



Mevagissey Male Choir

Raising funds and raising spirits since 1974



www.meva-choir.co.uk
Registered Charity No:298985

Don't forget, we're on the quay every Monday this month.

Come and join the fun at 7.45pm.

No: 36



OVER £1,000 RAISED AT FEAST WEEK!

It was shirt sleeve order at our Feast Week concert this year, as the temperature climbed into the high 20s – and that was outside. St Andrew's felt like an oven. But it made no difference. It was just another wonderful Feast Week evening.

Once again, we were blessed with the presence of the Mevagissey Performing Arts Choir from the primary school at the top of the village, and two veritable

virtuosos from Falmouth School, where our accompanist Matt Fox is Head of Music.

The chapel was packed and, at the end of it all, we were able to hand a cheque for £1,160 to the Feast Week Committee, whose Secretary Jill Edwards wrote saying: "I would like to thank you for such a fantastic concert. It is always a pleasure to listen to our choir alone. But the added extras of such

Brian Mitchell

As we were going to press, we were deeply saddened to learn of the passing of the much-loved Brian Mitchell, Choir accompanist from 1975 to 2012. Our thoughts are with Brian's family. A tribute will appear in the next edition.

talented youngsters and the Mevagissey School choir made it certainly an evening to remember.”

We opened the proceedings with four pieces, at which point the 27 members of the school choir tripped down the aisle to line up in front of us for a joint rendition of that lovely favourite, *'Calm is the Sea'*. We all sang the first verse, very quietly in our case, the children sang the second and then we all joined in for the third. Assistant Headteacher Rebekah Bailey says it's a wonderful experience for the children to sing with the grown-ups. We can tell her that it's a pretty emotional experience for us, too.



Magical!

Sadly, for us, anyway, Rebekah has now left to take up a headship in Camborne. “Thank you so much for all of your support over the last few years,” she has written, “and allowing us to join in your concerts at Christmas and during Feast Week. It is always so special to share and celebrate music from all members of the community. For the children, performing is such an essential part of their music education - so thank you for providing that opportunity. I will certainly miss teaching the choir and our concerts together. It has truly been a highlight of teaching and working in Mevagissey.”

Rebekah will be greatly missed and we hope that her successor will prove as dedicated and as enthusiastic.

After *'Calm is the Sea'* we left the risers and left the children to perform *'I Wish'* by Taylor & Lamb; *'Feel the Light'* from the film *'Home'*; and Clean Bandit's *'Rather Be'*. How the audience loved it. A tough act to follow, of course, but 16-year-old pianist Lewis Naisby from Falmouth School was up to the task, with Rachmaninov's *'Prelude in C# Minor'* and Judy Garland's *'Somewhere over the Rainbow'*. And we'd only just reached the interval!



Some of us have trouble staying on the risers, too, Rebekah

At this point Peter Bowker kept the audience entertained by raffling a brand new sewing machine that he had donated.

The second half opened with Falmouth's Abiah Wyatt, who had just completed her 'A' levels, accompanying herself in Eva Cassidy's *'Fields of Gold'* and Louis Armstrong's *'Wonderful World'*. What talent!

It was time for us again, a long final set that included new pieces such as *'You Are so Beautiful/Wind beneath my Wings'* and *'Tears in Heaven'* as well as favourites *'Au Fond du Temple Saint'*; *'We Rise Again'* and of course, *'The Floral Dance'*, capped by our increasingly popular *'60s Medley'*. There was still time for our adroit compere Bill Collins, to pay tribute to Edna Liddicoat, 96 in November, who was in the audience. Edna, born in Par, has raised £85,000 for the Merlin centre since her granddaughter was diagnosed with MS. A fan of the choir for many years, Edna has always loved *'Gypsy'* – so what other option did we have for an encore?

Thanks are due to all who contributed, in particular to Angela Blamey, who took on the onerous task of selling tickets in advance on the door. Well done, Angela.



Edna acknowledges the applause among a few familiar faces

Heads, tails – or just looking for the coin – we didn't like to ask!



This motley crew were about to teach 'Calm is the Sea' to the schoolchildren – if they don't scare them off

Laura and the Culdroses Help Make it Another Memorable Night at the Minack



Yes, that's Mike Thompson in the white jacket! More later!

What a thrill it was to be back at the Minack in May. There was a bit of a scare as we left Mevagissey on the bus amid a rain shower, but it didn't last and by the time we arrived in Porthcurno (by a rather circuitous route via Sennen), the sun was out and all was well.

After taking in that first wonderful view we began the fit and healthy among us began the strenuous task of lugging the risers, kindly delivered in our new trailer by second tenor Paul Horsman, down the countless steps to the staging area. On arrival we were delighted to discover that the changing rooms had been refurbished, giving us more room, more light and even better view out to sea.

This was clearly appreciated by our guests, too. Once again, we were honoured to be joined by the lovely Culdroses Military Wives Choir, from the naval base on the Lizard. And by Laura Nicholas, the dazzling soprano whom we first met at St Germans last year. Laura lives in Penzance and we were so pleased when she accepted our invitation to sing at the Minack.

The only sad note was that Graham Willcocks, our MD, was unable to join us. Graham has been receiving

treatment for some health issues since the beginning of the year, the after effects of which were sufficiently debilitating to prevent his attendance. His shoes were admirably filled by Baritone Mike S Thompson, who had had a very steep learning curve over the previous two or three weeks! It is impossible to praise him enough for his dedication and his efforts.

We were lucky enough again to procure the services of Adrian Wilton from Polperro as compere, who sprinkled the proceedings with his endless supply of Cornish jokes. He began the evening by introducing five pieces by ourselves - *'Every Time I Feel the Spirit'*; *'Only You'*; *'The Way We Were'*; *'Home Lovin' Man'*; and *'We Rise Again'*.

We were followed by Laura, with Ennio Morricone's *'Nella Fantasia'* and *'Wishing You Were Somehow Here Again'* from *'Phantom of the Opera'*.



Laura Nicholas – a real talent!

The Culdrose ladies then gave us *'Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy'*; Christina Perri's *'A Thousand Years'*; Leo Sayer's *'When I Need You'*; Carole King's *'You've Got a Friend'*; and Rachel Platten's *'Fight Song'*.



After a 15-minute interval, the Culdroses returned with *'The Climb'* from *'Hannah Montana the Movie'*; Coldplay's *'Viva la Vida/Titanium'*; *'Stand by Me'*, the Ben E King favourite; *'Joyful, Joyful'* from *Sister Act 2*; concluding with ELO's *'Mister Blue Sky'*. So much did we like this last piece that we asked the Culdrose WMC MD, Peter Luing, to arrange it for TTBB, and we expect to be learning it in the autumn.

Laura Nicholas was then welcomed back with another piece from *Phantom of the Opera*, *'Think of Me'*; followed by *'Simple Little Things'* from *'110 in the Shade'*. The Meva men then came on with *'Tears in Heaven'*; *'You Are So Beautiful/The Wind Beneath My Wings'*; and our popular *'60s Medley'*.

As is traditional, we brought back our guests for the finale, a powerful rendering of *'Morte Christie'* in which Laura's dulcet soprano could be heard soaring above the rest. Well over 400 attended, including so-called *'Nanny Pat'* from Par, who was celebrating her 80th birthday.

There was a particularly nice touch at the end. We filed off the risers towards the changing rooms, outside which the Culdrose ladies had lined up to form *'a guard of honour'*. What class! And how humbling!



FUNDS RAISED FOR CORNWALL HOSPICE CARE

“Fantastic!! Well done to you all for your hard work in the run up to the event, I know just how much goes in to putting an event on.” That was the reaction from Jane Appleton, Community Fundraiser for Cornwall Hospice Care (“CHC”), after totting up the takings from our concert in Lostwithiel on Saturday 9th June. After deducting expenses, we were delighted to be able to donate a total of £576 to this very worthy cause, thanks to a full house and everyone’s generosity when it came to the raffle.

CHC provides specialist care for people with terminal illnesses 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Its clinical teams support in and out patients and their families at Mount Edgumbe Hospice in St Austell, St Julia’s Hospice in Hayle and in Cornwall’s hospitals, care homes and in the community at its Neighbourhood Hubs. It also runs a 24-hour advice line for other healthcare professionals to support their patients when in need. “Your gift will enable us to continue providing our care to those in Cornwall, and their families, with terminal illness”, said Jane.

CHC’s Tamsin Thomas, former BBC Radio Cornwall presenter who compered the evening, told the audience that it costs “over £5 million to provide the specialist care we offer to our in- and out-patients. Only 20% of this is funded through a contribution from Cornwall’s NHS Commissioners. The other £4 million is raised via the support of people in Cornwall who leave us legacies, support fundraising events, play our lottery and visit our 33 shops. With minimal NHS funding, we rely on the generosity of people like you, so your help is very much needed and appreciated. Thank you.”



Tamsin Thomas tells us about Cornwall Hospice Care

The concert took place in St Bartholomew's, a Grade I listed building which includes a 13th century tower and a spire added in the early 14th. Our programme for the evening was a mix of old and new with songs such as 'Deep River', 'Ave Maria' and 'American Trilogy' resurrected to slot alongside our most recent offerings, 'Tears in Heaven', 'You Are so Beautiful' and our show-stopping 'Back to the '60s'.



Paul Pearce treated us to two solo pieces in the first half and Meva Cappella similarly in the second. And Tamsin pulled the show together with a wonderful mix of jokes and stories

We were delighted to meet and welcome Sally Berry, daughter of the late Harold Miller, the Choir's first Musical Director who did so much to establish our Choir among Cornwall's elite. Sally, who was accompanied by her own two daughters, lives in nearby Lerryn.

← *Paul Pearce prepares to sing*

*Choir Marshall Humfrey
Stobart leads us in*





← Choir members greet arrivals

Our MD briefs the audience →



YOU SAY

We thoroughly enjoyed sharing your rehearsal and had a great time in the Fountain afterwards. I love the way you help and encourage one another with eye contact and gentle body language. There appears to be a real intimacy twixt some of you. I wish you all every success throughout the summer - **Teresa Jenkins, Southfields, Wimbledon.**

My wife and I sat in on one of your rehearsals while we were in Mevagissey a couple of years ago. Wow!!!! was all we could say. - **John Tutton, Ipswich**

I can't let another day go by without telling you and the choir members what a magnificent evening Amanda and I had at the Minack Theatre. A very sincere "THANK YOU" to each and everyone for that most memorable evening. **Tina & Amanda Garner, Par**

Your planned events for the year look so exciting. How I wish I can one day make it back to my beloved Cornwall to be at some of them. Meanwhile, I so much enjoy my CDs and they are played very often – **Bernice Legg, Bridgwater.**

Popped into your rehearsal last Monday and heard you rehearsing this song - amazing and so emotional - what fantastic voices - highlight of my holiday - **Lynn Bailey**

Thank you so very much - I am hugely grateful to you for sorting out a little bit of Mevagissey magic for my dad - **Michelle Kilburn-Bond, Bristol**

That's Entertainment!

So successful was the Entertainment Evening devised by Bass Peter Bowker last year that we thought we should do it again. We just felt that it deserved a bigger audience, so we moved the venue from the Social Club to the Jubilee Hall.

Peter needed no encouragement and set about it with, if anything, more enthusiasm than last year. By the time 14th April arrived, he had put together a star-studded line-up for our delectation, as The Good Old Days' Leonard Sachs might have said. And, at just £5 a head, it was a sell-out!



Mevagissey's First Brass Band?

The evening opened with a wonderful piano recital by Matt Fox. The question was, could the rest of match that kind of class. Well, they had a really good go! Roger Mitchell was on next with an amusing recitation; followed by a Brass Ensemble comprising Mike S Thompson, Paul Uzzell and friends; Helen Hereward, with a flute solo accompanied by Matt; a duet by Mary Phillips and Rosey Murphy; a comedy sketch involving

Peter himself, Tony Scarratt and George Phillips – who will forget Tony's face as Peter regularly forgot his line; and a duet by Robin and Rosey Murphy.

Halftime gave everyone the chance to replenish their glasses – Billy Moore from The Fountain was running a bar for us - and buy a pasty. They were also asked for £1 each as entry into a simple 'Heads or Tails' competition run by former member, Alan Dibb. The prize was a litre bottle of Bells whisky.

The second half opened with a couple of songs from The Press Gang shanty group, which features seven choir members; a variation of the 'I look up to him' sketch; (singers), which was followed by Peter Bowker playing guitar and singing; 'The Lion Sleeps' by the Quay Notes (Dom McVeigh; Darren Lyons; Mike S Thompson & Peter Bowker; Robin Murphy, with guitar and song; Graham Hoskins with a guitar medley; a duet between George and Mary Phillips; and a special guest star – Steve Rashbrook, a professional actor/performer friend of Second Tenor Paul Horsman, who delighted us with his Frank Sinatra tribute.

For the Finale, all the performers returned to the stage to lead the entire hall in 'Cornwall my Home'.

It was a fun night for everybody – and we made £600 for the Choir after all costs! A brilliant result.

Special thanks are due to all those who helped by manning the door; heating pasties, setting out and putting away the chairs; to Paul Pearce for setting up the lighting; for which he was lighting engineer to Press Gang for their sound kit, and to Graham Hoskins for lugging it and setting it up; to Cliff Burnett for bringing the keyboard and speakers; to the Jubilee Hall, to Billy Moore; to all the performers and, of course, to Peter Bowker for making it happen. Here's to next April!!!



Bravo, MD Mike!



As many of you know, our Musical Director Graham Willcocks has had some health issues since the beginning of the year (and we all wish him well), the treatment for which has necessitated him missing one or two of our concerts and a few of our Monday practice nights. While our accompanist, Matt Fox, has deputised more than adequately on the odd occasion in the past when Graham has been missing, it is not really a practical solution, as we need him on the piano. However, we have been very lucky to discover that we have the perfect substitute within our ranks. Baritone Mike S Thompson has stepped up to take over when Graham hasn't been able to make it and what a wonderful job he has done! His first outing, would you believe, was at the Minack. There's no higher praise than to say that it was impossible to spot the difference. But don't worry, Graham, Mike would still rather be singing.

← *Mike heads for the stage after last minute instructions to the soundmans*

GRANDAD-TO-BE GARETH GRABS HIS CHANCE WITH THE BASSES



Gareth is the one on the right, holding the dog.

Fourteen years as a policeman and as many as a schoolteacher – sounds the perfect preparation for mixing with 58 Mevagissey Male Choir members.

Gareth Millington has been welcomed on to the risers after passing his voice test this spring and promises to be a valuable addition to our Bass section. Gareth hails originally from Marlow in Buckinghamshire, where he lived until the end of his school days, “playing lots of rugby and rowing”. It was there that he first sang in a choir, performing *‘Britten St Nicholas’* as a boy alto. But it was being on a stage with a huge adult choir singing *‘Zadok the Priest’* that “really staggered me and I have sung ever since!”

After leaving UCL, where he studied geography – and met his wife, Sally - Gareth joined the Met Police. He served as a constable in Kilburn, north west London, for three years before becoming a detective sergeant in Special Branch at Scotland Yard. Eleven years later, in 2000, it was all change. “I just decided to leave as I was increasingly working ridiculous hours. I got a

place to do a Postgraduate Certificate in Education at Bath Uni and moved the family to Wiltshire with no income!”

He eventually became a secondary school teacher and, ten years further on, and he was appointed head teacher. “I gave up in winter 2017 and I assure you that seven years of that is enough for anyone,” he says.

It was while in Chippenham that he sang in his first choir. “I’ve sung in a couple of male voice choirs and choral societies over the years but work has always stopped me from doing as much as I wanted. Nevertheless, I’ve managed something most Christmases and really enjoyed doing Stainer’s *‘The Crucifixion’* a couple of years ago with Melksham choral society!

He and Sally, who was born in St Germans, moved to St Austell last Christmas. “Our old 1303s Beetle broke down outside Gorran Haven on a visit in 1985. We stayed for a fortnight and have been visiting the Cornish coast every year since!”

They have two grown-up children, Hugh who still lives near London and Florence, who has also moved to St Austell with her husband. “We are now expecting our first grandchild in September!”

THANK YOU

Without your support we would struggle to buy the new music we need to keep progressing and to may our first class music team. As always, we have received some very generous donations throughout the past few months and in particular would like to thank Bibbi & Dickson Lee, from Washington state; Lynne Leigh, Bridgwater; Yvonne Thomas, St Blazey; Rachel Reeder and Rob Livingstone, north London; Kathryn & Pietro Abate, St Austell; Bernice Legg, Bridgwater; Michelle Kilburn Bond, Bristol; and many more who have helped fill our collection bucket, either on our practice nights or in The Fountain afterwards.

... AND TO -

As always, thanks to Carolyn George, Sylvie Thwaites, Rosey Murphy and others for keeping the newsletter supplied with wonderful photos of the Choir and its performances. And to Jane Stubberfield and Graham Hoskins for their more technical contributions.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Date	Comment	Venue	Time
Mon 6,13,20,27 Aug	Quay concerts	Mevagissey Harbour	7.45pm
**Sat 6 Oct	MMC Barbecue	Barley Sheaf	Tbc
Sun 14 Oct	Harvest of the Sea	St Andrew's	3.00pm
Sat 20 Oct	With Tamar Valley MVC	Tavistock	tbc
Fri 8 Dec	Christmas concert	St Andrew's	7.30pm
*Mon 10 Dec	Private	Penrice Hse, Porthpean	7.30pm
Tue 11 Dec	Christmas singalong – informal	St John's, St Asutell	7.30pm
Sat 15 Dec		St Augustine's, St Austell	tbc
Sat 22 Dec	Afternoon Christmas Concert	St Austell Brewery	tbc
Sat 19 Jan	Dinner/Dance	Carlyon Bay Golf Club	

Private. ** Friends of the Choir welcome.

Please check our website for updates.