

NEWS & VIEWS



235 SPRING 2025



**Poynton Male Voice Choir
president Maurice Hargreaves
and special guest soloist
Charlotte Hoather**



THE NATIONAL PUBLICATION FOR ALL CHORISTERS

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Last date for copy - 30 April 2025

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Crawford's Corner

Publications Officer - Bob Swallow



Well, here we are at the beginning of a new year. Of course, we'll be well into it by the time you read this but I'm sitting looking out into a frosty world at the moment.

Christmas is past and many choirs will be looking forward to planning a new repertoire. If you are, why not look at page 28 where Southport Lyric Singers have music available. It is sad that they need to get rid of their music, but you could make it positive by keeping the songs going.

There is a great deal of information on pages 6-10, where you can find out all about this year's Annual NAC Conference. It's on dry land this year and you don't need a passport to get into Yorkshire (Though some have hinted you might).

The National Association of Choirs has accepted an invitation to be included in

Chairman's Chat

NAC Chairman - Brenda Wilkinson



As the new year begins, we are filled with reflections and hopes for what has been and what is ahead of us.

The Association has had to say goodbye to quite a number of choirs who have faced the fact that they have had to disband because they haven't recovered from the pandemic or they haven't been able to recruit new members to swell their declining ranks, but we are beginning to balance this with some new choirs joining us.

As usual you can see from the contents of this issue our choirs have been very busy again entertaining audiences in various venues, supporting numerous charities

the celebration of the 80th anniversary of VE Day by helping to make our choirs aware of the opportunity to promote the singing of *I Vow To Thee My Country* at 9:30 on the evening of 8 May when other types of activity will also take place. It surely wouldn't take too much to be able to join in this singing. I shall be putting it in my diary.

Barnstable Ladies are celebrating a 40th anniversary. We have had some many celebrations recently. It is always wonderful to hear about what choirs have done over many years.

Another choir celebrating 20 years have a wonderful picture of ladies holding a cheque for £4,000. Well done Primrose Hospice Choir

The Poynton Male Voice Choir can look back on a memorable 90th anniversary year that has put a spring in their step as they look forward to the next decade.

and causes and celebrating their own anniversaries. The Christmas season is one of the busiest for every sort of musician, but I think the chorister has the best part because words can mean so much more than just the music. Talking of anniversaries 2025 will witness the 80th anniversary of VE Day and there is an opportunity for choirs to mark this occasion. All the information can be found on Page 12.

Following on from the successful inaugural MDs workshop in Reading last year, arrangements have been made for the second one which will be held in the Midlands on 5 October. Details about this venture are also available on Page 12.

Wow, 90 years and still looking forward. Roll on 100.

In recent copies of News & Views I have been hinting that I have been hoping that we might be able to find someone who would be prepared to take over this magazine. I have been doing it a long time now and I keep thinking it is time for a new look and a new approach.

I have met a gentleman who would be happy to take over the work I have done for so long and I am hoping that at this year's conference we shall be getting a new Publications Officer. The gentleman's name is Rob Edwards.

Since this might, therefore, be the last News & Views for which I am responsible, I must say a grateful THANK-YOU to all of the choirs who have supported me for so long with great stories and pictures of the wonderful work our choirs do.

Bob Swallow

It's going to be a very busy year I can see, but before I finish, I must mention our Conference which will be held on 4-6 April, and I really look forward to seeing you there.

Brenda Wilkinson



Music Review 2025

Music Review Officer - Liz Moulder



I do hope that during 2024, you found a composition that caught your attention which then encouraged you to explore new music for 2025. Having browsed through so much music in the past year, as well as speaking to musical directors, I thought I would introduce a potpourri of suggestions for this article, scanning all choral groups.

I will start with a rather beautiful unison arrangement of *I am Not There* with music by Eve Barsham. The words are anonymous but you may recognise them. With a flowing melodic line, subtle modulations and a supportive accompaniment this piece will allow you to further develop aspects of unison singing.

Many of my cool down sessions at the end of a rehearsal are focused on unison singing, often with a limited vocal range, allowing my choir members to hopefully relax their vocal folds, but at the same time, develop their aural skills as with help, they blend their voices skilfully together. Published by the Kassian Choral Series, this piece, which is suitable for many occasions, is available from Banks Music Publications in both printed and digital formats.

My second piece is for SATB, *My Hands I Lift To You*, composed by

Alan Bullard. Based on a traditional Celtic Blessing and a Native American Prayer, this was originally written to celebrate a wedding but it would be more than suitable as a concert piece. With an opening twenty bar unison melody, it skilfully changes key, whilst moving into close four-part harmony modulating again to reintroduce the opening melodic line, now sung in four-part harmony. A return to the original key sees the lower voices take up the melody accompanied by the upper voices. Finally, we return to all voices repeating the last four bars of the melody as the music gently fades away. The modulations, dynamics and changing voice parts helps to create an atmospheric piece supported with a gently flowing piano accompaniment throughout.

Moving onto an upper voices composition, *I love Paris*, arranged by Gwyn Arch, would I believe, delight audiences. Opportunity for solo work in the opening eight bars, its changing musical genres constructed around jazz idioms and detailed rhythmic features, would allow a choir to put their own performance interpretation into this arrangement. The melodic line is shared between all voices with the accompaniment supporting the jazzy feel of this arrangement. Both the Alan Bullard and this composition are published by Eboracum Choral Series.

Candles Are Burning was composed in the first decade of the twenty-

first century by Penny Blake and Harris Lowen. A very lively, triple time composition, this piece skips along with a catchy melody, keeping all choristers singing throughout the piece. A slow, A Cappella middle section allows the choristers to catch their breath before a reintroduction of the opening theme. Originally, I found a lower voice (TBB) arrangement and was drawn to it because it is so different to the standard lower voices repertoire, but further research revealed that it is also scored for SATB, SA and SSA. From Cypress Publishers this will certainly get your audience tapping their feet, albeit, hopefully quietly!

My final composition, *On The Mountain*, was written by American composer Jenny Lucy Cook for SATB. With the feel of an American folksong, this piece needs energy and the ability of all singers to maintain tight rhythmic accuracy whilst the MD keeps a strict tempo. Precision, excellent diction and vocal dexterity are required throughout the piece. This A Cappella arrangement comes with an optional snare drum accompaniment which feels almost military but adds to the excitement this piece conjures up. A young chamber choir would certainly enjoy the challenge of learning and performing this composition which was published in November 2024 by OUP.

Musical Jokes

I heard you lost your classical music CD. But don't worry, I've got your Bach.

Want to hear the joke about a staccato? -
Never mind - it's too short.

How many concertmasters does it take to change a light bulb?
Just one, but it takes four movements.

What was Beethoven's favourite fruit?
Ba-na-na-naaaaa.



When you read my report, we will be looking forward to the first signs of spring and the emergence of daffodils in gardens and along stretches of road verges. A wonderful time of year with new life emerging throughout nature. A time to plan the year and consider joining us at conference. I have been busy planning conference 2025 with enquiries beginning over six months ago. As you know this year, we will be visiting Leeds/Wakefield area with our conference based at the Holiday Inn by the same name on Junction 40 of the M1 motorway. As stated in my last report there are two Holiday Inns in Leeds so make sure you head for this one. I have a few amendments to report as you will see in the timeline proposed for the event.

Unfortunately, our President Ronald Corp is unable to present the Sunday morning seminar as planned and David Lawrence might have difficulty in filling the last seminar on Saturday. This has given me the opportunity of rethinking the layout. After discussion with my officer colleagues, we have divided the seminars in half.

David will be taking the two morning seminars on Saturday and as a new and very interesting addition to the conference Nicola Hunt will present the last seminar on Saturday and the one on Sunday morning. I am delighted to report that Mezzo-Soprano Nicola Hunt is delighted to have the opportunity of meeting all our delegates.

I have included a synopsis of both presenters Curriculum Vitae at the end of this report. I can assure you there will be plenty of opportunity to sing under her guidance. I am particularly interested in addressing comments made at last years Members Open Forum regarding opportunities to sing being included in our presenters' seminars. My choice of David Lawrence answers these comments added to his vast knowledge of choral composition and conducting technique. Nicola Hunt complements this theme with her knowledge of singing technique and protection of vocal equipment.

Liz Moulder is presenting our 'Come and Sing' presentation on the Friday afternoon including warmups and cool downs. The conference is designed to have plenty of singing opportunities with guidance from experts. You can be assured therefore of a comprehensive and varied presentation by all our speakers and an opportunity of enjoying the art of choral singing with like minded people.

Our Conference Concert will be presented by Leeds Male Voice Choir with their musical director Tim Knight and joined by invited choirs from the Yorkshire West Group of choirs. The concert will be held at the Riley-Smith Hall in Tadcaster. Tickets and coach transport to the event are included in the full conference package.

I have included the proposed timeline and two pages of booking forms within this publication. When at conference please refer to the timeline included in the delegate packs, and not in this publication, as the up to date and

**The Riley-Smith Hall
Tadcaster**



SEMINAR LEADERS



Nicola Hunt

Mezzo-Soprano Nicola Hunt was born in Liverpool, and began her musical journey

at the Junior RAM and Chetham's School of Music, continuing her undergraduate and postgraduate studies at the RNCM.

After graduation, Nicola toured internationally with Diva Opera, and as a respected singer on the oratorio and concert platform, has performed as a soloist with some of the UK's finest choirs and orchestras in venues such as The Sage, the Wigmore Hall, and The Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Hall.

A Vocal Health First Aider, Nicola delivers vocal coaching and workshops throughout the community, from national organisations and high-level choral societies, through to grass-roots community choirs and EYFS music, promoting positive singing and music-

making experiences for all. Nicola is Musical Director of several adult and children's choirs throughout the East Midlands.

Vocal Health Workshop Session Outline: Singing for life - a guide to healthy singing and vocal wellbeing: get the best out of your instrument at any time of life.

A dynamic session exploring practical skills to help singers spot and manage a range of vocal imbalances and situations for best singing and longevity. Warm-ups, cool-downs, rehearsal techniques, and vocal care create an understanding of good vocal health practise and the factors that can affect vocal wellbeing.



