



*Up with the Jolly Roger, boys ....*

## MAKING A SPLASH IN BATH – AND CAPTIVATING CREDITON

Our big event as we approach the end of our 40<sup>th</sup> year was a weekend trip to Bath and Crediton in Devon ... although none of the photos quite matched the above!

Our appointment in Bath on 4<sup>th</sup> October was with the mixed Silver Ring Choir of Bath to sing in a joint Autumn Serenade concert in St Michael's Church. This was a reciprocal visit offering an opportunity to renew friendships with members of the Silver Ring, who, many of you may remember, sang with us in St Andrews towards the end of 2012.

Two coaches set off on the morning of the 4<sup>th</sup>, arriving at the Arnos Manor Hotel in Bristol at around 3pm, where we checked in before heading for the church,

Silver Ring, conducted by Geraldine Roche, and accompanied by Judith Liddell, opened proceedings with four delightful pieces, and were followed by three guest singers, of whom two, Barbara Gompels and Paula Boyagis, gave a particularly entertaining rendition of the *'Flower Duet'* from *'Lakmé'*, a spoof on the version recently popularised by a British Airways tv ad. Our own Choir then performed five of our favourites.

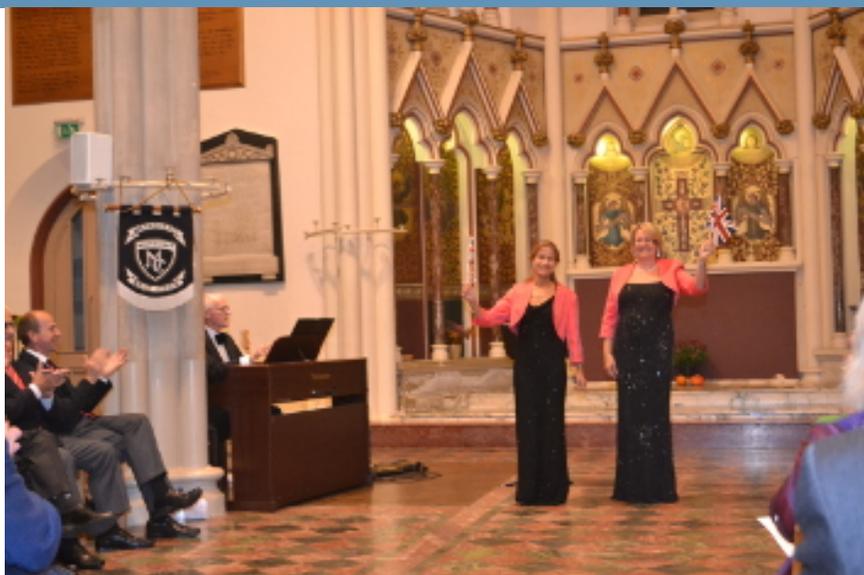
**Tune in to 'The Choir'** on BBC Radio 3 on Sunday 9th November to hear us!

Mevagissey Male Choir are being featured in the *'Meet My Choir'* slot, at around 4.30pm.

The second half, after a brief interval, followed a similar format, concluding with our 'Au Fond du Temple Saint', which is proving very popular wherever we go.

The evening ended with a visit to the Hadley Arms in Bath for an 'afterglow' before we re-boarded the coach back to Bristol.

Our thanks go to our hosts, Silver Ring of Bath, and to St Michael's Church.



*Silver Ring Duettists*

## Our Crediton Debt to Bernard

The following day, after a leisurely morning, we made our way to Crediton. Our original plan had been to perform a concert in Taunton, but when this proved difficult to arrange, Baritone Bernard Hocking came up with an admirable alternative, courtesy of his cousin Paul, a lifelong chorister with Exeter Cathedral and member of the Crediton Rotary Club.

The local Congregational Church kindly agreed to host a concert on the afternoon of 5<sup>th</sup> October, where we sang to a near-capacity and appreciative audience – raising considerable proceeds that were equally shared between the Choir and the Rotary Club's local and international charities. We performed a total of 16 pieces, and Paul has since written to

say how thrilled our hosts were with our "varied and entertaining programme". A team of helpers provided us with a wonderful supper to send us on our way back to Mevagissey.

The 'Bath Weekend' has been hailed as a great success with class acts, for which everyone involved deserves huge thanks. None more so, of course, than Michael Collings, who took on the entire logistical programming – hotel and travel bookings, plus detailed itinerary and individual arrangements – and Bernard Hocking, whose efforts were primarily responsible for our successful concert in Crediton.



*Meva Capella at Crediton*

## Supper for the Singers



*Tucking in at the Harvest Supper*

So successful was the Harvest Supper that we held last year following Mevagissey's annual Harvest of the Sea service that we decided to repeat the exercise this year. With the same, if not better, result!

It was gratifying to see so many of the St Andrews congregation accepting our invitation to join us for tea, coffee, savouries and cakes at the nearby Jubilee Hall on

the afternoon of Sunday 19th October - there was even beer and wine for those in need of something stronger!

Earlier the Choir had performed eight traditional pieces from of our repertoire in front of a packed congregation – including the powerful *'Deus Salutis'*, Cornish favourites *'Floral Dance'* and *'Hail to the Homeland'*, our own *'Mevagissey Bay'* and, possibly the congregation's best-loved Choir piece, *'Lower Lights'*. Oh yes, and Matthew Fox did a sterling job on the organ.

The Harvest Supper is a Choir initiative, an event that we regard as an appropriate way to repay the church for generously allowing us the use of the premises and facilities throughout the year (St Andrews is where we meet every Monday evening to practise, learn new pieces and brush up the old ones!)

It is also a wonderful opportunity to get to know the community in which the Choir has its roots, and to thank them for their continuing support. We spent a convivial hour or so eating, drinking and chatting to our many local friends. And some not so local, as we were delighted to welcome Choir supporters from Edinburgh and Teignmouth – and one lady from Florida!

None of this would be possible, of course, without the help and support of Choir members' wives who provided a wonderful array of food, and particular thanks are due to those who turned up to help. Thanks were also due to Billy Moore and Lynne Porter from The Fountain, who kindly 'dispensed' the alcohol.

## Christmas Concert

Don't forget our Christmas concert with Mevagissey Ladies' choir and Mevagissey School choir at St Andrew's Church on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> December starting at 7.00pm

## SUPPORTING THE FISHERMEN'S MISSION

September began with an invitation to take part in a concert with four other leading Cornish male choirs – Mousehole MVC, Nankersey MC, Newquay MVC and Polperro Fishermen's Choir - to raise money for the Royal National Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen ("Fisherman's Mission"). Organised by Mousehole Musical Director Stephen Lawry, it was held at Redruth Methodist Church on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> September, and raised over £2,500.



Although arranged at fairly short notice, we mustered around 30 singers, and found ourselves 'on stage' second, after Nankersey, where we performed five pieces – '*Hallelujah*'; '*Nessun Dorma*'; '*Angels*'; '*Bohemian Rhapsody*'; and '*Au Fond du Temple Saint*'.

An afterglow for all choir members took place at Redruth's 'Inn For All Seasons'.

In a note to all choirs afterwards, Stephen Lawry thanked everyone for the "wonderful spirit of camaraderie which was in evidence throughout the evening."

## Meva in the Media

As you hopefully spotted on the front page, we are expecting to be featured in the '*Meet My Choir*' slot on BBC Radio 3's *The Choir* programme on Sunday 9th November. We have supplied the producers with a recorded commentary and have been advised that they may play two or three of our pieces. We should be 'on' at around 4.30pm.

On Tuesday 30th September Second Tenor (and guitarist) Graham Hoskins and Baritone Mike Tate were interviewed about the Choir's activities on the Roseland's new exciting Hub Radio, in Tregony, Host Sally Carter played three tracks from 'Mevagissey Bay'.

The latest edition of 'News & Views', the magazine of the National Association of Choirs, carries a lengthy piece on the Choir's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations at the Eden Project and The Minack Theatre.

Our publicity efforts have also been considerably enhanced Bass Peter Bowker, who has done sterling work with our new sign boards, one of which is strategically placed on the approach to St Andrews. A second, transportable board now accompanies us to our 'away' concerts.

## WELSHMEN HELP MAKE TYWARDREATH SING



*Risca and Meva Primed for Morte Criste*

It was with great pleasure that we welcomed Risca Male Choir from Monmouthshire to Tywardreath on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> September, for a wonderful night of singing. Founded in 1970 and former winners of 'Male Voice Choir of the Year', the National Eisteddfod; the Welsh Choral Challenge Shield and a bronze medal at the Malta International Choral Festival, Risca were on a tour of Cornwall, and returning home the following day.

Led by Musical Director Martin Hodson MBE – he was honoured in June 1999 for services to education and music in the community – they entertained us with polished selection of traditional and modern pieces, including Rodgers & Hammerstein's 'You'll Never Walk Alone' and 'Sunset Poem' from Dylan Thomas' 'Under Milk Wood'; and they also joined us in a glorious rendition of 'Morte Criste' which proved a fitting finale.

We had moved our 'home' venue briefly to Tywardreath's St Andrew's Church, courtesy of Rev. Malcom Bowers, to give an opportunity to others in the wider St Austell area to hear us. The decision was a great success, a packed audience's pleasure enhanced by the wonderful acoustics of the beautiful village church.

Risca Concert Secretary Alan Davis was generous in his comments afterwards. "We would like to thank everyone at Mevagissey Male Choir for the wonderful welcome we were given on our arrival at St Andrew's Church, Tywardreath. We thoroughly enjoyed working with you all. You produce a lovely, even sound most pleasing to the ear, and your programme had great variety with excellent contributions from talented soloists and guitarist. Many congratulations and many thanks for your friendship and hospitality."



*Risca Welcomed by Father Malcom*

One thing did surprise some of us. We discovered when talking to Risca members in Polmear's 'Ship Inn' later that evening that Risca have not traditionally indulged in 'afterglows' – although you might not have believed it had you heard the enthusiastic way they threw themselves into supporting ours!

Hence Alan's final comment: "We had a great time listening to you singing at the 'afterglow' - there is something special about the Cornish sound that stands apart from other English choirs. "

## Our Readers Write...

It's always good to hear from readers. Former MMC Baritone Anthony Bond, and Choir Secretary, indeed, writes to say thanks for our "unwitting contribution" to his daughter's recent wedding at Carbis Bay. His 'father of the bride' speech ended ...

*"Some choirs in Cornwall do wedding gigs, but Mevagissey Male Choir don't. However, we did sing at our MD's wedding, so I know what they would have sung. One particular song comes to mind, really it's for the bride and groom, but I want to change the dedication and say from a proud father to a wonderful daughter, Anna, Meva Choir singing True Love... There was a good sound system", Anthony adds, "with a good operator who cued it perfectly - there wasn't a dry eye in the house! Thanks chaps."*

And then there is Nick Conway from the late '80s who now sings with the Plymouth Area Police Choir. He writes: "I loved my time with Mevagissey and, whilst on holiday in August, I took family to see you all on Meva Quay. Brought back many happy memories and we had wonderful evening! Thank you!!

Finally, sadly, due to space reasons it has been necessary to hold over the latest instalment of Paul Newman's memoirs until the spring edition.

## Honouring Heroes at Heligan



*Dressed in 1914 Frocks, Two Young Girls Watch Events Unfold on Mevagissey Quayside*

From dawn till dusk on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> August, Cornish drama group WildWorks and The Lost Gardens of Heligan collaborated to present a continuous theatrical event commemorating the outbreak of World War 1 – ‘the day our world changed’. And Mevagissey Male Choir played their part.

An audience of some 6,000 people followed the story of the day in 1914 when men from the parishes of Mevagissey, Gorran and St Ewe went to war, leaving their families behind, as it moved from Mevagissey Harbour in the morning to Heligan in the afternoon.

We were present on a packed quayside at 11am to perform a selection ten appropriate pieces, and again on the Heligan bandstand at 2.30pm. It was a memorable and moving day of story-telling and music, described by the organisers as a truly spectacular day of remembrance, in which we were very proud to share.

## Spring Tide Drives Us off the Quay!



Three out of five. That was the number of concerts we actually managed on the quayside this year. Not as many as last year, but better than 2012. Only the last, on 25<sup>th</sup> August, was actually rained off – a sudden cloudburst as we were setting up – but we had also been consigned back to St Andrews on the 11<sup>th</sup>, after we arrived to find the new extended quay flooded! Although we calculated that the tide would have receded by our scheduled start time, there was no possibility of setting up our sound equipment any earlier.

Still, both the St Andrews performances were played to packed audiences, as were the three that actually took place on the quayside. Their success can be judged by the significant total raised from collections – these concerts are of course given free – and the 62 CDs that were sold over the five evenings.

Our first concert, on 28<sup>th</sup> July, was the scene of additional amusement for early arrivals on the quayside, who were entertained by the inelegant sight of Choir members clambering

aboard Mevagissey fishing boat "Celtic Dawn", courtesy of skipper John 'Chunky' Hunkin, to be photographed for publicity purposes (see the front page!).

Also memorable was the 4<sup>th</sup> August concert (the first of two without honeymooning Matt Fox), which marked the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of WW1. At 10pm, by which time we had retired to The Fountain, lights were dimmed, in keeping with the rest of the country, and in the passageway outside the pub we quietly, and atmospherically, sang '*Lower Lights*'. Very moving!

The concerts also saw the reintroduction of two pieces – '*The Owl and the Pussy Cat*' and '*Comrades in Arms*' to our quayside repertoire.

Thanks go to Graham Rundle, Peter Bowker, Bill Reeve and Roger Mitchell who between them shared compering duties.

## OUR ACCOMPANIST GETS 'ACCOMPANIED'!



A summer of celebration continued in August, as the Choir journeyed en masse to Plymouth to celebrate the marriage of our popular and talented accompanist Matthew Fox to Carolyn at Mutley Baptist Church on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> August.

We were honoured to have been asked to sing during the ceremony, and entertained the guests with *'The Rose'*; *'Calm is the Sea'*; *'Anthem from Chess'* and *'Lower Lights'* during the signing of the register. Once the formalities were completed, Choir members

formed a Guard of Honour for the happy couple outside the front door of the church.

'We had an amazing day,' Matt and Carolyn said later. "It was everything we could have wished for, and the icing on the cake was to have the MMC in attendance and performing during the ceremony. We had so many compliments about how much they enjoyed the choir and how much more special it made the occasion. Thanks to everyone who came, we really appreciated it'.

As the wedding party moved off to their formal reception, the Choir had an hour or so to kill before boarding the coach to return home and fortunately found themselves opposite the Fortescue pub. Confirmation that mine hosts had been warned of our likely appearance came when BBC Radio Devon reporter Keven Stanley introduced himself and asked if we were going to sing. We obliged and his feature, including appreciative comments by other customers, was aired a day or two later!

Matt, who is the Head of Music at Falmouth Secondary School, and Carolyn, a nurse at Plymouth's Derriford hospital, have begun their married life in Gorran.



*We're There Behind Matt and Carolyn!*

## Jim and Iris – a Couple of Diamonds!



Not only do we have Matt and Carolyn's wedding to celebrate in this issue, but we have a diamond wedding too. Congratulations to Jim and Iris Hunkin!

One of the founder members of our Choir, and a continuing stalwart among our Top Tenors, Jim met Iris at a dance in Caerhays Village Hall, and they were married at Veryan Church on 25<sup>th</sup> September 1954.

Jim worked in the fish industry before becoming a long distance lorry driver – he later joined ECLP as a dump truck driver - while Iris was a live-in maid in Truro.

Mevagissey residents Jim and Iris have a son, Kelvin, and, through him and his wife Mel, they have been blessed with a granddaughter, Jasmine.

Jim's favourite Choir moment? Singing at the Royal Albert Hall on a Saturday and in Westminster Abbey the following day. And his favourite song in our repertoire? *'Away from the Roll of the Sea'*.

Jim and Iris celebrated their special anniversary last month in Xanthe, in Greece, a wonderful holiday paid for by Kelvin and Mel. Their advice for ensuring a long married life? "A lot of give and take!" they say.

## MEET ‘PATTACAKE’ – OUR NEW SECOND TENOR!



Don't be surprised if, at one of our concerts, you find yourself sitting next to Princess Beatrice or Princess Eugenie. Or, come to that, the offspring of Billy Connolly, or Ruby Wax. The fact is that they're all fans, or were once, of the Choir's newest recruit, Second Tenor Paul Paterson. Or perhaps you'll turn up at St Andrews to find the seating all removed and a giant Scalextric track criss-crossing the floor.

In one of his myriad former lives, Paul was known as Pattacake, a children's entertainer, modelling balloons and performing magic tricks for stars and royalty. Then again, in 1991, he was European Scalextric champion – he was British champion for ten years!

"You see, I was a despatch rider," he says, as if by way of explanation, "and one of my clients suggested I would make a good clown! [Seriously that's how he tells it!] I thought, 'anything to get out of this' and taught myself a few tricks." He found himself the subject of a London newspaper article, prompting a call from Windsor Castle.

Scalextric? "I loved cars of all kinds as a kid and just found that I had talent for it", says Paul. "You wouldn't believe what you can do with these cars, which we race on 16-lane tracks in rooms as big as church halls." He began in Wood Green, near his home in

north London, and went on to conquer Europe, starting his own club along the way in Edgware. One of his early rivals was F1 driver Johnny Herbert.

Born in Camden Town, Paul only arrived in Mevagissey in March this year, accompanying Cornish wife MaryAnne who wanted to be near her ageing parents. Paul and MaryAnne have two daughters and a son, all in their 20s.

Younger daughter Christina married last month in St Austell, with the Choir octet singing at the wedding.

It turns out that Paul's Great Grandad was a boat builder in Portscatho – and his Mum lives in Falmouth, “so I suppose my roots are in Cornwall.” He loves his fishing, too – “up to now just coarse fishing but now I live on the harbour I am sea fishing” – more evidence, perhaps!

He's also an athlete. “I've always been in the gym and boxed and worked out (weights) and jogged. I often run over the coastal path from Meva, through Pentewan and on to St Austell and back”, he says. This year, with a friend, he entered his first marathon, in support of the Macmillan cancer charity for which they have also taken part in a sky dive.

These days Paul makes a living managing a few properties in Yorkshire, which he can do remotely. Must be dull after his many other former jobs; he's built race cars, sold pensions for the Pru', managed an off licence, been a motorcycle courier, apprentice mechanic, you name it...

The one thing he has never done, it seems, is sung. “Not even in the bath...” But he's delighted to have put that right. Inevitably, living in Mevagissey, he ran into Top Tenor Dominic McVeigh who persuaded him to visit the Fountain to listen to the Choir. “The smell and look of the fish, sausages and chips was overwhelming. The singing was pretty decent too!”

“I have met some friendly people who I see in and out of choir, and have been made to feel very welcome. The harmony and strength of the choir sound superb and being part of that is a real honour. I would like to thank Dom for introducing me, and Paul Pierce and Roger Mitchell for their support.”



## Settling in to the Concert Routine

*Former Bass Paul Newman continues his reminiscences:*



Passing my voice test ushered in a period of heavy homework. We always performed entirely from memory, not a sheet of music in sight. I spent several train journeys to Guildford struggling to commit to memory the words and notes of pieces in the Choir's repertoire. Meanwhile, I had to do a lot of 'miming' in concerts – a problem faced by all new joiners!

One of the great virtues of singing without music lies in the vitality it produces. No head is buried in its music; instead fifty pairs of eyes are fixed on the Music Director, ready to come in precisely on the downbeat, to come off together at a twist of the wrist, to alter the balance between the sections, to follow each nuance in Graham's expression. On one memorable occasion, Graham's timing went awry. But the audience failed to notice because we all came in together, perfectly, in the wrong place, and carried on regardless!

All over Cornwall we travelled, and beyond. We sang in churches, chapels and village halls, in aid of all sorts of charitable causes. That was how it worked: people trying to raise money could 'hire' us for a modest fee and sell tickets for their concerts. No booking was accepted unless democratically approved in a show of hands at rehearsal. Often we were committing ourselves to dates two years in advance; loyalty to the Choir meant that people usually organised other aspects of their lives around Choir commitments.

Then there were the quay concerts. Every Monday in August we forsook our normal practice night to make public appearances on the Fish Quay in Mevagissey harbour, surrounded by fishing boats and squawking seagulls. Our repertoire on these evenings would include plenty of sea shanties. Some of the wives rattled tins; this time the takings were for Choir funds. I was always amazed how crowds of people seemed to enjoy the occasion; they didn't move on, but lingered a long time and formed a blockage on the quay. I suppose that to holiday-makers this seemed a highly Cornish experience.



*The Sun **did** Shine on the Quayside!*

## NEW PIECES IN THE PIPELINE

With November upon us, the Christmas music is out again. Most of the carols just need a bit of dusting off, but we're also working hard on arrangements of *'Mary's Boy Child'* and the Catalan lullaby *'What Shall We Sing for the Child'*.

That's not to say we're neglecting the non-Christmas repertoire, however. Both *'Mansions of the Lord'*, the moving hymn from the film *'We Were Soldiers'* and Freddy Mercury's *'Fat Bottomed Girls'* are close to being ready for public airing!

## 2014 CONCERT DIARY

Sat 6 <sup>th</sup> December	St Andrew's Church Mevagissey	Christmas Concert with Ladies' and School Choirs	7.00pm
Mon 15 <sup>th</sup> December	Penrice Carol Concert	Private Concert	7.30pm

## ...AND NOW THE REALLY GOOD NEWS!

Christmas has come early for Friends of the Choir. The Choir Committee has decided that it will no longer charge for membership. HOWEVER..... donations will, of course, continue to be welcome. These can be made by cheque, payable to Mevagissey Male Choir, and sent to Mike Tate, Hillside House, Biscovey Road, Par PL24 2HW, or via BACS – Sort Code 20-74-20, Account Number 7071794 (please email confirmation).

As mentioned elsewhere, contributions to the Newsletter are ALWAYS welcome and, in particular, if you take photos of the Choir at concerts etc, please send them in to [miketate@live.co.uk](mailto:miketate@live.co.uk). We can also use them on our website. If you need help, please telephone 01726 812046 or 07730 683324.