



Mevagissey Male Choir

Raising funds and raising spirits since 1974



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



No: 34

DON'T FORGET!

Two Christmas concerts this year, in Mevagissey on the 9th & St Austell on the 15th. And a special fundraiser for the poorly Alasdair Hoskins – details inside.

Buy your Christmas CD at <http://www.meva-choir.co.uk>

Stephen Lawry prepares to lead Mousehole MVC

“ONE OF THE MOST ENJOYABLE EVENINGS WE’VE HAD”

– MOUSEHOLE MVC

“The concert with Mevagissey Male Choir was one of the most enjoyable evenings the choir has had.” So wrote Mousehole Male Voice Choir in their recent report for ‘*The Cornishman*’.

What better tribute can there be? With Storm Brian at its height, more than 60 members of MMVC braved the trip to Mevagissey on Saturday 21st October to help us put on wonderful evening’s entertainment for a surprisingly - given the conditions - full house at St Andrew’s.

For our part, we are always delighted to welcome our old friends from Mousehole. This was the ninth time we had

appeared together, and the third time they have visited us here in Mevagissey. Sadly, however, the performance had to take place without our own Musical Director, Graham Willcocks, recovering at home from a surgical procedure. Choirs and audience combined sent their best wishes.

Into Graham’s shoes stepped Matt Fox, who managed both to conduct and accompany us from his keyboard in front of the risers. And what a splendid job he made of it. Stephen Lawry, Mousehole MD, had very kindly offered to help but we had rehearsed with Matt the previous Monday,

and were confident it would work. And it did.

Mousehole took the stage first, tunefully filing in from the door with the chorus of '*Halle Hallelujah*', a joyful, traditional Caribbean song, where they were formally introduced by Bass Bill Collins, our MC for the evening.

Mousehole MVC started life in 1909 – their first practices were held in an old net loft in the town – and the choir is reputed to be the second oldest in Cornwall. In 1932 they made the first of more than 100 radio broadcasts and in 1956 became the first Cornish Male Choir to appear on television. In 1995 they featured on the BBC's "Songs of Praise", televised from Mousehole Harbour and transmitted worldwide. So they have a great pedigree.

They also have a great accompanist, Annette Turton, who played beautifully as they embarked on their first set, comprising '*Sound Celebration*', by Tom Gentry; Marvin Hamlisch's '*One Song*', with soloist Graham Warren, '*Give Praise to God*', a traditional Breton hymn, arranged by Mousehole's own David Ceredig-Evans, who also took solo spot on the final piece, '*Lean on Me (with We Shall Overcome)*', made famous by Bill Withers.

Mevagissey then took their places on the risers, to deliver '*Every Time I Feel the Spirit*'; '*Home Lovin' Man*'; '*The Way We Were*' and '*Hallelujah*', before Mousehole returned with David Dickau's '*Stars I Shall Find*'; '*The Water Is Wide*', an English Folk Song arranged by Earlene Rentz; '*Four Strong Winds*', by Ian Tyson; and '*When Love Is Done*', by Daniel Protheroe.

At this point, the normally impeccable Bill Collins announced a 15-minute interval – an interval that hadn't been planned! So those who thought they'd have time to 'avail themselves of the facilities', found Mevagissey already re-assembled on the risers when they returned. Fortunately, it appeared that only a handful missed Terry Coplin's solo opening to '*The Rose*'. We followed this with our increasingly popular '*Back to the '60s*' medley, with additional applause was reserved for Matt.

And now Bill thanked everyone for coming and introduced the finale – except Mousehole had another set to do. If we didn't have to suffer enough with his jokes....!

Back once more came Mousehole, with Libby Pentreath's nostalgic '*Calling Me Home*', '*The Impossible Dream*', from 'Man of La Mancha', and the lyrical, unaccompanied Joseph M Martin piece, '*Sing Your Way Home*'. They closed with the spiritual, '*Battle of Jericho*'.

And now it **was** time for the 'thankyous', before the two choirs joined forces under Steve Lawry for two powerful pieces, the traditional '*Morte Christe*' and the new favourite, '*We Rise Again*', - although this was taken at a slower pace than we have been used to.

Back to '*The Cornishman*'. "The audience were absolutely delighted with the evening's entertainment and gave both choirs a standing ovation. The afterglow was hosted in one of the local hostelrys with plenty of orange juice and a pasty supper and just a little singing to complete the evening. Our thanks must go to Mevagissey Male Choir in hosting what was a superb evening as well as a big thank you for those who came out to support both choirs."