David Lawrence

David is one of the UK's most versatile conductors, working with orchestras, symphony choruses and national youth choirs. He has been nominated for a Gramophone Award for his conducting, awarded a prestigious ARAM by the Royal Academy of Music, and holds the Guinness World Record for conducting the UK's largest choir.

David's work has taken him to Singapore, Colombia, Canada, the United States, India, the United Arab Emirates, throughout Europe, and most often of all to Australia. His positive and engaging manner makes him a popular guest conductor, and he is an experienced and respected trainer of choral conductors. With particular experience in the field of contemporary music, David has prepared and conducted premiere performances by Per Nørgård, Pierre Boulez, Iannis Xenakis, Mauricio Kagel, Graham Fitkin, James Wood, Bob Chilcott and others. As a guest chorusmaster of the Netherlands Radio Choir he has worked with many conductors such as Kenneth Montgomery, Frans Brüggen, and John Adams, and in 2002 working closely with Stockhausen he also conducted this exceptional choir in the German premiere of Scene II from his opera Sontag aus Licht.

David has conducted the London Philharmonic Choir, Hallé Choir, London Symphony Chorus, the CBSO Chorus for whom he is an Associate Conductor, and the national youth choirs of Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. He has directed large scale education projects

with the Orchestra of Welsh National Opera, the English Symphony Orchestra, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, and of course the CBSO.

In 2011 David conducted an award-winning performance of Beethoven's 9th Symphony with the Barrier Reef Orchestra in Queensland, and has conducted the CBSO in a massed performance of Carmina Burana, the Orchestra of Opera North with their Inspiration Choir, Vaughan William's Sea Symphony for Hull's City of Culture Festival and the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra and Huddersfield Choral Society for the BBC's Songs of Praise.

David is Choral Advisor to Sinfonia Viva with whom he has worked closely since 1998, Musical Director of the Harrogate Choral Society, and is Principal Conductor of the Basel Proms. He directs the London Symphony Orchestra's Community Chorus, and as Principal Conductor of Young Voices, a position he has held for 25 years, directs massed choirs in an annual series of concerts with some choirs incorporating more than 9,000 singers.



Reg'd. Charity No. 1014630

National Association of Choirs

Joining the Nation in Choral Singing

National Conference Booking Form 1 4-6 April 2025

Holiday Inn Leeds/Wakefield

Junction 40 M1 motorway. Queens Drive, Lupset, WF5 9BE

CONFERENCE COSTS

Full Conference Stay

The price quoted is

per person for the whole conference

There are no single room supplements

Price per person for whole conference includes admission to all lectures

two nights bed breakfast, evening meal, refreshments and free admission to Saturday evening concert.

per person £275

Cancellations two weeks before conference will incur a charge of 50% of the total fee payable.

Substitute guests will be welcome.

Day Delegates

Payment in full when booking (non-refundable)

Please circle requirements

Evening meal Saturday add £28.00

Concert ticket Saturday add £12.00

Friday Gala Dinner add £35.00

Day delegate fee including refreshments and lunch £60

Deposit of £70 with booking form. Balance by early February 2025

Please circle Room Type -

single double twin

Amount submitted £_____

Please return your completed forms and deposits to the address below

Payment method - tick the appropriate box

Paying by cheque

Cheques should be made payable to

The National Association of Choirs

Please return your completed forms and cheque

to the address below

Paying by BACS

You may pay by BACS

(please indicate BACS on booking form)

Pay to **National Association of Choirs**

Sort code 30 94 19 - Account no 30254060

Reference: Conference 2025

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

National Conference Booking Form 2 4-6 April 2025

Holiday Inn Leeds/Wakefield

Junction 40 M1 motorway. Queens Drive, Lupset, WF5 9BE



Reg'd. Charity No. 1014630

National Association of Choirs

Joining the Nation in Choral Singing

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

Guest 1

Title Mr/Mrs/Miss.....

First Name.....

Surname.....

Address.....

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

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

Email Address.....

Special Requirements

Diet [type].....

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

NAC group.....

Choir Name.....

Guest 2

Title Mr/Mrs/Miss.....

First Name.....

Surname.....

Address.....

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

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

Email Address.....

Special Requirements

Diet [type].....

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

NAC group.....

Choir Name.....

PLEASE PHOTOCOPY THIS FORM FOR MORE GUESTS IF REQUIRED

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

01283 569677 or 07939012458 cliveandpatlawton@btinternet.com



National Association of Choirs

Joining the Nation in Choral Singing

National Conference Timetable 4-6 April 2025
 Holiday Inn Hotel, Leeds/Wakefield, M1 Junction 40. Queen's Drive, Ossett WF5 9BE

Friday 4 April 2025

- 2.00 Delegates arrive, register at reception, and collect delegate pack.
- 3.00 National officers meeting.
- 4.15-5.30 Come and sing - Liz Moulder.
- 7.30 Delegates and guests assemble for dinner.
- 8.00 Gala dinner with wine.
- 9.30 After dinner entertainment.
- 12.00 Bar closes.

Saturday 5 April 2025

- 7.00 Access for trade stands to set up
- 7.30-9.30 Breakfast in main dining room
- 9.30-10.45. Seminar 1 David Lawrence
- 10.45-11.15 Coffee break and trade stand viewing
- 11.15-12.30 Seminar 2 David Lawrence
- 12.30-2.00 Lunch
- 2.00-3.15 Seminar 3 Nicola Hunt
- 3.15-onwards Coffee and trade stand viewing
- 5.00 Early evening meal (2 courses)
- 6.45 Coach leaves hotel for concert at Tadcaster
- 7.30 Concert at Riley-Smith Centre Tadcaster with invited choirs from area.
- 10.00 Approx Light refreshments provided on return to hotel.

Sunday 6 April 2025

- 7.00-9.30 Breakfast
 (For those delegates wishing to attend local places of worship, details and directions will be available at reception)
- 9.15-10.30 Seminar 4 Nicola Hunt
- 10.30-11.00 Coffee and trade stand viewing
- 11.00-11.30 Annual General Meeting
- 11.30-1.00 Members Open
- 1.00 Conference closes. (Lunch is available in the dining room at member's own expense)
- 1.00 National officers debrief meeting (guillotined after one hour)

Extra night's stay The Holiday Inn group offer reduced rates on a regular basis. For our delegates to obtain the best rates I advise you to book these online.

ISLE OF MAN

FESTIVAL OF CHOIRS 2025

REGISTRATIONS OPEN FOR THE 2025 ISLE OF MAN FESTIVAL OF CHOIRS

The Isle of Man have announced their eight Festival of Choirs, which will take place from Friday 10th until Sunday 12th October 2025.

From its inception in 2010 the Festival is recognised as a serious, yet friendly, musical competition of stature and attracts choirs from around the UK and Ireland and wherever choral singing is enjoyed and celebrated. The competition is held in the Villa Marina which is situated on Douglas Promenade. The centre piece is the Royal Hall, a state-of-the-art and spectacular auditorium that combines Edwardian grandeur and comfort with the latest sound and light system to create an amazing atmosphere. This venue is indeed pride of the community and a phenomenal place to sing and perform.

The weekend will begin on the Friday evening with the popular 'Welcome Evening' where choristers can meet, eat, drink, sing and get to know each other before the competition begins. Once again there will be an Open Class which welcomes a wide variety of musical styles. Other categories will include Ladies', Male and Mixed Voice choirs, with the first two in each section receiving prizes of £500 and £200 respectively.

Each choir will be called on to perform contrasting pieces of their own choice, one of which must be unaccompanied. Winners of each class go through to the final with the overall winning choir scooping an additional prize of £1,500 and the Choir of the Festival Trophy. A standalone ensemble competition will be held prior to the Choir of the Festival Final on Sunday.

There will also be ample opportunity for choristers and supporters to have great fun exploring the Isle of Man taking in some of the glorious countryside, rugged coastline, attractions and historical sites

Home to the Celts, Vikings and the oldest continuous parliament in the world, the Isle of Man is steeped in history and choirs can enjoy visiting the many Manx National Heritage sites dotted around the Island. 10,000 years of history presented as 'The Story of Mann' links medieval castles and ancient burial sites to a Viking longhouse and the largest water wheel in the world, Laxey Wheel - a model of Victorian engineering.

Geoff Corkish MBE, Choir Festival Director and Chorister said: 'Following our record festival in 2023, I am looking forward to personally welcoming choristers to the beautiful Isle of Man to enjoy the 2025 Festival of Choirs. Although competition remains at the heart of the Festival, it is aimed at supporting and nurturing the continuance of choirs and choral groups. We also strive to include family and friends during the weekend to ensure that they too can enjoy the many unique aspects of our Island while others sing!'

Registration for the main competition is £50 per choir and £25 per ensemble entry. Choirs can enter online or they can download an entry form from the website www.festivalofchoirs.im. The closing date for entries is Monday 30th June 2025

For more information please contact Gary Corkhill on **07624 498773** or email: iomfestivalofchoirs@outlook.com

2023 Festival Winners

Welcome Evening

Laxey Wheel

Fabulous Female Voices

Castletown Harbour

Villa Marina, Douglas

visitisleofman.com

M Ds Workshop 2025

Music Review Officer - Liz Moulder

After the success of our first workshop for musical directors in 2024, we are delighted to welcome back Dr Edward-Rhys Harry to deliver our 2025 workshop on 5 October. This is a continuation of the NAC's new initiative, begun last year, in supporting our musical directors. Edward has many years of experience working with and mentoring choral conductors of all ages and experience and is known for his insightfulness and sensitive coaching, as well as his impish humour! For further information about Edward visit his website on

www.edwardrhysarry.com

This full day's workshop will be held at the Priory Centre, Stretton in the East Midlands, taking the opportunity to move our workshops around the country.

Easily accessible off the A38, north of Burton-on-Trent, it has excellent parking facilities and will be able to accommodate up to a hundred and fifty participants. The difference this year is that the focus will be on lower voice choirs who are currently well represented in the NAC membership.

