



# CWMDARE VOICES NEWSLETTER NOV 2018

Volume 3

## MEMORIES OF ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR

Nearly Christmas time again, the year has just seemed to shoot by, but once again what a great successful year it's been for the choir. It seems we are gaining in ability and confidence almost day on day and our sound can now compare with the best of them.

Lots to look back on and even more to look forward to for the year to come, however, lets start at last Christmas. If one recalls we had an invitation from the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama to perform together with the boys from Pelenna in the college's foyer. It was a Christmas jumper fest with everyone joining in the festive songs with a couple of cheap pints in the student bar afterwards. In the run up to the big day we performed in Tesco's and the Aberdare Market and also held a memorable concert in Nebo Chapel, again with the superb children's choir from Cwmndare primary School.



**A fine display of Christmas jumpers at Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama**

In February we performed again in Nebo Chapel and also entertained the tea time ladies at the Ty Newedd Country Hotel.

The choir has always supported charitable events and we've also, each year identified a local charity for which we've collected. In April we undertook, together with several of our family members and friends, a sponsored walk for Rowentree Cancer Care charity along the Brecon Canal to Talybont where most of us spent a pleasant afternoon in the sunshine entertaining the pub's clients with songs while others needed a long lay down and a massage to get their old legs back in working order



**Weary walkers at the Star pub, Talybont**

In May we invited Mountain Ash singers, Pelenna, and Cwm Rhondda Choir to a social night in the Club. It was a great evening with plenty of singing, games and a surfeit of hot dogs. During the year we've had a number of concerts as a joint venture with our associate choir, Pelenna. It's amazing what a huge sound we can make together. Indeed ten of our members joined with Pelenna on their short tour to Whitley bay, Newcastle in July. This interaction between choirs has to be the way forward and Pelenna have expressed their gratitude to our boys for their involvement.

However, by far the most anticipated event was to come in the week after Christmas. Who would have thought that the choir could beget so many wanabe actors, thespian lovey's and over the top performers as was seen in the choir's first ever PANTO. Written by our own musical Director, Dr. Mike Thomas, Treasure Island received positive critical reviews from such erudite groups as the regulars at the Ton and Park Lane Allotment Society. It was a thing of great beauty and it would be a crying shame if it was not nominated for a BAFTA. Peter Williams was indeed singled out for his role as Fairy Nuff, a role he took on with such gusto that one, without any imagination at all, could really believe in fairies



**Fairy Nuff hamming it up**



**Panto chaos**

In June we joined Cwmbach and Pelenna for a massed choir concert in St. Elvan's, Aberdare, and what a sound we made with 140 choristers raising the roof. All credit to our boys they more than held their own against long established choirs.

In August we held our second barn party at the Green Meadows riding school everyone learning to dance under the instruction of John Arwel from Pelenna Choir while Celtic Spirit belted out some Irish jigs.

Later in the month we were invited to take part in our first official wedding ceremony in Tenby and after the official songs were completed a fine afternoon and evening was spent sampling the local ales and entertaining pub customers with our songs.



**Christmas clones at Nebo**

## ROWAN TREE GETS THE CASH



**Garry Powell and Bobby Jenkins handing over the cheque**

A fine effort was made on our charity fund raising efforts this year and our congratulations must go out to you lads for selflessly taking part in the number of fund raising events we organised. This year with funds raised from our Christmas activities we supported Nebo Chapel with a gift of £400 and the Rowntree charity also with £400. Rowan Tree Cancer Care is an organisation which provides a range of care services including transport back and fore to the hospitals for patients suffering from cancer. Indeed our very own Bobby Jenkins volunteers for them.

At our Annual general meeting in July this year we invited their representative, Mrs Rhian Dash along to be presented with a cheque for a further £855.00.

For this coming year the committee have selected a new project to support. We have agreed to supporting another worthwhile cause, Riding for the Disabled, which is based at Green Meadows Farm in the Country Park, which of course is looked after by our very own Mark (Porkey) England.



## WILD CAT KELLY HITS TOWN POSSE FORMED FROM LOCAL CHOIR

Mike has once again come up trumps with another humorous rendition for us to sing (The pirate song has been so done to death) He has taken us from the Caribbean to the wild west to meet Wild Cat Kelly who pleads not to be fenced in. This gives us another opportunity to wear silly hats and ham it up, something, as Mike says, other choirs can't do. At the end of the day it's all about entertainment and if the audiences love it, long may it last.



**SHOOT-OUT AT THE OK CHORAL**

## Choir gets Pen y Cymoedd grant

This year we have managed to obtain a grant of £1350 from the Wind Farm Project and our thanks must go to Andy Phillips who organised and saw through the application.

This money has been spent on a new piano and fittings together with a portable sound system which includes a mixing desk amplifier with microphones and all the accessories needed for our concerts and as an aid for putting our afterglows on a more professional footing

Our thanks go to the staff and management at Pen y Cymoedd for this generous grant.

