



CHOIRLINK

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

No. 19

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Welcome to this quarter's Choirlink. After a cool May followed by the hottest June on record in the UK, July is more changeable (and more comfortable for some of us!). None of this puts off the choirs, however, so there's plenty to report.

United Kingdom

HIGHLAND GOSPEL MALE VOICE CHOIR

Eric Halkett

Summer is here and it is hot! Schools are coming to the end of the term and families are preparing for summer holidays, so the choir has decided to follow suit and restart in August.

Well! What a Spring programme! The lads in Northern Ireland were outstanding. They treated us like royalty, a fabulous time in Coleraine and Balymena. Singing Praise every

day we were there, and some of us even managed to scramble over the Giant's Causeway. No sooner were we home, but next weekend we were in Peterhead for their Festival.

An engagement in a care home and joining Moray choir in an engagement in Burghead were held during May and then it was all go preparing for our own Festival on the first Saturday in June. We wondered what size of audience would come to the new venue, especially when the television was showing the lo-

cal team playing in the Scottish Cup Final at the same time, but the LORD is good, and many folks came. The choir sang well, our guest string quartet was well received, and the Gospel message was brought by the local pastor – I hope some of you joined us via the live stream.

We were invited to attend a couple of occasions over in Fortrose. We heard about the charity work that Donnie was involved with on his trip at Easter in Bulgaria and the following week by the students of our Musical Director – a lot of talented people, both young and not so young.

As the old cartoon films finished – That’s all folks! Thanks again for the opportunity to share some of the news from the Highlands and may the Lord richly bless you all.

HERTFORD MALE VOICE PRAISE GROUP

Keith Youngman

We are preparing for Sunday service at a village chapel at the

beginning of September, our first time back there since Covid. As part of this we are practising some new pieces from the Keep Singing books to freshen up our repertoire.

WHITSTABLE MALE VOICE PRAISE CHOIR

David Casse

There’s not much news at the moment from Whitstable. We as a group of 5 anticipate taking a short service in July (waiting for confirmation) at Highland House in Canterbury where one of our ex-choir members, Ken Burgess, is a resident. He is 103 years old!

UXBRIDGE GOSPEL MALE VOICE CHOIR

Gerald Durrant

We enjoyed a Service of Praise organised by the Luton choir, at Stanton Road Baptist Church in May together with the Hertford choir. This included an excellent lunch followed by the choir. A time very much enjoyed by both choir and congregation. We have no Summer engagements and will not start meeting again until

September. However with the Luton choir we met on June 12th for a joint time of fellowship and singing in Uxbridge and we will do it again in Luton on July 10th.

Sadly I have to report that our pianist Ann Swallow is no longer able to play for us because of arthritis in her hand. I am grateful to John from Luton playing for any engagements but at practices it has to be me! Our average attendance at practices is 5 so with me playing it is 4!

Finally, by way of advance notice, we have been asked to take part in a 'Songs of Praise' event at Hayes Town Chapel on Saturday afternoon Nov 4th, as we did last year, with a congregation of about 100.

SWANSEA GOSPEL MALE VOICE CHOIR

Huw Jones

The Swansea Summer Praise event 2023 was held on Saturday evening July 1st at The Waterfront Church in Swansea. Despite the event clashing with the Swansea Air Show, there

was a congregation of well over a hundred.

The choir had worked very hard with practices since early March. Our chairman Rev. Jim Webber has been leading with a fifteen minute encouragement from Ephesians before each practice.

There were twenty three choir-men singing in the event. Our conductors were John Davies and Gareth Radford. The accompanist was Helen Dykes, wife of Kenny who has re-joined the choir. We sang a number of pieces by Valerie Collison, such as Lift High The Name of Jesus, There's A Sound in The Trees and The River Of Life. Other items were Burdens Are Lifted at Calvary and Unbounded Grace among others. The speaker was Andy Christofides from Cardiff who gave a powerful and very challenging word. The guest singers were The Messengers from Pontardulais. They are a trio of three men, accompanied by Dorothy Davies. They sang some lovely well known hymns and were a real blessing on the night. The

choir ended the evening by singing a great favourite with the choir, We'll Go In The Strength of The Lord.