The workshop is open to all musical directors and assistant directors from around the UK the only requisite being that your choir must be a member of the NAC. The choir will consist of three local lower voice choirs who have volunteered to participate. All directors will have the opportunity to work on traditional and new repertoire throughout the day. The conducting day might explore using the hand that isn't keeping a beat, developing gestures and musicality within the

beat patterns and developing ensemble through vowel and consonant work, breathing and shaping a phrase all through our conducting. It will vary for each conductor in order to further develop their own personal strengths. The programme and timings of the day, repertoire and areas to be covered will be further explained directly to participants. However, there will be welcoming tea/coffee on arrival and four sessions throughout the day with comfort breaks for drinks and lunch. Please bring your own packed lunch.

Costs for the workshop for those actively participating is £25. Official observer places are also available for those curious to understand how training and development takes place. These will cost £15.

To book a place or receive further information, please contact Liz Moulder on music.reviews@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk or 01773744377

VE Day 80th

Pete Carlyon - General Secretary NAC



Someone famous once said 'Wars are inevitable' and fighting still continues to this day all around the world. Thursday 8 May 2025 marks 80 years since the ending of WW2 in Europe and a national celebration of that cessation is being organised. Details of that celebration can be seen on the official website.

www.veday80.org.uk

The National Association of Choirs has accepted an invitation to be included in the celebration by helping to make our choirs aware of the opportunity to promote the singing of *I Vow To Thee My Country* at 9:30 on the evening of 8 May when other types of activity will also take place. The words and music for that song are available on the official VEDay80 website, mentioned above, and I am assured by the organiser that you may make as many copies of that as you wish.

We would love for your choir to be a part of the celebration in your area, wherever you are in the UK. The organisers suggest that your part in this could be as a choir, in an organised event, or as a small family and friends situation. The important thing is the taking part and those choirs that register their intention to join in will

later receive an impressive certificate that can be included on choir websites. The organisers will be maximising the celebration by encouraging TV, press, radio and using social media to spread the word leading up to the day and sharing images and recordings after the events. Choirs will be encouraged to inform their local news centres of what will take place and perhaps invite them to attend.

There are many ways in which your choir might join this celebration and benefit not only from the national pride of that occasion but also from the opportunity to make your locality aware of your ability to lead or join in such celebrations.

If your choir decides soon that you would like to take part in some way, the NAC is collecting details to pass on to

the national organisers and so please send me the following information. Your UK country, your county, your city/town/parish, the name of your choir, your contact name, the email of that contact and if your contribution will be a public event or a more private effort. Whilst joining the celebrations, why not consider the advantages this might have for your choir? Consider these possible scenarios:

Gain more members. If your choir rehearses on a Thursday evening (or you arrange to change it to Thursday just for this occasion), you decide to invite the public to your rehearsal (invite families even if you are a male voice choir), letting it be known that you will be including some suitable songs that all can join in and that you will end the evening with *I Vow To Thee My Country* as part of the national celebration. (They will have heard all about it on the lead up to the occasion). There is a good chance that some of those who visit will wish to come back to sing with the choir again.

Make use of the event to be better known in your area. Your choir might exist in a city or in a quiet village but this is your chance to approach the local council or parish council to ask what their plans might be. You might offer to provide choral support for the occasion or, if you are able and willing, suggest that you intend to organise something and that you would love the council to be a part of it. This is another way of



getting your choir better known in your area. It also widens your audience profile.

Use the local TV and radio. The national organiser will be putting out press releases and will provide information for you to send out (once you have registered your intention). Invite the TV or radio to visit you in advance to find out your plans and make them welcome to your event on 8 May.

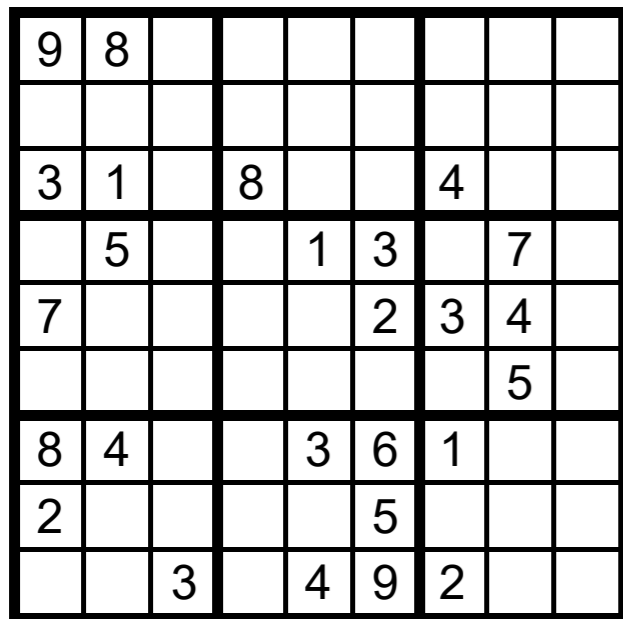
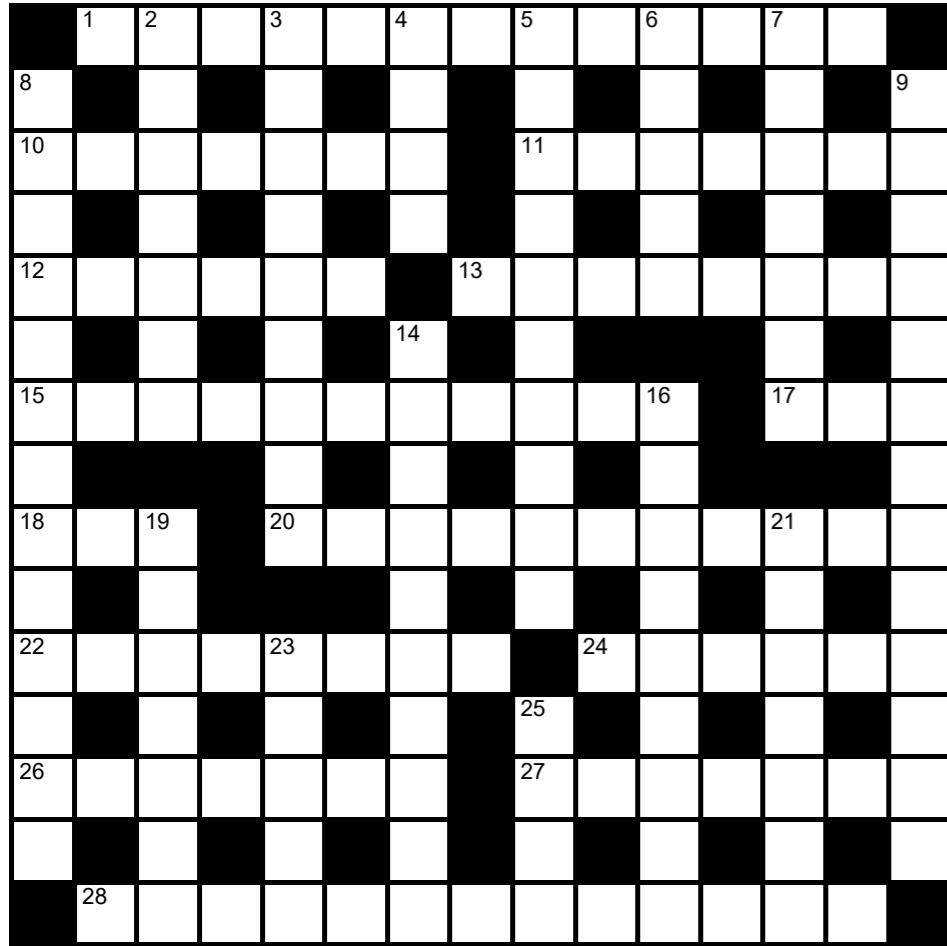
Local press and social media. Local newspapers are always looking for items to fill the pages so get your choir's name and photograph out there. Pre-plan some text that you might hand them and also a couple of recent photographs that you give to them with

the necessary permission. Do you use the NAC Facebook pages? Make use of that facility to put information out there! Let other choirs know what you are doing and, in that way, you share ideas, helping other choirs and getting ideas from them.

Keep Calm and Keep Singing. The pandemic laid the foundation for many repercussions that have lasted years and there are still choirs struggling to hold onto their existence though lack of numbers. This event offers the opportunity to redress that problem so some make something of it. Make union jack flags to wave, offer tea and sandwiches, think outside the box, but grab new members and keep your choir healthy.



PUZZLE PAGE



Across

- 1 Storm blows from Newcastle (13)
- 10 Ophthalmologist fall (3-4)
- 11 Editor (7)
- 12 No ears make a hash of understanding (6)
- 13 Hampers (8)
- 15 Acute fever (11)
- 17 Deer (3)
- 18 A snowman walks in it (3)
- 20 Gladstone travelling (11)
- 22 Surgery to restore to health (8)
- 24 Jacket for a nerd (6)
- 26 Not nothing (3-4)
- 27 Scottish historian (7)
- 28 Hyperbole (13)

Down

- 2 Proper bowling (7)
- 3 type of plane (9)
- 4 Catch sight (4)
- 5 Layers of jewels (10)
- 6 Young eel (5)
- 7 Adapted angel as pasta (7)
- 8 Look at a legal document (6,7)
- 9 Small hand weapon chaotically blackens rusks (5,8)
- 14 Near that place (10)
- 16 Might be a difficult problem (9)
- 19 Imperial Russian (7)
- 21 Rely on a rearrangement not to be late (5,2)
- 23 Gloomy and grim (5)
- 25 Northerner (4)

£5,000 For Local Causes

The Capricorn Singers – Lancashire North - Chrissie Mason

A 40th anniversary concert by the Fylde Coast Capricorn Singers have raised more than £5,000 for two local causes.

The concert, held at the Spanish Hall, Blackpool Winter Gardens, on 14 July, played to a packed audience, despite an unfortunate clash with the UEFA football final!

Guests included the Mayors of Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre, as well as the choir's 94-year-old founder Ray Buckley.

The Capricorn Singers were joined on stage by the Blackpool Male Voice Choir, The Coasters Choir, Thornton Cleveleys Brass Band and the Lytham St Annes Shanty Crew, plus the acclaimed soloist soprano Jane Wilkinson.

