



CWMDARE VOICES NEWSLETTER 21/22

Volume 6

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

After covid many choirs struggled to survive but not Cwm Dare Voices. We have really smashed it this year with 25 performances including many firsts under our belt. Starting at the end of 2021, we sang in St. David's Cathedral in West Wales, then a series of charity events where we raised a terrific sum for good causes. Then on to the summer where we performed at St David's Hall, Cardiff, in the Welsh Proms and just a day or two later joined the biggest massed choir Aberdare has seen for over a 100 years. We hosted a great concert with Stoneleigh Choir and Con Voce and also performances at Cardiff's City Hall, Cardiff Castle and then at the Millennium Centre, Wales's biggest and most prestigious theatre. To cap a very successful year we visited Newquay, Cornwall to perform at a memorial concert for our sadly missed patron, Mike Crocker.

We also have welcomed several new members and a number of past members have re-joined swelling our ranks to 40 choristers. So, much thanks to you all for your dedication and enthusiasm during the last year and also

Dave Manning



Wonderful Weekend

In the Wild West

Covid had really put a damper on our progress during 2020/21 and it had been a long year and a half without a performance. So it was with great expectations, in September last year that we travelled to Pembrokeshire in West Wales for our first outing in a long time.

Tudor Walters who hails from that part of the country had arranged a packed weekend for us. At mid-day on the Saturday we performed in Saint David's Cathedral to a packed audience then onto the Haverfordwest Cricket Club for an evening concert. If that wasn't enough Tudor had arranged a further Concert in a local pub on the Sunday afternoon. The whole series of performances was to be a fund raiser for a local charity, the Paul Sartori Foundation, that provides a hospice at home service for the local community.



The Belleview afternoon concert

Our performance in the Cathedral was exceptional considering that we hadn't sung together for such a long time. What a wonderful experience it was! One would have expected the boys to be a bit rusty but, boy, did we defy all expectations and our performance certainly brought a smile to Mike Thomas's face. Always a good indicator of how things are progressing!

After great plaudits at the Cathedral we embarked to the Sloop Inn in nearby Porthgain for a well-earned pint then it was to the hotel to book-in and then on to the Cricket Club for the evening concert.

We had successfully performed at the Cricket Club a few years previously and obviously the word had got around as the hall was packed and once again the boys sang their socks off. A most enjoyable even-



COVID HITS THE CHOIR After such a successful tour to West Wales in October 2021, it was disappointing to discover that several of the boys had succumbed to the dreaded virus. Thankfully all had been double jabbed and although laid low for a week of two, all made a speedy recovery. Although it put a blip on the whole proceedings, all who caught the bug said that even though they were ill they wouldn't have missed the brilliant weekend.



Cwmclare Voices with Pelenna at the Armistice



Again, the Choir with Pelenna at the Millennium Centre Cardiff at a Saint David's day concert



Tesco's



Trago

CANCELLED CHRISTMAS

Due to the virus, once again last Christmas's performances had to be cancelled, although we at least managed to have some Christmas singing, albeit outdoors, trying to keep warm in our Christmas jumpers. We had a session in Tesco's and two more in Trago Mills. Collection boxes were put out and we managed, between the three

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CHOIR EXCELS AT CHARITYFUND RAISING

Da iawn, splendid. Over £4,200 raised!



Jamie belts out American Trilogy

Once again, this year, the choir has pulled together for a series of charity events.

With just two weeks preparation time we performed in Aberdare Rugby Club and raised over £1500 for the Ukrainian appeal. Much thanks must go to Jamie Yates who provided the solo entertainment and also managed to sing several numbers with the choir.

This was followed swiftly with a similar night in Hirwaun Rugby Club with the proceeds going to Velindre Cancer Hospital. This time Elvis Legsley and Ceri Hagett were our star performers. Another splendid effort with £1,200 raised.

Just to round it all off we had another fund raiser for Ukraine,



A great night at the Aberdare Rugby Club

What a Week That Was!

Well, actually it was only 4 days but what a hectic time it was! On the Wednesday evening of the 13th July we joined several other choirs and the world famous Cory band to appear at the Welsh Proms in the Saint David's Hall, Cardiff. It had been quite a time coming as, because of Covid, the concert had twice been postponed, fortunately giving us a bit more time to learn the new songs, particularly the Welsh ones. It was an amazing experience for our boys, singing in a 200 strong choir with the band accompaniment and directed by Owen Arwel Hughes. Truly a night to remember.

The following day we were back on the bus again, this time to Mark England's son's wedding at the Fairy Hill on Gower for a short rendition and then on to the King Arthur pub for a lively afternoon in the sunshine. (more lively for some than others!)

Friday saw us performing with Pelenna, Cwmbach and Dare to Sing at St. Elvans Church at the opening night of Caradogfest, a 150th anniversary celebration of Caradog winning the prestigious National Choral competition in London.. The solo artists for the night were Ragsy and Cat Southall.

