



# CHOIRLINK

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

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2020**

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United Kingdom

## BRISTOL EVANGEL MALE VOICE CHOIR

*Paul Davies*

Regretfully, I missed the deadline for the October 2019 (No. 7) issue through not having made an appropriate diary note and probably because of the timing for arrangements with the Bristol Festival.

Our 67<sup>th</sup> Festival was held on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> September at our new venue in St Michael's Church Centre, Stoke Gifford on the northern outskirts of Bristol which is convenient for motorway travellers as it is only a few miles from the major M4/M5 intersection at

Almondsbury and is also right next door to the Bristol Parkway Railway station. This in turn is convenient for relatively cheap all-day car parking should all the local street parking be utilised and is certainly much cheaper than central Bristol City parking charges. This was our fourth Festival at this superb modern venue, and we have no regrets whatsoever in making the decision to move out of the Colston Hall in the city centre.

We were very much encouraged with a choir of 68 men including a large contingent of visiting men from Swansea, Exeter, Torbay, Saltash, Poole,

St Ives, Bolton and Purley. It was also good to welcome a couple of carloads from The White Rose Choir in Castleford including their leader Trevor Jones and Ewart North. It was a privilege to be able to welcome Mike Dewhurst, our Council Secretary, as our guest conductor who readily joined with me and our Bristol Evangel deputy conductor with the conducting responsibilities.

We were able to present the Gospel in a clear manner to a reasonably full church although the numbers were down on last year possibly because of the severe adverse weather conditions. The programme consisted of a typical varied FMVP programme using most pieces from our new repertoire held on the all-encompassing memory sticks as so professionally produced by Alfred Tarring. The two exceptions to this were first class interpretations of “Just a closer walk with Thee” as arranged by Ed Lojeski and the rousing “Praise the Lord, His glories show” set to the stirring welsh tune of Llanfair.

We were let down by our

planned soloist at short notice so I called in the services of a local mixed voice choir, The Emmaus Christian Choir, who certainly rose to the occasion with a steady presentation of six pieces including the well known arrangement of “The Lord’s my Shepherd” by Howard Goodall. The Emmaus and assembled Male Voices joined together with a suitable arrangement of Morte Criste which to my mind was very effective.

Our speaker and Chairman, Alan Thorpe, was.... well what can I say other than “different” and it really does depend on individual senses of humour as to how well you liked him! Besides being the Pastor of several churches over the years he was primarily the Railway Mission Chaplain for GWR based at Temple Meads Station in Bristol. Although officially retired he continues his work with the Railway Mission. I received various comments about Alan’s presentation but be in no doubt that, in between the jokes, we heard the Gospel message that evening. Whatever people may say Alan has been privileged to have led a number of railway

employees to the Lord including, during a counselling session, the train driver who had experienced someone jumping in front of his train.

A few weeks later we thoroughly enjoyed a day at Cheltenham helping the choir celebrate their Diamond Jubilee which is reported on elsewhere in this issue.

As unusually we have not had any Christmas engagements, we concluded our year with several regular Sunday evening services in and around our patch ending with an excellent evening at Whiteshill Evangelical Church. This is where we rehearse and the church is known to many FMVP people, including Council and Area Organisers who have attended meetings there. It was a great evening with a good choir performance, a superb piano solo from Norman Philips from Whiteshill ending with a good time of Fellowship with choir colleagues, wives and congregation over a first-class supper provided by the Whiteshill ladies.

We continued to rehearse up to

a week or so before Christmas and are looking to the New Year as we continue in His service especially as we get into the list of pieces as selected for both the Scottish Festival 2021 and this year's Exeter Festival – some interesting items in there which I am sure we will come across several times throughout the coming year.

Every Blessing to you all.

