



CHOIRLINK

*The Prayer and Praise bulletin of the
Festivals of Male Voice Praise*

No. 14

**APRIL
2022**

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Welcome to a bumper edition of Choirlink. Since the last one we in UK have had various Omicron Waves with many folk becoming sick and being unable to attend church etc. Winnie and I have also been unwell which has delayed the publication of Choirlink: my apologies. Despite this there is plenty of news and information, and in fact I've had to 'squeeze' things a bit to fit everyone in. Let's start straight away with deliberations from National Council.

COUNCIL REPORT: MARCH 2022

Ian Stangoe, Chairman

Council met on Zoom on 9th March. In attendance were Mike, Paul, Alfred, Keith, John, Houston, Allan and Ian with apologies from Colin and Huw. Ian opened with readings from Psalm 117 and 118 referring to the Lord's faithfulness and love repeated throughout these verses. Paul had prepared a financial statement which was discussed, and it was decided that Council would again pay the indemnity insurance this year. Music was next on the agenda and the use of backing tracks was agreed use-

ful for some choirs and would be put onto the website. If anyone has FMVP mp3 tracks which could be used please send to Ian at i.stangoe@hotmail.co.uk. It would be useful that any events or festivals being held this year be notified to Vaughan for inclusion in Choirlink. There is encouragement that some choirs are gaining new members and that choirs are beginning to meet again. We continue to do what can be done in this uncertain time and look to the Lord to continue His work.

United Kingdom

HIGHLAND GOSPEL MALE VOICE CHOIR

Ernie Collinson

In the previous bulletin I mentioned that the Highland Gospel Male Voice Choir were rehearsing for a fundraising event at Fortrose Church, a few miles north of Inverness for the new Church building. I am pleased to say the event raised almost £1100, which is a considerable achievement.

The Choir are once again back in our regular weekly venue at Inshes Church in Inverness rehearsing and enjoying Christian Fellowship. Whilst COVID restrictions have continued to be maintained, these were eased from 4th April, making life much more comfortable.

We are currently enthusiastically rehearsing with the continuing guidance (and patience!) of our Musical Director, Eileen Mackintosh, for the forthcoming **Inverness Festival of Praise on 4th June at East Church, Inverness**, supported by The Moray and Peterhead Choirs plus other members from various parts of Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Sadly it will be the last time we will be able to use this venue as

this iconic 200+ year old city centre building is to be sold and the congregation to amalgamate with Inches Church.

Recently Scotland has enjoyed some fantastic summer-like weather with long sunny days and clear skies. In addition we have witnessed the truly wonderful spectacle of The Northern Lights in the evenings. Our Lord has provided us with an amazing beauty which is humbling to behold.



‘For as many as are the promises of God, in Jesus they are yes!’ The empty tomb was a seal of the new covenant of hope and salvation.

A very happy Easter to you all.

SWANSEA GOSPEL MALE VOICE CHOIR

Huw Jones

The Swansea Choir had a blessed Communion Service at the beginning of March. We have commenced our weekly practices on a Friday night. We look forward to our Summer Praise in June. We will be singing around nine pieces of which some are by Valerie Colison. Every Blessing to all.

LONDON & HOME COUNTIES CHOIR NEWS

Keith Youngman, Chairman

As COVID restrictions are eased we are seeing a slow return to singing in most choirs, though a common factor is that the numbers of choirmen are significantly down. Following successful pre-Christmas engagements in a joint endeavour, choirs in Hertford, Luton and Uxbridge had been practising a programme for two pre-Easter engagements in the Uxbridge area on the 5th and 13th April. The earlier engagement was recorded and can be viewed on YouTube by searching 'Copy of Tuesday Focus Group choir'. The Uxbridge Choir will now break until some time in May.

A fuller report from the Whitstable choir follows this item. The choir, although also reduced in number, has started to meet again.

Because of low numbers choirs are being realistic in not taking on too much at present but this coincides with Care Homes not freely able to welcome visits and the sad closure of some afternoon fellowships.

WHITSTABLE GOSPEL MALE VOICE CHOIR

Darren Osborne

Ken Burgess celebrated his 102nd birthday on 6th March. Even though Ken can no longer sing with the choir, we still treasure him as a member after all the years of service to the Lord though his work with the MVP.

Fred and Freda Tassell have both stepped down from the choir. We thank them both for their hard work and ask the Lord to bless them in their future service.