Singer-songwriter Anna Shannon (BBC Radio Yorkshire Songwriter of the Year 2006), who penned the popular *Ready for the Shout* was in the audience to hear the massed choirs perform a rousing rendition of the song, to mark the RNLI's 200th anniversary.

The Capricorn Singers' musical director, Chrissie Mason, said: 'The concert was a triumphant evening and marked the culmination of a year's hard work, both in terms of planning and rehearsal time. However, it was well worth it as the feedback we have received from guests and audience members has been fantastic.'

Anna Shannon said: 'The whole night was totally awesome!'



The concert, which included an impressive raffle, raised £2,800 for the Winter Gardens Restoration Fund and more than £2,200 for the RNLI Blackpool.

Chrissie said: 'Our thanks go to all who purchased raffle tickets and programmes and to all our advertisers, donors and sponsors, all of whom have helped to contribute to this amazing total. Also to the Ardonagh Community Trust for their generous match funding of £500.'

The Capricorn Singers performed a varied repertoire, including music from the '80s, songs from the shows, rock and pop. Together with the combined choirs and brass band, they also performed a tribute to the RNLI and an emotional excerpt from *Les Miserables*.

The Capricorn Singers were voted runner-up in the 2023 Lancashire Choir of the Year, where they also picked up The People's Choice Award. They were also winners of the Ladies' Choir Class at Skipton Music Festival in 2023 and

2024 and winners of the Adult Choir Class at last year's Fleetwood Music and Arts Festival.

The choir has had four Musical Directors in its lifetime – founder Ray Buckley (1984 – 1997), David J Murphy (1997-2013), Joe Martin (2013-2015) and Chrissie Mason (2015-Present) – but only two accompanists - Jennifer Higginbottom (1984-2013) and Ian Whalley (2013-Present).

The choir has raised thousands of pounds for charity over the years, supporting Macmillan Cancer Support, the Rosemere Cancer Foundation, Alder Hey Children's Hospital, Hug in a Bag Breast Cancer Charity, the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI), Trinity Hospice and more.

The Capricorn Singers offer a warm welcome to ladies of all ages and meet each Wednesday at St Andrew's Church in Cleveleys at 7.15.

Autumn rehearsals commence on 4 September.

For more information about The Capricorn Singers, visit <https://www.thecapricornsingers.org>

For further information, please contact: Chrissie Mason – 07734 081824 Email: capricornsingers@gmail.com

Choral Humour

How much to buy a singing ensemble?

You mean a choir?

Fine, how much to acquire a singing ensemble?

Why should we buy chickpeas to be part of our choir?

They could hummus a song!

A pony goes into a bar, and the bar tender asks him why the long face?

I didn't make it into the men's choir.

Well, you are a little horse.

To have your own copy of this page to work on go to

www.nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk

and look for the latest copy of News & Views then print the page. Easy!

[SOLUTIONS PAGE 30](#)

Choir Steam into December

Bestwood MV Choir – Midlands East - Peter Fletcher



The choir was delighted to provide the live music at Papplewick Pumping Station's Christmas Fair and Steam Event on Sunday 1 December. Under their Musical Director, Mirek Rus, with guest Accompanist, Sally Watson, and soloist, Colin Pursglove, the choir sang a range of Christmas carols in two sessions at 12.00 and 1.30.

The choir received an enthusiastic response from a large audience on the top floor of the Pump House, singing in time with the huge rocking steam beam. Unfortunately, after a number of years when Bestwood MVC have enjoyed performing at this wonderful event, it may have been the last

occasion that the Christmas Event will have taken place, as the Pumping Station looks to replace it with a new event from November next year.

However the future event develops, Bestwood MVC wishes it a great success and is grateful to have had the benefit of performing at such a wonderful and historic venue over a number of years



40th Anniversary Year

Barnstaple Ladies Choir – Devon - Lynne Beer

The choir has enjoyed an incredible 40th Anniversary Year with many concerts raising over £12,000 for charities as well as entertaining thousands of people.

As well as our Anniversary Concert at the Queen's Theatre in Barnstaple in April another highlight was our tour to Northern Ireland.

This came about as our Music Director, Lorraine Homewood, hails from Ballycastle and suggested taking the choir to visit her homeland. We flew from Exeter to Belfast City Airport where we had a coach arranged to transport us for the whole of the weekend.



Our first stop was to the Titanic Experience where we were given permission to sing at the Titanic Sign. A



crowd gathered to hear our rendition of *My Heart Will Go On*. It was very emotional singing the song associated with the film right where the Titanic had been built.

We then had a tour of Belfast before travelling to our hotel in Coleraine where we sampled the Guinness and of course had a singsong.

The following day we arrived at the Giants Causeway and were welcomed by the manager and shown to the stage

in the visitors centre where we performed several songs to an enthusiastic audience. Then we were guided to the Giants Causeway itself, the sun was shining, and we had a marvellous time wandering around the incredible rock formations.

In the evening we set off for the Town Hall at Ballymoney where we were greeted by the Ballymoney Male Voice Choir and enjoyed a fantastic concert to a packed auditorium. The finale was a

joint rendition of *You Raise Me Up* and *As Long As I Have Music* which was met with a standing ovation.

On Sunday we had a coach tour along the Antrim coast stopping at Ballycastle which had been Lorraine's hometown and where we had to have a photo of us all by the Ballycastle sign.

We travelled on to Banbridge to our next hotel and then on to the parish church to sing with the Portadown Male Voice Choir. The concert, in aid of



Water Drops Charity, was thoroughly enjoyed by the 600 capacity audience. They were entertained with beautiful choices of music from both choirs culminating in the joint finale of *Jesu*,

Joy of Man's Desiring and *The Lord Bless You and Keep You*. We were so proud to represent our town and meet amazing choristers of both Irish choirs, we had tremendous fun chatting to all of them and audience members. Everyone was so kind and generous. We hope to meet with both choirs again in the future.

A wonderful time was had by all, now we have to plan to follow that.

Founder Member Now Gone

Nelson Arion Male Voice Choir – Lancashire North - Allan Walker



After 137 years of making music the Nelson Arion Male Voice Choir held its last Concert on 29 January 2024.

The choir was formed by Joe Ingham with some 9 singers where they rehearsed in Eleanor Street Nelson. Over the years, numbers have varied tremendously. At its peak the choir had over 100 members which enabled it to produce magnificent sounds. Many of these can be heard on You Tube. In an attempt to introduce young blood into the choir The Arion Boys Choir was formed in the 1980s and proved successful for a number years. However, only three boys joined senior choir, but they did not last long due to age gap.

Since its original formation the choir has had a varied career under 13 Musical Directors, four of whom deserve special mention.

Over the years the choir won many prizes at competitions throughout UK. The first period was during the 1900s under Lawson Berry with a choir of 60

members. In 1913 they won five Trophies in 36 days including two on the same day. Having won at Hawarden they travelled to Bwlchgwyn and took first place there. They also had the honour of singing for King George V and Queen Mary on their visit to East Lancashire. After this their fortunes took a downturn.

The second period was from 1933 to 1952 under the baton of George Altham. He rebuilt the choir to a standard capable of taking on the might of Wales with its choirs of 120 men. With only 70 men he achieved a third memorable triumph at the Welsh National Eisteddfod at Denbigh.

The third period was in the 1980s and 90s under Frank Smith as conductor and John Taylor as accompanist. The 1980s saw the choir of some 80 members compete at the Llangollen International Festival and achieve five Firsts, three Seconds and a Third. During the same period the choir won BBC Choir of the Year Competition for the second time and became Overall Champions at the first Elgar Festival

held in Worcester Cathedral beating a number of choirs in the Mixed Voice and Ladies classes. Frank retired in 2017 after having been with the choir for 60 years of which he was its Conductor for 50 years. During this period the choir toured extensively to countries such as Canada, Germany, Hungary, Ireland and many more.

The fourth period started in 2017 with Julie Townson. She brought a new dimension to the choir repertoire. Rehearsals were more relaxed but as public tastes changed so did Julie's choice of music for our concerts, retaining many of the choir's old favourites.

Over the past seven years, however, there was a steady reduction in numbers and the onset of Covid meant the real beginning of the choir's decline. After Covid, current members agreed that they would continue to come together on a Monday evening just to make music and enjoy the fellowship.

Sadly numbers reached the stage where it became unviable to carry on and in January 2024 it was decided to put away our music and end an era of music making. Although there were 12 registered members, the average turnout in 2022 and 2023 were 9 members: the same as 1887. Déjà vu.

The spirit of the choir still lives on as some members joined the Colne Orpheus Glee Union, friendly rivals since 1887. Both choirs were founder members of the National Association of Choirs founded in 1920 at Todmorden, Lancashire.

New Accompanist

Mendip Male Voice Choir – South West - John Kendall



After almost 10 years, Mendip Male Voice Choir's highly respected and much-admired accompanist Phillip Evry has decided to retire.

Phillip joined the choir in January 2015 and quickly struck up a strong rapport with all sections. His mastery of the piano, sympathetic playing in rehearsal and performance made him a greatly valued member of the choir's musical team. Phillip was educated at the Royal Academy of Music and retired as Deputy Director of Music at the Arts Educational School, Tring, before moving to Somerset. He will be much missed by all choir members. We wish him well and hope to see him at future concerts.

Phillip's replacement is another gifted pianist. Dominic Irving studied composition and piano for four years at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance in London, graduating in 2009 with a 1st class BMus Honours degree. In 2011, he completed an MA at Bristol University.

From 2012-2019, Dominic was the Musician in Residence at Dauntsey's School, Devizes, where he taught the A-level composition syllabus and accompanied countless exams, recitals and recording sessions - all from his trusty iPad.

He is actively involved with other choirs and orchestras in the South West, and can occasionally be heard tinkling the ivories with the Pump Room Trio in Bath, playing concertos with local orchestras, or accompanying screenings of classic silent films.



Dominic is a published composer, with his recent work including Hi-Tech Études, a two-volume set of modern piano compositions aimed at young players.