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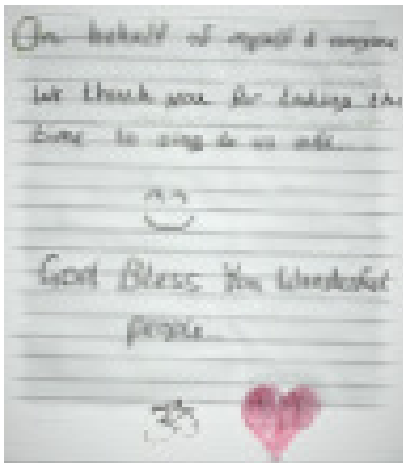
## HIGHLAND GOSPEL MALE VOICE CHOIR

*Sam Macdonald*

Greetings to all as we are nearly a month into 2020 and one event of praise under our belts and 9 booked engagements before our annual festival on 6<sup>th</sup> June, in various locations and for needy charities including the Inverness Street Pastors and Dyke Church which dates back to the time of MacBeth, as the Thane of Cawdor is buried in the oldest part of its foundations.

Now let me tell you of our annual visit to Porterfield Prison. On Monday 18<sup>th</sup> November we

gathered to sing a programme of Gospel hymns to some of the inmates of B hall at the start of Prisoners' week. Twenty of the Choir attended and were well accepted. At the end we received enthusiastic applause and a note, pictured here, was pushed from under a cell door. What a wonderful encouragement for our Choir and may we continue to pray for the writer of that note.



The 19<sup>th</sup> November saw the Choir singing to Senior Citizens at Inshes Church Inverness. We sang a selection of their favourite pieces such as 'Ye gates' Scottish 53, which we sang *a capella*. Also, we sang the tune Finlandia as requested. At the end we enjoyed fellowship with

our audience over a sumptuous tea.

The Choir also sang in Fortrose Free Church on 6<sup>th</sup> December for a fund-raising evening to support the building of the new church and a sum over £2,100 was collected.

On the afternoon of Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> December in Dingwall Auction Mart we gathered to sing at our 22<sup>nd</sup> annual Christmas service for the Farming Community. A collection was taken for 'Support in Mind', a mental health charity, which amounted to £1,350. Following a time of gathering community singing of carols, the choir of 20 sang from the auction ring a mixture of new carols and choir pieces to an audience of 400+. At the finish we received enthusiastic applause and enjoyed fellowship over tea and cakes.

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## BOLTON MALE VOICE PRAISE

*Mike Dewhurst*

*Mike has written to say that there will be no Bolton Festival in 2020. He sets out the reasons in a letter which I quote from here:*

Sadly I am writing to inform you that we have made the decision not to have a Festival in Bolton this year.

Several factors have led us to make this decision, the main one being the lack of support we now seem to get from the local churches resulting in a massive fall in audience numbers. This is together with the rising costs of putting on such an event, the amount of work involved with fewer people to help, and also concerns about the balance and size of choir as many choirmen are now getting older and may not be able to travel to be with us.

Last year we reached our 40<sup>th</sup> Festival and what a great event that was. Our feeling now is that could never be repeated and we do not want to go down the road of seeing events that fall below the standard we require and are not honouring to the Lord.

As a local choir we intend to maintain our witness in the area and will continue supporting other areas where Festivals are taking place. Therefore we can

continue friendships and have fellowship with the many we have known for so many years.

Thank you so much for your support over the years your presence on so many wonderful occasions has been very much appreciated. What great lasting memories we have, and we know that there are those who have come to put their trust in the Lord as we have experienced His presence with us in our work and witness together.

*Thanks Mike. This is a sad day but the important thing is that you have made a decision which honours the Lord, and allows the work to continue in a more streamlined way. May He bless you all!*

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## CHELTENHAM MALE VOICE PRAISE CHOIR

*David Kendrick*

### Diamond Jubilee Rally

Our Annual Rally was truly a festival of praise and worship to our wonderful God, whom we serve so willingly and affectionately. It is only by His grace and favour that we have the ability to do so and that fact must always be acknowledged

by every choirman. This was evident at the Rally as a Choir of 59 men sang from the depths of their hearts to produce a superb sound, both verbally and musically. This was underlined by a comment and compliment from our retiring Sound Engineer, Don Feltham, who has recorded many festivals over many years. He said, 'that was one of the best festivals that I have had the privilege to attend and record'. I wonder whether it could be the Welsh connection?