Ron Ashman's wife June is still unwell and is being given end of life care. We ask the MVP members to pray for Ron, June and family to receive the strength they need each day. Please also pray the Lord's help for Rita Coombes

and family following Phil's passing from cancer of the jaw.

The choir is meeting on the last Monday of each month, to go through songs and fellowship with each other. We have 9 members in our choir and meet at Andrew and Gabi Webb's house.

Darren Osborne has taken over Freda's role as secretary. His details are 59 Hyde Place, Aylesham, Kent, CT3 3AN. email daza789@hotmail.com and mobile 07565 963826.

BOLTON MALE VOICE PRAISE

Mike Dewhurst

For many years the McRoberts choir from Glasgow have been coming to Bolton for the Area Festival. Every year they have stayed over and taken the Sunday morning service at Emmanuel Evangelical Mission at Ringley near Manchester.

Sadly the Bolton Festival is no more, but in 2020 the Mission celebrated their 100th anniversary and invited the choir from Glasgow to join with the Bolton choir in an evening of celebration. Like many events in 2020 this meeting was stopped by the pandemic. We have now planned to go ahead

with this event on May 21st and are looking forward to celebrating with our friends from Ringley and Scotland. Albeit 100+2, it brings back to us all a sense that things are slowly getting back to normal.

Please pray for the "joint meeting" on the Saturday and also for the McRoberts choir as they again take the Sunday morning service.

We thank the Lord that what seemed impossible is now possible. It will be a joy to uplift our voices once again in praise and worship to Him.

EXETER MALE VOICE PRAISE

Alfred Tarring

To continue, or not to continue? That was the question we faced at the end of September last year as the choir met to decide its future. We knew other FMVP choirs were facing the same question, with many closing. With recent retirements through various reasons, and now with several COVID deaths, old age and frailties, we were going to lose a total of 13 men. We only wanted to continue if we had a balanced choir of sufficient size to bring glory to the Lord's name with our singing.

But the big question at that meet-

ing was “what does the Lord want us to do?” and we had to confess we didn’t have the answer. We didn’t know how many men we would have, or whether churches would be requesting us to sing, most having restricted services. And you cannot sing with masks!

We therefore decided to continue to meet for practices but we would delay making a decision on our future for six months. We agreed to use that time to pray and ask for the Lord’s guidance and if, after six months the Lord had given us new members, a balanced choir, and venues to sing at, we would take that as being His will for us to continue. The meeting was arranged for 31st March.

In the meantime, we had some good practices with the added wonderful news of three new members including good musicians – but we were still desperately short of second tenors.

We met for our meeting on 31st March to make our decision, only to discover that on that very evening another two men had asked to join, and, yes, one is going to be a good second tenor! Six different churches had approached us, and we had five definite engagements! We thus concluded that God had gone before us, and was showing

us His will that the choir should continue to sing in His service.

We give God all the glory, and we are so grateful that we have a prayer-answering God, and that He has been so gracious to us. It also gives us the assurance and confidence for the future that we are in His will and care. And now it is up to us to work hard in our practising so we can sing for our King and bring glory to Him and to witness for Him so that our congregations will be blessed as they hear the gospel message of God’s love.

CHELTENHAM AND DISTRICT MALE VOICE PRAISE CHOIR

David Kendrick

I had hoped that by now we would have been back together as a choir, enjoying Christian fellowship and preparing to sing for the Lord, both locally and at Festivals. However, the Lord has not allowed that to happen. Many of us are still hopeful that the reformation of the choir will not be t-o-o far ahead, though there are still some legitimate obstacles to overcome, not least of which are COVID and the age of many choirmen, and my own health issues with yet more delays in my hip surgery (more prayer needed!).

Early on we lost 2nd Tenor Jimmy to COVID. His niece, with whom he had recently been united through a family search (Jimmy was unmarried) had hoped we could sing at his funeral but was disappointed that this couldn't

happen. A Thanksgiving Service is now scheduled for August at which we have been asked to sing. Please pray that Therese and her family will not be let down.

Love and blessings to all in FMVP.

