



Pontnewydd Male Choir

CHOIR NEWSLETTER OCTOBER issue.

Year 26 October 2022

Welcome to our October newsletter and, following my appeal last month, I am delighted to report that a few choristers responded to my plea for help and provided me with some items that I hope will be of interest to our readership and become regular features in future editions.

You will see that Sarah Jones and Ian Roberts (B2) have contributed music related items, Mike O'Dwyer is our first sports correspondent and for you wild-life enthusiasts, we have a guest reporter in Paul Reynolds' wife, Wendy, who will be keeping us updated on the prickly subject of hedgehogs!

Please let me have your ideas on what we should include in future issues of our Newsletter.

October birthdays.

Alun Wilmot (T1) Sunday 2nd

Martin Jones (T2) Saturday 15th

John Counsell (T2) Saturday 8th

Peter Binding (B1) Sunday 23rd

Chorister updates.

Roy Fisher continues his recovery and remains in Llanyravon Court Nursing Home on Llanfrecha Way, Cwmbran. However, a recent outbreak of Covid at the nursing home has resulted in a ban on all visiting. If you need an update, you can phone the Nursing Home on 01633 876112. Our continued best wishes go to Roy.

Peter Davies, remarkable man that he is, has again shrugged off another bout and is back to what seems to be his normal sanguine self. **Mansel Young** has also suffered and we hope to see him back in practice before too long.

Paul Reynolds has succumbed to increasing pain and reduced mobility and has requested Leave of Absence. We wish him a speedy recovery and swift return to practice.

We continue to welcome back established choristers to practice after the Covid-imposed lockdown. **Steve Spokes** and **John Miller** have returned to swell the ranks of the Baritones, and which has resulted in much shuffling of the seats in the practice room. **Steve's** college lecturing left him very vulnerable to contracting the virus to which he eventually succumbed as restrictions were lifted. **John Miller's** return was delayed by a combination of a requirement to visit his vast estates in Western France and recovery after an operation. It's good to see them back in practice and in robust health.

New chorister recruitment

You will be aware that we are trying to recruit new members into the choir and the plan is to occasionally hold our practice nights at different venues around Cwmbran, not only to see if we can attract more choristers, but also to take our music out into the wider community. So, if you know of venues that might be suitable, please let me know.

Our "**Bring a Friend**" practice night at Cwmbran Rugby Club last night was a very relaxed and enjoyable occasion and, we hope, successful. We were joined by four prospective choristers (together with two visitors from Cornwall who enjoyed themselves immensely) and, although the initial response for them was positive, time will tell if that translates into regular attendance at practice. Nevertheless, the whole experiment was enjoyable and will be repeated. So, for those of you who still have friends, use your persuasive charms to invite them along.

Raiders of the Lost Archive



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It appears that an expedition into the deepest recesses of a garage has unearthed a rare and possibly valuable choir artefact. This magnificent wooden wine cask has been hidden for years but remains in remarkably good condition despite its antiquity and its associated plaque bears the inscription...

'In Freundschaft 2004 MCV Buchenau'



If any of our older choir members can provide information regarding the occasion that provided such an unusual memento, I shall be delighted to receive it.

However, I do have a major concern and that relates to its contents – they are missing! Again, I appeal to our older choir members in the hope that they can shed some light as to their whereabouts.

The barrel now resides in the vaults of our secure storage facility at Fox's Storage.

Engagements.

New Inn Pensioners concert

Our concert on 9th September proved a revelation and a joy despite the presence of an untuned piano. Well done Annette for overcoming that little local difficulty! The choir sang particularly well, the concert was very well received, and we discovered that we had some hidden talent within the ranks of the choristers. Keith Jones delivered a monologue called "Never a dull moment" based on a, whilst Paul Reynolds revealed that he was a closet poet, reading one of his own compositions entitled "Words" which described the power of words as the principal means of communicating context and emotion. There will be more to follow on this in next month's edition.

The months leading up to Christmas were going to be quite busy for the choir, but we have received several postponements and cancellations and the amended list of engagements is below.

Item	Date	Arrival Time	Venue	Address
Gwent Police HQ Opening	05/10/22	TBC	POSTPONED	
St Gabriel's Fundraiser	07/10/22	18:30	POSTPONED	Clomendy Rd., Old Cwmbran NP44 3LR
WAMC St David's Hall Practice	09/10/22	12:30	St Julian's School	Heather Rd., Newport NP19 7XU
West Pontnewydd Hall Fund raiser	21/10/22	18:30	POSTPONED	
Remembrance Service	09/11/22	TBC	CANCELLED	
Lovelight Concert	06/12/22	TBC	St Woolos Cathedral	105 Stow Hill, Newport NP20 4SZ
Rural Concierge of Herefordshire	21/12/22	15:00	Parkway Hotel	Cwmbran Dr, Cwmbran NP44 3UW



Race Night

The work of the **Ladies Committee** re-commenced with an enjoyable and successful Race Night at Cwmbran Working Man's Club and my grateful thanks to them for their hard work. Most people who attended did not leave disappointed as they were all prepared to lose their money on the night! If my bitter experience was anything to go by, the "on course" racing tips provided by the lady bookies proved totally unreliable and their coffers were suitably swollen.

