

7RR followed by a family committal and refreshments for all in the Parish Hall. Fred's son Neil wrote with this recollection:

While at a small Baptist Church near the Airbase in Missouri, the minister had 'volunteered' Fred without his knowledge as a special soloist at a prestigious outreach event! On complaining, Fred was told very firmly that 'you have a wonderful singing voice - use it for the Lord!' Only in the mid sixties was Fred able to comply with that command and found the calling for the rest of his life - Male Voice Praise. Leaving youth work, he joined the Bristol Evangel Male Voice Choir, quickly becoming organising secretary, then assistant conductor. Weekly rehearsals and fortnightly engagements were religiously attended, holidays being planned to fit in spare weeks. Not even the demands of secular employment were allowed to interfere with the rehearsal night! Fred was one of the choir soloists for a number of years and also under-

took solo support for other Christian engagements. Tours to France with the Bristol choir followed in the 1970's (singing phonetic French was an experience...), and later, with the South Wales Choir, a number of tours to Canada and the USA. On moving to Spaxton he led the small Bridgwater Gospel Singers group and over a number of years helped them take services in some of the smaller country chapels, as well as maintaining contact with the Bristol Choir when they were nearby.

Lastly, Andy Dart of the Suffolk Choir has passed on some information regarding his late father, Steve, who passed away in August 2020. Now a group of his work colleagues have got together to raise money for a headstone for him. They are doing a sponsored cycle ride around the area in which they live on 13th August, some two years after Steve's death. This kind gesture shows the esteem in which Steve was, and still is held by his colleagues working with HM Prison Service.

My thanks to all who have written for this edition of Choirlink. Thankfully, during these difficult days we can still sing God's praise and bring Gospel hope. Please send your items for the next Choirlink by Saturday 1st October.

Yours in Christ, Vaughan



CHOIRLINK

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

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Welcome to this quarter's Choirlink. Many choirs are entering a quieter time, and Council haven't met for a while, but there is still news to share.

United Kingdom

BOLTON MALE VOICE PRAISE

Mike Dewhurst



We Praise the Lord for our last session when we were able to continue our witness after the restrictions of the Covid 19 epidemic. It was great to sing

again at Ringley and also to enjoy fellowship with our friends from north of the border and the wilds of Yorkshire. Just like old times.

We are holding a Fellowship Evening on 5th August in the grounds of Emmanuel Evangelical Church Ringley: Pasty, Peas and a special treat - Parkin!

We are glad to welcome David Collier into the 2nd Bass line, and we re-start practices on 19th August when we shall begin practising Christmas music!

HIGHLAND GOSPEL MALE VOICE CHOIR

Ernie Collinson

For the first time since the Coronavirus Pandemic, choirs from across Scotland and Northern Ireland gathered to celebrate the 35th Inverness Festival of Male Voice Praise on Saturday 4th June.

More than 200 people of all ages headed to The East Church in the city centre and enjoyed Gospel Praise sung by choirs attending from Northern Ireland, Moray and Peterhead, the Festival being hosted by the Inverness-based Highland Gospel Male Voice Choir.

The free event included a Gospel Message from speaker Kenny Wilson and additional songs and music by guest artists John Alexander Wilson and Friends.

The 60 choirmen were accompanied by pianist Karen Young and led by conductors Eileen Mackintosh from HGMVC, Walter Brown from Peterhead and Houston Ogilby from Balymena, Northern Ireland.

A collection was raised for local charities Bear Necessities and The Highland Hospice.

The very powerful and well rehearsed sound from the choirs produced an enjoyable, emotional and Spiritually charged evening with an awareness of His Presence being clearly felt.

The Highland Gospel Male Voice Choir is now on a well earned summer break and will resume in August when rehearsals will commence for several events already planned for later in the year.