The Chairman and Speaker was Paul Young, an Evangelist from Maesteg, in the Valleys. The Soloist was Luther Vaughan, from Cardiff, who is a classically trained opera singer. One of the Guest Conductors was John Davies, who leads the Swansea Gospel Male Voice Choir, and the Organist was Paul Willis, who is a Bristol man but now lives in Cardiff and sings in the Cambrensis Christian Choir. The Choirmen came from various choirs around the UK: Bolton, Bristol, Cheltenham, Chesterfield, Exeter, Inverness, Luton, Purley, Swansea, Torbay, and Whitstable. We welcomed three Guest

Conductors; John Davies (Swansea); Paul Davies (Bristol); Alfred Tarring (Exeter); together with our own Leader, Mark Mulley. We were also treated to the keyboard and musical skills of Paul Willis on the organ, and our own maestro, David Tingley on the grand piano. The evening was led superbly by Paul Young, who gave a very good message. Luther Vaughan gave us two good solo spots, accompanied by his own pianist. The result was a very successful evening, which was enjoyed by both Choirmen and visitors alike.

Could I conclude by saying that a CD + message of the event is available from the Secretary at a cost £10, inc. UK p&p:  
dajeaken@talktalk.net

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## FMVP DAY OF PRAYER 19th March 2020

*Please don't forget to pray for the movement in your choirs and as individuals on this day, which is the birthday of our founder, James McRoberts. Numbers may be down overall but we have much to thank God for, and the work continues, sometimes in new ways.*

## Worldwide

### BRISBANE FESTIVAL MALE VOICE CHOIR *Derrick Newton*

*This news actually concerns the Toowoomba Choir, which is part of the Brisbane choir. Derrick says:*

For your interest I have sent the photos below of Estelle Dempster, who is the wife of one of our prominent Toowoomba Choir Members.

Estelle was recently awarded the Toowoomba “Citizen of the Year” Award for 2019.



One Certificate says, “ In recognition of promoting the Welfare and Wellbeing of the local community and providing positive role model for others”. The other says, “ In recognition of Outstanding Community Service”.



These prestigious Toowoomba awards were provided to recognize the valuable contribution by Estelle to the community of Toowoomba.

You might be interested to learn that the Toowoomba Choir completed 15 Church services and a total of 27 presentations at Nursing Homes and Aged Care Retirement Villages during 2019. A remarkable achievement for a choir of only 20 dedicated Members.

*Estelle's husband John also sends this photo of the Toowoomba men singing in their new shirts at the Nubeena Retirement Village in Toowoomba. This was taken in early December and he says this new summer uniform is much cooler when the temperatures rise!*



## Snippets from here and there...

*Allan Turner from **Purley** says that Alan Riches, who was for many years the choir's leader and conductor, passed away on 5<sup>th</sup> February. He was admitted to hospital in January with pneumonia, but then suffered a stroke and died a few days later. Please pray for Muriel and the family at this sad time.*

*Allan also says that Geoff Forsdyke had a fall recently in his home and broke his hip. He had emer-*

*gency surgery and is now back home but has to use a wheelchair. Geoff already suffers from Parkinson's disease so his reduced mobility is an additional burden.*

*Byron Goulding, who lived in Reading, passed away towards the end of last year. I received this news in a card from his widow, Audrey. Byron was known to many for his participation in the Canada and USA tours, both as singer and as speaker. As a native Welshman, he was closely associated with the Male Voice choirs in the South Wales Area.*

## Calendar of Events: February - April 2020

### APRIL

18 *Exeter Festival, St Thomas Methodist Church, Cowick St, Exeter*

*Winnie and I thank you for your prayers while we were away. Mercifully, we avoided the fires in Australia, but are of course aware that others may have been affected. We were reminded of the seriousness of the situation when the Australian smoke cloud blotted out the sun in South Island, New Zealand, for a day - over a thousand miles away. We also seemed to be ahead of the coronavirus in SE Asia. Some have seen these events as evidence of the Lord's imminent return - could it be? Let us keep watch!*

*Yours in Christ, Vaughan*