The choir have been invited to sing in Verdi's on Saturday 8th July. This is a big Italian restaurant in Mumbles. We last sang there in 2019 before Covid. They have also asked us to sing there on August Bank Holiday Monday.

The choir will now have a well earned rest for six weeks.

**LONDONDERRY GOSPEL
MALE CHOIR**
Craig Henderson

Londonderry choir is presently "resting" after a busy few weeks up to the beginning of June.

With the addition of three new members who joined the choir over the past few months we are now the strongest numerically for a some years and this reflects in the quality of the singing. Participating in packed mission halls in Co.Tyrone and Co.Donegal were a real blessing and already

several requests have come in for the new season, commencing in September.

We are thankful to God for opening doors and the opportunity to sing His praises and tell the story of His saving grace.

We can't wait till September to renew fellowship at our Thursday evening practices in preparation for service for the Master.

**CHELTENHAM AND
DISTRICT MALE VOICE
PRAISE CHOIR**
David Kendrick

My last report was written a short while after our Tri-Annual General Meeting when 8 of us met to plan for the future of the Choir, with great anticipation. Having read that report recently I was reminded that I said 'we are hoping to hold a Rally, if we can recruit some new members, and invite other choirs to come and join us'. Sadly, that won't happen this year, indeed, we have struggled to hold two events at two of our Care Homes and an annual engagement at Cambray Baptist La-

dies' Fellowship, due to my long-term absence from being able to join the Choir and the call of the Lord for another of our members. Having said that, I am reliably informed that the Choir performed relatively well on each occasion, for which we give all the praise and thanks to our wonderful Lord, who is the reason for our singing.

When we reformed as a choir after 'lockdown', we were joined by a choirman who had been a member of the St Ives' Choir for about fifteen years. He had relocated back to Cheltenham and had been given my contact details during the pandemic. We communicated by email and telephone and got to know each other, in spite of never meeting. Roy joined us in September as a 2nd Tenor, and due to his talented background as a chorister, he transferred to the 1st Tenors. Roy settled into the Choir well and we enjoyed his company and singing. Sadly, Roy started to have medical problems early in 2023 and was enduring various procedures, which did not improve, hence we saw little of him as we approached Easter.

Roy was admitted to Gloucester Royal Hospital in May, departing to be with the Lord just before midnight on Saturday 6th May. Roy's daughter has arranged a Thanksgiving Celebration for him at The Queens Hotel in Cheltenham on Friday 7th July at 1pm. Sadly, due to illness and other problems within the choir, we are only going to be able to attend but not sing.

Bereavement and illness seem the order of the day for the choir at the moment. I reported earlier that one of our retired 1st Tenors, Brian Burrows, had been called to higher service. It is with sadness I report that his wife, Ruth, who was our Deputy Accompanist for many years, has since followed Brian. Ruth went to be with the Lord on Saturday 3rd June and her funeral and thanksgiving service has been arranged for Thursday 27th July, to which the Choir has been asked to sing at the thanksgiving service. Please pray that we can muster a choir that will be able to glorify the Lord on the occasion.

I would like to close by thanking those of the FMVP move-

ment who have upheld my wife and family in prayer since Easter, whilst I have been quite seriously laid aside. I am still 'housebound'; however we can now see the light at the end of the tunnel and I am so very much better, and rearing to go! Being the Secretary of the Choir has been a real blessing because I have been 'kept in the loop', as they say, by doing the secretarial duties, as normal.

Can I reiterate my request for prayer for the Cheltenham MVP Choir, and the movement as a whole, that the Lord would touch the hearts of Christian men who can sing, to give serious consideration to becoming members of a Christian Male Voice Praise Choir; the fellowship is wonderful, and the singing is good practice for when we join the heavenly choir! I feel that the need is urgent!

