



Pontnewydd Male Choir

Celebrating 120 Years

1904 - 2024



CHOIR NEWSLETTER

May issue

Year 29 May 2024



Welcome to our May newsletter as we continue to celebrate our 120th anniversary year and, at last, what appears to be a glimpse of British Summertime.

This month we also celebrate:

May 1st - In many countries, May Day and Labour Day are both celebrated on May 1. Labour Day started as International Workers' Day commemorating the trade union's fight for an eight-hour working day in the late 19th century. May Day was first recognised as a public bank holiday in the United Kingdom in 1978 and is held on the first Monday in May each year.

May 26th – Traditionally referred to as Whitsun which is a contraction of "White Sunday", and marks the Christian holy day of Pentecost It falls on the seventh Sunday after Easter and commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Christ's disciples.

Did you know:

19th May 1935 – T.E.Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia) died. Born in Tremadog, Carmarthenshire, he found fame as a leader of the Arab revolt against the Ottoman Empire during the First World War.

20th May 2009 – William Windsor (Billy), the goat of the 1st Battalion Royal Welsh, retired due to old age. He held the rank of a serving lance corporal, and his duty was to march at the head of the battalion on ceremonial occasions. His replacement is William Windsor II.

28th May 1865 – the clipper ship Mimosa carrying 153 Welsh emigrants set sail from Liverpool bound for Patagonia in Argentina to establish a Welsh colony (Y Wladfa) in the Chubut River valley in a bid to preserve the Welsh language and culture.

Totally unrelated, but did you know "**Mayday**" is an emergency procedure word used internationally as a distress signal in radio communications and is used to signal a life-threatening emergency primarily by aviators and mariners. Convention requires the word be repeated three times in a row during the initial emergency declaration.

The "mayday" procedure word was conceived as a distress call in the early 1920s by Frederick Stanley Mockford, officer-in-charge of radio at Croydon Airport, England. He had been asked to think of a word that would indicate distress and would easily be understood by all pilots and ground staff in an emergency. Since much of the air traffic at the time was between Croydon and Le Bourget Airport in Paris, he proposed the term "mayday", the phonetic equivalent of the French m'aidez ("help me").



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**May birthdays.
Three to celebrate this month:**

Sarah Jones (MD) Wednesday 15th Graham Roberts (B2) Tuesday 28th Wayne Parfitt (T2) Wednesday 29th

Chorister updates

Attendance at practice has remained strong with any decrease reflecting the start of the holiday season, with cruising the high seas being a popular choice.

In the Second Tenors, **Paul Wellington's** absence continues as hospital investigations try to uncover the cause of his health issues. Our best wishes to Paul for a speedy recovery.

On a positive note, we have welcomed two new choristers into our ranks, **John Loder** into the Baritones and **Tom Heard** into the Bottom Bass section. We wish them both a long and enjoyable membership of the choir.

Annual Concert 2024

Celebrating our 120th Anniversary, our Annual Concert on 27th April saw a return, after a number of years, to the Congress Theatre, where we were delighted to share the stage with celebrity and guest artiste, Travis George. His powerful voice and engaging personality contributed to a very successful evening and the concert was very well-attended, well-received and, it's pleasing to report, financially successful as well!

AGM 2024

This year's AGM was held at Nant Bran Centre, 7th May 2024 and was well-attended. The main points to emerge were:

- A successful year for the choir as we continued to raise money for a range of local and national charitable causes including Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital, the Royal British Legion and Hope GB, and in supporting local community organisations. In the process we established new links with other choirs as well as discovering new venues to host future concerts.

- Progress made on achieving the 4 targets set of:
 - recruiting new members
 - recruiting new Vice Presidents
 - increasing our advertising and publicity campaigns
 - increasing our social media presence

- Financially the choir remains very stable with a profit recorded over the year of approx. £2000.

- The following officers and post holders were elected for the coming year:



OFFICERS AND POST HOLDERS 2024/25

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE		OTHER POSTS/COMMITTEES	
POST	HOLDER	POST	HOLDER
President	Nick Thomas-Symonds	Financial Secretary	Phil Pritchard
Chairman	Ian Evans	Web	Ian Evans/Doug Hopkins
Vice Chairman	Ron Burnett	Social Media	Ian Evans
Ex-Officio Chairman		Librarian	Vacancy
General Secretary	Martin Carey	V.P. Secretary	Gareth Jones
Treasurer	Doug Hopkins	Gift Aid	Paul Wellington
Concert Secretary	Derek Williams	Archivist	Frank Horsell
Publicity & Marketing Officer	Graeme Davies	Audio sales	Alun Wilmot
Social Secretary	Martin Jones	Health & Safety	Bill Adshead
Stage Manager	Graeme Davies	Outfitting	Phil Batty
Minute Secretary	Graeme Davies	Registrar	Chris Howard/Barry Page
Elected Member 1	Alwyn Nutland	Welfare Officer	Jeff Williams
Elected Member 2	Jeff Williams	Ticket Sales	Gary Jeffries
Elected Member 3	Alun Wilmott		
Elected Member 4	Wayne Parfitt	1 st Tenor Section Leader	John Walding
Elected Member 5	Mansel Young	2 nd Tenor Section Leader	Graeme Davies
Elected Member 6	---	1 st Bass Section Leader	Haydn Noonan
		2 nd Bass Section Leader	Frank Horsell

Vice Presidents

As we embark upon our anniversary celebrations, a reminder to encourage family and friends to support the choir by becoming a Vice President. The membership package will include:

1. A Vice President identification of pin badge
2. A copy of our monthly newsletter
3. Advanced notification of all choir events
4. Complimentary ticket to our annual concert to include reserved seating in prime position
5. Complimentary concert programme
6. Invitation to exclusive Vice Presidents social event - cheese and wine/buffet evening to include short concert and afterglow
7. Meet and greet with Choristers

An annual Vice President membership will cost £30 for individuals and £50 for husbands/wives/partners.