Dominic has already become a valued member of the Mendip Male Voice Choir team, and we look forward to our

first concert with him in our forthcoming Christmas season.

Mendip Male Voice Choir was formed as the Timsbury Male Voice Choir in 1919, drawing in men from the Somerset coal-mining community centred on the village. The choir has continued to grow since then, even though coal mining ended around 50 years ago. The choir became a registered charity some years ago to help to raise thousands of pounds for charities and good causes with a series of concerts throughout the year.

The choir currently has 65 members arranged in four sections. Kate Courage recently re-joined as Musical Director, taking over from Jamie Knights who directed the choir for 11 years. Kate was Jamie's predecessor and has the distinction of being the only musical director to have directed the choir twice. Kate studied Music and English Literature at University and has taught, directed, conducted and composed for many choirs, groups and schools, including twice conducting the Royal Albert Hall Schools Proms with a massed choir of 500 children singing two of her compositions.

For further information about Mendip Male Voice Choir please contact: PR officer: PR@mendipmen.co.uk, 07941 782956.



the under 20 internationals at Parc Eirias Colwyn Bay.

This month: December 2024 our new website has been launched and is up to date! There you can access via our

www.cormeibioncolwyn.co.uk

This features our area, concert events, recordings, films and photos, booking and membership details etc.

Like many choirs, the choir has waxed and waned over the years and has been reformed on a number of occasions, the most recent reformation being in November 1972. The choir was suspended for part of the First World War and the Second world war.

However by 1947 the choir had been reformed and won the National Eisteddfod at Colwyn Bay in 1947. Colwyn won in Cardigan in 1976, Caernarfon 1979 and Porthmadog in 1987. The choir has toured Ireland extensively and has also won the male voice competitions in Cork and Pan Celtic festivals in Derry and Carlow, also in the Isle of Man. We were placed 3rd in the Male Voice Choir competition at the Llangollen International Music Festival. Tours further afield include Spain twice, Germany twice, Malta, Canada twice and Belgium.

We have 60 choir members, well balanced between sections and so far, we expect three new members in 2025. In 2024 we hosted three choirs: the

New Mill Male Voice Choir, where our accompanist Anne Leavitt was MD plus one from Iceland and the Kor Ost from Norway, a mixed choir drawn from a range of small towns in eastern Norway. See picture of Colwyn with Kor Ost. We also enjoyed an afterglow with them at a local hotel. Colwyn also paid a return visit to Heaton Chapel Stockport to sing with the Werneth concert band, a friendship that has lasted over 20 years.

For 2025, we have St David's day concerts in March a tour of west of Ireland including Dingle Tralee and Athenry. Concert and charity organisers are arranging with us a series of concerts between April and October to coincide with the main holiday season. In June we will be hosting a youth choir from Illinois and a tour group, both from USA and we will travel to Wirksworth, Derbyshire for a charity concert.

To discuss possible future concerts and events contact Charles Cooksley charles@colwyn.plus.com.

Rehearsals are every Wednesday 7.30 to 9.15 except August.

We will be pleased to welcome visitors at our rehearsals. Please contact me in advance in case we are away on concert commitments.

Our address is Old Colwyn Community

MUSICAL QUIZ

- 1 - Who is the composer for the musical Cats?
- 2 - *Toot Sweets* is a song from which musical?
- 3 - *'Who will buy* is a song from which 1968 musical?
- 4 - What is the girl gang called in the musical Grease?
- 5 - The Magical Mystery Tour is a 1967 musical based on which band?
- 6 - *Step In Time* is a song from which musical?
- 7 - Which is the largest West End theatre?
- 8 - *One Hand. One Heart* is from which 1961 musical?
- 9 - *Ya Got Trouble* is a song from which 1962 musical?
- 10 - Which Musical debuted in Paris in September 1980?

Answers on page 27

Reflections And Memories

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

The end of the year is a time for Christmas reflections and memories while at the same time looking ahead to future years. In all we have given 20 concerts in the year, though sadly epic storm Durragh meant that our concert at the RNLI Llandudno was cancelled. We started off the carol charity season with our performance at the Tree of Lights with a huge crowd accompanied by the Beulah brass band. This annual event attracts up to 1000 people outside on the Cayley promenade Rhos

on Sea and over the years has raised £460,000 for the St Davids hospice. Our other carol concerts were held at St Asaph cathedral for Tenovus and 3 in Colwyn Bay St Georges, St Joseph and St Johns. Earlier in the year gave charity concerts in Llandudno in aid of the Llandudno museum and for the St Johns church roof fund to help repair storm damage.

2024 was the 130th Anniversary of Cor Meibion Colwyn as the choir gave its

first concert on 8 June 1894 and in 1899 the choir sang for Queen Victoria at the old Crystal Palace. Over the years Colwyn has sung as the solo choir at a number of World Heritage venues including the Royal Albert Hall, Conwy Castle and Montserrat Abbey and the Palau de la Musica Catalana during our second tour of Catalunya Spain. We have sung at international rugby matches featuring Wales at the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff and in

A Lovely Evening

Minehead Male Voice Choir – South West – David Phipps



I knew from the moment of entering the church that we were in the safe hands of a choir that knew what they were doing. The church was almost full, the audience quietly chattering with a sense of pleasant anticipation; the choir was already in position, relaxed and immaculate in their blazers; there was quiet piano music to help set the tone; and an impressive spread of refreshments for later spoke of efficient organisation and support behind the scenes.

So, to the concert – and the choir did not disappoint. They opened with an appropriately rousing version of *Stout-hearted Men*, a piece that was sung with great confidence and show-cased their control, power and harmony. It immediately demonstrated one huge strength: they sing without music. This requires an enormous commitment of time and practice to learn and master their vast repertoire, but it pays huge dividends. With no need to look at the score all eyes are on the conductor, and the control that this allows lifts the performance of each piece.

A cruel (and unfair?) description of some male voice choirs used to be that they had two volumes: loud or very loud... That is certainly not the case at Minehead. There were some lovely

quiet moments, some very effective crescendos, and at appropriate times full-bodied singing that demonstrated their power, and always with total control – note-endings, for example, being precise.

The balance of voices was excellent throughout. The programme was very well planned – as above, this is a choir that knows how to do it. Each half started with a rousing piece and ended similarly. For the first half the *Anthem From Chess* was a great choice (for me taken a tad quickly so it felt slightly rushed, but as the final piece of the half it wouldn't want to drag, so fair enough) and to end the show *Les Mis* is a winner and the final chord of *Do You Hear The People Sing* was an absolute belter.

In between there were clever sections sometimes of paired pieces that changed the mood nicely. The choir had some fun with *Nothin' Like A Dame* and in the second half *Gendarmes*.

This sense of singing seriously but having fun with it was enhanced by the MC, Kerry Steele. Before giving a few details of the upcoming pieces, he entertained the audience with a joke or pretend notice. To say that the jokes were appropriately corny in no way detracts from their effect and the

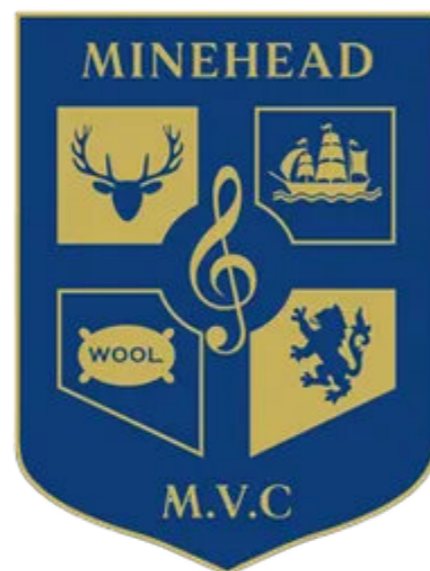
enjoyment of the audience!

There was also tremendous work from the accompanist Alan Hemsley. He alternated between piano, electric piano and organ, and always gave the choir the firm support the pieces required. Particularly noticeable were the lovely (and not easy!) piano parts in *I Believe*, *Softly As I Leave You*, and *You'll Never Walk Alone*.

Ultimately, success comes down to the conductor and when I say, 'The choir knows what it's doing' that really means 'the conductor.' Jackie Butterworth is hugely experienced and skilled, and over many years has forged the choir into such an effective group, clearly insisting on – and getting – the highest standards of singing. The work in planning and then rehearsing such concerts is immense. It was clear how, rightly, well regarded she is by all the choir.

It was a lovely evening of excellent, varied music, and the audience – standing at the end – thoroughly enjoyed it.

Minehead Male Voice Choir was formed in 2000 and rehearses every Monday evening at Alcombe Methodist Church between 7:15 and 9:30



An Amazing Musical Year

The St Helens Singers - North West - Helen Tierney



The St Helens Singers have had an amazing musical year, with new events and venues and another increase in membership.

Our return to rehearsals in January after the Christmas break was marked by the wonderful sight of nine new members. Since then, we have had steady interest from potential new members keen to try us out, and we finished 2024 with just under forty members. We can be justly proud of how far we have come since the days after the pandemic when we had less than half that number.

confidence to sing out and engage with the audience.

It is testament to the welcoming and friendly atmosphere evident in rehearsals and concerts that a number of our members have been with us for many years. Indeed, we are currently celebrating the 'Diamond Jubilee' of four of our men. In 2023, Tony Moran and John Appleton reached that milestone; in 2024 Wilf Fildes celebrated his 60 years; and this year Vint Brennan will join the Diamond Jubilee club. Each of them has made a significant contribution during their



Our repertoire has expanded greatly thanks to the vision of our Musical Director, Angela Turner, ably supported by our accompanist, Maria Fazakerley. We are singing more and more from memory, which gives us more

time with us – singing chorus and solo parts, serving as committee members and officers, and by helping with stage set-up and moving equipment. They also keep us entertained during rehearsals with their dry wit and good humour. The four men have recently joined forces to provide a spotlight act

under the guise of 'Take This' and have already gone down a storm with their rendition of *The pub with no beer*. The jubilees for Tony, John and Wilf were each marked with a dinner and presentation evening, and we look forward to celebrating with Vint later this year. During the celebration for Wilf, his son Anthony entertained the gathering with a performance of *I am a Pirate King* in tribute to his dad, who played that role numerous times in his Gilbert & Sullivan days.