LONDON & HOME COUNTIES CHOIR NEWS

Keith Youngman, Chairman

The steady re-start after the Covid hiatus continues with joint choir engagements involving Uxbridge, Luton and Hertford choirs. The two pre-Easter engagements in the Uxbridge area were very successful and well attended. We return to one of those fellowships on 19th July but before that, we have a joint choir engagement organised by the Luton Choir on 14th

again a warm reception but a much smaller audience than previously. However there was at least one sincere inquiry for the Gospel tract we offered. On the 3rd July we are booked for the Living Faith Uniting Church at Carina Heights at 2.30pm. Unfortunately we learnt that our Conductor Robyn Geddes had tested positive for Covid and unable to be there. Peter Dor, who had just commenced as an assistant con-

ductor in the last few months, will now have the responsibility for the whole programme. There are some other presentations in the pipeline and a further number still to be finalised in the latter part of the year.

We thank God for these opportunities and although our numbers have reduced we still have a reasonably balanced group in the low twenties on most occasions.

From here and there

A number of folk have passed away, whose families we can remember in prayer.

In early April the London Area lost one of its long-standing supporters in the person of Beth (Betty) Carter-Samuel, who died aged 96. Her husband Leith Samuel had spoken at several Area engagements and after his death, Beth continued attending events including some outside the Area.

As mentioned earlier, David Roberts passed away on 23rd June. He died peacefully during a short spell in hospital whilst receiving treatment for a blood

clot. David had been leader of the Whitstable Choir for several decades and also had a spell as Pastor of Faversham Gospel Mission. He conducted at several London Festivals and was a regular at the East Kent Festivals. His funeral is to be held at 11am on Tuesday 9th August at Aylesham Baptist Church, with a burial afterwards at Whitstable Cemetery.

We have also heard of the very recent passing of Fred Boulton, a long-standing member of the Bristol and West Area. His funeral will be held at 1pm on July 20th in St George's Church, Wembdon, Bridgwater TA6

Worldwide

SYDNEY CHRISTIAN MALE VOICE CHOIR

David Gordon

Despite using Zoom to keep in touch while we were not permitted to meet for practice, the Sydney Christian Male Voice Choir has lost a number of members due to age, retirement, relocation, etc. We are conscious that this is the Lord's work, so we are looking to Him for guidance about the future. There is no shortage of opportunities - retirement villages are the growth industry in Australia! We would value the prayers of other choirs that we gain new members, so we can keep doing what we've been doing for the last 70 years - "Proclaiming Jesus, no other name".

BRISBANE FESTIVAL MALE VOICE CHOIR

Malcolm Arnold

Richard Jeffrey, for whom we asked for prayer in our last report, has progressed well but still has some anxious times with his health. However he has

been able to return to practices and singing at our presentations. Sadly, on the 1st April we attended the memorial service for John Slaughter who had not sung with us for some time because of ill health. He originally joined the choir in about 1986. Later on he shifted to the Blue Mountains in New South Wales and sang for some time with the Sydney choir. He returned to Brisbane and sang with us for quite some years. About twelve choir members attended with a number of our wives. We managed to sing We'll All Be There at the end of the service. This was appreciated very much by the family. A eulogy from Martin Fleming, our previous Chairman for twenty years, was read during the service.

Our presentation at St Matthew's Anglican Church on Palm Sunday had a good attendance. The Minister who was relieving at the time told our conductor he would give us 12 out of 10 for the presentation. On the 11th June we travelled to Burleigh Heads at the Gold Coast. This time there was

July. Very encouraging and we give thanks to the Lord for these opportunities.

In Hertford, after the Covid period losses, we have been heartened by two new choir-men joining us. They are now finding their voices and their way around the structure of the music which was new to them.

I was shocked to hear of the sudden passing of David Roberts, the leader of the Whitstable choir. He will be sorely missed by his family, the choir and the many in the movement who knew him. We give thanks for the significant contribution David made to the FMVP movement in the south east and pray that the Whitstable choir, already struggling after Covid, are able to keep singing.

UXBRIDGE GOSPEL MALE VOICE CHOIR

Gerald Durrant

The Uxbridge choir sadly lost a valued 2nd tenor, Ronald Elliott, a month ago. He was not a well man being on dialysis 3 times a week, diabetic and with

heart problems but was so devoted to the choir. His funeral is at Slough Crematorium, 3.00pm on Friday 15th July.