Gareth Jones has taken on the role of **Vice President's Secretary** and all enquiries should be directed to him.

His contact details are:

Mobile number: 07787 362198

Email: gareth@lyncon.co.uk

Our grateful thanks to **Lyn Birch** who has undertaken this role in the past.

Recruitment



As we continue to relaunch our publicity and marketing drive to recruit new members and increase the choir's profile across the area, Graeme Davies organised a publicity event at ASDA in Cwmbran to promote the choir.



This allowed the choir to renew their links with Cancer Research Cymru when both organisations held events at ASDA Cwmbran. PMC had sung at the opening of Cancer Research's shop in Cwmbran in 2018. This will be followed by a similar event at Sainsbury's on Saturday 8th June.

All our choristers and supporters can play a part in helping us recruit new members by liking and sharing our new Facebook page. Equally, if you know of friends who may be interested in joining PMC, please encourage them to come along and sit in during practice. They'll be assured of a warm welcome.

Engagements.



The choir's "Red Wall" made yet another appearance recently when they supported MBACT bench dedication ceremony for Andrew Park at 14 Locks Canal Centre in High Cross, Newport. The well-placed gazebo kept us dry!

PMC Confirmed Bookings

Item	Date	Arrival Time	Venue	Address
Publicity event	08/06/24	11.00 am	Sainsbury's	Cwmbran
Leadon Court	11/06/24 Tuesday	3:30 4:00 start	Leadon Court Nursing Home	Thornhill, Cwmbran, NP44 5TZ
Holy Trinity Fund Raiser	28/06/24	6:30 7:00 start	Holy Trinity Church	44 Church Road Pontnewydd Cwmbran NP44 1AT
Caerleon Festival	05/07/24 Friday	5:45 6:15 start	Caerleon Amphitheatre	Broadway, Caerleon, Newport, NP18 1AY
Wedding	25/08/24 Saturday	TBC	Holy Trinity Church	44 Church Rd, Pontnewydd NP44 1AT
120 th Anniversary Dinner	31/08/24 Saturday	TBC	Parkway Hotel	Cwmbran Drive Cwmbran NP44 3UW
Concert at Ledbury	28/09/24	Leave Cwmbran 5:00pm 7:00 start	Ledbury Theatre	The Market Theatre Market Street Ledbury HR
New Inn Pensioners	10/10/24	7:00 start	New Inn Hall	New Inn Hall NP4 OPZ
Wedding	20/04/25	TBC	San Fraed House	LLanvihangel Gobion, Abergavenny NP47 9BA



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Chorister's Memorable Moments

This will become a regular feature in this our 120th year as I encourage choristers and ex-choristers for their recollections of memorable concerts, tours, events etc.

Please don't wait to be asked though, just email me - ianevans1812@gmail.com

John Walding remembers:

Prior to joining Pontnewydd Male Choir, my first encounter was at a guest weekend away with them to Guildford, Surrey in 1979, where they sang at Guildford Cathedral. I still recollect the soloist for that evening as the Bass Baritone, Delme Bryn Jones from Swansea. It was a tremendous occasion with a packed cathedral, and what a reception that choir had!

The following year a friend of mine, Ken Allen, asked if I was going to join the choir but, still not sure, I said that I'd think about it. Ken responded by calling around at my house every Tuesday and Friday until after a month or two of him coming back and forth, I conceded defeat and after 44 years this year, I'm still here!

Then, we had three practice venues, Pontnewydd Junior School, Police Headquarters (where Chief Constable John Over, then Vice President of the choir, was based) and where we could use the conference hall and the bar(!) and Mount Pleasant Hall which we subsequently made our home.

One of my most treasured memories was during the 1980s singing at a concert in the Garrison Theatre, Windsor in the presence of the Duchess of Norfolk. The venue was full with 1000 people in the audience.

We also sang at St Martin's in the Field Church, Trafalgar Square, in a memorial concert for Liberace. The venue was secured for us by our Concert Secretary, Lyn Ford, and our then Vice President, Sir Merlyn Rees, former Home Secretary).

During the 1980s we embarked on our first overseas tour to Holland where, for five days, we sang at the Hague Festival, staging with 64 choristers. We subsequently toured Germany twice.

Then the choir had the privilege of singing at Royal Albert Hall and, on our own, performing The Holy (with soloist John Walding!) in front of an audience of 6000 people in the presence of Dame Vera Lynne. What a venue to sing at! So this must be my most memorable recollection of them all, from a long list of varied venues across the UK and abroad.

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

Best wishes
Ian