In 2024 we sang at our local theatre as part of a tribute to Enid Pennington, who did so much to promote the arts in St Helens; we appeared at a local village gala in the summer and returned to the village in December to lead the Carols as the Christmas Tree lights were switched on. We participated in a Christmas Remembrance Service at the crematorium and staged four concerts to raise funds for local charities and church funds. In addition, we sang at three private events which are now firm fixtures on our calendar.

Sadly, in November, we heard that our former musical director, John Flood, had passed away. John was well-known throughout the Northwest region, having been involved with many choral and operatic groups. That a great number of our current and former members were able to attend his funeral shows how highly he was regarded by singers and musicians alike.

In 2025 we look forward to another busy year. We already have dates in the diary, and we are excited about building on the reputation we have of being a hard-working group, but which also has a lot of fun along the way. We welcome enquiries from anyone interested in joining us. For more information contact our secretary, Mrs Marie Holden, on 01744 612485, find us on social media, or visit www.thesthelensingers.com.

A Magical Highlight

Poynton Male Voice Choir - North West - David Allaby



The choir can look back on a memorable 90th anniversary year that has put a spring in their step as they look forward to the next decade. In a year of celebrations, the centrepiece was the choir's birthday concert featuring a thrilling guest performance from coloratura soprano Charlotte Hoather.

Charlotte, who has featured in leading roles with Scottish Opera, at New York's Metropolitan Opera, in Paris, and in concert with super star Rolando Villazon, made the trip from her London home back to her roots in Cheshire for what she described as 'a truly magical evening that I feel so blessed to have been a part of.' It was an extra special occasion for the choir's president, Maurice Hargreaves, who was marking 50 years with the choir as he continues to be an influential voice in the first tenor section. He spotted Charlotte's talent when she first took part in the Hazel Grove Music Festival, Stockport, as a 12-year-old. 'It was a joy to reconnect with someone who has supported and believed in my journey from such a young age', she said.

It was in the Spring of 1934 that the men of Hockley Methodist Church, Poynton, were invited to sing at a Men's Sunday service. A visitor was so impressed he invited them to sing at his Alderley Edge church, and, soon after, 36 men met to form Hockley Male Voice Choir with George Braddock as conductor.

The choir gave several concerts that year

and continued to do so until 1940 when the war intervened. When the choir resumed after the war new members were attracted from beyond the church and the singers became Poynton Male Voice Choir.

'I doubt those who got together to sing for that church service could have dreamt there would be a flourishing male voice choir here in Poynton 90 years later,' says Maurice, who succeeded Joe Tinsley as president. 'Joe was a local legend. In his 50-plus years with us he did every job, including being an incomparable concert compère. At rehearsals, long-serving choir librarian Jean Yarwood would sustain us with sweets. Wonderful generous characters, and many more, who have been vital to our 90-year story'.

Over the years the choir has taken part in music festivals with some success, including a prize-winning performance at the Hazel Grove festival in their celebration year. However, the main focus has always been on staging concerts, raising thousands for local charities.

Massed choir events have been among past highlights, including Manchester concerts at the Free Trade Hall, the Bridgewater Hall and with 1,000 voices in the G-Mex. Further afield, the choir travelled to Germany as part of an exchange with a Dortmund choir.

Research continues to show the benefits of singing in a choir as a boost to health and wellbeing. And it's not just for retirees. Recent studies point to singing's ability to revitalise and relieve pressures for those in the hard-working middle years. 'We really enjoy singing – together. That's it simply', says Maurice, 'and we look to encourage more younger men to discover this. It's always been a friendly crowd with a good social side and a popular Singing Waiters group who entertain at a variety of venues including care homes. Novices soon find their voice with support from experienced singers, accompanist Kath Buckley who followed her mum Joyce Deighton in the role, and musical director Eileen Rigg, all backed by the outstanding work of chairman, Donald Sykes and secretary, Rob Ayerst.'

The choir has had just six conductors in 90 years. Stanley Hadfield and David Mosley spanned more than 50 years and were much loved. Tom Steer, a well-known pianist on BBC TV and radio and soloist with the Northern Dance Orchestra, opened new doors when he took the baton. Celebrity musicians such as Hallé Orchestra leader Martin Milner and flautist George Galway, brother of James, were among guest performers at PMVC concerts. The choir also took part in the long-running radio show Sunday Half-Hour.

Concert collaborations with the Laurence Singers, St Peter's Junior Choir and the Gallery Choir – all from the Stockport

area - and, at Christmas, the Over Alderley Band, enriched this special year, topped off by the big birthday concert that everyone will treasure.

Musical director Eileen, with her arm in a sling after a recent accident, 'led the choir with unwavering dedication and spirit', commented Charlotte on her website. 'Her resilience and passion for music were palpable and served as a true inspiration to us all. Accompanying the choir and myself was the wonderfully talented Kath Buckley, whose expertise at the piano brought each piece to life with exquisite finesse'.

'Performing with the Poynton Male Voice Choir again was a nostalgic and fulfilling experience', she added. 'It was delightful to meet so many old friends and familiar faces with whom I've shared stages and



songs over the years. These moments of reconnection remind me why I cherish the performing arts so deeply – they bring people together, transcending time and space through the universal language of music'.

The wide-ranging programme included many of the choir's favourites including *Let There Be Light*, *Anthem* and *Those Magnificent Men In Their Flying Machines*. Charlotte, a previous 'Voice Of The Future' at the International Eisteddfod, Llangollen, and an Odin and Grand Metropolitan competition winner, delivered two breathtaking sets with great expression with flawless technique. From Lloyd Webber and Sondheim to Puccini's *Quando M'En Vo* (La Bohème) and Donizetti's *O Luce Di Quest'anima* and finally to Bernstein's show-stopping *Glitter and Be Gay* from Candide.

An unforgettable evening. An unforgettable year for the men of Poynton. And as Charlotte closed her appreciation of the occasion: 'Here's to many more musical milestones and shared successes in the future'.

Conductor Hands Over Baton

Tamar Valley Male Voice Choir - Cornwall - Sarah Evans



Tavistock's United Reformed Church was filled to the rafters with Christmas music on Friday 13 December, as the Tamar Valley Male Voice Choir bade a fond farewell to Director of Music, Rosemary Cole. Rosemary co-founded the choir in April 2006 with just nine singers and it has grown in numbers and reputation ever since. Several founder

members are still singing, while others were in the audience for this special occasion. The programme included arrangements and a composition for the choir by Rosemary herself, as well as familiar Christmas music.

The concert also included a carol for oboe and male voice choir by local oboist Leslie Mazur-Park, who will be taking up the baton in the New Year.

Compères Ken Topping and Ray Stenning kept up a good double-act of Christmas cracker jokes between them and encouraged full participation in the traditional carols by the sizeable audience.

Choir President and former BBC Spotlight presenter Justin Leigh gave a fitting tribute to Rosemary, not only as Director of TVMVC but also for her wider services to music in the South West over many decades, for which she

was awarded the BEM in 2018. She was previously a secondary school music teacher and a vocal coach and founded the mixed-voice Stanborough Chorus, which she conducted for 25 years.

Rosemary departed with a splendid bouquet from the choir, a gift from former choir members and the good wishes of all for a happy retirement.

The Tamar Valley Male Voice Choir returns to rehearsals on Tuesday 7 January 2025 at 7.30 at Callington Methodist Church. New members are always welcome, and further details can be obtained by phoning Geoff Gunning on 01752 895102, or via the choir's website:

www.tamarvalleymvc.com

I love to hear a choir. I love the humanity... to see the faces of real people devoting themselves to a piece of music. I like the teamwork. It makes me feel optimistic about the human race when I see them cooperating like that.

Paul McCartney

A Bit Of A Moan, Then The Good

The Glasgow Phoenix Choir - Scotland West- Anne Kay



Conductor and Director of Music – Cameron Murdoch

As it will be mid-February by the time we're all reading this issue, it may be a bit late to wish everyone a Happy New Year, but it seems appropriate, none-the-less. The second half of 2024 was slightly strange for us. We would normally have completed a short tour in the final weekend of September, known in the West of Scotland as THE SEPTEMBER WEEKEND. (We don't have special names for the others, which seems a bit weekend-ist. We largely ignore their existence!) Sadly, we were unable to tour this year due to the vastly rising prices of hotel accommodation caused by the holiday nature of this particular weekend – I suspect the rest of Scotland is jealous that we have a special holiday and thinks we should pay more, as a result. I think it's our equivalent of the August Bank Holiday, without an actual bank holiday. It's a bit weird, anyway.

We have also had fewer other concerts in this part of the year. I think it may be that we are still in a strange state following Covid lockdowns. Wherever we perform, we generally have good sized audiences, but it seems that many people wait for reassurance that events are not going to be cancelled before committing themselves to ticket purchase. I wonder if this is still affecting other choirs and hope we recover from it soon. The other thing that has impacted on our concerts, is that there are many changes going on in the structure of the Church of Scotland with closures, amalgamations,

and a state of not knowing what will be happening in the next few years. As a result, many of the venues we perform in have been reluctant to agree to host concerts as they are unsure of their position. This is a relatively new challenge for us and one we need to address in the short term.

Having had a bit of a moan, I can now tell you about the good things that have happened since August. In early September, the choir hosted an open rehearsal, a joint singing practice and social event. Both parts went very well and as a result, we now have: one new first soprano; three new first altos and one new second; and, in the male voices, one each new first and second tenor and one new first bass. They are all very welcome and some have even managed their first concerts with us following some hard work to be ready, especially as we, largely, perform 'off-copy'. The others will, no doubt, make their performing debuts in the second half of the season. The good news is, we have several other applications in the pipeline, though we would like to be greedy and find some more gents.



In December, we performed four amazing concerts. We started in a new venue for us, courtesy of one of our tenors, Graham Dunigan, singing in Strathblane Parish Church. The church was compact with a lovely acoustic and an excellent organ, which allowed our accompanist, Matthew McIlree, the opportunity to play a magnificent piece which required him to have five hands and three feet. Well, that's how it sounded. Truly wonderful! He played the same piece, *Postlude on Mendelssohn (Hark! The herald angels*

sing!) arranged by David Willcocks, at our next concert in the Freemasons Hall in Edinburgh, where the majestic organ sounded even more spectacular than the one in the church and the audience went wild.

Our BIG Christmas concert is the one we perform each year in Glasgow Royal Concert Hall. This year's guests were the Farmers Choir (Conductor Kate Picken) who have raised considerable funds to raise awareness of mental health issues in the farming community. As over the last few years, we were joined once again by Whitburn Band (Conductor Chris Shanks) one of the most successful brass bands in the UK. Lastly, we enjoyed the youthful voices of Glasgow CREATE Junior, Senior and Chamber Choirs (Conductor Claire O'Reilly). The range of music and sounds combined to produce a wonderful programme of Christmas music. The final concert in our series of Christmas events was performed in one of our favourite venues, Moncreiff Parish Church, East Kilbride, where we always receive the warmest of welcomes. In Glasgow and East Kilbride, where we had no organ, Matthew once again entertained both audiences with virtuoso piano performances of a jazzy arrangement of *O Christmas Tree* by Jonny May.

I'm sure that many people attending Christmas concerts enjoy the comfort of a familiar programme of festive music. Our audiences do, but are also pleased to hear new additions. This year, we worked very hard to add Kenneth Leighton's challenging version of *A Coventry Carol* to our repertoire and also enjoyed the addition of *O Radiant Dawn* by the Scottish composer James MacMillan and *People Look East* by Christopher Steel. And, while we thoroughly enjoyed singing them – oh, yes we did! Many of us struggled in differentiating John Gardner's *The holly and the ivy* from *Sans Day Carol*, a traditional Cornish piece - too many berries, too many mixed colours, too many things with the oddest rhymes.

Still, they went down very well with our audiences and we'll be better at them next year - maybe.

A final word to Cameron Murdoch, our hard-working conductor. Without you, we would not be the choir we are. Thank you for everything you do.



A harp is a nude piano.

20 Years Of Song

Côr Meibion Taf – Wales South - Rhodri Jones

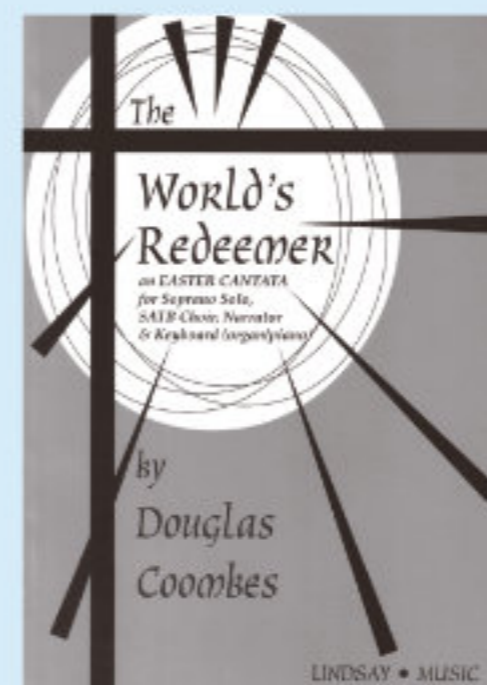


The choir was formed in 2004 and last year celebrated its 20th anniversary. Since its early days the choir has now grown to boast a membership of 80 voices with its members all living within the city of Cardiff and its environs. The choir has been under two batons since its formation. The first was Rob Nicholls, the choir's founder, and conductor until 2015 when Steffan Jones took control. A constant has been Lowri Guy, the accompanist since 2006, and she is held in high regard and respect by all members. Over the years the choir has

had many eisteddfodic successes at both local and national levels and many memorable trips. The 20th anniversary was celebrated at the Marriott Hotel in Cardiff where we were joined by many past members, partners and friends. It was also a pleasure to have our President Alwyn Humphries and our two Vice-Presidents Ieuan Davies and John Phillips amongst us for the evening.

Something different for EASTER ?

The World's Redeemer



an Easter Cantata by Douglas Coombes
for Narrator, Soprano solo, SATB Choir & Organ
This was commissioned by Pauli Presbyterian Church, Pennsylvania, USA and first performed at Easter 2003 in the USA by the commissioning body.
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This is a highly accessible longer work of oratorio proportions, and full of drama, telling the whole of the Easter story, using a variety of texts - including two by the composer (*Judas* and *Betrayed by a kiss*). The music is continuous, although the ten choral movements may be sung in isolation as anthems etc. Instead of sung recitative, the narrative is spoken, thus broadening the opportunities for performance. *The World's Redeemer* offers an alternative to the standard Easter repertoire in which the composer has fully exploited the full range of emotion in the expression of this poignant story.

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Singing For A Cause

Primrose Hospice Choir - Midlands South West - Lynne Taylor



In the heart of Worcestershire, the Primrose Hospice Choir stands as a beacon of hope and harmony, uniquely aligned with the Primrose Hospice and Family Support Centre. This choir, unlike many others, dedicates its efforts to fundraising for palliative care and bereavement support, making it a truly special ensemble.

A Unique Mission

The Primrose Hospice Choir is not just about singing; it's about singing for a cause. Our primary purpose is to raise funds for Primrose Hospice and Family Support Service, a palliative care facility that provides compassionate care and support to patients and bereavement support to families. Through concerts and performances in public spaces throughout the year, we sell tickets, take collections at concerts, hold raffles, and ensure that every note sung contributes to vital fundraising for the hospice.

A Legacy of Love

Next year marks a significant milestone for us as we celebrate the choir's 25th anniversary. We are currently working on a programme of events to make the most of this celebratory year. Over the past quarter-century, our choir has not only brought joy to countless audiences but has also raised substantial funds for the hospice. This achievement is a

testament to the dedication and passion of our members, who volunteer their time and voices for free.

The Sweet Sound of Success

We were delighted when The National Association of Choirs approached us to write this article. They believe that very few choirs exist solely for the purpose of supporting a cause like ours, making us stand out in the choral community.

Celebrating Milestones

As we look forward to our 25th anniversary, we reflect on the countless concerts, community events, and public performances that have defined our journey. We also remember the many choir members that have sadly passed away and the contribution they played to the success of the choir.

Each event is an opportunity to connect with our community, spread awareness about the hospice, and raise much-needed funds. Our concerts are not just performances; they are gatherings of support, love, and hope. We support the Hospice with their 'Lights of Love Christmas' reflections and the music we perform at these events brings solace to bereaved families.

The Heart of Primrose Hospice

Primrose Hospice is an independent charity that plays a crucial role in the Worcestershire community. It provides comprehensive care and support to patients with life-limiting illnesses and any families affected by bereavement. The hospice offers a range of services, including clinical support, counselling, and support groups, ensuring a holistic approach to care. Each year, Primrose Hospice touches the lives of over 1000 individuals, providing comfort and compassion during some of their most challenging times. The hospice relies heavily on community support, needing to raise over £1.95 million annually to continue its vital work. The local connection to the hospice is profound, with many people in the community having experienced its care first hand through loved ones.

David Burrell, Chief Executive Officer at Primrose Hospice and Family Support Centre said 'We are incredibly fortunate to have the unwavering support of the Primrose Hospice Choir, who have raised over £250,000 for us over the years. Their dedication to performing at our fundraising events and their passion for fundraising directly for the charity have made an enormous difference to our work, and we simply couldn't do what we do without them. We are deeply grateful for their ongoing commitment and the joy they bring to our community.'

Rod Laight, the Primrose Hospice Choir Patron commented 'The Primrose Choir is synonymous with the happiness and warm support that is always the daily aim at the Primrose Hospice and Family Support Centre in Bromsgrove. The commitment by all the talented singers is clear to see, attending the weekly practice sessions and singing at the many concerts around the county and organising the sale of tickets plus the many raffles too! In the process of raising funds the choir brings joy, happiness and solace to their many audiences. We thoroughly enjoy having the Primrose Hospice Choir as our

ambassadors in the heart of the community far and wide.' Over the course of the choir's history former Musical Director Kay Hadley was instrumental in establishing the choir and in recent years the baton has passed to the current Musical Director Ruth Henley who commented: 'Working with the Primrose Hospice Choir is a wonderful and fun experience. We perform a wide variety of music, and our rehearsals are filled with joy, laughter, not to mention the odd dud notes but always fun and an uplifting feeling. While some performances are quite sombre, especially when supporting families at funerals, and other reflective events, we also have a lot of fun, particularly when working with children at schools.

The variety in our musical repertoire and the different events we participate in make leading this choir a truly rewarding experience.'

Join Us in Our Journey

Like many choirs post-covid, we are now finding it challenging to attract new members and we are actively recruiting new members to join us. We also have a very strong and active committee who are working hard to secure grants and funds from local businesses and resources to ensure that the choir can live on for another 25 years at least! We are very mindful that not only does the choir raise funds for those in need, but for the choristers themselves, singing contributes to their

good mental health and provides a regular social activity to some who may otherwise feel lonely and isolated.

As we celebrate our 25th anniversary, we will continue to invite everyone to join us in our mission, whether that's attending our concerts, joining the choir, participating in our raffles, or simply spreading the word, this support makes a difference. Together, we can continue to provide vital support to the Primrose Hospice and ensure that every patient receives the care and compassion they deserve. We're aiming to make the next 25 years even more impactful, filled with music, love, and community spirit.

Midlands East Vocal Workshop

Rolls Royce Ladies Choir – Midlands East - Catherine Mears



On Sunday, 15 September, several ladies from our choir attended the Midlands East Group workshop led by the renowned David Lawrence. Choirs from across the region were represented, and we had a wonderful mix of voices spanning SATB.

The day began with a variety of engaging warm-ups, setting the stage for the next session. David introduced five distinct and diverse pieces, including his own arrangement of *You Raise Me Up*. We also explored the beautiful *Stars, Songs and Faces* arranged by Jonathan Adams; Elgars' *As Torrents in Summer*; Benjamin Britten's *O Waly Waly* and the whimsical *On the Ning Nang Nong*, words by Spike Milligan, music by Craig McLeish, which added some light hearted fun.

