



CHOIRLINK

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

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Welcome to another edition of Choirlink. I have been encouraged by the number of folk responding with news, however brief, during the UK summer break. Further afield, the Brisbane Festival is the major event of recent times, reported in the Worldwide News section.

COUNCIL REPORT: 6th SEPTEMBER 2023
Ian Stangoe, Chairman

Due to various circumstances only five members were able to attend the Zoom meeting. Ian opened with a reading from Hebrews 10:24-25 where we are reminded to encourage one another as in Rom 15:5-6 which says, 'May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

The bank balance continues to grow year on year and choirs are reminded if they have need of

funding for special circumstances to contact the Secretary. This past year Council was privileged to help in the cost of the choirs from the North of Scotland to attend the Festival in Northern Ireland.

Alfred agreed to arrange for all the music with accompaniments to be available on a memory stick for any choir having difficulty downloading from the website. Ian will see if the website can be improved to make it easier to access the music download area.

Mike had produced a choir numbers list which shows a further de-

cline in the number of choirmen. It is also disappointing that there have not been more choirmen from closed choirs looking to become associated members so please encourage any you know to contact Mike. It was agreed that a questionnaire would be issued to all choirs to try to get a clearer understanding of how choirs operate so that we may learn and share ways to improve.

Mike closed by asking how often do we say thank you? In Luke 17 we read about 10 lepers who were

cleansed but only one came back to thank the Lord. Ephesians 1 and 2 remind us that we should say thank you for the blessing of the past when we consider the riches of God's grace that He lavished on us, and we should also thank Him for the good works which He has prepared in advance for us as we continue in His service.

Note: Any choir interested in receiving a memory stick should contact Alfred Tarring on: alfredtarring@gmail.com

United Kingdom

HIGHLAND GOSPEL MALE VOICE CHOIR

Eric Halkett

Autumn – the season when the Lord paints His landscape in colourful beauty.

Moray choir invited us to take part in an open-air event in the seaside village of Gardenstown on the Moray Coast. It was a gloriously sunny day so shirt sleeves were in order. The event was from 12 noon till 4:00pm with short comfort breaks and refreshments. As well as a powerful Gospel message being proclaimed we sang our core pieces several times over and the large crowd that had gathered

around us swelled the praise as, in addition, we all sang requests of many well-known hymns.

We held our AGM in August and have enjoyed a quiet start to the autumn term with a visit to a local care home and attending the Moray Festival in Buckie – that was a wonderful occasion with the Holy Spirit overshadowing the whole event. So now the main focus will be on the carol singing in the Dingwall Cattle Mart in December with two more care home visits in between. Sadly, we will not be able to sing during 'Prisoner Week' to the prisoners in the local jail due to shortages of Prison Officers.

Some of our members have been having a torrid time lately and we would value prayer for a return to good health. However we also rejoice as recently two men have joined the choir, but sadly one of our stalwart 2nd basses has decided it's time for a change.

Thanks again for the opportunity to share some of the news from the Highlands and may the Lord richly bless you all.

**PETERHEAD KEDRON
GOSPEL MALE VOICE
CHOIR**

Walter Brown

It is with great sadness I have to inform you that the men have decided that the Choir cannot continue. This is due to lack of balance and diminishing numbers meaning we could not fulfil engagements.

The Choir was formed in 1947 by Rev. Richard Smith, minister of the Congregational Church, taking the name Peterhead Kedron Gospel Male Voice Choir.

One of the original members, George West, who came from a village near Peterhead called Boddam, started as a 1st Tenor moving onto 2nd Bass. George has

faithfully been there from the beginning to the end serving his Lord in song.

It has been a joy being part of the Male Voice Movement and the fellowship it brings, not only to the men, but to their wives, when we all meet up at Festivals.

The Choirmen want to thank the Movement for the rich fellowship it has brought serving our Lord and Saviour.

Walter Brown, Conductor

**HERTFORD MALE VOICE
PRAISE GROUP**
Keith Youngman

Our return to a village chapel to lead a Sunday service in September went well and was very much appreciated. We hope this has now helped to reopen other invitations on the village chapel circuit.

We are meeting to practise about every two weeks, depending on choirmen availability, and we are currently working on pieces for the joint engagements with Uxbridge and Luton choirs before Christmas. We also hope to be going into local Hertford care homes in the Advent period to help them celebrate Christ's birth.