## All change on the accompanist front.

Gwilym Jones who has been our choir pianist from the very beginning decided to hang up his boxing gloves (in joke) this year. Gwylim has been a stalwart of the choir and his contribution to the choir's development has been enormous. However there has been some good news as he, with his fine bass voice has agreed to join our bass section. A special evening was arranged at the Club in order for us choristers to show our appreciation for his excellent service to the choir, at which he was presented with a signed choir photo and a voucher for a weekend break for him and his wife Anne. As a bit of a jest he was also presented with a pair of boxing gloves cufflinks. Gwilym has a great sense of humour and I'm sure he appreciated the joke!

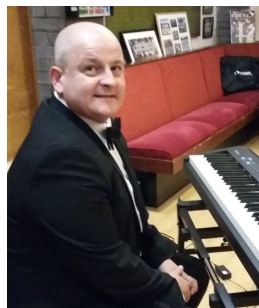
But it wasn't all bad news for by a lucky coincidence a superb musician was waiting in the wings.



**Choir Chaiman Huw (Yosser) Jones making a presentation to Gwilym**

## Welcome Phil Juliff

In July 2003, Philip graduated with a Degree in Music from the University of Wales, Cardiff. He has been Head of Music at various secondary schools over the last fifteen years and is currently the Head of Sixth Form at Aberdare Community School. He completed a Masters Degree in Educational Leadership and Management in 2017 at Cardiff Metropolitan University and was appointed as Principal Examiner for GCSE Music at the Welsh Joint Education Committee in 2016. Philip has conducted and accompanied many choirs over the last 25 years including Aberavon Male Voice Choir, Burma Star Choir and the Kenfig Hill and District Male Voice Choir.



He has performed at the Royal Albert Hall, Royal Festival Hall and the Birmingham Symphony Hall and at the opening ceremony of the 1999 Rugby World Cup. Philip has also conducted memorable performances with Aled Jones, Katherine Jenkins, Hayley Westenra and Sir Willard White. I'm sure we all agree that Cwmdare Voices are privileged to have such an experienced musician on board and look forward to a long and fruitful association.



I am Bass and below both of them. I shave once a day

I am baritone and I am above him, but below him. I shave once a week

I am a tenor and I am above both of them. I haven't started shaving yet



## WHY WOULD YOU JOIN A CHOIR?

I suppose we must get something from it otherwise we wouldn't be putting ourselves through the weekly practice sessions and the stress of performing. There is something immensely satisfying in perfecting a new song and then performing it particularly when you can see the enjoyment and pleasure that it brings to an audience. Then there is the camaraderie that coming together with others to achieve something special brings. Additionally there is the sheer fun of being part of a group experience with the banter, merriment and togetherness engendered. It is also a great way of socialising and making friendships. But did you know that your passion for singing can lead to incredible benefits in your physical, emotional health, and social wellbeing? Here are some reasons why singing is good for you.

- \* **Singing strengthens the immune system:** hormones are released when someone performs as part of a choir. The deep breaths taken during singing equates to that of aerobic exercise, which increases blood flow and releases endorphins.
- \* **Singing is a workout :** Singing can be an excellent form of exercise. Even if you're healthy, your lungs will get a workout as you employ proper singing techniques and vocal projections. Singing can increase your aerobic capacity and stamina.
- \* **Singing improves your posture:** Standing up straight is part of correct technique as you're singing, so with time, good posture will become a habit!
- \* **Singing helps with sleep:** Experts believe singing can help strengthen throat and palate muscles, which helps stop snoring and sleep apnoea.
- \* **Singing is a natural anti-depressant:** Singing is known to release endorphins, the feel-good brain chemical that makes you feel uplifted and happy.
- \* **Singing lowers stress levels:** Making music in any form is relaxing. Singing releases stored muscle tension and decreases the levels of a stress hormone called cortisol in your blood stream.
- \* **Singing improves mental alertness:** Improved blood circulation and an oxygenated blood stream allow more oxygen to reach the brain. This improves mental alertness, concentration, and memory.
- \* **Singing can widen your circle of friends:** One of the unexpected health benefits of singing is that it can improve your social life. The bonds you form singing with others can be profound,
- \* **Singing boosts your confidence:** Performing well and receiving praise from your friends and family may be the key to eventually overcoming fears and boosting self-confidence.
- \* **Singing broadens communication skills:** Honing this talent improves your ability to communicate in different ways!

## 🎵 MEN OF HARLECH 🎵



## G'day sport.

### Australia here we come

Mike our MD has long had an ambition to take a choir to Australia and in 2019 it looks as if his dream will come true as at least 21 of our choristers have signed up for the tour along with several lads from Pelenna together with a few waifs and strays as well. The itinerary will involve a number of concerts both in Sydney and in Port Macquarie and also a stop over in Singapore on the return where hopefully the lads will be able to hold a further concert. It is going to be a opportunity of a lifetime and a wonderful experience for all our boys.



On a sunny day in late September the choir was privileged to sing at Aberdare cemetery in a service to celebrate the life of Private David Lloyd who fought at Rorke's Drift in South Africa where 150 British soldiers defended the Mission against 4000 Zulu warriors. A new grave stone was erected at the cemetery where previously the grave had been unmarked.