He Touched Me - Brian McKay, Glasgow and West of Scotland

*He touched me, and oh the joy that floods my soul,
Something happened and now I know, He touched me and
made me whole.*

- T The Touch from the Saviour Transforms our lives – gives us hope for the days ahead; helps us to serve Him as never before – share in FMVP singing and enjoy the thrill it gives.
- O Opens up new ways for us to live our lives – helps us to Overcome temptation – gives our lives order by serving Him in ways we would never have imagined.
- U We Understand His love for us in a new way. A love that will never leave us; a love that Upholds us in every situation.
- C A touch that Cancels out our sinful lives and makes us Complete in Him. He Cleans us and makes us whole in Himself.
- H Gives us Hope and Happiness as we walk with Him daily. He Holds us up and stops us from falling; Helps us to honour Him in so many ways in our living, our singing, conversation with others; Helps us to find meaning and truth in the pieces we sing in FMVP.

Lord, thank You for Your touch.

Lord, thank You for Your love.

Lord, thank You that You keep.

Lord, thank You that You are coming back to take us home to be with Yourself.

Lord, thank You for many blessings from FMVP in the past; looking forward to blessings singing in days ahead; asking You for guidance for choirs continuing.

Worldwide

BRISBANE FESTIVAL MALE VOICE CHOIR

Neil Moss

Greetings from a very wet Brisbane.

We have had a couple of weather episodes in the past six weeks. The first caused extensive flooding and the second more minor flooding in some areas. Lots of people have been displaced from their homes and massive clean ups have taken place. Fortunately we have no reports of any of our members having problems although some have been prevented from getting to practice because of flooded roads.

Our year started out with our first practice on the 4th February 2022. Because of COVID restrictions we had to comply with regulations that stipulated the wearing of masks while we practised. Our first presentation was on the 13th March at a suburban Church at Acacia Ridge in Southeast Brisbane. On the Sunday afternoon they put on a Barbeque inviting friends, neighbours and the choir members and their families. After enjoying food and fellowship we had a time of prayer then did our evening presentation. There were 28 voices in the choir and we were

able to share a good Gospel programme which was received enthusiastically. The most pleasing aspect was the number of young people from the church and the neighbourhood who were present. Fortunately by then the restrictions had been relaxed.

Our AGM was held on the 18th March with the same committee being retained. However I subsequently stood down from my position as a committee member and chairman. Malcolm Arnold, previously Vice Chairman, has taken on the Chairman's role. Philip McCorkell has taken on the Vice Chairman's role. Please pray for Richard Jeffery, another committee member, who this past week has been hospitalised with a heart condition and underwent surgery for the insertion of stents. He is now at home recovering.

Our next presentation is booked for Sunday 10th April at 2.30pm at St Matthew's Anglican Church at Sherwood. Being Palm Sunday we will be giving a programme based on the Easter message. This is our first presentation in this Church so we are trusting for a good number of choirmen and audience being present. The next presentation we have booked is at the Gold Coast

at the Uniting Church at Burleigh. We have visited this Church once prior to COVID and look forward to returning. This will be followed by a visit on the 3rd July to the Living Faith Uniting Church at Carina Heights on the East side of Brisbane. This will also be a first time presentation. On the 20th August we plan to go to Forest Lake Baptist Church, the presentation being scheduled for the Auditorium of the Forest Lake State School. We also hope to hold a

Regional Festival on the Sunshine Coast and possibly at Bundaberg in the latter part of the year.

It is a special blessing from God to again be able to make some bookings. We are trusting in His mercy to allow these programmes to go ahead as planned. We continue to give thanks that we can be a part of these presentations of the Gospel in song.

God Bless you all.

From here and there

In February I received this note from Marilyn Davies, leader of Poole Choir:

Because of COVID the choir is closing as from January 2022.

From September I started my eleventh year of taking the Choir and am pleased to report that we endeavoured to get back together in October 2021 to sing three carols on December 19th at Rossmore Gospel Church. Because of COVID only two men were able to sing: Mike Tate and Julian.

We are sad but we cannot go forward into 2022.

That's very sad news but some members are remaining as Associate Members of the FMVP, including Marilyn herself. Marilyn also mentioned that she has published a book of Christian poetry called THE WAY and the TRUTH under her full name, Jayne Marilyn Johns-Davies, through Austin Macauley Publishers in London. Their sales line is 0207 038 8212.

I've also heard of the passing of Paul Berry, from his daughter Rachel. Singing was a huge part of Paul's life and he sang Male Voice Praise with Hertford Baptist church in the 80's and 90's, and after moving to Bristol in 1997 joined the Bristol Evangelical choir.

Sincere thanks to all who have contributed to this edition of Choirlink. Please send your items for the next one by Saturday 2nd July.

Yours in Christ, Vaughan