Then Saturday hit us with its blazing sun and high temperatures for the Caradogfest main out-door event, but did the heat deter us? Not at all! We braved it all to join the massed **We're in there somewhere**



The Welsh Proms at St. David's Hall, Cardiff



The Cor Mawr at Caradogfest

YMA O HYD A few years ago the Choir travelled to Stoneleigh, a village near Coventry to perform at a concert with their male voice choir. It was such a success that we invited them down to our own neck of the woods for a return match. Billed as the Festival of Voices on the 8th October we played host to not only Stoneleigh Male Voice Choir but also to Con Voce, a local mixed choir, and what a night it was! Filling St Elvans Church, the three choirs took turns to entertain the audience and what a successful evening it turned out to be. Lots of encouraging audience plaudits and positive feedback, everyone seemed to enjoy it. One of the highlights was when Con Voce joined us to sing Yma O Hyd. **What a sound!**



YMA O HYD WITH CON VOCE



Our travelling logo

BARBADOS HERE WE COME

As with the successful Australian tour a few years back, arrangements are now well underway for a large contingent from Cwmdare Voices to join choristers from Pelenna, Cwmbach and Wigston on a trip of a life time to perform at the Barbados Celtic Festival. This is a 4 day festival celebrating all things Celtic and we will be performing at three venues, representing Wales. We will, of course be sampling the national drink of rum with plenty of time to relax in the sun as well. Mike Thomas has come up with an unique name of *Cor Caru-B* to encompass all the choirs taking part and tee shirts with the new logo will be soon available.

BRAINS TO BRAWN



The Choir at Cardiff Castle

Cwmdare voices are certainly versatile. In September we were invited to perform in the historic Cardiff City Hall at the World Congress on Oxidation Catalysis. The Hall was filled with eminent scientists from all over the world and our job was to provide them with a taste of Welsh culture which we certainly achieved.

As a complete contrast a few weeks later we were invited to sing at the opening ceremony of the World Kickboxing Championships in Cardiff Castle. A prestigious event which featured teams from a plethora of countries from as far afield of New Zealand and the USA, We provided the Welsh cultural input to the proceedings with a rousing Yma O Hyd followed by Calon Lan and then the Welsh National Anthem



WHAT AN EXPERIENCE !



On stage at the Millennium Centre

We must have made an impression at our

St David's Day performance on the Foyer stage of the Millennium Centre in Cardiff, as we were invited back to sing at their Festival of Voices at the end of November 2022. Not only did we provide a short performance on the Foyer stage again but this time we opened the show on the theatre's main stage. Combining with Pelenna we were 50 plus on stage and boy did that allow us to make a great noise. Another wonderful experience under the Choir's



In memory of our good friend and patron, Mike Crocker

Another great trip for the Choir! A weekend in Newquay, Cornwall, with a full contingent of choristers and a fan base from the Ton to fill the bus.

We had, for some time, tried to organise a concert in Newquay to celebrate Mike's life and collect some money for his favoured children's charity. However, lock down and other gigs got in the way, but now we were there in full force to celebrate our memories of the man. Jeff Francis, a particularly good friend of Mike gave a moving and sometimes hilarious

account of his association with the big guy and finally he presented the Club with an inscribed miners lamp. It was an intimate concert in the Newquay Rowing Club and we were supported by the rowing Club's own singing group. Despite the venue being limited in size a good crowd packed on and we raised £1,000 on the night. The Rowing Club Singers then presented us with an original artwork as a memento of our visit.

Further joint events are planned.

Nov. 2022
NEWQUAY

Big Mike Crocker



The Club gets the miners lamp



presenting the painting to Jeff

Notices: We have lost a couple of choristers during the last year but thankfully we have taken some on as well. We have welcomed on board Bernie Thompson, Mike Hall, Huw Deacon, Warren Seymour, and Kevin Kmiec, who had their first real concert in Saint David's Cathedral, what an experience for a first gig! More recently Johnny Weston, Darran Lloyd and Mark Pope has joined us and we have also welcomed back a few of our past members, Keith Boggis, Kingsley Samuel and Gareth Davies (Fudge). Well done the lot of you, I'm sure you'll enjoy singing with Cwmdare Voices.

We also are pleased to announce the election of Dave Manning as new Chairman of the Choir, taking over from Huw Jones who has served the Choir well over his term in office. Dave has had over 20 years experience of choir singing and he takes the position with a wealth of committee experience behind him through his involvement in a number of past organisational positions. Dave will surely be an asset to our choir.

As in the past, each year, the Choir has nominated a charity to support. This year a decision will be announced shortly.

Finally, a huge thank you to all our loyal band of patrons for their ongoing encouragement and support.!