest Newman