Their next fund-raising event is an evening with Pashy Pops on Saturday 26th November. Tickets will be available shortly.

Christmas

I apologise for mentioning the C word so early, but a few of our choristers are actively preparing for that seasonal event. **Alun Wilmot** has booked the Cwrt Henllys for our Christmas Dinner for Thursday 15th December, whilst **Mike O'Dwyer** will soon be posting his request-list of donation items for our Christmas Hamper raffle.

Lawn Green Bowling

As some of you may know, Mike O'Dwyer is a keen Lawn Green bowler and currently Chairman and a coach at Croesyceiliog Bowls Club. Mike would like to renew the open invitation to join the club at the start of the new outdoor season. No need to worry about the lack of experience as coaching is provided free of charge.

This year Croesyceiliog BC have maintained their place in the 1st Division of the Monmouthshire Bowls Association, finishing in 3rd position. They also won the Eastern Valley league.

They run two teams on a Saturday, another on a Wednesday and have an over-60's team that plays on a Tuesday.

Y Tangnefeddwyr (The Peacemakers)

This piece has returned to our repertoire after we first started to learn it in Welsh in 2012 under Walford Hutchings. We subsequently began singing it in English with Pauline Carey and now it has returned to the practice room as one of the programme pieces for the St David's Hall concert next year.

The words are those of Waldo Williams who was a conscientious objector and pacifist, and when, from some distance, he saw Swansea in flames after the 1941 Blitz he was moved to write his poem Y Tangnefeddwyr (The Peacemakers). It explains that in the midst of the mayhem of WWII, peacemakers are "the children of God" – "plant i Dduw". It was set to music and translated into English by Eric Jones

Autumn Leaves

Sarah tells us that, a new addition to our repertoire, "Autumn Leaves" is a popular song and jazz standard composed by Joseph Kosma in 1945 with original lyrics by Jacques Prévert in French, and later by Johnny Mercer in English for the 1946 film *Les Portes de la nuit* (Gates of the Night)

"Autumn Leaves" has accumulated more than a thousand commercial recordings by such vocalists as Bing Crosby, Nat King Cole and Frank Sinatra. Roger Williams made the song a number-one hit in the U.S. in 1955, the first piano instrumental to reach number one. It was also quickly adopted by instrumental jazz artists including Artie Shaw, Duke Ellington and Miles Davis. So, gentlemen, we are in good company.

Rachie

There has been some debate recently as to how to pronounce the title of his hymn, so after some research I have discovered that:

Rachie, frequently sung to the hymn "I Bob Un Sydd Ffyddlon", is a Welsh hymn tune. The music was composed by Caradog Roberts, with lyrics by Henry Lloyd.

The name of the tune derives from a visit in 1918 by Caradog Roberts to the Jerusalem Chapel in Resolven, Neath to conduct a Cymanfa Ganu. Caradog Roberts stayed with the minister of the chapel for that event. The minister was Parchedig (Rev) Robert Enoch Williams, and the tune was named after his daughter who was popularly known as Rachie, although christened Rachel. ("Rachie" was pronounced by the family as "Ray-chee" and not as "Ratch-ee" which sometimes now occurs).



Expand your music knowledge

Ian Roberts recommends the ABRSM Music Theory app for anyone interested in learning the basics of music theory. Starting at grade level 1, users are taught the basics of rhythm and pitch, with lots of questions available to test your knowledge as you progress. It's equally perfect for choristers wanting to spend 10 minutes a day learning a little more about the dots, lines and symbols on their music score sheets, and all at the cost of a pint of beer! An absolute bargain!

Do your bit for conservation

Wendy Reynolds writes:

Six years ago, I found an unwell hedgehog in the garden. I struggled to find information on what to do or find someone to help look after it and so, unfortunately, it died. I was so upset I decided to attend a course in Hedgehog First Aid and Rehabilitation. And so Huffing Hedgehog Rescue was born. Over the years I have rescued, nursed back to health, and released back to the wild hundreds of hedgehogs. Since the start of the millennium, hedgehogs have declined by over half in the countryside, and by a third in towns and cities. In 2020 hedgehogs were placed on the Red List indicating that they could be at risk of extinction. Fortunately, current figures indicate that urban hedgehogs are holding their own. This is, in a big part, due to the support they are receiving from individuals in their gardens. Over the next few newsletters, I will be providing a Tip of the Month to help encourage hedgehogs to your gardens and support those that are already there. You can also find more information online at www.hedgehogstreet.org or www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk. You can also follow my rescue on Instagram @huffinghedgehogs.

October Tip of the Month

Create a Hedgehog Highway – Hedgehogs roam between 1-2km each night during their active season. It is critical that they can access a wide range of gardens. A 5-inch square hole in a wall or fence will let hedgehogs roam freely but is too small for most pets. If you don't want to cut a hole, dig some earth out under the fence.

If anyone else is passionate about conservation in any of its elements, please let me know.

Quote of the Month

“Singing is a noble art and a good exercise. It has nothing to do with worldly affairs, with the strife of the marketplace and the rivalries of the court. The singer feels no evil; he forgets all worry and is happy
- Martin Luther (1483-1546)

Computer Technology

Logging into a website I was asked for a password eight characters long, so I picked Snow White and the Seven Dwarves!

Best regards
Ian