



CWMDARE VOICES NEWSLETTER NOV 2016

2016 OUR BEST YET

As we come to the end of 2016 it's worth reflecting on the Choir's year and considering it's only our fourth year together, we've done pretty well.

As Mike often says "The boys are working extremely hard" and I think our ever increasing repertoire, our refining voices and improving confidence demonstrates this.

This year we have completed eleven of our own concerts, taken part in several joint choir ventures and, although through unfortunate circumstances, have been asked to sing at a number of funerals. Our first concert of the year at Ystralyfera Rugby Club, was something to remember where our warm-up artist was a 6ft bearded female impersonator who introduced us to an audience consisting of about two hundred women. How does a male voice choir compete with that many women out for an evening of drink and gossip? (no sexism intended). Talk about being tested! But once again, Mike, our esteemed music director had them eating out of his hand and we had a very enjoyable concert with a standing ovation to finish. (As Mike often says there are other choirs who couldn't have coped with that)

We held two successful concerts in Penywaun Club, the second in May, was our first annual concert and we are grateful to Pelenna Valley Male Voice for joining us there. Hopefully we can continue this concert as an annual event into the future. We also performed twice in the Aberdare Rugby Club, helping to raise a lot of funds for the "Stay strong for Ows charity" along the way and certainly increasing the Rugby Club's bar takings as well (I hope no-one drank any alcohol before singing, yea)

Our biggest event of the year however, had to be the massed concert at St David's Church, Neath. Quite a challenge for us as a relatively new choir, twelve new songs to learn, a task even experience choirs would jib at, but we did it lads.

But what a night it was, best part of two hundred choristers on stage and an audience of approximately four hundred. The final number of the evening, American Trilogy, raised the hairs on the arms of many of the audience and choristers alike. Rachael John played the piano superbly while Mike's son Will came in on the church organ. The climax of the song was reached when Mike's other son Jac and his band, Blackweir Brass joined in, resulting in a standing ovation from the audience.



What a smart bunch of fellows!

Our official Choir photograph dressed in our number ones



I've put him in to hit the high

I think we certainly held our own with Cwmbach, Pelenna and Wigston, the three experienced choirs who performed with us. Each had been in existence for many years and I think we surprised them by our professionalism and ability. Such a prestigious event left us with a great buzz and the feedback from the audience was even better.

After the summer break it was all hands on deck to prepare for the opening night of the Cwmaman Music Festival at St Josephs Church. Again we took it by storm with great reviews and feedback. The night was completed with some great numbers from the Dare to Sing Ladies Choir and Stephany Harvey Powell. (Have a look at the clips on You-Tube, they're pretty good)

On the 30th September we performed for the St Fagin's Harvest supper at the Cwmdare Club and although only a short gig the singing continued into the early hours at the Ton.

On the 9th of November we are again performing with Pelenna at St. Elvan's church, Aberdare. A concert to commemorate Remembrance day on the 11th.

MEET YOUR COMMITTEE

Chairman Huw Jones

Vice Chair Mike Rees & Patron co-ordinator

Secretary Matthew Burford

Treasurer Bob Jenkins

Members:

Dave Manning

Gwilym Jones

Nick Evans

Andrew Phillips (Funding co-ordinator)

All our best wishes go the Vice Chair, Mike Rees who is going through some health issues at the moment. Get well soon Mike.

SOCIAL EVENTS:

Pelenna have invited us to their second German night in the Tonmawr Rugby Club on Saturday 3rd December. Your chance to dress up in lederhosen and pork pie hats. Ompa Band and bangers and chips included.

CHRISTMAS IS COMING

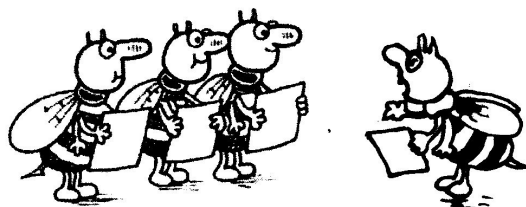
We have a few things on over Christmas this year

Party at the Con Club: Once again we will be joining, Pelenna and the Ladies Choir at the Con Club on **Sunday 18th December**. As last year, each choir will 'do their bit' and there will be extra entertainment laid on. We know that Sunday is not the best of days but we're stuck because it's Pelenna's concert in the church before hand. A buffet will be laid on at a charge of £5.00 per head and members will be able to bring one guest only.

Christmas at NEBO on Tuesday 13th Dec.. This was quite successful last year so it will be the same format again this time

We are also arranging to sing at the Ysguborwen Home, Tesco Store in Aberdare and Aberdare Market (dates to be announced). All good stuff to promote the choir locally.

Le Grand Piss up (Squz the French) On Wednesday, December 28th a bus will be leaving the Ton at 1pm to ferry you to the **Half Way pub** in Glyneath where we will eat, drink and generally make merry until we're unable to stand. The bus will then be coming home about 8pm . (para-medics will be on stand-by)



"O.K., let's make sure we're all humming from the same sting-sheet."



I HAVE A
DREAM

Mike came to Cwmdare Voices after spending many years as musical director for Pelenna Valley Male Voice Choir with a dream to develop close links between the two choirs.

Why do we need closer links? I hear you ask. Well, it's a known fact that a lot of choirs with an aging membership are finding it harder and harder to survive. Lots are closing or joining forces with similar choirs. Luckily we are bucking this trend to some extent, but we still need to encourage others to join us to underpin our strengths.

