



# Pontnewydd Male Choir

## CHOIR NEWSLETTER

Year 25 FEBRUARY 2021

### **This month's birthdays.**

**Ken Long** (T1) Sunday 7<sup>th</sup>      **Paul Wellington.** (T2). Thursday 25<sup>th</sup>

These lads were born in the same year – care to guess?

### **From our Chairman:**

*A Happy New Year to you and I'm sure we are all glad to see the back of 2020. At least 2021 has started on a more positive note and I hope that those notes soon get transferred into our practice room!*

*Despite the choir being unable to meet for most of last year there has still pbeen much positive work undertaken that has helped maintain the contact and communication that is central to upholding the spirit and camaraderie for which our choir is noted and I wanted to express my personal thanks and gratitude to those choristers who have put in so much hard work.*

*So here's my New Year's Honours list:*

*Martin Carey and Martin Jones for their continuous phoning and emailing of choristers:*

*Martyn Jones and Lucie for organising our bi-weekly online practices:*

*Doug Hopkins for organising our weekly online chat room and for updating our website:*

*Phil Evans for keeping our Facebook page alive:*

*Roy Fisher for regularly compiling our monthly newsletter:*

*Peter Davies for creating our new calendar:*

*Alun Wilmot for distributing the calendar to all our sponsors:*

*The management committee for their strong support this year.*

*I am also aware that a number of choristers, especially Lyn Birch, Graeme Jones and Mike Mayled, who take it upon themselves to regularly phone other choir members to maintain contact and check on their wellbeing. I would encourage you all to follow their example to help ensure that the heart and soul of the choir remains strong so that we can enjoy a full return to singing when circumstances allow.*

*Here's to a happy and healthy 2021*

*Look after yourselves and stay safe*

*Blwyddyn Newydd Dda a chadwch yn ddiogel  
Ian*

## Welsh Association of Male Choirs Update.

The Association has continued to work with other organisations to lobby on behalf of our member choirs in particular but also on behalf of the wider, community-based amateur organisations in the cultural sector. There is continuing frustration with the lack of attention being paid to the amateur part of the sector by Governments throughout the UK. But we are having some effect – the criteria relating to the recent Emergency and Lottery funding streams announced by Ty Cerdd were influenced by the views of WAMC amongst others.

On Easter Monday, 5<sup>th</sup> April, there will be a live stream of a chorus of several hundred of voices from all over the world singing three “Messiah” choruses as part of the London Handel Festival. The live stream will be from Handel’s own church in London. **Iestyn Davies** will be one of the star soloists. An inaugural performance was broadcast by **Classic Fm** on 3<sup>rd</sup> December and was a great success. You can still see that performance (free) on

<https://www.facebook.com/132685010.../videos/194080452255620>

The WAMC has recently taken out membership of **Making Music**, a national collaborative organisation and we have been working closely with them on COVID-19 issues. They are one of the organisations running **Make Music Day** - an international, online, celebration of music held on 21<sup>st</sup> June each year.

### Pontnewydd Male Choir update.

See the end of this newsletter for latest information regarding concert / events dates.

Donations have been made to **Lovelight** and the **Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal**.

A regular item on the agenda of Management Committee Meetings is the possibility of resuming regular indoor practices – so watch this space.

Synchronisation problems affect the efficiency of Zoom practice sessions. Investigations are underway into other software that reduces time lags if fewer (up to 12) singers are involved.

*(Editor’s note: one-off performances can be edited to get rid of the lack of synchronisation – live sessions are a different proposition.)*

### Looking back.

A choir formed in 1904 must have a huge collection of memories and it is surely remarkable that we have present members who can look back over almost half of them. One such memory is of a memorable visit to The Royal Albert Hall in April 1986. We had taken part in the Festivals of Massed Male Choirs in 1978, 1979 and 1982. The increase in membership had created a demand for repeated visits – tales of experiences meant that ‘newcomers’ didn’t want to miss out. Overleaf is a scan of page 29 of the programme for the concert. The conductor was Terry James and the soloist Terence Sharpe. *(I was there!)*



## Pontnewydd Male Choir

Pontnewydd Male Choir's musical journey began in 1904 in a Cwmbran clubroom, and has taken in numerous concert venues - home and abroad. Destinations have included Scotland, Newquay, Kent, Worcester, Coventry and London, with Albert Hall appearances in 1978, 1979 and 1982. The choir's visit to Holland - a return trip to exchange choir Amersfoort - was a highpoint, completed with an appearance in the International Music Festival at the Hague.

For its many loyal supporters, the choir performs regularly much nearer to home.

Pontnewydd Male Choir's conductor since 1971, Walford Hutchings has also been both soloist and accompanist. He is Head of Music at a Gwent Comprehensive School.

The choir's accompanist, Betty Parry is an Associate of the London College of Music, and joined the choir in 1979, having previously played for Pontypool Choral Society and Beaufort Male Choir.



Walford Hutchings Musical Director



Betty Parry Accompanist

Six of the pieces sung by the choir were *CAVALRY OF THE STEPPES*, *THE FINNISH FOREST*, *LANDERKENNUNG*, *HANDELS' LARGO*, *THE LOST CHORD* and *THE SARACENS*. The opening piece was *MARTYRS OF THE ARENA* and the final piece was – *NIDAROS*. There were six other pieces, so I reckon the audience had their money's worth!

Each time we took part all the choirs were from South Wales and in 1986 they were Abercynon, Aber valley, Afan Glee, Blaenporth, Cardiff, Cowbridge, Creunant, Cwm, Cwmtwrch, Glynneath, Haverfordwest, Kilgetty, Llamdybie, Llantrisant, Mynyddmawr, Nicholas Singers, Pelenna Valley, Pontnewydd, Whitchuch and Ystrad Mynach. (How many are still in existence?)

**For relaxation.**

*Last month's teasers:*

If this common food item is put into a bar you'll then see a mendicant.  
(3 letters). If you put egg into bar you'll see a beggar.

Add just one letter to the following and see what you get:

*French cheese becomes quite short. Brie .... Brief*

*A vegetable becomes a fruit. Pea .... Pear*

*Showing disapproval becomes part of a car. Boo .... Boot*

*An animal noise becomes what ships do. Moo .... Moor*

*What number, greater than zero, will look just the same if you turn it through a quarter, half or three-quarters of a turn or even look at it in a mirror? X*

**February teasers.**

M.D Martyn emailed information about choir pieces to be rehearsed in forthcoming zoom sessions. Rather than quoting the titles he gave the first lines of each piece. Unfortunately his computer developed a fault and as a result the following information was received for the first two pieces:

Dp,r dsu ;pbr oy od s tobrt

G;u ,r yp yjr ,ppm

Can you work out what the two pieces were?

.....

Can you think of the name of a pet food that indicates how 'cross' the pet might me?

.....

What 6 letter word has 3 anagrams that mean:

Part of a piece of furniture, a recognition of success, a screw.

**Engagements.**

**Cancelled:** June 2021 concert in Mark, Somerset.

**Postponed:** 2021 Annual Concert – new date April 2022.

**Under review:** July 2022 joint concert with Toronto Welsh Male Choir.

Roy Fisher.....Editor