Worldwide

BRISBANE FESTIVAL MALE VOICE CHOIR

Malcolm Arnold

The Choir continues with enthusiastic support from all its members.

We were able to present a Sunday Afternoon Programme at Janoah Gardens Retirement Village in Manly West, Brisbane on Sunday, 28th April, which was much appreciated by the audience there.

On Sunday 21st May, we travelled to Minden, west of Brisbane, where again the Choir was well received by those

there in attendance at the local Baptist Church.

It was a great joy to join with the Bundaberg Choir with 36 men on stage, to present a Regional Festival at Maryborough, 3 hours north of Brisbane, on Saturday, 17th June. The St Stephen's Uniting Church was practically full, and the audience enjoyed the programme.

A feature of the programme was a Piano Solo given by Tim McCorkell, the young 14-year-old son of Terence McCorkell, a former Brisbane Choir Conductor and grandson of our Vice Chairman, Philip McCor-

kell. Tim is a very talented young man and his rendition of Fantaisie - Impromptu by Chopin brought much applause.

Most of the Choir members were hosted at Campialba for the weekend by Tim's parents and grandparents. Mealtimes and the Hymn Singalongs on the Friday and Saturday nights were a great time of fellowship and enjoyment.

On the Sunday morning we attended the Maryborough Gospel Chapel where we participated in their Worship Service.

The Church provided a great BBQ lunch before we returned to Brisbane from a wonderful weekend of Praise, Gospel sharing and warmth of fellowship among Believers.

Our attention now turns to our Combined Festival which will be held (DV) on Saturday 23rd September 2023 at the Presbyterian Living Church, Creek Road Ministry Centre, Carina, Brisbane.

This will be our first Combined Festival for five years due to the Covid 19 interruption. We invite and welcome all visiting choristers who can attend.

Blessings to all from "Down Under".

[If anyone needs further details and hasn't already been notified, please either visit bfmvc.org or contact me - Vaughan - and I will forward a copy of the invitation letter supplied to me by Derrick Newton, BFMVC' Secretary]

From here and there

*From Allan Turner comes the sad news that Geoff Forsdyke, for many years Secretary of the **Purley** choir, passed away in June. Geoff had been unwell with Parkinson's for some years and had been in a Care Home since January. Please remember his widow Margaret*

in your prayers.

*I understand that the **Suffolk Male Voice Praise Choir** has decided to disband. This small group of men wished to continue the work of Male Voice Praise following the closure of the Bury Choir some years*

ago, but had not had engagements, a situation which obviously became more difficult with Covid.

Prayers are asked for Pauline Pease, wife of John Pease (Whitstable and former West-cliff choirs). Pauline has been unwell in hospital for some weeks, undertaking new chemotherapy treatment for a long-term condition.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

*Mike Dewhurst
Secretary to the Council*

Sadly since Covid several choirs have ceased to function which means quite a lot of men have been lost to the fellowship. Council were very aware of this, noting that some men still wished to be part of the movement but under the present rules could not be members, as they no longer belonged to a registered choir.

Problem solved – Council have made provision for ex-members of closed choirs to now become personal Associate Members.

If you are reading this and your choir has closed, and you still wish to be involved, why not apply to become an Associate Member? You will officially be part of FMVP and receive the same benefits as you did when you were a member of an active choir.

Sadly to date only 9 men have registered. We could do with more as we do not want to lose contact with those of you who have served the Lord faithfully with us over very many years.

To register, contact me for an application form either by telephone (01204 468828) or e-mail dewhurst810@btinternet.com or write to me at 21 Buckingham Ave Horwich Bolton BL6 6NR.

It's sad that, with the closure of the Suffolk Choir, East Anglia now has no MVP presence, where once it was very strong. However, well done to the Highland Choir for live-streaming their recent Festival. If you missed seeing them live, they are still on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8xnDr8P1q2E> is the link.

My thanks to all who have contributed to this edition of Choirlink. Please send your items for the next one by Saturday 7th October.

Yours in Christ, Vaughan