WHITSTABLE GOSPEL MALE VOICE CHOIR

David Casse

Five of us still meet once a month at the home of Andy and Gabi Webb for a time of singing and fellowship. We have one proposed engagement coming up at the end of the month at Bradbury Grange Nursing Home, Whitstable.

Some readers may remember Ken Burgess who was a 2nd bass in our choir for a number of years.. He recently went to be with the Lord at the age of 103. It was a privilege to be able to sing "All Things Bright and Beautiful" (one of Ken's favourites) as a group at the funeral and at the family's request and although we sang *a capella* the family and friends who were there joined us in the chorus. Please remember the family in your prayers.

UXBRIDGE MALE VOICE CHOIR

Gerald Durrant

On Saturday 4th November we are supporting a 'Songs of Praise' event at Hayes Town Chapel. We went there last year and there was a congregation of about 100. We will of course be joined by our friends from Luton and Hertford. For us it is almost a 'mini Festival'

Sadly we only have one Christmas engagement this year. Last year we had two. Pre-pandemic we had 3 or 4 every year

I am also sorry to report that we are losing our pianist Ann who has been playing for us for many years. She lost her husband Richard to COVID some years ago and has decided to move to be close to her son in Stokenchurch which is the right thing for her to do. She will be very much missed as not only was she our pianist but she also helped with refreshments. I will therefore have to lead the five of us from the piano as I am the only other pianist, and I guess we will be cutting down on refreshments!

LONDONDERRY GOSPEL MALE CHOIR

Craig Henderson

Londonderry choir members recommenced practices at the beginning of September after the summer break. On the 5th October we took part in a church service in the Glenelly valley in the Sperrin mountains and look forward to singing in the next few weeks in Limavady Baptist church and taking the evening service in Raphoe Congregational church in Co. Donegal.

A little history of the Londonderry choir.....The choir was formed in 1950 by the late Walter Leech and for many years met weekly in Fountain Street Baptist church mission hall located in the City centre. In the early 1970's during what is known locally as "the troubles", the city centre became as a fortress with Army checkpoints and for many years few people ventured into the city, especially after dark. During this time we met for practice in members' homes. On one occasion while practising in the late Jim Taylor's house we heard shots and members scampered to kneel down away from the windows.

Our friends from Lismacrol Mission hall in Drumahoe on the outskirts of the city offered us accommodation in their hall where we enjoy fellowship second to none during our weekly practices

Only a few of our members actually reside in the city and suburbs of Londonderry. Others, mainly farmers, reside in the Limavady area, Plumbridge and Bready in Co. Tyrone, Moville Co. Donegal and Portrush Co. Antrim and in order to come to choir practice and return home would aggregate approx 300 miles weekly.

"True commitment indeed"
"To God be the Glory"!

SWANSEA GOSPEL MALE VOICE CHOIR

Huw Jones

We are now practising on a weekly basis for our Christmas Praise in December. We have been blessed with two new choir members of late. One joined after hearing us sing in the open air on August Bank Holiday Monday. The other after being asked by a choir member. The practices are well attended.

We are so grateful for our conductors John Davies and Gareth Radford. Also for Helen Dykes, our accompanist. Our chairman Rev. Jim Webber continues to bring much blessing and sound encouragement to us at the start of every practice. The pieces for Christmas Praise include "Come and join the Celebration", "Son of the Highest", "Down from His Glory", "The Angel's song" and "God is with us". Our prayer request is that we are kept healthy by The Lord in order to Praise Him all the more. Every blessing to all choirs.

CHELTENHAM & DISTRICT MALE VOICE PRAISE CHOIR

David Kendrick

My report in Choirlink 19 finished with a genuine and urgent need for

the Cheltenham MVP Choir and the Lord has yet to answer in a very positive way; however there are signs of a possible answer in the New Year. I have recently been invited to join a Breakfast Group of Christian men who meet every Saturday morning at the Tewkesbury Wetherspoon Hotel. One of the men sings in a mixed choir and has expressed an interest in joining a male voice choir, together with a couple of his colleagues. We had hoped that it would have happened by now but there have been some doubts among them, hence the urgency of the situation. The Leader of the mixed choir has written to our Leader and me, but we have not yet been able to respond. My contact is talking about the possibility of meeting David and me in the New Year. Meanwhile I am having difficulty in responding positively to some invitations from a number of Care Homes in the area. Please pray with us for the Lord's guidance in the situation.