Mike's vision to maintain two distinct autonomous but linked choirs has already provided dividends for Cwmdare Voices. We have had a number of joint concerts and of course the massed choir concert at St. David's in Neath. We have also provided choristers when they were short and they have similarly helped us out. We have raised charity money through our association and have gained a wealth of experience along the way.

A particularly good example of joint partnership was when Pelenna were short of choristers for their tour to Ibstock in Leicestershire. Eleven of us joined them in a special 'three half concert' and then helped to drink the bar dry at the hotel afterwards. We were still singing as dawn broke over the village, mind there were some sore heads on the bus later that morning. Cwmdare Voices have also joined in several charity fund raising events with Pelenna raising money for this year's cause, the *Royal Voluntary Service*. The money raised from these events together with the funds raised from our massed choir enabled Pelenna to present a cheque to the Service for £2,800. Some of our members attended the presentation at Ton Mawr and en-

joyed a super evening with a bit of singing (as always) and a superb buffet afterwards.

As we know Mike has now taken another choir under his wing and hopefully our association with them will pay dividends for us in the future.



WANTED

DEAD OR ALIVE



The man known as Pirate Pete
(sometimes known as Half Cut Pete)

Wanted for

- 1/ Singing inappropriate songs
- 2/ Excessive drinking
- 3/ Clapping out of time
- 4/ Overacting

Choristers are advised not to approach this man as he is liable to burst into song at any time

Known associates:

Seaman Stains, Roger the cabin boy,
Titus Buggerme & of course
Charlie Mopps

Choir Patrons

The committee are currently looking at the feasibility of having a patron association for the choir. The idea at present is to have two tiers of patron membership. Group one would be invited and consist of people with influence both locally and further afield who could promote and publicize the choir or perhaps people who have shown extraordinary support for us over the years (Big Mike from Newquay has already been invited and is over the moon to accept)

The second group consists of friends, family and others who do not want to sing but would just like to enjoy the choir's company on outings, social events and concerts. They would be asked for a donation of £10.00 a year (£15 for a couple) and for that they would be offered first choice of event tickets at a discount price, join us at any social event and be invited to attend a special 'patrons evening' which will be held once a year.

Vice Chair Mike Rees (the younger) has kindly accepted the responsibility to co-ordinate this, so get your wives, girlfriends, relations, friends and acquaintances to join. You know it makes sense!

THE FUTURE FOR CWMDARE VOICES.

Our progression from Only Drunks Aloud to Cwmdare Voices has been nothing short of Phenomenal. From an Idea born in the bar of the Ton, only a few short years ago, where a need for a better structure to the late night singing was sought (We are Welsh after all and its just expected !) to a respected 37 member full male voice choir (and growing) has been remarkable. We are beginning to be a force to be reckoned with in choir circles and I know we are envied by some because of our progress and strength of membership.

As already reported, during this last year we have gone from strength to strength. So do we continue this into the future? You bet your sweet ass we do. Next year on May 20th we have another massed choir, this time in St Elvans Church. Aberdare, again with Pelenna and Cwmbach and possibly another choir, yet to be announced.

The Committee are working hard to get us a short tour in the town of Montelimar in France during 2017. (partners welcome)

And better news still, we have been provisionally selected to perform together with Pelenna, (big choir required for this gig) in the annual Celtic Festival in Lorient, Brittany in August 2019. Dave Manning had the opportunity a few years ago, to perform there with Cwmbach Choir and it was a great experience. The whole thing will be paid for by the festival organisers including transport, accommodation and meals. All the wine is free and several beer tokens are issued each night. The tour will be for six days and we will be expected to perform most evenings in the Lorient football stadium in front of a 20,000 strong audience as well as a number of smaller concerts some of which are usually televised for French TV

SPECIAL MENTIONS

Congratulations to Nick Evans and his wife for completing the recent Cardiff Half Marathon.

(did she carry Nick?)



Also congratulations to Gareth (Fudge) Davies on being selected for Strictly Come Dancing 2017

OUR THANKS

There are a number of people who richly deserve our thanks for the work and support they have put in over the last year:

Our thanks go out to **Dr. Mike Thomas** without who's enthusiasm, knowledge and extraordinary talent we would not be where we are today Secondly our thanks goes to our accompanist **Gwylim Jones** . His patience in putting up with us rabble must be extraordinary. He is a superb pianist and all of us can be thankful we have a man of such talent to play for us.

We must also not forget the work which goes on behind the scenes and our thanks goes out to the **committee** as a whole but a special thanks must be made to our secretary **Matthew Burford** who does sterling work as he carries out the unenviable task of organising and managing the choir.

Finally our thanks goes out to the **Cwmdare Club's committee** and also **Emma** behind the bar for putting up with us.

MEMBERSHIP

We currently have 37 members on our books, however it would be handy to have a few more, particularly in the bass and baritone sections. So fellows if you have mates with particularly low voices get them to come along. In fact if they can hold a tune at any level get them to come along anyway.

Over the year we have gained a few and lost a few. Yan Jones had to leave because of his work commitments and Stan Coleman decided to retire, however we welcomed to our gang, Ian Blake, Peter Davies, Ian Caulfield and Kingsley Samuel. We wish them a long and happy association.

TOUR SAVINGS CLUB.

It's sometimes difficult to raise funds at the drop of a hat so as a means of financing any future concert tours we have started a monthly savings club. All you have to do is increase your monthly subscription standing order by however much you want and then tell Bob Jenkins, our treasurer. He will keep a separate account and you can then use it to fund your tour or keep it to pay your bar bill. The choice is yours