On a positive note we have gained a 1st tenor so our numbers remain at 7 with an average of 4/5 at most practices.

As mentioned, we have engagements on 14th and 19th July shared with Luton and Hertford choirs.

SWANSEA GOSPEL MALE VOICE CHOIR

Huw Jones

The Summer Praise event with Swansea Gospel Male Voice Choir took place on Saturday evening June 25th. It was held at The Waterfront Community Church in Swansea. Twenty one members of the choir sang on the night. There were around one hundred and forty in the congregation.

Our faithful conductors were John Davies and Gareth Radford. Our accompanist was Sheila Flannagan with Pastor Jim Webber as chairman. The

Word of God was powerfully preached by Pastor John Funnell from Pontypool. The scripture reading from the Psalms was by David Thomas, one of our 2nd tenors. Guest singers were The Messengers, a trio of men who sang some lovely, meaningful pieces. The choir sang eleven pieces in all including Stand Up and Praise The Lord Your God, My Saviour Lives, Ten Thousand Angels and The Power Of The Cross.

It was a real blessing to have been there and we pray that The Lord will have brought more souls into His Kingdom and that people have been built up in their faith in The Lord Jesus. The choir will now have a well-deserved rest until September, The Lord willing.

LONDONDERRY GOSPEL MALE CHOIR

Craig Henderson

As with almost every other activity, the Londonderry choir has seen big changes during the past three years or so.

Just before COVID presented

itself, bringing our choir work to a standstill, our 1st tenor William Purcell sadly lost his mother. A week later Craig our choir leader's wife was called home and then a fortnight later our youngest member Thomas Craig suddenly passed away. Shortly thereafter our 2nd tenor Andy Walker lost his wife and then our eldest member Edgar Hogg was called home. Illness has also affected two of our members.

In spite of all these setbacks we met together to seek God's will in relation to the future of the choir and I am pleased to report that members were enthusiastic in their desire to "get back into service for the Master". In the will of the Lord we have arranged to re-commence choir practices in September and already have been asked to sing at our local Disabled Christians Fellowship anniversary meeting in Richill Baptist Church, Londonderry in September.

Although small in number (9 members) we look to our wonderful Lord and Saviour for guidance, strength and His blessing as in His will we seek

to honour Him in song and witness in the times laid out for us as He pleases.

CHELTENHAM AND DISTRICT MALE VOICE PRAISE CHOIR

David Kendrick

The choir has not yet recommenced, though not due to any negativity on the part of the members. It might have been restarted some while ago; however, with hindsight and the happenings in the lives of many of the members, it is evident we are in the place where the Lord wants us. It is becoming clear that there is a desire to recommence in the autumn. We have a goal to which we are aiming – a Thanksgiving Service for one of our 2nd tenors, who went to be with his Lord at the beginning of the pandemic. James (Jimmy) O'Donnell has a niece, who found him late in his life and who was involved in the arrangement of his funeral. She promised that when it was possible, she would arrange for a Thanksgiving Service at his church in Cheltenham, in conjunction with the Choir. The Service has been arranged with

the Minister for Sunday 28th August at 16.30; the only part missing is the Choir. Please pray that there will be sufficient numbers of men who will want to start up again and that we will be able to get together to practise so as to produce a Song of Praise, worthy of the Lord, whom we love and serve.

In other news Ken Spink, one of our very faithful 2nd tenors has at the age of 92 been diagnosed with incurable lung cancer. Ken has a staunch faith, enabling him to face this crisis with great dignity. We are praying that Ken will be with us long enough to restart with the Choir.

As for my own health, I was discharged from hospital on Friday 17th June, following the hip surgery on the 14th, as promised this time. I was very weak and rather wobbly and in much pain, and it became clear that the recovery was going to take time, especially with more complex surgery. My physiotherapist says I am progressing well but Jean has been told to be strict with me! I am grateful for all the love and concern that has been shown to me by so many.