## We're at the Principality Stadium

A long held ambition of the choir has been to sing at an international rugby match at the Principality Stadium, well, we've done it lads! On November 24th we are joining three other choirs to provide the pre-match singing in the final autumn match between Wales and South Africa. Thanks must go to our secretary, Matthew, who has pushed for this since the choirs conception.

It's going to be a great showcase and a privilege for us and an unique experience to sing in front of a crowd of 80,000 people. I'm sure we will be more than up for the challenge.

# Mayhem in West Wales

Go West Young Man *by Ace reporter Bob Jenkins*

On the 22nd September the choir hitched up their wagons (Globe Coaches) and headed West, not across the prairie's of North America to prospect for gold but to visit the golden coast of Pembrokeshire and the lovely old town of Haverfordwest. We had been invited to sing at a fund raising event organised at the local cricket club, in aid of the Paul Sartori Charity, an organisation that provides care at home for terminally ill people throughout Pembrokeshire.

We arrived at the Club to a warm welcome from the Club's committee and staff and were provided with a very appreciated meal of curry, chips and rice

The boys sang to a packed house and were joined by two talented local musicians, Debi Lewis who provided some superb vocal entertainment and a young local lad who wowed the audience with his amazing harp playing, providing a super varied evening of entertainment. The concert concluded with a standing ovation from the audience who were more than happy to stay for our memorable afterglow. It began in our now traditional way with Peter Williams leading the singing of Charlie Mopps (the audience sat stunned for a moment but soon got the idea and glasses were raised and clinked all round). This was followed by some fine individual and group songs from the boys.

The following morning the cricket club excelled themselves again by providing us with a real Welsh breakfast before we embarked on our "cultural tour of Pembrokeshire" and its beautiful coast line. Unfortunately most places of culture were shut, it was a Sunday after all, so the boys reluctantly agreed to visit some pubs.

The first hostelry to be visited was the quaint Swan at Little Haven and as our trusty coachman could not get us directly there, we parked up in Broad Haven and proceeded to walk across the bay and around the headland not realising that the tide comes in as well as out. More of that later. We entered the Swan with some trepidation, it was a Sunday lunch time after all and the pub's internal dimensions were not really suited for 30 odd burly choristers amongst the diners. We needn't have worried as the welcome could not have been better, indeed when the landlord learned we were a choir he offered us £100 towards the charity as long as we gave his customers a few songs. Soon the tens and twenties were rolling in as more and more of his customers supported the charity. We ended up leaving with £175 which was a great boost to the £550 we had raised the previous night.

With the tide rolling in and fairly well inebriated we dashed back across the sands to beat the incoming tide. The stragglers, unfortunately were not so lucky, the sight of them, with shoes in hand, wading through the waves while others clambered over the rocks was of great amusement to the other holiday makers on the beach. Undaunted we bravely rode on the next pub, the Bishops Inn at St. Davids and then on to the Sloop at Pwll Gwain where we settled in for the rest of the day whilst digging in to a large tray of chips and bread and butter.

A big thank you must go to **Tudor Williams** for organising the whole event and playing a big part in its smooth running. It was a memorable experience and no doubt we will "go west young man" on further occasions.



A bunch of happy and slightly inebriated choristers in Little Haven,

## Choir Notices

*A warm welcome to three new choristers who have joined us this year:*

**Graham Hobson** who has been with us for several months now and has been a welcome addition to our baritone section

**Phil Dodge** has recently joined us and although being thrown in at the deep end appears to be relishing the challenge.

**Peter Lydiard**, is an experienced chorister who in the past has sung with Bryn Coch Choir, he is a welcome addition to our bass section. Peter hails from Cadoxton near Neath and has recently joined Pelenna choir as well.

Our condolences and sympathy must go out to **Alun Venn** (2nd tenor) who lost his wife to Cancer recently. Alan has expressed his heartfelt thanks for those of the choir who attended Penny's funeral and helped boost the wonderful singing of Glynneath MVC.

**Christmas:** We are singing in Tesco Aberdare on Sunday **9th December** and have also been asked for a return Christmas concert at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama on Wednesday **5th December**. We have also arranged our Christmas concert in Nebo Chapel for **Tuesday 18th**. Once again the children's choir from Cwmdare Primary School will be joining us.

**Looking forward to:** Next year is already starting to look busy for the choir. Of Course 21 of us are off to Australia in April, while in late June, we've been asked to take part in a massed Welsh choir concert in Bournemouth. The Celtic Festival in Brittany is still hopefully on the cards in early August as well. (a decision will be made in late November)

**Patrons:** Our newsletter would not be complete without a big thank-you to all our patrons. Your support and contribution to the choir has helped us progress to where we are today. As a token of our appreciation we would like to invite you all to a celebration night at Cwmdare Club on **Tuesday 6th February**, (provisional) where, you will not only be treated to some renditions by your choir but also a full evening of fun and entertainment with a great buffet thrown in as well. We'll contact you nearer the date and look forward to seeing you there.