Concert for Alisdair Hoskins

Alasdair Hoskins, the 10-year-old grandson of Graham Hoskins, our Second Tenor and guitarist, has been diagnosed with a rare and aggressive form of brain tumour. Although brought up in Tywardreath, where he was a pupil at Tywardreath School, Alasdair now lives in Hawaii, with his parents and sister.

With no adequate facilities on the island, the family have had to fly to California for the necessary treatment. They are having to cope with medical costs, travel expenses, possible relocation costs and loss of income. A GoFundMe campaign has been started by Alasdair's father, Daniel, with the message: 'Alasdair is a really sweet, kind, intelligent boy. This is breaking our hearts'.

The Choir has decided to help the fund-raising in the best way we can and a concert has been arranged at Tywardreath Church on Saturday, 2nd December. It is hoped that singers from Tywardreath School will also take part. Doors will open at 7pm for a 7.30pm and admission will be £5, payable on the door.

Alasdair's GoFundMe Page: <https://www.gofundme.com/help-save-alsadair>



Grandad Graham

Raising the HATS Roof



We've made it to the 'bright lights'!

On 7th October, just 17 months after our last visit, we set off for north Devon for our second appearance at the impressive HATS theatre in Holsworthy.

Holsworthy Amateur Theatrical Society, or HATS, is the result of a merger between the Holsworthy Dramatic Society and Holsworthy Theatre Club, who joined forces in 1969 to buy the town's derelict Tudor Cinema. Together, they converted the premises into a theatre which, following a major renovation in 2004, has provided the townspeople with a theatre complex that they can all be proud of. Indeed, perhaps the big surprise to us on the night was that no one was listed missing in the warren of rooms, stairs and corridors behind the stage!

Holsworthy itself is recorded in the Domesday Book as Haldeword, thought to mean 'Heald's enclosure'. The manor itself was purchased by Holsworthy Urban District Council from Earl Stanhope in 1932.

The theatre has a different acoustic to a church and it wasn't until the second half that our smallish, but adequately balanced, choir properly came to terms with it. Indeed, our final two items, *'Back to the '60s'*, and *'Only You'*, as the encore, were perhaps our best of the night.

As on our last visit, our MC for the evening was James Morrish, who got laughs and was brief, the two main criteria for any compere. HATS also provided a soloist, the 18-year-old Cameron Mills. He was fully miked up and of his four items all well received, with *'Leaving on a Jet Plane'* the most familiar of his pieces.

When we visited last year, it was to raise funds to refurbish the stage.. They are now looking to redecorate the

auditorium and replace the house lights with energy saving LED lighting, as well as installing lighting in the storage bays under the stage.

The HATS team were glowing in their praise of our Choir. "It was a wonderful evening. The Choir's professional singing with such a broad choice of material, plus solo turns was much enjoyed. The support we received from family and friends of the choir, and the general public, was very gratifying and we have received many complimentary comments from those that attended."

"The Mevagissey Choir has contributed massively towards the above work", says HATS secretary, Annette Dennis. The surplus from our first visit amounted to just over £1,000 and this month's figure was £862, "an amazing total that will go a long way towards the eventual bill. Please pass on our most grateful thanks to all members of the Choir. We really enjoy having you at our theatre and hope maybe you will visit us again at some future date."

A very enjoyable afterglow took place at the Rydon Inn, half a mile along the road. Our thanks go to Bass Phil Walter for his efforts in organising the event, and indeed the afterglow.



Rydon the Chariot, perhaps?

Chas and Daughters Walk the Cornish Coast for Cancer Charity

The following day, Bass Chas Bailey and his daughters, Lisa and Suzanne, embarked on the fantastic challenge of walking the Cornish coast path to raise money and awareness for Cancer Research. Chas's wife and the girls' Mum, Ann Bailey, lost her life to the disease in 2014. They had planned the venture last year but had to postpone when Lisa herself was diagnosed with cancer and had to undergo significant intensive treatment.

Their 307-mile walk started in Morwenstow and finished 19 days later at the Edgcombe Arms in Cremyll on the south coast. The somewhat hilly and muddy path took them over incredibly beautiful and varied terrain and stunning cliff tops and the trio experienced a range of weather conditions, including the less expected hurricane Ophelia and storm Brian! With the help of Gift Aid, they have raised a staggering £5,835.89 at the time of going to press.



Chas and Lisa – or is it Suzanne?

Laura's Top Cs Inspire MMC

We have Baritone Mel Coombe to thank for what turned out to be a thoroughly enjoyable evening in St Germans on Saturday 23rd September. St Germans is Mel's home village and his brother Harold, sadly now deceased, was Captain of the Bell Tower for 50 years – and a keen supporter of our Choir. Mel says the whole Coombe family have been members of the church choirs over the years.

The highlight of the evening was, unquestionably, the inspired singing of Laura Nicholas Hall, a young soprano from Penzance, who had been invited by Mel to guest at the concert. Laura performed two pieces in each half and her seemingly effortless ability to hit her top Cs took many people in the audience's breath away, and provided an added dimension to the concert.

Mel, who, with his wife Celia, celebrated 60 years of marriage earlier this year, had arranged the concert to raise much needed funds for what is one of the oldest parish churches in Cornwall, with roots that can be traced to 430AD. (Celia is not in the best of health at present and all our best wishes go to her.)



St Germans – 'more original Norman masonry than any other Cornish church'

A priory was built here at St Germans after the Norman Conquest, but it was abolished during the Dissolution of the Monasteries, and its buildings became a private house, home to the Eliot family, in whose hands it remains. The Priory church, however, which itself dates back to the 12th century, claims more original Norman masonry than any other Cornish church and is Grade 1 listed.

But it had been stripped of everything of value. The only relics remaining from the

monastery are a 15th-century statue of St Antony of Padua, the 13th century font, a 13th century coffin in the porch and a misericord seat, with a carving of Dando and his hounds. (Dando, as the legend goes, was a monk who took drink from a man (the devil) on horseback on the sabbath. Along with his hounds, he was reputedly dragged into the waters and never seen again. Their ghosts are said to haunt the estate.)

Gradually the monastic site changed to reflect the wealth and position of the Eliot family, with the estuary dammed to create a landscaped park. Two years ago, St Germans Priory Trust was formed to take on the responsibility for raising funds to create a visitor attraction and educational centre. Under the Trust's stewardship, The Priory, while

remaining the local parish church, now provides: a unique learning environment for schools from across the county; as well as a new tourist destination in Cornwall.

This was Meva Choir's fourth visit to the church, having first performed here in 2001. We returned in 2004 and again in July 2013.

Mel had asked Graham Willcocks to prepare a 'light' programme for the evening, and he duly obliged, with favourites like *'Nessun Dorma'*, *'American Trilogy'*, *'Bohemian Rhapsody'* and *'Angels'* interspersed with newer pieces such as the *'Every Time I Feel the Spirit'*, *'We Rise Again'* and our *'Back to the '60s'* medley.

Laura delighted us midway through the first half with Morricone's *'Nella Fantasia'* from the film *'The Mission'*, and *'The Laughing Song'* from *Die Fledermaus* by Johann Strauss and on her return in the second half she thrilled us with Gershwin's *'Summertime'* and *'Poor Wand'ring One'* from Gilbert & Sullivan's *'Pirates of Penzance'*.

After MMC had delivered one of our own classics, *'Au Fond du Temple Saint'* from *'The Pearl Fishers'*, there was a welcome appearance by Meva Cappella, with *'Darkness in the Delta'* and *'This Land is Mine'*, the theme from *'Exodus'*.



Lovely Laure Hall holding us all in thrall!

It was a magnificent concert, in front of a packed audience, with Laura's performance inspiring our own Choir. "I am sure that all who attended had a very enjoyable evening", wrote Peter Daw from St Germans, in a note thanking Mel for his hard work. "It was a great pleasure to have the Mevagissey Male Choir in St Germans."

Some magnificent refreshments had been prepared by the St Germans ladies at the nearby Eliot Hall, after which we retired to the Eliot Arms for beer and a traditional afterglow that put us in good spirits for the hour-long coach-ride home.

HARVEST OF THE SEA

A week before Mousehole's visit, we gathered at St Andrew's for the church's annual Harvest of the Sea Service, in which the Choir traditionally plays a part with a handful of hymns related to the sea. A passably good turnout of around 30 singers made an appreciated contribution and, as has been the case in recent years, invited the congregation back to Jubilee Hall for refreshments. Once again, we were grateful to members' other halves for the provision of a veritable feast of cakes, pastries and other goodies. And to Billy Moore and Lynn Porter at The Fountain for donating a barrel of beer!



*What a feast for the eyes –
and the food looks pretty*



*Harvest of the
MM – Sea!*



Quay Concerts Pull in the Crowds – and Fill the Coffers



Our traditional summer concerts on the Mevagissey quayside drew huge crowds as ever and were extremely well received. Only for the third of the five were we driven inside St Andrew's, after a day of rain.

These concerts are a vital part of our fund-raising, the one time in the year when we sing for ourselves. We must be putting on a good show because we've had a terrific response with donations. The £300 we collected at the first, on 31 July, set the tone for the season that yielded well over £1000.

Our programme, which was repeated on weeks three and five, comprised: *'Blue Moon'*; *'Floral Dance'*; *'Mevagissey Bay'*; *'American Trilogy'*; *'Fat Bottomed Girls'*; *'Every Time I Feel the Spirit'*; *'Angels'*; *'Bohemian Rhapsody'*; *'60s Medley'*; and *'We Rise Again'*. It was a breezy evening with sunny spells, which is just how you might describe Bass Peter Bowker's compering.

The following week, with heavy rain in the forecast, it was with some trepidation that we positioned the risers and plugged in the speakers. In the event, we experienced barely a few drops, although we still had a few feedback problems in the absence of sound man Chris Williams. Chris's fellow Bass Bill Collins took on compering duties for an almost



completely different programme, which we repeated in the fourth week.

We began with *'Anthem from Chess'*, followed by *'Hail to The Homeland'*; *'Calm is the Sea'*; *'The Song of The Jolly Roger'*; *'Ride the Chariot'*; *'Hallelujah'*; *'Only You'* and *'You Raise Me Up'*. However, we kept to our rousing finale – *'60s Medley'* and *'We Rise Again'*.

Our indoor concert, on the 14th, went smoothly enough, with Second Tenor Graham Rundle on good compering form, and a well-received contribution from Meva Cappella. But the drama was taking place elsewhere, with Julie Bowker, wife of Peter, suffering a heart attack just minutes before Peter left for concert. She was rushed to Treliske and we're delighted to say that Julie has made a full recovery.

The 21st was a lovely evening, with a good crowd, although for some, the view was obscured by a van that had unfortunately been left on the quay. Bill Collins was on comper duties again. For our final performance, on the 28th, and brought out possibly the best crowd of the summer. With Bill Collins missing, Graham Willcocks took on the *'Floral Dance'* solo – and Graham Rundle was our MC.



INDOOR BARBECUE PROVES A SUCCESS

In mid-September, we held our second barbecue, once again at the Barley Sheaf in Gorrán. Sadly, the weather wasn't quite as kind as last year, but our hosts generously allowed us to use their dining area to escape from the elements. Spirits weren't dampened, however, and a wonderful time was had by all, with a little impromptu singing to enjoy later in the evening. Thanks to Bases Simon Lawday and Peter Bowker for organising.



Happy raffle winners, Matt and Carolyn Fox with Baritone Ray George 11

THE SILVER SCREEN BECKONS. . .



Baker's Dozen? The cast and crew of The Mermaid Catch sandwiching the Martins Ladies

Luc Mollinger from Australia and currently studying at the London Film School got in touch in August to say he intended to shoot his new film – 'The Mermaid Catch' - in Mevagissey. And he wanted to use the Mevagissey Male Choir in the soundtrack.

"Having listened to your recordings I really do think the singing is excellent and has the authenticity of a passionate group of men who live and breathe the maritime experience," he told us. Flattery will get you everywhere, Luc!

Luc and his producer Katherine Waters began filming in October – some of our members volunteered as extras – but the recording is not expected to begin until January. Luc, who has written the story and is directing the film, is from Ballina, a small seaside town in New South Wales, famous for its prawn trawling industry and as a tourist destination. "Parts of the coastline are very similar to Cornwall and it gets the dramatic weather too".

Luc has lived in the UK for twelve years now, is a UK citizen and has worked as an opera director, assisting on productions at the Royal Opera House and the English National Opera. He's also worked with the Bach Choir and Only Boys Aloud, having staged them with Katherine Jenkins in a concert he directed at Buckingham Palace for the Queen's Coronation Jubilee Gala in 2013 and broadcast on BBC1.

He has clearly fallen in love with Cornwall. His fictional story is set in unnamed Cornish village, but he was "very keen to engage the community where possible; that's also why I was excited to see that Mevagissey has its own renowned male Choir."

We are currently awaiting the arrangement for the piece he would like us to do. Watch this space!

Friends of the Choir Write:

Below is an extract from a letter to Graham Rundle from Lucy Oldershaw, of Episkopi MWC in Cyprus:

"Can't quite believe it's a year since Curium. I've been very tempted to arrange something else to mark the occasion, but it was a fantastic event that we'd be lucky to repeat with such success. Funnily enough, we had a request for tickets come through this week as someone from Sweden had seen an old advert when googling for things to do on their holiday in Cyprus. She was very disappointed when I told her she was a year late!

All is going really well here at Episkopi MWC. We've had a large turnover of members, as is always expected with our transient lifestyle, but we've had lots of lovely new members join which is fantastic. We've had a busy year of performances and other exciting activities too - like being the only all-female team to enter the Episkopi Station Raft Race, which was no mean feat but great fun!

We are hoping to take a trip to Jordan next June, as we've been asked to potentially perform at an event to mark the Queen's Birthday, but we've also been invited to London by the MWC foundation for a weekend event. We aren't sure if we can manage both, but we'll certainly try! I'm always up for a challenge!"

And from north London

We could only spend a few days on the coast path this summer – Plymouth to Dawlish – so missed your beautiful singing in Mevagissey. My holiday wasn't complete without hearing your voices! Next year we will make it to wherever you may be. I still have not finished my SW Coast Path embroidery, which is getting bigger and bigger. I carry it everywhere, stitching on more while on trains or tubes. I stitch in the special things that happen on my trips. On this evening, in 2016, we arrived in Mevagissey, found our B&B, and I jumped into the harbour for a swim. To our amazement, we saw dolphins swimming towards us. We were thrilled and wondered why they were swimming so close to the harbour, then heard your voices. It was simply magical. I think the dolphins had come to listen, too! We live in a fabulous world, don't we? I'll write again when I have stitched more – *Sally Adams*

Please Help Us Buy More Music!

The proceeds from most of our concerts go to good causes. And we're not ashamed of that. However, it does mean we have to look elsewhere for the funds to buy the music we need to continue learning new songs– and to hire the best musical director and accompanist in the business!

We no longer charge for this newsletter but, if you like what we do, you could always make a small donation. You can do this by sending a cheque made out to Mevagissey Male Choir to The Secretary, Mevagissey Male Choir, Hillside House, Biscovey Road, Par, PL24 2HW. Or you can pay via BACS. Sort code: 20-74-20 Account number 70717940 but please email us confirm! Our thanks go to those who have made generous donations to our Choir in recent months, including Kathryn & Pietro Abate, Dickson and Bibbi Lee, Rachel Reeder, Rob Livingstone and Yvonne Thomas. And, of course, to Dawn Stallward, who so kindly stepped in to fund the replacement of our Choir promotional banner, when it went missing last summer.

THANK YOU

Thanks to Carolyn George, Sarah Lee, Ryan Tate and Sylvie Thwaites for the photos this newsletter.

THREE WAYS TO HEAR THE CHOIR AT CHRISTMAS

Our traditional Christmas concert with the Mevagissey Ladies Choir takes place on Saturday 9th December at St Andrew's. For the second year running, we are delighted to report that we will also be joined by the children from Mevagissey Primary School, who made such a delightful contribution last year. A week later, on Friday 15th December, we will welcome Champagne Cornwall Chorus to the Holy Trinity Church, St Austell, for our second Christmas concert. If you can't make either, of course, you can settle back with *'Sing for a Child'*, our new Christmas CD.

And don't forget our fundraiser for young Alasdair Hoskins at Tywardreath Church on 2nd December!

Friends are also advised that the Mevagissey Male Choir annual dinner and dance will take place this year on Saturday 13th January at the Carlyon Bay Golf Club, where we had such a great night last year. All Friends of the Choir are welcome. Tickets are £25 a head.

And, finally, a heads-up for 2018. We shall be performing again at the Minack Theatre, with the Culdrose Military Wives Choir among our guests. The date for your diaries is Saturday, 12th May

UPCOMING EVENTS

Date	Comment	Venue	Time
Thu 30 Nov	AGM	Mevagissey Social Club	7.30pm
Sat 2 Dec	Fund raising concert for Alisdair Hoskins	Tywardreath Church	7.30pm
Sat 9 Dec	Christmas, with Meva Ladies and Meva School	St Andrew's, Mevagissey	7.00pm
Mon 11 Dec	Tbc - Private event	Penrice House	7.30pm
Tue 12 Dec	Informal Christmas Singalong	St John's, St Austell	7.30pm
Fri 15 Dec	Christmas concert with Champagne Chorus Cornwall	Holy Trinity, St Austell	7.30pm
Sat 13 Jan	Dinner/Dance	Carlyon Bay Golf Club	7.30pm