Regarding answers to prayer, I wish to thank those of you who know me and have been praying about my health within the last couple of years. Although I am no longer a spring chicken, I am very happy to share with you that after many doctors' appointments and procedures, I was given excellent news from my Consultant Sur-

geon, who is a fine Christian man, last Thursday. He is convinced I have no major health issues requiring surgery. I just have anaemia, for which he has referred me back to my doctors to resolve the issue, medically. My wife, Jean, and I are thrilled and look forward to, hopefully, a few more years of active service in the Lord's service, DV.

Our Conductor has two boys who experience health issues and the younger of the two is facing major orthopaedic surgery towards the end of November, which will entail him remaining in plaster for a couple of months, at least. Hence Mark will be unable to conduct the choir during that time and it will affect the attendance of the grandpa, who sings in the choir too. Again, much prayer would be appreciated.

It would appear that, as things stand at the moment, Cheltenham MVP Choir will not be performing a Christmas programme this year - maybe one or two engagements, perhaps!

This leaves me to conclude my report by wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and God's richest blessing in the New Year, DV. We pray you will be used well for the blessing of many during the Christmas season.

Worldwide

BRISBANE FESTIVAL MALE VOICE CHOIR

Malcolm Arnold

We are pleased to report that the Brisbane Choir continues enthusiastically to proclaim 'Jesus - No Other Name'. We presented a programme at the Southport Uniting Church on the Gold Coast on the 6th August. The church and audience were most appreciative and "we are welcome back any time".

We held an amazing Combined Festival of Male Voice Praise in Brisbane on Saturday afternoon 23rd September 2023. There were 52 men, from 5 choirs in the combined choir with an estimated audience around 450. The church was full to overflowing. It was such a blessing, after a 'break' of 5 years, to have such a receptive and appreciative audience. A vocal solo was given by Phil Shield (Bundaberg), two outstanding piano solos by Tim McCorkell (aged 14, grandson of Deputy Chairman and Festival Coordinator, Philip McCorkell) and a Barber Shop Quartet, 'Soul'd' Out of which 2 members are Brisbane Choristers. Approx 50 'Bridge to Life' tracts were taken by the audience. Our prayer was, and is, that the Festival was 'all for the Glory of God.'

We concluded the day with a wonderful time of fellowship as we enjoyed a Dinner together.

On the Sunday, 25 Choristers attended the Grovely Christian Community Church, where we participated in a great time of worship and praise. This was followed by a sumptuous lunch provided by the church, which 'wrapped up' a wonderful weekend of fellowship and service for our Lord.

We were greatly encouraged by the whole weekend as we didn't really know what to expect after such a break due to COVID19.

Lord willing, we may well now press on to host our '70th Anniversary' Combined Festival' in 2025.

We are now preparing for our end of year Christmas presentations.

Blessings to all.

SYDNEY CHRISTIAN MALE VOICE CHOIR

David Gordon

The combined choir at the Brisbane Festival included six fine men from Sydney; photo overleaf.



The 'Sydney Six' in full regalia for the Brisbane Festival

From Here and There

A short update from John Pease, former leader of the Westcliff Choir and member at Whitstable, whose wife Pauline has been very unwell in hospital:

“After 9 weeks in hospital with me sleeping in the room with her, Pauline finally came out on 12th August a very weak lady.

We almost lost her twice but the Lord raised her up both times and she is with us today. She has to have chemo every week for the next few months and then

monthly thereafter.

I want to thank the brethren and others for their prayers for if it were not for those prayers I'm sure she would not be with us today.

The effectual fervent prayers of righteous persons availeth much.

To God be the Glory.”

John is now fully retired from the ministry and has taken on being Pauline's carer - certainly a different type of vocation.

It's sad to hear of another choir closing (Peterhead Kedron) but we praise God for those choirs that continue in their work for the Lord. Meanwhile, as I write, deeply troubling events are unfolding in the Holy Land. Let us follow the command to 'pray for the peace of Jerusalem' and the wider area, and may the time swiftly come for those involved to “be still and know that I am God”, and to cease the carnage. Items for next issue by 6th January, please. Yours in Christ, Vaughan