



# Mevagissey Male Choir

Raising funds and raising spirits since 1974



[www.meva-choir.co.uk](http://www.meva-choir.co.uk)  
Registered Charity No:298985

## MMC TO PERFORM AT 'SING EDEN'

We are delighted, and greatly honoured, to reveal that Mevagissey Male Choir has been invited to take part next year in a grand choral festival at the Eden Project. The event is the brainchild of Re-imagine Kernow, a Cornwall-



*Nick Hart*

**No: 40**

### 3 Christmas Concerts!

St Andrew's on the 6<sup>th</sup>

St Augustine's on the 14<sup>th</sup>

St Austell Brewery on the 21<sup>st</sup>

Full details at [www.meva-choir.co.uk](http://www.meva-choir.co.uk)

based voluntary group with the explicit aim of 'supporting individuals and local communities in managing small ecological changes...'

At the heart of the project is Nick Hart (no pun intended!), whose contribution to Cornish music is legendary - in 2013 he was made a Bard of the Cornish Gorsedh for 'Creativity in Music'; who says the idea is to harness the power of collective singing to 'inspire and persuade us to take even better care of our world'.

### **Sad News**

*With great sadness we report the passing of two MMC stalwarts, Ivor Morcom and Ron Hocking. Tributes appear inside.*

Each participating choir will perform a programme of its own choosing but including an individually dedicated piece that will be especially commissioned for the event – i.e. a different piece for each choir. Composers - professional, amateur and youth – have been already engaged to write songs with a theme of environmental well-being.

It was in Bodmin on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> October that Nick, a long-standing friend of our Choir, outlined his plans for the event, which is scheduled to take place on the weekend of 26/27 September 2020, and issued his invitation. He had kindly agreed to compere our concert at St Petroc's Church, where we were raising funds for The Chestnut Appeal for Men's Health. A consummate presenter, witty, charismatic, lucid & inclusive, he not only charmed the audience with his introductions but took the opportunity to spell out plans for the new project.

It was ten years since we had last sung at St Petroc's, on 14th November 2009 in a joint concert with Wadebridge MVC. A magnificent building dating from the late 1400s, with many interesting features it apparently, it cost some £200 to build. Not much more than would buy the Choir a pint of beer each these days. Makes you think!

Given Nick's presence, it was particularly appropriate to include in our programme *Away from the Roll of the Sea*, which he himself had arranged for us a few years back. We were keen to give it our best for him. But it was far from the only highlight. No fewer than three soloists were interspersed between the Choir's offerings. Alex Pearce sang *Proud of Your Boy* from *Aladdin* and *Electricity* from *Billy Elliott*; his father, Paul, sang *Empty Chairs* from *Les Mis* and Frank Sinatra favourite *It Was A Very Good Year*; and Saul Sandey gave us the magnificent Masefield poem, *Sea Fever*, brilliantly set to music by John Ireland, as well as the number from *Showboat* made famous by Paul Robeson, *Ol' Man River*.



*No 'Empty Chairs' when Paul Pearce sings!*

Not to forget Graham Hoskins on guitar and George Phillips on harmonica. We are very lucky to have such a wealth of talent.



*George Phillips' harmonica adds to the poignancy of 'Tell My Father'*

Such a pity then that a bigger audience was not there to enjoy it all. We were disappointed that the charity was unable to send anyone, but we know the church authorities enjoyed it: 'It sounded amazing,' commented Roland Oakley, St Petroc's Events Manager, afterwards. 'You guys are the best choir we have had in church and you are more than welcome back anytime you like.'

The evening was concluded with the usual convivial afterglow in *The Hole In The Wall*, which is well stocked with fine ales, according to the many connoisseurs of such matters who attended and pronounce on such matters. The locals made us most welcome and joined in with the many favourites so often rehearsed in *The Fountain*.

\* It's appropriate here to pay tribute to Anna Flavell, who lost her husband and our much-missed colleague Steve, to prostate cancer in February 2017. Earlier this summer she cycled almost 120 miles around Brussels in one day, 'including a couple of big hills and lots of cobbles', for Prostate Cancer UK. 'I know how thrilled and proud Steve would have been,' she says. We are, too, Anna.



*Anna on some of her favourite cobbles*

## Alex is King at Indian Queens



*The Rev Dr David Hart introduces the Choir at Indian Queens*

The Methodist chapel in Indian Queens is a delightful, snug, homely little place. It is fair to say that all those of us who had not visited the chapel before we turned up on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> September were greatly taken by its charm. With its original pine pews and hand painted organ pipes, it is redolent of a far-off time of comfortable predictabilities and solid certainties, an age gone by. Decked out, as it was, with fresh produce ready for the Harvest Festival, the aroma of fresh apples and ripe tomatoes filling the air, all that was missing was a few smocks and tricorne hats among the congregation to make one feel that Poldark might come striding in at any moment.

It was almost thirty years since Mevagissey Male Choir had last sung here; on 11<sup>th</sup> March 1990! All in all, it was our fifth visit to Indian Queens – we first performed there in 1978, just four years after the Choir was formed, and we returned in 1979 and 1980.

The audience for our latest performance almost filled the place – although it was a small place! - and a most appreciative group they were. The acoustics are extremely good and many compliments were heard about the richness and quality of the Choir which, at near full strength, was under strict instructions from our MD to hold back! Indeed the numbers were so large that compere Bill Collins found it difficult to locate Matt Fox when doing the introductions, hidden as he was behind the Choir.

It was here that Alex Pearce, one of the newest members of the choir, son of Paul and grandson of founding choir

member John, who himself has just celebrated his 85th birthday, made his MMC debut as a soloist with *Proud of My Boy* and *Electricity*. His fine, confident performance was a huge success and the entire Choir did, indeed, feel very proud of 'our boy'!



*Alex Pearce takes the applause following his solo debut*

The programme chosen for the evening was very full, but there was time for two further interludes when members could gather their breath.

Meva Capella were on top form with established favourite *In My Room* and a new addition to their repertoire, *Exodus*, almost straight from the Old Testament and, in that evening's setting, it sent tingles down everyone's spine! It will be much in demand in future, we feel sure.

Paul Pearce had the difficult job of following Alex, as he himself acknowledged, but his pride in his son, and the Choir, shone through. He gave us the well-loved pieces, *Mona Lisa* and *Empty Chairs*.

Later, Rosemary Ruth Webb, on behalf of the church, commented on our 'lovely programme', adding 'We were honoured to have such an amazing choir'. And she reserved particular praise for Alex – 'a young man with such talent'.

## HARVEST OF THE SEA



Some three dozen members turned up on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> October for the St Andrews *Harvest of the Sea* service. Not a concert, but a nice way for us to say thank you to the church authorities for allowing the use of their facilities for our practices. Our two sets of four, mostly traditional and mainly sea-related, pieces blended effortlessly into the hour-long service, at the end of which the congregation were invited for tea, beer, savouries and cakes next door at the Jubilee Hall. Well, actually, they weren't because we forgot to mention it, but they came back anyway. And a convivial hour was spent by all. Thanks to Billy Moore of The Fountain for the beer and to the many Choir ladies who kindly donated and prepared the wonderful food on offer.

*Minutes before the congregation arrive – some of our lovely ladies with the harvest of their kitchens!*

## Records Tumble on the Quay

Our Quay Concert season got off to a very damp start and we were forced to hold the first, on 29<sup>th</sup> July, in St Andrews. Despite the rain, we sang to a full church and raised almost £400 for the Samaritans. We also introduced our newest piece, *Let the River Run*, from the classic '80s film, 'Working Girl'. Originally conceived by Carly Simon as the title track for the film, it went on to win the Academy Award for Best Original Song. In more recent years it has become an anthem for Woman's Rights Movements and global initiatives aimed at making a better life for all.

We sang 14 numbers in all, most of our newer pieces but also some more traditional songs like *The Mermaid*, *Gypsy* and *Deep River*. (It was a programme we were to repeat for the third and fifth concerts.)



*Queue for the quay*



*Our talented accompanists*



*Will it, won't it? Surveying the grey skies*

A week later it was touch and go again, as we gathered on the quayside in a fine mist. But we got underway on time, only for a mini downpour to interrupt proceedings just before our final set. MD Mike Thompson (Graham Willcocks was away), accompanist Matt Fox, sound engineer Chris Williams and compere Bill Collins glanced quizzically at each other as the large audience wrestled with anoraks and waterproofs. Thirty seconds was all it took to make the decision and Bill Collins,

compere for the evening, informed everyone that, regrettably, we would have to abandon the concert. Hardly had a riser block or microphone been moved than the clouds parted, and the rain stopped, as suddenly as it had started. So we were able to complete the final set and even managed an encore, although there was no little irony in the choice - *Mr Blue Sky*.

It obviously worked for Mumnoon Ahmad, of Milton Keynes, who was moved to comment: *"Thank you for this evening's quay side concert. It was fabulous and definitely an occasion to remember."*

It worked, too, for St Andrews, our home church and the venue for our practice evenings, because we had undertaken to donate the evening's takings to the fund for repairing the church's boiler. In fact we succeeded in raising a record amount of £507 (a record however, that was not to last long!). A letter was received from the church thanking us for the donation and we should thank, too, our collectors, Carolyn George, Gerald Goode, and Angela Blamey for their sterling work with the buckets. Our programme for this second concert (repeated for the fourth) was completely different – just eleven pieces but including the ten-minute long *Back to the '60s medley*.

Our third concert, on 12<sup>th</sup> August, was less eventful. Graham was back with us and all went to plan. Mike returned to take the fourth concert a week later, but the best was saved to the last, on the Bank Holiday 26<sup>th</sup> August, when our collectors once again did a magnificent job, bringing in an all-time record £718. And we also sold 21 CDs on the night.

## BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY HALL

On 17th October next year, we will be joining many other choirs from Cornwall to sing at the Birmingham Symphony Hall. If you want to know more, or travel with us to see the Concert, contact Rod Richardson on 07967 005715.

## BUDE CONCERT RAISES £900 FOR RNLI

Thanks to the tireless efforts of two of our most dedicated members, Chris Bale and Phil Walter, who make the hour-long journey from Bude to practice each week, