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Autumn 2010

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Chairman's Chat



The days are starting to draw in now – we are into September as I write, and the next thing to think about is inevitably Christmas! The tinsel and baubles are appearing in the shops, and I guess

it will not be long before the voice of Slade is heard among the merry jingle of the cash-tills... Oh dear, wherever has this year gone?

One of the 'perks' of being Chairman of the NAC is that I get to see the upcoming edition of News & Views before anybody else. I have just had a read through all the articles, and there are some fascinating bits of information. There almost seems to be a co-ordinating link between some of the choirs and our General Secretary, and that is steam trains. I noticed that one of James' interests is steam trains (one of mine too, but that's another story), and a few pages earlier there is a wonderful photo of that grand old A4 Pacific engine Mallard, which was designed by Sir Nigel Gresley and visited by Gresley MVC.

Choirs travel around a good deal more than they ever used to, and of course the choir committees need help and advice when it comes to arranging tours, whether in this country or abroad. Luckily we have contacts with reputable tour companies, and as always I would urge you to contact them and see what assistance they can provide for you. Our advertisers are there for you - our Public Relations Officer, Richard Bradley, and James Ferrabee, as Webmaster work very hard to attract new advertisers, and to get good deals for our member choirs from firms who may be new to the kind of audience we provide for them.

Recently I was on holiday around Scotland, and was struck by comments from one tour guide as to how many people actually live in Scotland, and where they were mainly situated. It is hardly surprising that most people seem to live in and around Edinburgh and Glasgow. The Highlands, where we were at the time, are quite sparsely populated. This makes sense when you look at the map of the two Scottish Groups and realise that the member choir which is furthest north is from Banchory and we have no other choirs in the whole of the north of Scotland, so I am very glad to see that we have two contributions in this edition from

Scottish choirs, and of course we have some faithful attendees from East Fife MVC at Conference each year.

From the other end of the world comes our regular contribution from Peter Marshall and Sydney Male Choir. They are very busy people, as you will read. Also giving a flavour of exotic lands far away is the Alliouagana Chorale, invoking the sights and sounds of Montserrat, in the Caribbean. We do get around.

I do hope you are enjoying putting together events for the 123sing! Weekend on 1-3 October, and I look forward to reading about them both in News & Views next time, and of course on our website. Are you making full use of the NAC website's capabilities? Do have a roam round (using your member log-in details - available from James Ferrabee) and make sure you are aware of all the various links to other organisations. You can get sheet music at a 10% discount, help with making a recording of your choir, options for ticket printing for your concerts, a new uniform for your choir members, staging for concerts, insurance at a very competitive rate, and many other things. Although the NAC does not endorse any products advertised either on the website or in our publications, and recommends that you make your own enquiries before entering into contracts, we are happy to make our member choirs aware of what is 'out there' and can be extremely useful to you.

Do have a wonderful autumn and - dare I say - a wonderful Christmas and a peaceful and happy New Year.

Regards and best wishes

Celia Johns

From the President

My Choir, Gresley MVC, had a great weekend in the Scarborough area with concerts in two of the local chapels close by.



Our return journey was via York to sing in the National Railway Museum alongside of the Mallard steam locomotive designed by Sir Nigel Gresley born locally to Swadlincote. Our Boys' Choir joined us and sang to start the afternoon concert which was well received by a large audience.

Jan and I attended two concerts locally one at Ibstock by the Coalville MVC and the second one at Eastwood with the Eastwood Collieries' MVC and the

Snowdown Colliery MVC where we met some of the choir members when we visited them in Folkstone last year.

Our choir members paid tribute to one of our retired members, now in care due to illness. Jack and Joan Clamp celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary on 17 August. A stalwart baritone for over 30 years and a valued handyman for Gresley and the Boundary Singers, his ability with metal to make frames, music stands and trolleys for transporting equipment saving costs to the choirs never to be forgotten.

Eric Jackson

Change Of Date Of Issue Of Year Book

Around this time of year you will be expecting to receive the latest edition of the Year Book. This is to remind you of my decision, and its reasons, to change the time of its issue which I announced at the AGM in March.

Delving into the history of the Association, I haven't found any logic in the Year Book being issued in September (except to ease my workload around the year end), except maybe that the very first one was produced at that time. In many instances, when the Year Book comes out, it prompts many choirs to inform me that their correspondents have changed and this renders it immediately out of date.

My proposal to issue it in January seems better because I should have received all choir subs renewals together with up to date information, making the Year Book's details more relevant.

Brenda Wilkinson
Membership Officer

Notice to Choir Officers

You will receive mailing from the NAC on or after 11 November 2010 to include:

Membership Renewal
and
Insurance Renewal

Please note the 'no later than' dates.

**The City of Chester
Male Voice Choir**
Wales North/Cheshire West

This choir was founded in 1941 and for most of its existence has been known as the Cestrian Male Voice Choir. The name was changed in 1999 in order to be associated more closely with the city of its origin.

Her Grace the Duchess of Westminster is the Choir President and The Lord Mayor of Chester is the Vice-President.

Over the years the choir has built a formidable reputation as a concert choir, and performs in several concerts each year. The renowned Festival Concerts held in the spring and autumn of each year have been the main showcase for the choir, sharing the concert platform with many famous artistes from the world of opera and musical stage.

The first overseas tour of the choir took place in Prague in 1971 and since then the choir has performed in concerts in Germany, Holland, United States of America, France and Malta. The choir has also toured in the UK to Cornwall, South Wales and Scotland, having performed



in many great concert halls including the Royal Albert Hall and Manchester Free Trade Hall, as well as having sung in many great cathedrals including Cologne, Notre Dame and Rheims as well as Chester, Liverpool, St David's and many more in this country.

With its motto, 'We Sing to Serve,' the choir has raised many thousands of pounds for charitable and other good causes. The choir has a varied repertoire ranging from religious to secular, traditional to modern and classical to popular, and has had the great pleasure of singing in the

presence of Her Majesty the Queen, and other members of the Royal Family on more than one occasion. We sang at the Shrewsbury Flower Show in August with many other concerts throughout the year. In 2011 the choir celebrate its 70th year with many activities including a dinner at a local hotel, and joint concerts with other choirs who are also celebrating 70 years.

More information can be viewed on our website www.chestermalevoice.com

Peter Hobson

The City of Chester MVC sent this to Crawford at publications.officer@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk

Music for Male Voice Choirs
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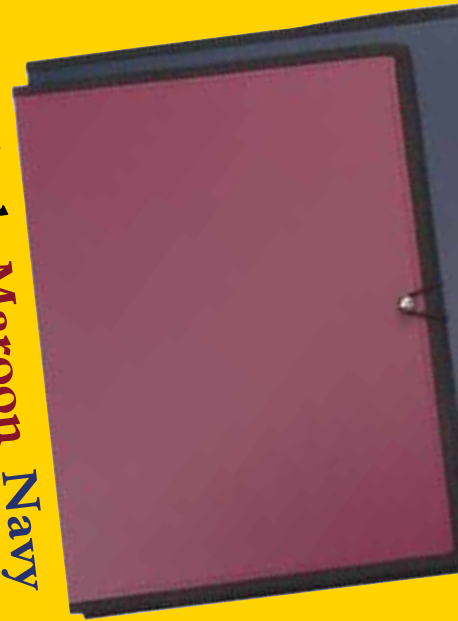
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Alliouagana Chorale Thames North

Montserrat is known as the Emerald Isle of the Caribbean and from its lush green mountains to the sandy beaches can be heard the sound of singing.



These people with Irish and African heritage have much to sing about as they celebrate resilience in the face of difficulty. This little gem is home to Air Studios Montserrat opened by former Beatles producer Sir George Martin and hosted a number of international recording artistes including Paul McCartney, Elton John, Stevie Wonder and Eric Clapton.

Montserrat has gained international recognition through the work of its renowned son of the soil - Alphonsus Cassell - famously known as the Mighty Arrow and his hit song *Hot Hot Hot*.

Following the volcanic crisis in 1995, many Montserratians moved to the United Kingdom. In 1999 several persons living in London, who formerly sang in the choral groups 'Voices' and 'Emerald Community Singers', came together to form the 'Alliouagana Singers' which reflected the all Montserratian membership. The group evolved from a strong desire to utilize as well as showcase Montserrat's musical talents. Yes indeed 'we have lost our homes but not our voices'.

Alliouagana (The Prickly Bush)

The name Alliouagana was assigned by the early Amerindian settlers of Montserrat, and is derived from the Carib term for 'prickly bush' that was found in abundance on the island.

Under the name Alliouagana Singers, we staged successful performances of gospel, contemporary, folksong, negro spiritual, Caribbean, African and traditional music in venues including Leicester, Birmingham, Slough, Acton, and Enfield.

2001 Caribbean Expo held at the Excel Centre, Docklands.

2002 The 'Reach out for Africa' musical concert hosted by Patti Boulaye at the Royal Albert Hall.

2003 We undertook a tour to Wales where we worked in conjunction with the Cwmbran Male Voice Choir and the Coersiegerdd Youth Choir to produce a memorable performance. While there, we also conducted a music workshop for children in one of the deprived areas of Merthyr Tydfil which was recorded for local television

2005 –2007 Performances in Tottenham, Dalston, Leyton, Leytonstone, Islington, Newham, Croydon, Milton Keynes, Coventry and Preston

2008 The membership base was then expanded to attract talents from other Caribbean islands as well as the continent of Africa. In the process the group adopted the name 'Alliouagana Chorale'.

We have featured in the London Borough of Enfield Community Festivals and the Newham Police Victim Support.

A significant part of our work is to raise the profile of Montserrat and to support development projects on the island. To this end, the group performed to a sold out audience in 2009 to raise funds in aid of the Roman Catholic Church building in Montserrat.

Simon Kwame Maty

Much Wenlock Male Voice Choir Midlands North

It is with great sadness that the Much Wenlock Male Voice Choir announces the death of Doug Edwards, Choir Secretary, on Friday 23 July.

Doug had been a supporter and patron of the choir for many years and then seven years ago took on the role of Choir Secretary. Since then, he has been our hardworking and very efficient Secretary and the primary point of contact with other choirs and the NAC. Although he could not be persuaded to be a chorister, he nevertheless attended choir practices almost without exception, his weekly announcements at half time keeping choristers fully in the picture with the latest developments and concert plans.

Doug was born in Much Wenlock in 1945, attended the Town's schools and spent all except six years of his life in or close to Much Wenlock. He was also actively

involved with other activities within the local community - the Town Youth Club, the Wenlock Players, both on and off the stage and the Wenlock Olympian Society. He was a very keen and long standing supporter of the 'Wolves' football team.

In 1998, Doug had a heart attack, which required a bypass operation and he made a good recovery, continuing to work part time in the management of a local glazing business. Whilst his health had deteriorated at the end of 2009, it was a great shock to his wife, Sue, and his many friends that he passed away so suddenly. He will be remembered with affection and for his enthusiasm and love of sport and music.

Lionel Gosden

Singchronicity Ladies Harmony Chorus Anglia

The choir was formed just under 2 years ago and so we are still finding our feet. At first there were only 13 of us, following a split from a larger group, so we were quite tentative and nervous being such a small group.

So something had to be done to increase our numbers. We decided to hold a 'Learn to Sing' course. We had a very good response to the course and lots of the ladies signed up to join the Chorus.

So after Christmas 2008 we began to build up our numbers and learn some new songs and develop our repertoire, under the direction of our Musical Director, John Armstrong, who helped us greatly to improve our technique. He promised he would stay for a year to get us going.

We decided at the start that we would be happy to perform as a chorus, but that we did not want to enter competitions, the feeling being that we wanted to sing for our own pleasure and for any group, club, or organisation who booked us.

Now, two years on, our numbers have increased and we are all good friends who really enjoy singing for pleasure. 01733 230758

Denise Meiklejohn, Secretary

'If it must be Richard, I prefer Wagner;
if it must be Strauss, I prefer Johann'
Anon

Rolls-Royce Ladies' Choir Midlands East

The R-R Ladies' Choir were thrilled to feature in the recent BBC2 documentary 'How To Build A Jumbo Jet Engine' televised on Sunday 4 July.



Paul King, who was the producer, and a cameraman came along on a Monday evening in April and filmed the Ladies' Choir, the Male Voice Choir, the Brass Band and also the Ceroc Dancers who all meet every Monday evening at the R-R Leisure Association complex. Since December 2009 over 70 hours of filming has taken place at various R-R sites and around Derby. This all had to be condensed into the 1 hour show. The Choir was filmed in the Nightingale Hall as if they were performing at a concert; a number of ladies in the choir were also interviewed, particularly those who work or who have worked at R-R. Mary Hirst who has been singing with the choir since it began in 1958 had

a starring role, as did Cath Taylor who has been with the choir for 12 years and has worked at R-R for over 25 years. The show has been heralded a great success and attracted over 2.6 million viewers.

In addition to this 'The Nightingales' (8 of the choir members plus John Lord as the pianist) entered Ram FM's Fame Factor in early May (This is Derby's version of Britain's Got Talent). From over 100 entrants 'The Nightingales' have progressed from the audition stage, through Boot Camp, the semi-finals and onto the Final, which took place on Friday 30 July in the Great Hall of the Assembly Rooms. The Nightingales sang *Memory* from the musical 'Cats' and came second. The winner was also a singer, Marcia Lynette Campbell; her prize is to appear in the Pantomime also to be held at the Assembly Rooms through December and January. As runners up 'The Nightingales' may be called upon to sing at other events staged in Derby by the 'Derby Live' team.

The Rolls-Royce Ladies' Choir will be holding an open evening in September in order for any interested new ladies to come and have a chat and a listen to the choir singing. There are about 25 current members and

they would like to increase their numbers to over 30. Anyone interested should contact Cath Taylor on 01332 341042.

Cath Taylor

Choir

It was visitor's day at the lunatic asylum. All the inmates were standing in the courtyard singing *Ave Maria* and singing it beautifully. Oddly, each of them was holding a red apple in one hand and tapped it rhythmically with a pencil.

A visitor listened in wonderment to the performance and then approached the choir. 'I am a retired choir director,' he said. 'This is one of the best choirs I have ever heard.'

'Yes, I'm very proud of them,' said the conductor.

'You should take them on tour,' said the visitor, 'what are they called?'

'Surely that's obvious,' replied the conductor. 'They are the Moron Tapanapple Choir.'

If you think this joke is in bad taste please write to complain to

publications.officer@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk

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Music

I am grateful to Faber Music for the large number of scores they have sent for review.



The first are from their Choir Rocks series and are arrangements of pop songs by well known artists. All the arrangements are by General Editor Ben Parry, two Amy Winehouse

numbers, *Rehab* and *Valerie*; two pieces by Welsh pop artist, Duffy, *Warwick Avenue*, a beautiful slow ballad and *Mercy*, a lively blues number; *Patience* and *Greatest Day* sung by Take That; *Somebody to Love*, Queen; *The Promise*, Girls Aloud; *The Climb*, Cyrus and McElderry and *Haven't Met You Yet*, Michael Buble. These are written for soprano and alto with an optional baritone line and have a simple piano/keyboard accompaniment and practice backing tracks are also available.

The above mentioned could be of interest to our youth choir members or choirs wishing to add more up to date pieces to their repertoire.

The Faber Choral Signature Series has four new pieces by Margaret Rizza, formerly known as opera singer Margaret Lansky. They are; *Veni Jesu, O Sapientia, Ave Maria* and, *Mary Slept*. I liked the dissonant opening to *Mary Slept* followed by unison, tenor and bass responses. The words were taken from a book by Thomas Merton, a Trappist monk, and are beautifully set to music by this highly acclaimed composer.

Veni Jesu with its monastic style section to open the piece was impressive as was the rest of the music. There is separate cello part which may be downloaded. These are scored for SATB.

Boosey & Hawkes have published the latest work from Karl Jenkins entitled *Gloria*.

This work was commissioned for Don Munro, founder of Concerts from Scratch and The Really Big Chorus. The work was first performed in the Royal Albert Hall in July. It is scored for solo voice, orchestra and chorus in five movements. *Gloria in Excelsis, Laudamus Te, Tehillim-Psalm 150,*

I'll Make Music and *Domine Deus*. The third movement is unusual as it can be sung in Hebrew.

Faber have published four books of a Choral World Tour series. SATB by Mike Brewer. *Pokarekare, Three Songs from Asia and the Pacific; El Cascabel, Three Songs from the Americas; Oalla Mohololi, Three Songs from Africa; Korobushka, Three Songs from Europe*.

I recently attended The Choral Voice a joint ABCD (Association of British Choral Directors) and BVA (British Voice Association) course. It was an interesting day, perhaps more suited to those starting their career as a musical director/singer than those with a lot of experience in these fields.

The first seminar, directed by Stuart Barr, was titled, Inside the Voice and its Care. This dealt with the more physical side of singing. This was followed by Mike Brewer & Stuart Barr with Warm Up, Theory and Practice. Mary King, a well known soloist, dealt with bringing soloist techniques to enhance a choir's performance.

Brain patterns and the effect music had on the brain were explored by Professor Graham Welsh, a man obviously very knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the subject matter. Two other sessions by Mike Brewer and Stuart Barr were about Idiomatic Choral Sound (making the sound suit the music) and The Sound in your Hand. How the actions of the conductor affect the choir's performance.

The shortest session of the day was my favourite seminar. Jo McNally talked of fantasy or reality, preparation and repertoire. She is obviously a hands on and skilled musical director and spoke from experience with down to earth advice.

An interesting side topic which may interest anyone experiencing difficulty, through medical condition, with voice production are the new voice clinics being set up by the NHS. In Huddersfield we have such a clinic and a friend of mine has recently been a patient. He was given a detailed examination by an ENT specialist and vocal coaching by an opera singer to try and correct points brought to light by the specialist.

There is a list of such centres on the BVA web site.

www.britishvoiceassociation.org.uk

Festivals

Rothwell Competitive Festival Music 23, 25 and 26 March 2011

Copies of the syllabus now available

john@mcgrory1950.fsnet.co.uk

or 0113 283 2960 to have one posted to you.

SPREAD THE NEWS

The International Federation for Choral Music (IFCM), in cooperation with Europa Cantat and Jeunesses Musicales International, announces the First International Competition for Choral Composition 'A Choral Work for Peace' with the aim of promoting the creation and the wide distribution of a new choral repertoire and, above all, of promoting peace among the people of this world with the help of music.

Inform the composers you know. Announce this competition on your websites and publications. Thank you for your support.

Andrea Angelini
Managing Editor of ICB.

The International Choral Bulletin of IFCM

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Isle of Man Festival of Choirs 15 - 17 October 2010

Entries have come from West and North Yorkshire, Northern and Southern Ireland, Lancashire, Norfolk and Essex. Six ladies choirs will be taking part together with five mixed and three male voice choirs. A total of 320 people will be travelling to the Island for the occasion.

Eric Cooper

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Cannock Ex-Servicemen's Club Male Voice Choir. Midlands West

We have had a most successful year with many enjoyable concerts, of a varied nature. Our Musical Director, Dorothy Bates ALCM, has kept the choir's interest at a peak with the excellent choice of music. She has introduced some modern pieces while still retaining some traditional songs.

Everything started to fall into place in December which is the busiest month for all choirs, I am sure. We were invited to sing at Shugborough Hall for four nights. The hall was the home of the Earl of Lichfield. Patrick Lichfield, who passed away some years ago, was the Royal Photographer. The estate is now run by the National Trust in association with Staffordshire County Council. Each year in December the hall is lit by hundreds of candles and is open to the public. It is a most magical sight and well worth a visit. You must book early as it is soon fully booked.

Other concerts in December were for our local hospices which we try to support as much as possible. A local Rotary Club also asked us to sing for them and it was well received.

Being associated with the army we were invited to sing in the trenches at Whittington Barracks where they have a mock up of the world war trenches. Brrr! It was cold but fun.

At the end of January we had our annual dinner at The Barns at Huntington. As usual it was a super event with choir members and wives in attendance. Apart from the food being first class, certain members of the choir entertained the gathering. The highlight was when Stan Tew did a very funny act with a fully grown ape, who turned out to be Dave Rimmer in costume. Our choir is able to produce individuals from the ranks to provide comedy and song, as well as the choral music; they are really versatile.

SOLENT MALE VOICE CHOIR PORTSMOUTH

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by December 2010, male or female.
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Brian6391@btinternet.com

Margaret Newman Musical Director
margaretnewman216@btinternet.com



March saw us in Macclesfield for a concert for charity at St Michaels and All Saints Church. We were singing on the same venue as the church based singers, 'SANDS'. They were exceptional, considering that there were only four in the group, but what lovely harmonies they produced.

Not all choirs are invited to a garden party by their MD but we were. On 12 June Dorothy invited us all to her house for an afternoon of relaxation and chat. The atmosphere was really lovely and the weather remained bright and sunny for the afternoon. Some £60 was raised for the choir while another £60 or so was raised for Katharine House Hospice.

It was indeed a great honour to be asked to sing at the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas on Armed Forces Day on 26 June. The weather was beautiful and the choir excelled themselves with their performances. Our compere Major (rtd) Paul Mulingani was a complete knock out with some very cheeky jokes which made the audience, and the choir, laugh a lot. The conductor, Peter Carey's, sigh at the end indicated a good performance; we all thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

On 5 December we have the privilege to be invited to sing as the guests arrive at the Lichfield Cathedral Fire Service Carol Service and are really looking forward to such a wonderful venue. The Cathedral is magnificent, with excellent acoustics.

On 18 September we shall be singing in an NAC concert at The Prince of Wales Theatre, Cannock. We shall be joined by Walsall Harmonic MVC, St Cecilia Singers and Five Ways Primary School Choir. Local professional singers, Nicky Moran and her husband, known as 'Eternity', will also be entertaining during the evening. Our President, Councilor Derek Davis OBE will be at the event. The President of NAC, Mr

Eric Jackson and his partner will also be present for the evening. Dorothy Bates ALCM as well as being our MD is also the Chairman of the West Midlands Group and will accompany our choir as usual.

With a few smaller concerts coming up in between times, we are preparing for our four December evenings at Shugborough Hall once again. If you decide to visit this lovely Victorian Christmas extravaganza, remember to wrap up well as most of the attractions are outside. It's well worth a visit.

We would like to appeal to any readers who would like to be a part of our choir, to contact our MD, Dorothy Bates. We are currently looking for an accompanist to ease the load on Dorothy and to give her more time to arrange and direct the music. Male voices are also required to boost the already excellent line up. For more information about the choir go to our website.

www.cannockexservicemenschoir.co.uk

Contact our Chairman
Geoff Thacker 01889 574 160

A P Hayward Asst Secretary

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Help me to present your article easily by following a few simple rules.

Here is a report from a fictional choir. The first part is the way it's best sent to me. Nothing flowery, just plain text. The House Style shows the way we like things to be.

House Style

- Use Calibri 10 pt to write your article.
- Set your paragraphs to single space.
- No spacing before or after paragraphs.
- Please give the name of your Choir.
- Please provide the name of your Group.
- Please say who is submitting the piece.
- Quotes use single quotation marks
- Dates do not use st, nd, rd or th.
- Abbreviations do not use full stops.
- Song titles are shown in italics.

Here is the basic text

Popington Magna Festival Chorus
Northern Group

Saturday 28 February 1998 saw the opening of the Popington Magna Arts Centre with a Gala Concert. The central feature of this concert was a performance of Carmina Burana by Carl Orff. The choir for this performance had been put together with singers from four local choirs: Popington Magna Male Voice Choir, The Popington Philharmonic, The Frank Roberts Singers and Morvin Ladies Choir. The North East Symphonia, under the baton of Evan Jenkins FTCL accompanied the Festival Chorus as well as providing some stirring items of its own.

The evening was so successful that it was felt that the Popington Magna Festival Chorus (PMFC) should not simply fade into the past. So it was that in 2000 when Andy Seward, MD of Popington Magna Male Voice Choir, retired he decided that there was a need locally for a SATB choir that would sing the kind of music that the local male voice and ladies' choirs sang.
Pauline Crawford

And here it is when we've set it up

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Pauline Crawford

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Gresley Male Voice Choir Midlands East

The Choir, now in its 106th year went on a weekend tour in early June to Scarborough and once again took part in the Filey Methodist Church Festival of Music.



On Friday evening we sang at a new venue, Westborough Methodist Chapel, Scarborough where we were made very welcome. The chapel had the outside appearance of a grand Romanesque theatre and certainly didn't disappoint inside. This was an impressive venue for a concert.

Saturday saw a walking group going to Goathland, a small group visiting Burton Agnes Hall and Gardens and others taking a leisurely stroll along the sea front. Saturday night saw our return to Filey Methodist Chapel, a full house buzzing

with expectation from the minute we arrived and we are pleased to say we didn't disappoint. This was an audience well used to listening to and performing concerts. The thanks and comments at the end from Peter Hazeldine, Secretary of the Festival, were truly fabulous. We already have a special relationship with the Filey Festival and we are sure that this can only continue after the wonderful welcome and reception they afforded us.

Sunday again was something different, with a visit to the National Railway Museum in York where the Gresley Boys' Choir joined us for an afternoon concert in the Great Hall by the Mallard Steam Locomotive. Gresley MVC has a link since the famous Mallard locomotive was designed by Sir Nigel Gresley, a member of a prominent local family from which we take our name, and still has a thriving following amongst railway buffs. The Mallard holds the world speed record for a steam locomotive, at 126 mph set in July 1938. A piece of good fortune saw us joined by a gentleman in a wheelchair who used to drive this particular engine.

This was a great opportunity for us all, both choir and railway buffs, to have a photograph session with the Mallard. Both

choirs performed well in a very difficult place to sing. Special praise was received from a lady watching the concert who said she conducted three choirs in Holland and was very impressed with the choir's performance, especially in such difficult conditions. The choir continues to perform its engagements and is preparing a new repertoire which will be first performed in their Celebrity Concert on Saturday 30 October with guest Thomas Spencer-Wortley and his Musicians <http://www.thomasspencerwortley.com/>

Please visit our website.

<http://www.gresleychoir.org>

for further information, photographs, recordings and history of the choir.

Geoff Hampson, Chairman



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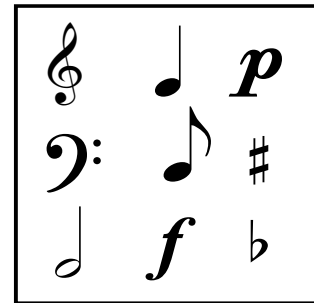
Level: Moderato

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Carmina Burana

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Please contact David
 Lewis
 07816 319406
 or
percussiondavid@yahoo.co.uk



I asked David Lewis to provide the percussion section for our performance of Carmina Burana in March 2010. This work makes serious technical demands on the players. The result was a first class professional percussion section. The musicians were carefully managed over the large range of percussion instruments to ensure the maximum effectiveness. He was also able to provide high quality instruments. I am definitely going to use his expertise again.
John Perrin (Lancaster and District Choral Society).

Marchington Singers Midlands East

And it all began when a handful of villagers in Marchington near Uttoxeter decided to stage some live entertainment for an expected visit from the good burghers of Neudrossenfeld with whom the village was twinned.



By December 1984, when the small group of singers joined with MADS (The Marchington Amateur Dramatic Society) on stage, they were registering their third public appearance. The Marchington Singers were born and, as day follows night, the last twelve months have seen the celebration of our Silver Jubilee. A mixed choir of more than fifty now, the choir has sung widely in the UK and abroad, in Germany, where a local ferryboat DJ introduced us as 'The Marchington Swingers', Portugal, Majorca, France and Belgium. Such achievements could hardly have been foreseen as was suggested in a Wearside programme which recorded The Singers' first appearance on stage - a dry run for the village twinning performance: 'About a dozen decided that they could croak out a few notes to keep boredom at bay at the Harvest Supper - and enjoyed it so much as they decided to carry on.'

Twelve of those singers remain in the choir! And as we have celebrated our twenty five years of singing in harmony (most of the time), so nostalgia has ruled. The Singers' history, published at the beginning of the year, evoked memories of singing at 84 different venues and the total is now at least 20 more after a hectic year, churches and cathedrals, village halls and showgrounds, civic buildings and old people's homes, hotels and tents, as well as, informally, on buses, in airports, on trains and boats, the streets of Marchington and even in a castle.

Members were also reminded of highlights of our developing story such as the appearance of our own Lucy Crowe who went on to a distinguished student career at The Royal College of Music, to be a finalist in the Times South Bank Show

representing the field of opera, sang a Glyndebourne season last year and has been in demand as far afield as Japan. With her college housemate, Katherine Jenkins, Lucy appeared in the 2001 production of Vivaldi's Gloria, one of The Singers' eagerly awaited summer concerts.

The joint concert with The Elogy Choir from St Petersburg in 1996 and that in 2007 when Tanya Hilton, a distinguished Russian trained pianist joined us, remain fondly in our memories. Our Jubilee Year's summer celebration sought to rival these as The Singers used a new venue, Uttoxeter's Thomas Alleyne's High School, to host a champagne reception and concert which featured the support of professional singers, Margaret Langford, an internationally renowned soprano; Iain Sloan, tenor and conductor of the Malvern Festival Chorus and former principal with Diva Opera; bass, John Evanson; percussionists, organist and harpist. A first half, laying bare our nostalgia with extracts from past concerts culminating in an Abba tribute *Thank You For The Memory* to the work of founder conductor, Barbara Brandom, who had travelled from the south of England to join us. What a contrast to the second half of the programme when we appropriately honoured the memory of the patron saint of music and musicians by singing the solemn, expansive, delicate yet robust Gounod's *Mass for St Cecilia*.

The celebrations continued with another 'blast from the past' as members past and present enjoyed the beautiful Smallwood Manor facilities for a special annual dinner (What a difference from our recent summer dinner on a barge on the Cauldon Canal when the strains of *Kumbaya* reverberated under the waterway's nineteenth century bridges). Over 100 of us thoroughly enjoyed our meal together before dancing to the music of London based 'Weird Fish', who had featured in one of our previous summer concerts.

The annual, popular 'Candlelight Concert' in St Mary's Church in Uttoxeter again brought together large numbers of the local and wider East Staffordshire community, followed an increasingly large number of weddings, charity events and celebrations but, on this occasion, almost half of the choir was absent with illness. Not to worry, our ever unflappable inspiration and conductor, Wendy Scott, coaxed us through and still gained so many plaudits from regular supporters among The Friends of Marchington Singers who had failed to recognise our plight which had seemed

to have been worsened by the minute as apologies for the non-appearance of singers reached us.

The climax to our year was still to come however. Simon Barber, our bass section part time World War I battlefields guide and steward of Talbot House, the 'behind the lines' centre for troops temporarily withdrawn from fighting on the Ypres



Salient, had convinced us of the viability of a Choir tour in Northern France and Belgium to mark our anniversary. Accordingly, after considerable blood, sweat and tears on the part of an industrious steering group, a party of 28 Singers and 15 Friends set off for a six day adventure on the other side of the Channel. Missing two ferries in consequence of traffic congestion en route to Dover was hardly an auspicious start to the exercise but it was the last calamity of an exciting trip which is still excitedly talked about for its seven concerts, its marvellous camaraderie amongst choir members, and with our first day hosts, 'Hop Chora' in Poperinge, and the stirring, huge memorable detailed explanations of events at sites visited, which proved to be so very moving for so many of us.

After launching our tour, which was based in Ypres, by opening The Poperinge Cultural Festival in the Park and with the Town Mayor, planting a tree to prove it, we retired from singing on stage in a gale to the restful grounds of Talbot House to be entertained by the melodious 'Hop Chora', fresh out of their biennial summer concert. They were marvellous but their action supported renderings did attract the attention of our conductor who refused to accept that we are too mature (old) for such levity. An afternoon spent in the adjacent concert hall singing with our hosts, savouring the local brews and devouring a never-ending supply of barbecued meat, provided the perfect start to our stay.

Singing at the Thiepval and Welsh Memorials proved to be so evocative

in enabling us to fully understand the horrors of war before our visit to the tiny village of Guillemont brought home to us the rapprochement that has been brought about in so many parts of modern Europe. The villagers treated us to a superb meal before we sang in their newly recreated church. Ultra modern, beautifully decorated, the product of the work of the villagers, reopened by former President Mitterand, Rev Ian Paisley and other European Leaders, its wonderful acoustic and the touching tearful support of the monoglot French Mayor made this the highlight of the tour - until next day when we sang before a huge crowd at the nightly playing of *The Last Post* at the Menin Gate where the tens of thousands of soldiers who gave their lives on the Salient, but have no known burial place, are commemorated.

The last day, a visit to Bruges almost obliterated memories of all the other vivid memories that we had banked. Singing in the Church of Our Lady, wherein a constant procession of tourists intent on seeing Michelangelo's sculpture, Our Lady and the Infant, continually risked the ire of their tour guide (with flag) by adding themselves to the audience. Utilising the wonderful acoustic to best advantage, The Singers gave great satisfaction to both themselves and the many who joined them, for some or all of the time, as they sang a programme of sacred music (part of a folio of over forty pieces with which they had armed themselves). The comments of American visitors in the church's daily diary provided the icing on the cake.

And now we begin the next 25 years in good heart and voice.

Peter Davies, Chair

Churchdown Male Voice Choir South West

The committee of Churchdown Male Voice Choir is delighted to announce the appointment of Ralph Barnes as the choir's new Musical Director.

Ralph, from Cheltenham, has been with the choir since 2000 and has been Assistant MD since 2003. In March of this year he took over the choir on the resignation of its former MD, John Blenkinsopp, who had been with the choir for over 35 years.

He graduated from Roehampton University in London with a BA Hons Degree in Drama with Theatre Studies and Music.

There he studied singing, performing in many concerts and solo recitals as well as studying the art of choral conducting.

From August 2002 for over four years Ralph was the Musical Director of The Wide Valley Singers of Witcombe and Benham.

As an orchestral conductor he has directed the Young Workers Music Association Symphony Orchestra, The Halesowen Chamber Orchestra and The Belarus White Russian Army Band. He has worked with Wynn Evans of Welsh National Opera, now well known as the tenor in the 'Go Compare' adverts. Early on this year he worked with International conductors Manvinda Rattan and Sir Neville Marriner.

Ralph has a fine tenor voice and performs often with Churchdown Male Voice Choir as one of its principal soloists.



He is a guest soloist with many of Gloucestershire's leading choirs, including Charlton Kings Choral Society, Cheltenham Choral Society, Churchdown Choral Society and the Silurian Choir, and has performed leading roles in the Gilbert and Sullivan operas with The Cotswold Savoyards, Worcester G&S Society and Hereford G&S Society.

On announcing his appointment the choir's chairman, Pete Wilson, said, 'We are delighted to have such a talented and enthusiastic young man taking on the position. The choir and its audiences can look forward to a very exciting time in the choir's future'.

The choir can next be heard in a concert featuring the world famous Band of the Blues and Royals on Saturday 11 September in Cheltenham Town Hall. All the proceeds

from the concert will go to 'Help for Heroes', the charity set up to aid the service personnel injured in the war in Afghanistan. The Band of the Blues and Royals is one of only two mounted bands remaining with the British Army. Its 35 musicians play on state occasions, for private functions and for public concerts when the time allows. The choir will be singing, amongst others, an arrangement for band and choir of *Non Nobis Domine*, the song that was used to such spectacular effect in the Kenneth Branagh film of Henry V. The guest soloist will be the sensational soprano, Susan Black.

On Wednesday 3 November the choir will be again at the Town Hall to take part in a Military Musical Spectacular and featuring the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas. Tickets are £16.50, £15.50 and £14.50 from Town Hall Box Office.

Barry Woods

Top Ten Reasons for Being a Soprano

1. The rest of the choir exists just to make you look good.
2. You can entertain your friends by breaking their wineglasses.
3. Can you name an opera where an alto got the man?
4. When sopranos want to sing in the shower, they know the tune.
5. It's not like you are ever going to sing the alto part by accident.
6. Great costumes - like the hat with the horns on it.
7. How many world famous altos can you name?
8. When the fat lady sings, she's usually singing soprano.
9. When you get tired of singing the tune, you can sing the descant.
10. You can sing along with Michael Jackson.

I got this from

<http://www.stjameslex.com>

I asked for permission to print this but I haven't heard anything. All being well **Ten Top Reasons For Being an Alto** in the next edition of News & Views.

Letter from NAC in Oz

We are just coming out of winter which has been remarkably cold but now the sun is shining, the wattle, acacia, banksia and all the other flowers of the bush are starting to bloom. The whales have started their return to the south where they spend their summer after wintering off the coast of Queensland. As they come back down the coast they are teaching their calves how to slap their flukes and generally make great splashes. When we see this we know summer is getting near.

The Sydney Male Choir has, as usual, had a very busy year and we are not finished by a long way! We are in frantic activity preparing for the big one of the year, our annual City of Sydney Concert where this year we return to the newly refurbished Sydney Town Hall.

We will be performing a piece which has been specially written for us by an eminent Australian composer, Stephen Lee taking the words from the poem 'Blue Australian Skies'. The piece reflects the sights and sounds of the Australian outback and is very modern in style. In fact when we first heard it many of the choir, including me, doubted whether we would ever be able to sing it! The harmonies are not the ones that we usually hear. However we are now of quite a different opinion and it is sounding really good. We have had a couple of sessions with the composer and he has given a great insight into what he had conceived.



We will be sharing the stage at the Town Hall with Bathurst Panorama Singers, a Sweet Adeline's choir who recently were crowned as mid-range chorus champions of Australia, who will bring a touch of glamour to the event.

The Town Hall concert will mark a sad time for the Sydney Male Choir as it will be the last major concert under the direction of Maestro Alan Thrift who is relinquishing the conductor's podium after 20 years in the position. He will be sadly missed but we are looking forward to the new era with our new Musical Director, Houston Dunleavy, an Ulster man who is currently Senior Lecturer in Composition at Woolongong University, south of Sydney.

We are moving towards our centenary celebrations in 2013 with plans already being formulated to mark the occasion. Part of this a possible tour of France and the UK at the end of April and the beginning of May, taking in the International Male Choir Festival in Cornwall. As plans evolve I will keep you informed.

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

Peter Marshall

Appledore Singers Devon

The Appledore Singers celebrated their Silver Jubilee in July with a wonderful dinner held at a local restaurant. Over 30 members plus three gentlemen (our accompanist, page turner and member of our splinter group the Pips Plus) enjoyed a superb dinner. The evening was great fun

and a good chance to mix and talk with everyone, and sing one or two of our favourite pieces. Margaret Funnell one of our Treasurers recited a poem she had composed recounting various activities of the choir over the years and a pottery jug inscribed with musical theme (by a celebrated

local potter, Harry Juniper) was presented by Barbara and Phyllis Tatem, two of the founder members of the choir, to Pam and Chris Beechey our Musical Director and Accompanist, on behalf of all the members and the evening finished with the cutting of a splendid cake made by a member.

Later in the week we gave a concert of Summer Music with the Appledore Band joining us as our guests, in Westward Ho. The MC for the evening was Anthony Chambers who kept us entertained with jokes in between the musical numbers. We played to a full house of supporters and holiday makers and enjoyed punch and nibbles in the interval. We also had a grand raffle. In spite of the very wet evening we voted it one of our best concerts ever and would like to thank everyone who came along. We raised a good sum of money which will help towards the cost of lots of new music and hopefully (if we can all agree on it) a new uniform.

A summer vacation is now being enjoyed by everyone with the exception of a wedding at which we have been invited to sing and practices begin once again in September with the promise of an exciting Christmas programme and many requests to give concerts coming in.

Jane Hayman (Publicity)

Great Sutton Male Voice Choir Wales North/Cheshire West

Wednesday 28 July 2010 witnessed an end of the line within the Ellesmere Port and Chester Music World.

Emrys Williams MBE, Musical Director of Great Sutton Male Voice Choir for 52 years laid down his baton for a younger person to take up the challenge. Emrys, now 93, has served the area with much pride and distinction in both the Musical and Art interests in the borough. The choir's AGM marked his final retirement which was recognised by three members of the North Wales association of Male Voice Choirs who had travelled great distances to make the presentation of a beautiful cut glass & engraved rose bowl on behalf of the association.

Mrs Jo Moms the choir's treasurer also retired after serving them for many years together with her late husband, Frank, who was 'front of house'. The choir resumes rehearsals on Wednesday 8 September at 7.00-9.30pm. Any male interested in singing is most welcome to come along and join in.

Wilf Wilson.

Read or download this edition online from the members' section on

www.nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk

contact James Ferrabee for your user name and password

Dumfries Male Voice Choir Scotland West

60 Years of Note

In the post-war year of 1949, while TV was still in its black and white single channel infancy, evening classes were a popular way of learning new skills. One such class, for singing enthusiasts, was coached by Andrew Young and from this beginning Dumfries Male Voice Choir was formed in 1950.

Through their own voluntary efforts the choir members have, over the years, raised several thousands of pounds for local, national and international charities. The funds have largely been generated from local concerts and there will be few towns, villages or churches throughout the region that have not been hosts to the choir.

On a competitive note the choir has taken part in musical festivals not only here in their home town of Dumfries but also in the Land of Song - Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. They have performed joint concerts with choirs from Wales, Norway and our twin town of Gifhorn, Germany.

The Millennium year 2000 saw the choir's 50th anniversary being celebrated in style in June when the male voice choir from Gifhorn, 'Gifhorner Maennerchor', came over for a joint concert. This was followed in October when Dumfries MVC went across to Germany on a reciprocal visit. Spirits were high in both countries and firm friendships established. Not content with the near continent, the choir jetted off to another of our twin towns, Annapolis, Maryland, USA in 2003. Included amongst the concerts there was a memorable first, and a unique distinction, with Dumfries MVC having the honour to be the only choir to have sung in the US Naval Academy crypt, where John Paul Jones, native of Kirkbean and founder of the US Navy is buried.

David McCullough, our Conductor since 1994, is patient and his encouragement is legendary, being delivered with good measures of Irish humour. Also with the choir since 2004 is Scott Miller, who gives his considerable talents as the choir's accompanist. The choir is indeed fortunate to have the services of two such gifted musicians.

Since its first major concert in 1951 the choir has given performances each year here in Dumfries and celebrates its 60th anniversary with a Concert in DG One on Friday 23 April. Guest artistes are


'Caledon' - Alan Beck, Ivan Sharpe and Jamie MacDougall - three internationally acclaimed Scottish tenors, under their Musical Director, Michael Barnett.

Always keen to attract new members Dumfries MVC invites any male who enjoys singing to come along to Dumfries North West Church (Lochside) Hall any Wednesday evening at 7.15pm between September and April.

Jim Kelly PRO



Dumfries MVC sent this to
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The Albrighton Hall Hotel is a luxurious 4 Star Hotel 2 miles outside Shrewsbury Town Centre. It is an 18th century manor house with a lake and 15 acres of grounds. The hotel has modern rooms, each with internet access and satellite TV. The spa has an indoor heated pool. The facilities for our conference are first class with a series of 9 meeting rooms easily accommodating the NAC Conference.

A full and packed conference awaits you, consisting of seminars and workshops each offering a different topic and theme, Trade Stand exhibitors offering products and services from the choral world.

Douglas Coombes will Headline our seminars and workshops.



Douglas was a Music Adviser to Norfolk LEA for 5 years. He worked at the BBC, on education programmes such as 'Singing Together' and 'Time and Tune', writing scripts and arranging music for many of the country's leading musicians.

He has often arranged large concerts for children in many of the country's leading concert halls and cathedrals. One of the biggest children's choirs he conducted was one of 4,900 in Everton Football Club's stadium. Douglas often works in the USA and one highlight was the first performance of his Requiem, in 1997, by the chorus and orchestra of The Mastersingers of Philadelphia in Daylesford Abbey (a Norbertine abbey).

In 1988 Douglas formed The New English

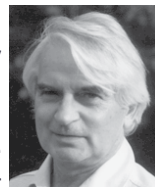
Annual Conference Weekend 8 - 10 April 2011 84th Annual General Meeting Mercure Shrewsbury Albrighton Hall Hotel and Spa

Concert Orchestra. This professional orchestra has given many concerts and over the past 12 years has, since they started, played for the Battle Proms in the grounds of various stately homes Burghley House, Hatfield House, Blenheim Palace, Highclere Castle. Althorpe etc.

Over the past 8 years Douglas has also conducted large concerts for Barnardos, with children's choirs of 400 to over 1000 in such places as the Royal Albert Hall, The Royal Festival Hall etc. Douglas has two choirs - a mixed choir and a women's choir, both over 50 strong. These are his hobbies!

Since it started, in 2002, he has been the music director of the BBC Songs of Praise School Choir of the Year. Working with these choirs is demanding but always rewarding and great fun. There is so much more and Douglas is looking forward to being the Headline speaker/presenter at the Association's conference in 2011.

Gwyn Arch studied English at Cambridge University where he played for both the Cambridge and Oxford University jazz bands. He began his teaching career as Head of English in a large secondary school, whilst studying composition in his spare time at Trinity College London. Gwyn subsequently became Director of Music at Bulmershe College of Higher Education, Reading. Under his direction the choir represented the UK seven times in the International rounds of the BBC competition Let the Peoples Sing. Gwyn is also a very successful arranger and publisher of choral music for all voices and many of his pieces can be found in choir libraries around the world.



Dr Liz Garnett BA PhD LRAM



will be taking two individual seminars. Liz studied music at the Universities of Bristol and Southampton. She taught at Colchester Institute's School of Music and Performance Arts for four years before moving to Birmingham Conservatoire, where she was Head of Postgraduate Studies until 2009. Her teaching experience

is varied in subject area, delivery style and level, from lectures in Musical Philosophies to practical workshops on Playing by Ear and one to one tutorials in Professional Development for Musicians.

As a student, she studied piano with Christopher Northam gaining an LRAM in piano teaching and singing with Glynn Davenport, Duncan Robertson and Molly Petrie. She started conducting as an undergraduate, attending the Choral Conducting course at the Canford Summer School of Music at the age of 19, then went on to conduct the Southampton University Light Opera Society as a postgraduate.

She is one of the UK's most prominent arrangers and performance coaches. She certified as a Music Category judge in 2000, and has served as LABBS Music Category Director. She has adjudicated in both 'barbershop' and 'mainstream' choral classes at the Llangollen International Eisteddfod and the Sligo International Choral Festival. She is the founder-director of a female close harmony choir called Magenta.

There will be other seminars and workshops covering Practical Singing, Developing Music from the Inside and Developing the Ensemble. As well as all this there is also the massed concert on the Saturday night for which resident delegates receive guaranteed concert tickets. This concert is hosted by the NAC Midlands North Group especially for the National Conference weekend. Some of the area's finest choirs will come together to entertain and enthral you. The concert is sure to be a sell out when tickets go on sale to the general public in January 2011.

NAC Conference Weekend will be fun packed and busy; a chance to meet new faces, greet old friends, sing, learn and hopefully, take back the wisdom and expertise from the seminars and workshops. Places are strictly limited and well worth an early reply to ensure your place.

**Send the booking form with your
NON-REFUNDABLE deposit to**

**James Ferrabee
Conference Co-ordinator**



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2011 National Conference – Booking Form

Albrighton Hall Hotel, Ellesmere Road, Albrighton, Shrewsbury, SY4 3AG.

8th ~ 10th April 2011

Please complete in **BLOCK LETTERS** and return to the address below:

Title: First Name: Surname:

Special requirements? (Dietary, Medical, Mobility etc):

NAC Group Name: Choir Name:

Your full address for correspondence:

..... Post Code:

Telephone No.: Email:

Full Name of other delegates included in this booking:
(continue on reverse if necessary)

2011 Conference Costs

!! Midlands North NAC Group hosts the Saturday night concert !!

!! This event is open to all including non NAC Members who wish to attend on payment of the appropriate charges !!

* Saturday day delegates should use this form to book their attendance,

** Friday and / or Saturday dinner should be booked using this form

Resident Delegates Only:

Room Requirements:-	Night	Friday	Saturday	Sunday <small>(optional)</small>	Total Cost
Tariff Fri & Sat includes >>		Dinner, B&B	Dinner, B&B	B&B	
Please enter number of rooms required of each room type.	Double	☐ @ £200	☐ @ £200	☐ @ £99	= £ ☐.00
Single delegates please be aware that a £44.50 per night supplement will apply and has already been added to the cost of each single room.	Twin	☐ @ £200	☐ @ £200	☐ @ £99	= £ ☐.00
Alternatively try to twin wherever possible.	Single	☐ @ £147	☐ @ £147	☐ @ £99	= £ ☐.00

Day Delegates / Non Residents:

**Dinner for non-resident delegates including wine with your meal only >>>>>	☐ @ £35	☐ @ N/A	= £ ☐.00
*Saturday non-resident delegates conference fee includes lunch and refreshments – (no concert ticket included)	☐ @ £48		= £ ☐.00

Total Payment Submitted (Resident Delegates £100 per person non-refundable deposit) (Day Delegates / Non Residents Full Payment is Required with this Booking Form)	= £ ☐.00
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Balance of Payment Due (by 9 th March 2011) PLEASE COMPLETE THE FORM IN FULL SEND WITH YOUR CHEQUE MADE PAYABLE TO THE – ‘National Association of Choirs’	= £ ☐.00
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For the attention of: - James Ferrabee – Conference Co - ordinator, 35 Hawton Crescent, Wollaton Park, Nottingham, NG8 1BZ
Tel: 0115 9788847 Email: conference.coordinator@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk

Receipt required? Y / N Please enclose a stamped, addressed envelope if you require a receipt

The Glasgow Phoenix Choir Scotland West

After the last issue the members were again hit by the passing of yet another member, Tenor John Armour who sadly lost his battle with cancer. John was a stalwart of the first tenor section, travelling regularly from Troon to choir practices, a 70 mile round trip. We also learned of the passing of former members Malcolm and Elnor Galston with Elnor passing away two weeks after her husband. Malcolm was latterly Choir Manager before he and Elnor retired from the choir. Letters of condolence were sent to relatives of the deceased with the choir's sympathy.

On a brighter note, the choir was delighted to hear that Conductor Marilyn Smith and husband Ian had become grandparents with daughter Hayley, now based with husband Ray in the Republic of Ireland giving birth to son



Daniel. Congratulations were passed to all concerned. Bob Chilcott's arrangement of *The Londonderry Air* otherwise known as *Danny Boy* sung regularly by the choir will become especially poignant in the future.

The season finished on a high note with the tour of Northern Ireland and Southern Scotland in late May and concerts in June in Kirkcaldy and in the West End Festival in Glasgow. The Irish tour began with a most successful joint concert in Glenmachan Church of God as guests of the Donaghadee Male Voice Choir, and a first performance by the Phoenix of Faure's *Requiem* and a most varied programme in St George's Parish Church, Belfast. The tour finished in Kirkcudbright on the way home in the Parish Church with a full house due largely to the efforts of the local Rotary Club. Another Rotary event which resulted in a full house was held in the Adam Smith Theatre in Kirkcaldy to great acclaim by the appreciative audience. The choir has been involved in many fundraising concerts for Rotary Clubs throughout the country, a collaboration which has resulted in many thousands of pounds being raised for worthy causes and the award to the choir of the Paul Harris Fellowship by Rotary International.

The final concert of the season took place in St Peter's Church in Glasgow as part of the West End Festival. This concert was entitled 'Coronation, Requiem, Gloria' with some choral pot-boilers including *Zadok*

the Priest, Tchaikovsky's *Here Lord our God Have Mercy*, and Faure's *Requiem*. The second half had the Phoenix performing its more usual repertoire. This concert was something of an unknown quantity with the members unsure if there would be an audience. The choir's fears were totally unfounded with a packed house and an audience of between 400 and 500, and people still trying to cram in seconds before the concert was due to start. A standing ovation greeted the choir at the finish which put a gloss on the end of the season.

The new season started on 28 August with a concert in St Mary's Church, Haddington in East Lothian, a church famed for its musical programmes and the members looked forward to a first visit to this ancient church. This venue has concerts by the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and the Dunedin Consort among others following the Phoenix and has a great reputation for its musical offerings. The concert was organised by the Haddington Rotary Club celebrating its 50th anniversary.

A concert in Trinity Church, Duntocher led eventually to the choir's trip to Germany at the end of September, which is always a hectic but most enjoyable get together with good friends of 25 years, the Widukind Chor. The Phoenix had two joint concerts with our German friends in the weekend visit. However prior to that, the choir gave a late evening rendition of Faure's *Requiem* in the Stifts Kirche in Enger, a truly outstanding medieval church, this after an early morning flight from Edinburgh to Frankfurt and a five hour coach trip to our destination, phew! The members had a free day on the following day before the evening concert, a much needed rest.

Our website www.phoenixchoir.org

J Lawson Purdie
Hon Vice-President

The Dalesmen MVC Midlands East

There can be no finer uplifting experience than to sing in any of Great Britain's magnificent cathedrals.

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within cathedrals, has got to be worth making the effort to sing in them, even without a formal audience and for no payment.

For twenty years I was member of the excellent Radcliffe on Trent Male Voice choir (a 60 + voice choir near Nottingham) and during that time, due to the vision and energy its late Chairman Mike Pratt, and talented musical directorship of Richard Howarth, we managed to experience the 'Cathedral effect' in many of England's historic buildings.

York, Exeter, Derby, Lichfield, Lincoln, Ripon, Worcester, Hereford, Coventry, Nottingham and recently Llandaff, were amongst many venues targeted by Radcliffe on Trent MVC (now under the baton of Chris Burton) for singing enjoyment.

Many readers with longer MVC experience than I, will understand what it means to sing with the acoustic that older historic ecclesiastical buildings offer. I would like to make the same happen for my new male voice choir.

I have recently moved home to Derbyshire and have joined, 'The Dalesmen' (40 voices) based in Belper, Derbyshire. So wanting to continue with 'cathedral ambitions' it has fallen to me to organise a singing experience for The Dalesmen in Lincoln Cathedral on the afternoon of Saturday 23 October 2010.



Like so many wonderful Cathedrals, Lincoln is within an easy coach ride of our base (and many other male voice choirs) and so we will enjoy a choir and family day out in historic and attractive Lincoln, and reward ourselves with a good sing in wonderful surroundings.

So make a note: - The Dalesmen

**Saturday 23 October, Lincoln Cathedral,
2pm onwards.**

Please telephone David on 01332772370 before the date to confirm there have been no changes!

David Culm

Haydock Male Voice Choir North West

These are exciting times at Haydock. Hot on the heels of an enormously successful concert, when we hosted the Fron (Voices of the Valley) Choir, has come the release of our latest CD, 'Grace', to widespread acclamation.

The concert, held at St Helen's Parish in May, attracted a sell out audience of over 500. The choirs alternated in performing their own selections and then combined in a grand finale that brought a standing ovation from the enthusiastic audience. For our part we sang a programme that included mainly pieces that are on our new recording. Six of these pieces are brilliant arrangements we have obtained from America and we are not aware of any other UK choir that has recorded any of them. Of the six all but one are by Mark Hayes a well known pianist and composer on the other side of the Atlantic. This is what Mark had to say about the CD.

'Your CD, Grace, arrived last week and I certainly enjoyed hearing the choir. The men sing with passion and musicality. They definitely did justice to my music. I can hear the joy in their voices.'

Another five tracks were arrangements we had obtained directly from Alwyn Humphreys who of course needs no introduction to anyone interested in choral singing. We also sent a CD to Alwyn and were proud to get this comment from him.

'I enjoyed the CD immensely. My heartfelt congratulations to Alan, the accompanists and choristers. It is a lovely selection of music beautifully performed.'

The Alan referred to is, of course, Alan Herbert our Musical Director who has recently been invited to conduct a mass male voice choir concert being organised by Rotary Club International. The concert will be held at the Bridgewater Hall in Manchester in February 2012.

After all the hard work entailed in preparing for the recording and concert the choir members were rewarded with a few days R&R in Devon where we gave a concert at the home town of Ruth Webb, our brilliant young accompanist. The rest of the time was spent relaxing and bonding and in the evenings entertaining ourselves and fellow hotel guests.

George Anderton Chairman

Many hands make light work?

Q: How many sopranos does it take to change a lightbulb?

A: One. She holds the bulb and the world revolves around her.

A: Two. One to hold the diet cola and the other to get her accompanist to do it.

A: Four. One to change the bulb and three to pull the chair out from under her.

Q: How many altos does it take to screw in a lightbulb?

A: None. They can't get that high.

A: Two; one to screw it in and the other to say, "Isn't that a little high for you?"

Q: How many tenors does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Four. One to change the bulb and three to bitch that they could have done it if they had the high notes.

Q: How many basses does it take to change a lightbulb?

A: None. They're so macho they prefer to walk in the dark and bang their shins.

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Lord James Ferrabee
National Association of Choirs
General Secretary and Conference
Co-ordinator

Lord James Ferrabee was born in 1973 in the small market town of Retford in Nottinghamshire. He is the eldest of four children and grew up alongside his three sisters.

From an early age James was encouraged to take an interest in musical activities by his parents and grandparents. His grandfather sang with both the Retford Operatic Society and the Retford Male Voice Choir. James attended church regularly and was recruited into the church choir as well as serving as an altar boy eventually becoming Head Altar Boy. He had vocal training with Southwell Minster School Choir. He was an active member of the school choir while at junior school and this led later on to him becoming involved in school plays and pantomimes. As part of his musical education James was taught to play the recorder, guitar and the piano, although he confesses to not paying as much attention as he should have done.

James started school at Thrumpton County Primary School and then moved to King Edward VI Grammar School in Retford. After leaving school he went into the catering business and trained at the Hotel and Catering Training Board in Mansfield where he was awarded diplomas in Hotel and Catering Management. James started his working life with the Rank Organization that owned many hotels and restaurants as well as their interests in the cinema. He started at the bottom as a vegetable chef and steadily worked his way through all of the ranks of being a chef eventually ending up as a Head Chef. James spent much of his early career at the West Retford Hotel and Country Club which was the conference venue for the NAC in 2004. The working routine was very vigorous with early morning shifts starting at 5am and evening work often lasting into the early hours of the morning, so the working life of a chef often left little to no time for personal life.

Once James had reached the position of Head Chef he realized that the next step to Executive Head Chef was almost impossible as these positions were far and few between and were mainly only available in London so he decided to make a career change and went into Sales. He became a sales executive for an insulation company in Liverpool and within eighteen



months found himself promoted to the position of Sales Manager. James remained in this position for four years and was then head hunted by a company that specialized in urban regeneration, property maintenance, facility management and housing. While working for this company James' career developed further and he was promoted to Operations Manager which involved overseeing the contracts of urban regeneration and housing that the company had heavily invested in. After two years James found himself making another career change and became a partner in a small dealership in the motor trade. Here things developed and the business became a franchised dealership with all of the trappings and responsibilities of a dealer network. James specialized in sales and found this to be his forte although it gave him little satisfaction so eventually he sold on his share of the business. This then gave him the opportunity to work solely for himself, although it hasn't been an easy path to take and there are still things to learn and much to accomplish. However his company is on a sound footing and he concentrates on housing projects with a mix of regeneration, rental and resale.

The varied experience that James has had in his working life gives him a useful set of skills that he is able to apply to his personal interests. James is one of those people who becomes heavily involved in activities that he pursues and gives of his all to them. As well as him working tirelessly for the NAC James is also the Regional Chairman for the National Heart Foundation which is also a registered charity and requires a lot of skill to keep it directed.

James has a long term partner of seventeen years and has no intention of getting married as they are very happy with the way they are.

James has a wide and varied interest in music spanning from opera through going to musicals and listening to jazz. He enjoys listening to the radio be it music or current affairs programmes. For the last ten years James has sung with the Eastwood Collieries' Male Voice Choir in Nottinghamshire and before that he spent ten years singing with another Male Voice Choir so over the years he has developed a real passion for the repertoire and unique sound that you get with a quality Male Voice Choir. For the last seven years James has been the General Secretary of the Eastwood Collieries' Male Voice Choir and is part of the NAC Midlands East Group. He was originally co-opted onto the National Committee when he was identified as a person with enthusiasm and ability for charity work and assumed the role of Services Officer. However there was a need for someone to take over the responsibility for organizing conferences and James was offered the opportunity to move to this position. This has proved to be a role that he has fitted into perfectly and the results have been experienced by all those members who have been delegates at conference over recent years. Now with the retirement of Frank Rhodes, James is combining his role of Conference Co-ordinator with that of General Secretary.

Despite his heavy work load James still finds time to relax and pursue other interests that include working for Cancer Research UK, walking his dogs in the countryside, nature and wildlife, birds and steam trains. His original training also helps with his passion for cooking and entertaining friends.

Richard A Bradley

Oops!

In the last issue of News & Views we featured Celia Johns, our Chairman. In that feature we, inadvertently, misprinted her granddaughters' names. They should have been Kaiya and Tahlia.

Sorry girls.

Crawford

The Silver Ring Choir of Bath South West

The Silver Ring Choir of Bath have exciting times 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.

To celebrate the choir's 60th birthday, the choir will be recording a new CD at the end of this year and have commissioned a special celebration piece of music to be co-written by multi-million selling composers Ben Cullum and his brother, jazz star, Jamie Cullum, who both have a long association with The Silver Ring. A major concert is booked for 30 April 2011 at the Forum in Bath with The Silver Ring Choir which will include a guest spot with Jamie where the new song will get its first public hearing. For further information on this concert and ticket information, please contact Bath Festivals on 01225 463362

www.bathfestivals.org.uk/boxoffice

Alternatively contact Choir Secretary, Ruth Bwyne on 01179 422205 or

silverringsec@aol.com

Information on the concerts planned for 2010/2011 and how to become involved with the choir can be found at www.silverringchoir.org

Jo Campbell

Aughton Male Voice Choir North West

I was recently invited to hear Aughton MVC perform at one of their concerts; nothing unusual about that until I discovered that the concert was called Aughton sings Elvis.

Having already had the pleasure of being at a different concert and hearing the choir



perform my immediate reaction was that Aughton MVC were crazy and that Neil their Musical Director was as mad as a March hare.

However I was intrigued and the more I thought about the concert the more intrigued I became. When I arrived it was clear that this had been a clever idea of the choirs, the Ormskirk Civic Hall was filled to bursting, attending was the choir's President the Mayor of South Lancashire and the choir were abuzz with excitement and fear... no one knew how this would go.

The programme listed a packed programme of Elvis' music, with guest soloist Lynn Jones ably assisting the choir who also sang Elvis numbers. The choir sang brilliantly and the choice of music thrilled and entertained the packed hall, there was even a visit or two by the King himself none other than Dr Tony Manley one of the choirs singing members.

There was even a surprise turn when the Mayor and Mayoress jumped to the floor during *Blue Suede Shoes* and danced while the choir sang.

The concert finished with *An American Trilogy* where the King sang with the choir and the evening came to a close, a tremendous success out of a crazy idea, Aughton MVC dared to be different and through this broadened the appeal of their concert. A risky venture and a massive gamble but one that worked well and thrilled and enthralled the concert audience. Well done to Aughton MVC.

Lord James Ferrabee

Where there's blame... Advice from TIP



No one can be unaware of the increased knowledge the British public have of their legal rights and remedies. Along with this is the enthusiastic and innovative efforts of the legal profession to maximise damages awards for injured parties or damaged property.

The magnitude of awards continues to spiral and together with the associated legal costs there is a danger that apparently adequate insurance indemnity limits could be exhausted.

Such is the concern that the owners of venues (especially Local Authorities and Cathedrals) will now stipulate a requirement that hirers evidence they have at least a ten million pound indemnity limit for their public and products liability - just in case the worst happens. It's fairly unlikely that a Choir will breach this limit with a claim of this size and insurers have been persuaded to offer this new limit as an alternative to the current £5,000,000 for just a small additional annual premium. The options will be detailed clearly on your renewal correspondence in a few weeks time.

Of course if you would like more information in the interim please contact Elaine Blakeston at our Scheme Broker The Insurance Partnership 01482 388513

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Rossendale Male Voice Choir Lancashire North

It's not often that a local choir can make a real difference but the Rossendale Male Voice Choir in Lancashire has recently done just that.



In June they masterminded a charity concert in aid of the Christie hospital and were joined by their special guests the Black Dyke Band and the Rossendale Ladies Choir. The massed concert took place at the prestigious Bridgewater Hall in Manchester and a packed audience of 1500 helped to swell the hospital coffers by the magnificent sum of £30,000.

Entitled 'One Man's Dream', the event started life as the personal ambition of one of the former members, Peter Kelly, who was being treated for cancer at the Christie. His aim was to give something

back for all the efforts the staff had made on his behalf. Sadly Peter never lived to see his dream come true but the choir took up the challenge and despite all the odds the hall was organized, the band booked and every ticket sold.

Kate Shipway, the musical director of the choir, was thrilled with the whole event and said, 'All the men put in 100% to make sure everything went well. They sang wonderfully and the whole audience were on their feet at the end of a truly thrilling night. To perform at such a fantastic venue was tremendous but to sing with the Black Dyke Band was the icing on the cake. The men finished with a thrilling rendition of *An American Trilogy*, with the Bridgewater organ coming in towards the end. It was an evening we'll all remember for the rest of our lives and just shows what can be done when everybody pulls together.'

Having developed a taste for this sort of major event, the choir is looking to repeat the exercise in the future, and have already started talks with a few interested parties.

All those rehearsals in the draughty halls, really can lead to something special.

Charles Crowley

New Harmony Ladies Choir South West

I would like to correct a statement made in the Cowbridge Male Voice Choir's piece in the Summer edition of News and Views.

In it Mr Bob Whitaker states that Cowbridge were the only choir ever to have sung in the SS Great Britain in Bristol. Our choir, New Harmony Ladies Choir Bristol, sang there in December 2006 and I attach some photographs of the choir with our then MD, Elaine Smith, and Accompanist, Matthew Goh. You can also see a photograph on our website,

www.nhlcbristol.co.uk

in the Photo Gallery pages.

Joan Lovell



Sorry ladies I only print what people tell me.

Crawford



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SADS UK

Second Gala of Massed Male Choirs

The national cardiac charity SADS UK held their second Gala of Massed Male Choirs on May 8 2010, at St David's Hall in Cardiff, another wonderful evening of music and song. Eleven male choirs gave freely of their time, along with the Regimental Band of the Royal Welsh and Drum Corps. Their performances were very powerful.

Principal Soprano Soloist, Elin Manahan Thomas, held the audience spellbound with her beautiful renditions and the vibrant, Angharad Morgan, joined her in duets, including the *Flower Duet* which was absolutely breathtaking. Jane Samuel brought her expertise to the evening and accompanied Elin and Angharad. Barbara Davies accompanied the choirs.

SADS UK were grateful to Mr Frank Jones, Musical Director from the City of Newport Choir who organised the music programme and conducted the massed choir and to Major Denis Burton of the Regimental Band of the Royal Welsh who



put together a stunning programme for the Regimental Band, including *Rugby Medley, Post Horn Gallop, Raiders March* and *the Drum Beatings*. The UV lighting on the band drumsticks showed how hard the musicians worked and mesmerised the audience who gave a standing ovation.

Honoured guests included the City of Newport Mayor and Mayoress, The Deputy Mayor, the High Sheriff of South Glamorgan, and councillors.



The charity was absolutely delighted that the daughter of Mansel Thomas, Mrs Grace Gilmore-James and her husband came along to the evening. The choir sang several of Mansel Thomas' compositions in his honour as Grace said this would be included as part of his special Centenary Year.

A special guest appearance was made by Rugby Union player, Jamie Roberts, who is SADS UK's Wales Patron. Jamie presented the performers



with beautiful floral bouquets and Penderyn whisky. Of course there was quite a rapport between television sports presenter, Jason Mohammad, who introduced the items, and Jamie Roberts, as they had a lot in common. Both had been rated in the most appealing men in Wales for 2009, with Jamie Roberts taking first place and Jason coming fifth.

You may have seen the enormous posters Arriva Trains arranged and displayed on their platforms, which encouraged over 1,000 to come along to enjoy the gala.

SADS UK is grateful to the following choirs who have supported the Massed Male Choir Galas or who have held individual concerts to assist:-

Barry Male Choir
 Blaenavon Male Voice Choir
 Blaenporth Male Choir
 Caerphilly Male Voice Choir
 Creunant Male Choir
 City of Newport Male Choir
 Glynneath Male Voice Choir
 Haverfordwest Male Voice Choir
 Kenfig Hill and District Male Choir
 Llandybie Male Choir
 Maelgwn Male Choir
 Maesteg Male Choir
 Morriston RFC Male Choir
 Ogmor Valley Male Voice Choir
 Oxford Male Voice Choir
 Penarth Male Voice Choir
 Penybontfawr Male Choir
 Porthcawl Male Choir
 Ynysowen (Aberfan & district) Male Choir

Anne Jolly

A Simpleton's Guide to the Four Part Choir.

In the first of four articles we take a 'tongue in cheek' look at the ladies who sing the top part in a mixed voice choir.

THE SOPRANOS

They are the ones who sing the highest, and because of this they think they rule the world. They have longer hair, fancier jewellery, and swishier skirts than anyone else, and they consider themselves insulted if they are not allowed to go at least to a high F in every movement of any given piece. When they reach the high notes, they hold them for at least half again as long as the composer and/or conductor requires, and then complain that their throats are killing them and that the composer and conductor are sadists. Sopranos have varied attitudes toward the other sections of the chorus, though they consider all of them inferior.

Altos are to sopranos rather like second violins to first violins; nice to harmonize with, but not really necessary. All sopranos have a secret feeling that the altos could drop out and the piece would sound essentially the same, and they don't understand why anybody would sing in that range in the first place - it's so boring.

Tenors, on the other hand, can be very nice to have around; besides their flirtation possibilities (it is a well-known fact that sopranos never flirt with basses), sopranos like to sing duets with tenors because all the tenors are doing is working very hard to sing in a low-to-medium soprano range, while the sopranos are up there in the stratosphere showing off.

To sopranos, basses are the scum of the earth - they sing too darn loud, are useless to tune to because they're down in that low, low range, and there has to be something wrong with anyone who sings in the F clef, anyway.

In the next issue: The Altos

I found this information in several places on the internet. I will not apologise to any offended sopranos as I have every intention of offending altos, tenors and basses in the next three editions of News & Views.

Do you have a musical quote, joke our funny story?
 Send it to Crawford.

Crawford

The Rowland Singers Thames South

I cannot believe that we have come to the end of our 40th anniversary year. It has been a year packed full of super social events and the most amazing series of concerts.

The highlights included our Messiah performances both in Worthing and whilst away for the weekend in Ryde, IOW. They were hard work but very rewarding and we are looking forward to our next venture away from Worthing and out of our comfort zone. Our June concert with Three Valleys Male Voice Choir was great fun and of a very high standard. We were very lucky to have the international concert organist, Michael Wooldridge, as our soloist. Did he make that organ sing? He certainly did and the audience were jiggling about in their seats for all they were worth.

In the joint finale with the two choirs, Helen on the Steinway grand and Michael on the organ and all of the audience joining too, I thought the roof of the Assembly Hall might be lifted off. It was really great that James Ferrabbee, our NAC secretary travelled all the way from Manchester and back the

same night to support us and be at the event.

In July we gave three more concerts entitled 'Summer Serenade'. Our soloist at these concerts was Dominic Smith accompanied by Helen. They have an excellent rapport and the audience demanded an encore which was duly delivered; however, during this piece, Helen got a fit of the giggles and, temporarily, was unable to play, she vamped until she had control of herself before attacking a particularly difficult bit with great aplomb much to the audience's delight.

These concerts were especially poignant for me, having completed forty years, starting as soprano soloist and for the last 35 years as conductor. We took the advice given by Frank Rhodes and the executive committee when Helen, Maxine and I attended our first NAC Conference in Chester. The problem of succession was addressed and Helen was appointed as our new conductor from September 2010.

Consequently the concert on 22 July was my last with the conductor's hat on and the choir took me by surprise with a lovely speech and a beautiful bouquet presented by Helen. Emotion overcame me and I

was crying my eyes out. The trouble was that we still had to perform the exciting Beatles' Medley which needed all my concentration and my tears caused my glasses to steam up. However, a little girl from the audience brought a paper hanky and soon all was well. The ending, when all of the audience joined us in Hey Jude with the repeated ad infinitum chorus 'Da - Da Da Da Da Da - Da Da Da Da - Hey Jude' reached new heights. I suspect that it was humming through many people's minds as they tried to get to sleep that night.

So, Helen is starting the new season with three workshops when she will have some fun with warm ups and introduce the choir to some of the items we will be working on during the next year. Although she will be doing the teaching side of things from the piano, we auditioned and then appointed a very talented young pianist, Kathryn Kay, who will play for the last few rehearsals and then at concerts starting with our carol concerts later this year. I will sing in the choir where I am needed, continue as secretary and enjoy my role as Honorary Life President for as long as I am fit and able.

Jacky Hetherington

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Basingstoke Ladies Choir Thames South

Memories Are Made Of This

I cannot quite believe it but it will be 40 years, in October, that my friend Margaret Allen and I joined the Basingstoke Ladies Choir.



Roger Stacey's photograph of Susan Booth and Margaret Allen

I was introduced by Jessie Norris, a founder member, who I had met at my local bus stop, in October 1964. At the time I was a young mother and was ready to take up a hobby. I had sung in Hilda Price's Girls' Choir as a child so always had an interest in singing.

My audition took place in the front room of the founder of the choir, Ken Williams. The song I was asked to sing was *He That Hath a Pleasant Face*. That was in October 1970. The subs, at that time were 6d per week and the choir rehearsed at St Thomas' School for the deaf; quite appropriate some might say!

The first of many away trips with the choir was to Cornwall to sing with the Holman Climax Male Voice Choir. I was billeted with Beryl Mason in a cottage out in the sticks, although the church clock woke us on the hour during the night. We had a stone hot water bottle which was a bit painful if you kicked it. I don't recall the concerts but many friendships were forged with Holman Climax over the next few years.

Margaret Allen joined the choir in the same month as me. I first became friendly with Margaret when she invited me to an underwear party, at her house, shortly after joining the choir. We have been great friends ever since, sharing in family celebrations and woes. We have spent several holidays together from when the

children were small. The choir has been my extended family over the years and I will never forget them singing at my daughter, Carey's, wedding in 1996. Many also came to support my family at my Mum's funeral.

The first uniform I wore was a knee length blue crimplene dress. Quite the fashion in those days! Later this was replaced by a flowery cotton tabard which several of us made in Margaret's living room. There have been many changes since and sometimes it can take years to choose a new outfit.

I have been on many wonderful trips with the choir. In the early days without my husband who stayed behind to mind the children. In those days the young ones sat at the back of the bus and from there led the singing on the way home, probably to the disapproval of the 'sensible' ones at the front. As the children grew up my husband also joined our trips and we have enjoyed many experiences with the choir. One of the most memorable was the trip to Canada in 1998. We travelled on April fool's day and the very next day woke up to a blanket of snow. The hospitality shown to us then and by many other choirs since has been second to none.

Over the years we have sung in the Albert Hall, Worcester Cathedral, and Cologne Cathedral many lovely churches in Malta in 2003, lots of theatres and one venue I will never forget was singing *O Fortuna* at The Dome, Thorpe Park in April 1993. The Choir has sung in England, Wales, Canada, France, Germany and Malta but as yet haven't made it to Scotland! There have been ten Musical Directors during these 40 years.

Our latest trip was in April 2010 when the choir were invited to sing in our twin town of Alençon for the third time. It was a memorable trip and the choir received two ovations during our performance at the Theatre d'Alençon. After the concert a meal was laid on for us and much singing and even dancing took place. We were served dessert after one in the morning! We also managed a trip to Le Mans and Bayeux during the two days we were there.

I have also organised several fund raising

events including many jumble sales and once raised £450 by swimming 101 lengths of our local swimming pool to help fund the trip to Canada. We later had a sponsored walk around Basingstoke to fund another trip, organized with the help of our president at the time, Arthur Attwood, known as Mr Basingstoke.

One of the daftest things I remember is the Gotcha Oscar's for BBC television's Noel Edmunds Show in October 1994. The subjects were Barbara Windsor and Andy Crane (children's presenter). Another BBC show 'Last Choir Standing' will live on as one of the most emotional experiences with the Choir.

I first served on the Committee (I do not remember the year, but it was shortly after I joined) as Publicity Officer. In those days not everyone had a telephone and I remember many occasions ringing reports through to the Gazette from the local call box. My next roll was assistant Secretary (Margaret Allen was the Secretary). I used to join her at the Catholic Church, where she worked, to help with copying. There were no photocopiers in those days. Stencils were made on a typewriter and then inserted on a large roller and turned by hand to produce a copy. A very messy job, I recall. My next role was that of Treasurer and I continued at this for many years. At first all entries were made manually in a ledger but by the time I handed over to someone else we had come into the computer age. After a short break from committee I returned as Vice-Chairman for about three years from this I then took on the General Secretary role, which I continue to do. I now combine this with Stage Manager, a job I really enjoy.

The choir is now planning a second trip to Weimar, East Germany in September. It is sure to be another memorable occasion.

None of these experiences would have happened had I not become a member of the choir all those years ago. So I say to all those who are now members, to look to the future and keep this wonderful institution going well into the millennium!

Sue Booth

You can send me your choir's report of what has happened, news of what is going to happen or personal reminiscences (like Sue Booth's) at publications.officer@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk

Download a helpsheet from the Members' area on www.nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk or from me by email

Crawford

Worcester Male Voice Choir Midlands South West

During the last two years the Choir has increased its membership to 65 choristers, extended its repertoire and enhanced its quality. Performances at major venues and participation in tours home and abroad have become a regular and exciting feature.

At a concert to celebrate St George's Day Worcester Male Voice Choir (WMVC) were joined by the outstanding heritage Ensemble from St Petersburg. Currently on tour in the UK it was their only performance in Worcestershire and Herefordshire and their unique sound based on a long tradition of Russian Orthodox Church music was something not to miss.

Among the ten pieces they sang were their own particular versions of well known favourites like *Ave Maria* and *Kalinka*. The audience was stunned by the performance.

Hermitage Ensemble and WMVC had twice previously performed together during the Cornwall International Male Voice Choir Festival in 2009.

WMVC sang for the first time two new additions to its repertoire, the Vicar of Dibley version of *The Lord is my Shepherd* and *Do You Hear the People Sing?* The rest of the programme included amongst others *American Trilogy*, *Bring Him Home* and *Anthem*. Comments on the quality of the Choir referred to the excellence

of their performance and it seemed that the 60 choristers had been uplifted by the quality of their Russian guests.

The sell out concert was held in St Martin's Church, Worcester and included the traditional audience participation in *Pomp and Circumstance* and *Jerusalem*. The internationally acclaimed Keith Hearnshaw accompanied on the impressive organ and a rousing finale with flags waving, conductor Nic Wright sporting an appropriate St George's Day hat and Sheila Leatherland's piano draped in the English flag.

WMVC hope this celebration of St George's Day will become an annual feast of music which can also raise funds for local charities. On this first occasion we supported the Noah's Ark Trust which provides a bereavement service for children and they benefited with over £500 being donated. More details of the charity appear in the next section.

In February WMVC were invited to participate in the 25th anniversary of the establishment of BBC Hereford And Worcester, which was held at Malvern Festival Theatre. Three pieces went out live *With a Voice of Singing*, *African Prayer* and appropriately to conclude the programme and to stress the support of the work of the Noah's Ark Trust, *You'll Never Walk Alone*.

As part of their anniversary celebrations BBC H/W are supporting The Noah's

Ark Trust during 2010 This local charity provides a whole range of services for children who have lost parents and other close relatives whether due to illness or accidents. They will never walk alone.

WMVC has continued its policy to encourage music in the local community and has recently performed with primary school children at Whittington School near Worcester. At the time of writing the Choir is about to embark on a Bank Holiday tour of North Wales. More details in our next report.

Terry Dillingham

Crawford's Kwik Komposer Kwiz Kwestions.

1. Which of his own compositions did Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky describe as being very loud and noisy?
2. Which famous composer played in bars that also acted as brothels to help support his family?
3. Bolero which was used in the movie '10' was composed by which famous person?
4. Which composer, virtuoso pianist and teacher was from Hungary?
5. Which famous composer was also known as the Red Priest?
6. Which famous composer began composing music at the age of five?
7. Which composer wrote the now famous '[Wedding March](#)'?
8. Who was the first Japanese symphonic composer?
9. Who composed the piano duet, Marche Militaire Op51 No1?
10. Who composed the famous opera Madame Butterfly?

Answers on page 35



K Shoes Male Voice Choir Cumbria / Isle of Man

KSMVC is well into its 41st year having enjoyed a memorable 40th anniversary involving concerts, overseas travel and a new CD recording. The highlight was our Anniversary Concert for a capacity audience in the Leisure Centre at Kendal. We were joined by three visiting Male Voice Choirs: Much Wenlock, Steeton and Chapel-en-le-Frith. Among our guests were Eric and Sandra Cooper from the NAC.

Most of our performances are around the Lake District and North Lancashire, but last May we spread our wings and went to Killarney where our concerts were well received both in St Mary's Church of Ireland in Killarney and St John's Church in Tralee. Killarney town is twinned with Kendal. We spent 5 days in Killarney and had 'Jaunty Car' rides and a cruise on Killarney Lake as well as coach tours around the area.

We are planning for the future and aiming at our golden 50th anniversary (hopefully with 50+ members as well).

We rehearse every Wednesday Evening in the Town Hall in Kendal, starting at 7.30 and finishing at 9.30. We have just over 40

members who come from all around South Cumbria and North Lancashire and a high attendance is maintained. We enjoy our



singing and the discipline in learning the words and the music, for we give 'music free' performances.

Typically our concert programme includes ballads, love songs, folk songs, show songs, 'Golden Oldies' and the obligatory Welsh hymn tune. Our current repertoire includes *The Day is Past*, *The Long Day Closes*, *The Workin' Man* and a selection from 'Les Miserables' whilst our 'foreign' song this year is *Die Nacht*. In our concerts we include guest soloists and instrumentalists and some solo items from choir members. We have enjoyed shared concerts with other choirs and we have also travelled to Music Festivals at home and abroad.

As well as our visit to Killarney last year, in 2007 we visited Kendal's other twin town which is Rinteln in Germany. The photo shows our musical director conducting an impromptu Speed your journey before we set off to Rinteln.

Amongst all this activity we are fortunate in having very supportive partners and a 'Ladies Committee' helps on the social side.

We are proud of our heritage and wear the 'K' badge in our lapels. As the name suggests the uniform includes the shoes as well since we are supported in that respect by Clarks International, the new owners of K Shoes.

Our website www.k-shoes-male-voice-choir.org.uk has more information.

Jim Fielding

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Tideswell Male Voice Choir Yorkshire South

Over the past five years the Tideswell Male Voice Choir, under the inspirational leadership of its Musical Director and Principal Conductor, Dennis Kay, has gone from strength to strength. With over thirty events in 2010, its programme covers a comprehensive range of venues including concert halls, theatres, country houses/parks, outdoor arenas, churches, caves, caverns and a variety of locations for private functions. The popularity of the choir and the demand for its services continues to grow. The 2011 programme is almost fully booked with several concerts confirmed for 2012.



Dennis attributes the choir's success to hard work, commitment, good vocal training and team spirit. He believes that a busy choir is a happy choir, constantly looking forward to the next exciting event. These come thick and fast.

TMVC was delighted to be part of the burgeoning Buxton Fringe once again this year. Having given a preview of its programme in the Pavilion Gardens, which attracted hundreds of people, the choir presented a spectacular musical evening to a packed St John's Church in Buxton.

The choir's performance was recognised by the organisers of the Fringe and nominated for awards in two categories, eventually being presented with the music award for the 'Most Enjoyable Performance'. Dennis commented 'We are very honoured and delighted to receive this prestigious award. This is particularly pleasing given the hard work of the choir and the music team in achieving this standard of performance.'

Earlier this year, under the direction of Dennis, Tideswell MVC set up a project which brought together forty men to give them the opportunity to take part in a 'Showstoppers Spectacular' at Buxton Opera House on 24 October 2010. This group gave its first public performance, alongside

Tideswell MVC, at the Fringe concert. Dennis commented, 'I am absolutely delighted with the group's first public performance, these guys are showing tremendous commitment and enthusiasm and are producing a sound that is simply amazing.'

One week after the Fringe event, the choir held its Annual Concert in the famous 'Cathedral of the Peak' where standing room only was the order of the day. The following week 'Sold Out' was the notice outside St Helen's Church, Grindleford for its next concert.

Over the next few months TMVC will be working hard in preparation for several major concerts including the show at the Buxton Opera House. In August, the choir will record another new CD and, in between the concert programme schedule, will be preparing to compete at the inaugural Isle of Man International Music Festival.

Dennis believes that the choir is in the entertainment business and it is vital to take a good look at how as 'entertainers' choir members present themselves individually and collectively. The choir must aim to excite audiences by delivering the 'wow' factor. Wherever Tideswell MVC appears you can be guaranteed a performance which will leave you wanting more.

Visit our website www.tideswellmvc.co.uk to learn more about why Tideswell is making things happen.

Stuart Gordon

Saltash Ladies Choir Cornwall

Since attending the Festival of Brass and Voices at the Royal Albert Hall at the end of October 2009, The Saltash Ladies Choir (together with their Director of Music Linda Eastlake and their Accompanist Carolyn Varcoe who has taken over the reins from their previous stalwart Accompanist of over 20 years, Eileen Hatch who, sadly had to retire at the end of 2009 due to ill health) have had a number of very successful concerts and their busy calendar extends to the end of 2010, with other concerts already booked for 2011 and 2012.

Each year at their Annual General Meeting the ladies nominate a charity for which they raise money during the ensuing

year. Since 2003 they have raised over £17,000 in Saltash alone. Their current charity, which was chosen in March 2010, is Help for Heroes, and already they have raised £1,798, of which £590 has already been sent to the charity. Over the years the Ladies have sung with many leading choirs and bands throughout Devon and Cornwall and even further afield. They have forged friendships with choirs they have met at the Royal Albert Hall and have enjoyed singing in concerts with those choirs, namely the Nelson Civic Ladies Choir and the Wantage Male Voice Choir both of whom have visited Saltash.

This year they enjoyed many concerts in the area, one of which was with the superb City of Truro Male Voice Choir with whom they have sung previously, both in Truro and Saltash. In June the Ladies visited Torquay, where they sang in concert with the Brixham Orpheus Male Voice Choir and the Riviera Singers, a ladies choir also from Brixham, and both of these choirs generously donated the proceeds from the concert to the Help for Heroes fund. The ladies choir was honoured that they were asked to host a concert in July with the Loughborough Endowed School Concert and Big Bands. These musicians, whose ages were from 13 - 18 years are superbly talented, and their Director of Music is a true Cornishman - who was born and brought up in the county. The ladies were indeed delighted that they had been invited to join in concert with these young musicians. One of the other excellent choirs that have sung with the Saltash Ladies in the past is the Plymouth Area Police Choir and they are joining forces again in November for another concert. Also in November the ladies have accepted an invitation to sing again with the Royal Marine Band (Plymouth Division) at the Pavilions in Plymouth for the Festival of Remembrance when they will be joined with a local boys' school choir. December is going to prove a very busy month for the choir with several concerts and events booked. The choir has been fortunate enough to increase their membership during 2010 to 42 singing members.

If any Choir would like to visit Cornwall and arrange a concert with the Saltash Ladies Choir on a 'one to one' basis whereby you visit us and we would pay you a return visit, please email me at dflatcis@gmail.com you will be sure of a warm Cornish Welcome.

Cecily Sharp

Wadebridge Male Voice Choir
Cornwall

90 years and still as popular as ever

Founded in 1920 at the instigation of Mr Harry Woolcock, Wadebridge Male Voice Choir is one of the oldest choirs in Cornwall. It was originally directed by Dr A F Wilson-Gunn. Within a year of its initiation the choir was travelling to music competitions and festivals across the southwest. Dr Wilson-Gunn retired from the choir in 1950 after 30 years service. Records show how generations of men have benefitted from the Male Voice Choir tradition.



Today, as the choir celebrates its ninetieth birthday, it is enjoying increased popularity. At a time when some choirs are struggling to attract new members the choir continues to grow with over 50 regular choristers. This is largely due to the friendliness of the members and the accomplished musical direction of Paul Mitchell who continues to improve the quality of the pieces and extend the repertoire for all tastes. This is best evidenced by the choir's free summer concerts on the picturesque Padstow Harbour side, where regularly the audience includes teenagers who are surprised to hear the choir sing numbers like *Angels* as performed by Robbie Williams.

Traditional male voice pieces are still a core part of most programmes but new works like *Cornish Hearts* composed for the Cornwall International Male Voice Choral Festival 2007 by Gareth Churcher, words by Bob Wilmott are also performed.

Another recent addition is the testing novelty item *The Seven Ages of Song* a Festival Commission from 2009 by Alan Simmons, a definite favourite of audiences. Choir accompanists



are Sheila Flower and Grahame Lee. Each year the choir undertakes a programme of concerts for charitable purposes in Wadebridge and around Cornwall.

The Choir has taken part in combined events such as the World Choir performances in Cardiff Arms Park in 1992 and 1993, and the Festival of Cornish Choirs on each of the four occasions at the Royal Albert Hall. At the last of these, in 2000, the programme included *Cornwall I Love Thee* written by a member of the Choir. Other engagements have included visits to Toronto in Canada and on several occasions Languieux in Brittany. On their visit earlier this year the choir performed the rousing *Cantate A Jean Barte* by D Riefenstahl arr Rene Cordier to the delight of the French audience. For further details of the choir, visit www.wmvc.org.uk or Contact Taff Williams Tel 01208 814717.

Brian Wood

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Weekend breaks with your choir: an inexpensive way to tour with your group

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It's been a tough year financially and those little luxuries, like choir tours, are being pushed further down the agenda. However, over the past 12 months, we have seen a surprising dedication from our regular clients who want to keep their annual tour alive and continue to achieve the musical and social benefits which touring promotes.

In response to this demand we have worked hard to develop our concert contacts at nearer destinations in France and Belgium, so that we can provide groups with shorter tours, to closer tour destinations, with a lower price tag, where the quality of the concert arrangements is not compromised.

So what can OneStage provide for a group of adult musicians? First and foremost, a really good weekend away, with reasonably priced accommodation, good food (if required) and a weekend itinerary with a good mix of group activities and free time.

For groups travelling from the South of England, the Dover / Calais ferry route will take you swiftly and cheaply across the channel; whereas those from the North of England can travel from Hull, perhaps incorporating a 'cruise' element in to the tour.

We can offer a huge range of concert venues in Picardy, at destinations such as Boulogne sur Mer and Le Touquet (only 45 minutes from Calais); or across Normandy for a tour complete with concerts, castles and Calvados!

A short break in Belgium could include visits to the beautiful cities of Bruges and Ghent with well attended concerts in smaller communities across Flanders.

Depending upon the number travelling, a tour can cost as little as £115.00 per person for a two night stay, including transportation by coach and ferry and arrangements for one formal, fully promoted concert.

At OneStage we are all musicians with a good understanding of the needs of an adult group and the various stresses of the financial climate. We hope that we can work with you to keep your tours alive.

Philippa Trentham

Stagecoach not OneStage Two composers who took to the roads in search of music and money.

It is so easy for us today to arrange our journeys to foreign climes. We can use the internet to plan or visit a travel agent. When we want to tour as choirs we get companies like 'OneStage' to do our planning for us.

It must have been so different, centuries ago, for composers to travel the world before the aeroplane, train or motorcar. Imagine them travelling hundreds of miles by coach, horse or even, in some cases, on foot.

In October 1705, J S Bach took a four weeks' leave from work and walked 200 miles to Lubeck to hear the celebrated player Dietrich Buxtehude.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart toured extensively, being paraded as a child prodigy, or 'Wunderkind', by his father. The teenage years of Mozart were significant and important as he undertook more travels and compositions.

1769: Mozart was 13. November 27 the father and son Mozarts travel to Verona via Innsbruck.

1770: Mozart performs in Verona, Mantua, Milan, Bologna, Florence, Rome and Naples.

1771: He spends spring in Venice. He only stays in Salzburg for about four months, then he's off to Italy all through the remaining year. It is 491 miles from Salzburg to Naples.

Crawford



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Crawford's Corner

Well here we are again; it's autumn; season of mists and mellow fruitfulness. For many choirs it's the time for a grand concert and many of you will be deep in final rehearsals. For some they are coming to the end of a busy year, perhaps even an anniversary year. You will no doubt be eager to share what you have been up to with your fellow choristers by sending your report, reminiscence, story or gossip to News & Views.

In this issue I have included some of the information that is in the helpsheet that I made as guidance for people submitting

their wonderful reports and stories. It really is straightforward. Some of the copy I receive is so complicated with bold, underlined headings and coloured bits and pieces. It must have taken hours to produce, it looks gorgeous. Unfortunately, the first thing I have to do is take all the lovely stuff out so that I can set it up in the way it appears in News & Views. Have a look at page 11. I hope it is helpful.

In this edition I have included a Musidoku® puzzle. Those who have been hooked to the basic Sudoku puzzle may find this a new and welcome challenge. In the Musidoku® the numbers have been replaced with items of musical notation. Antony Kearns owns the copyright for these puzzles and has kindly given permission for us to include it and also has given permission for members of the NAC to print it in their programmes or newsletters as long as the copyright notice is included in full. If you want the sample puzzle for your choir publications just send me an email and I'll send it to you. If you enjoyed doing the puzzle you can find more at www.musidoku.com where you can buy one of Antony's two books, or even both.

Crawford's Kwik Komposer Kwiz Kwestions The Answers

1. 1812 Overture
2. Johannes Brahms
3. Maurice Ravel
4. Franz Liszt
5. Antonio Vivaldi
6. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
7. Felix Mendelssohn
8. Kosaku Yamada
9. Franz Schubert
10. Giacomo Puccini

Crawford

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Swadlincote DE12 6QA

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president@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk

Celia Johns - *Chairman*

350 March Road, Turves, Whittlesey,
Peterborough PE7 2DW

01733 840370

chairman@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk

Lord James Ferrabee - *General Secretary*

35 Hawton Crescent, Wollaton Park,
Nottingham NG8 1BZ

0115 978 8847

general.secretary@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk

Paul Gailiunas - *Treasurer*

25 Hedley Terrace, Gosforth,
Newcastle, NE3 1DP

0191 285 0654

treasurer@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk

Lord James Ferrabee - *Conference Co-ordinator*

35 Hawton Crescent, Wollaton Park,
Nottingham NG8 1BZ

0115 978 8847

conference.coordinator@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk

Brenda E Wilkinson - *Membership Officer*

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

01530 411178

membership.officer@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk

Eric Cooper - *Music and Festivals Officer*

7 Imperial Road, Edgerton,
Huddersfield HD3 3AF

01484 543982

musical.officer@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk

Richard Bradley - *Public Relations Officer*

292 Station Road, New Waltham,
Grimsby DN36 4QQ

01472 822417

pro@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk

Bob Swallow - *Publications Officer*

8 Charles Avenue, Laceby,
Grimsby DN37 7HA

01472 500130

publications.officer@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk

Position vacant *Services Officer*

services.officer@nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk

Bob Barratt - *Music Publisher*

Jean Cooper - *ret General Secretary*

Gerald Haigh - *ret Chairman*

Ken Hone - *ret Group 11 Chairman*

Peter Marshall - *ret Services Officer*

Frank Rhodes - *ret General Secretary*

John Robbins - *ret Gen. Secretary*

Alan Simmons - *Music Publisher*

Des Statham - *ret Chairman*

Doris Williams - *Music and Festivals Consultant*

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
Conference Bookings	James Ferrabee
Copyright (Photocopying)	Eric Cooper
Festivals Information	Eric Cooper
Financial Enquiries	Paul Gailiunas
Gift Aid Scheme for Charities	Paul Gailiunas
Health and Safety	James Ferrabee
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 9 November 2010 11.00 Twin Oaks Hotel, Chesterfield

Tuesday 11 January 2011, 11.00 Twin Oaks Hotel, Chesterfield

Open Forum Meetings (Open to all members)

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

Solution

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♩	#	<i>f</i>	♭	♩	<i>p</i>	♩	♩	♩
<i>p</i>	♩	♩	♩	♩	#	♩	<i>f</i>	♭
♩	♭	♩	♩	♩	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	♩	#
♩	♩	♩	<i>p</i>	#	♩	<i>f</i>	♭	♩
♭	♩	<i>p</i>	♩	<i>f</i>	♩	#	♩	♩
<i>f</i>	♩	#	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	<i>p</i>