After lunch, four brave Musical Directors, Megan, Liz, Nicola and Helen, volunteered to conduct the group. This allowed David to provide valuable and constructive feedback. Each conductor showcased a unique style and David offered insightful suggestions for them to take back to their choirs. It is safe to

say that everyone, conductors and singers alike, walked away having learnt something new.

The day concluded with David's thoughts on 'What makes a good performance?' During this session we moved around whilst singing and David demonstrated how blending different sections could enhance the overall sound. Throughout the four sessions, David was supported by the accomplished accompanist Lorna Flear from Leaside Singers.

All in all, it was a fabulous day of singing, connecting with other choirs with of course, plenty of tea and biscuits. Our thanks go to everyone involved in the organisation and running of the event.

MUSICAL QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1 - Andrew Lloyd Webber
- 2 - Chitty Chitty Bang Bang
- 3 - Oliver
- 4 - Pink Ladies
- 5 - The Beatles

- 6 - Mary poppins
- 7 - Apollo Victoria Theatre
- 8 - West Side Story
- 9 - The Music Man
- 10 - Les Miserables

Music For Free

Southport Lyric Singers - Lancashire North - Dorothy Hughes

Sadly the Southport Lyric Singers which was founded in 1954 is having to fold. We are offering this music for FREE but require payment for P&P. We would also be grateful for a donation for the Local charity which we have supported for years - Queenscourt Hospice.

Please contact Dorothy Hughes dh.hughes40@gmail.com for more information.

SATB

Amazing Grace	21	Roberta	17	Only God Knows - Andrew Brade	37
Black & White Minstrels on Parade	7	Romberg Selection	27	Four Carols of Other Nations	30
Bobby Shafto	30	Somewhere, My Love	23	Sing, Christians, Sing - David Fanshawe	34
Chattanooga Choo-Choo	18	Spread a Little Happiness	18	Let Heaven and Nature Sing – Jay Althouse	39
Cycle Round Britain	15	Star Dust	17	Ladies' Music	
Drink to Me Only	70	Serenade	18	Wouldn't It Be Lovely - 3 part	24
Ellan Vanin	29	The Lark in the Clear Air	26	I Can Give You the Starlight – 3 part	30
Fly Me to the Moon	20	Those Lazy, Hazy Days of Summer	19	Heather Rose - 2 Part	34
For Me and My Gal	18	Travel in Style	14	Bali Ha'i - 2 part	21
For the Fallen	19	Uist Tramping Song	26	Cielito Lindo – 4 part SSAA	26
Go Down, Moses	30	Watching the Wheat	21	Love Changes Everything - 3 part	21
Harvest Song	29	Westering Home	18	Summertime - 3 part	24
I'll See You in My Dreams	29	What a Wonderful World	13	Good Night (Nos Da) – 2 part	18
I Write the Songs	16	What Would We Do Without Music	13	Suo-Gan (welsh Lullaby) – 2 part	18
Jerome Kern Selection	18	WW1 Selection	15	I'll Walk Beside You - 2 part	27
Looking High, High, High	26	Christmas Music		Somewhere a Voice is Calling – 3 part	19
Love is the Sweetest Thing	18	Sing a Joyous Glad Noel – Jay Althouse	31	Count Your Blessings – 2 part	12
Michael Row the Boat	28	What Have They Done to My Christmas?	12	I Love Paris - 3 part	35
Moonlight and Roses	26	Falan-Tiding (Tyrolese Carol)	40	'S Wonderful - 3 part	18
Mull of Kintyre	18	My Dancing Day – 5 English Carols	25	Ain't Misbehavin' - 2/3 part	16
Nice 'n' Easy (Perry Como)	19	Sleighbell Serenade	39	It Was a Lover and His Lass - 2 part	19
Night of Stars	33	Jingle Bells - Pierpoint arr. David Blackwell	39	Sleepy Lagoon (SSA)	18
Old Macdonald	17	Pictures of Christmas Time – Leslie Burgess	40	Bridge Over Troubled Water (SSA)	18
On a Clear Day	26	Whar a Beautiful Christmas - Ed Pickell	37		
Ose Shalom	20	Christmas Pudding - J. Willcocks	40		
Raindrops Keep Fallin'	27	Memories of Christmas - Teena Chinn	40		



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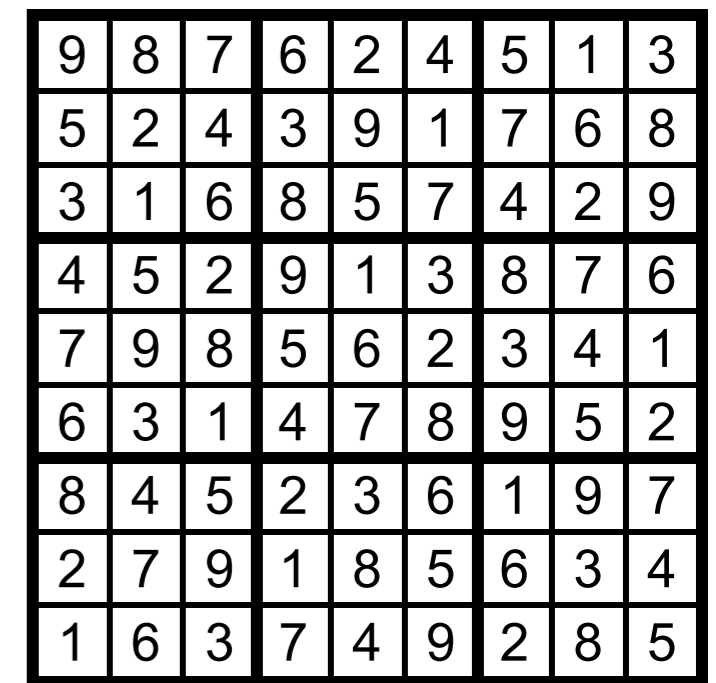
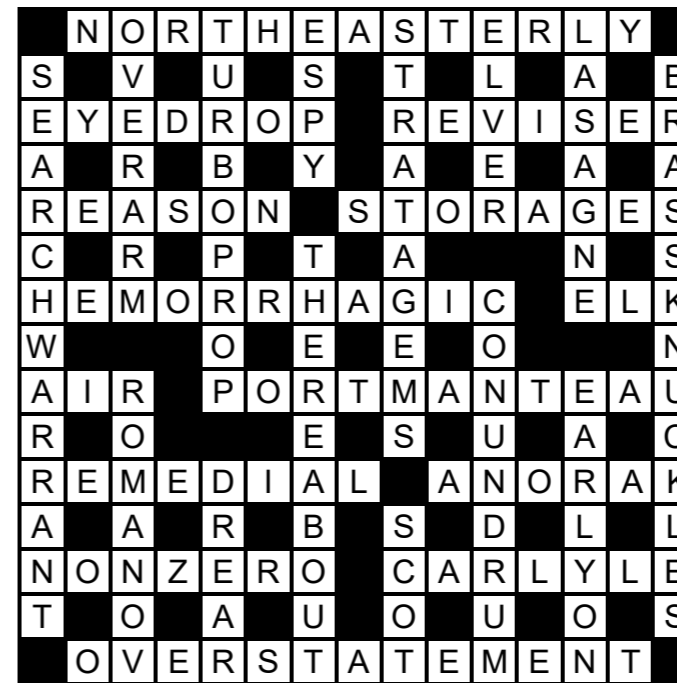
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The first thing is to send your article attached to (not in the body of) an email to

publications.officer@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk

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

Many of our contributors love to show their prowess by sending in wonderful finished articles with coloured headlines, five different fonts and many underlinings, italics and bold bits. Then, of course, I have to spend time taking them all out before I can set their article up the way you will see it in the magazine. I'm afraid I also have a thing about exclamation marks. I allow one per article. Any more I remove.

KEEP IT SIMPLE!

PHOTOGRAPHS

Send me pictures as high resolution .jpegs of 1mb or more, minimum 300 dpi.

HOUSE STYLE

- We use Calibri 10pt in News & Views. (If you don't have this, don't worry I can soon change the one you use.)
- Set your paragraphs to single space with no spacing before or after paragraphs.
- Start with the name of your choir.
- Then the NAC group your choir is in.
- Tell me who has written it.
- Write your article.
- Quotes use single speech marks (same key as @ but without the shift).
- Dates do not include st nd rd or th
- Abbreviations do not have full stops.
- Song titles are shown in italics.
- Please do not put photos in the text.
- Don't use am or pm in times.
- Unless the word 'choir' is part of a title it should NOT have a capital letter.
- Your choir is singular so 'the choir is' not 'the choir are'

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The Officers [®]

Ronald Corp SSC OBE - *President*

Brenda Wilkinson

Chairman, Membership Officer

Andante, 23 Mendip Close, Ashby de la Zouch,
Leicester LE65 1DZ
01530 411178

membership.officer@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk
chairman@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk

Clive Lawton

Conference Co-ordinator

20 Arthur's Court, Stretton,
Burton on Trent DE13 0GS
01283 569677

conference.coordinator@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk

Pete Carlyon

General Secretary, Webmaster

8 Lilac Grove, Trowbridge,
Wilts, BA14 0HB
07887 516335

general.secretary@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk
webmaster@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk

Bob Swallow

Publications Officer

8 Charles Avenue, Laceby,
Grimsby DN37 7HA
01472 500130

publications.officer@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk

Paul Gailiunas

Treasurer

25 Hedley Terrace, Gosforth,
Newcastle NE3 1DP
0191 285 0654

treasurer@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk

John Croft

Services Officer & Public Relations Officer

15 Glendale, The Bayle,
Folkestone, Kent CT20 1SH
01303 240345

services.officer@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk
pro@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk

Liz Moulder

Music Review Officer

6 Abbey Crescent, Ripley,
Derbyshire DE5 3TP
01773 744377

music.reviews@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk

Vice Presidents

Bob Barratt - *Music Publisher*

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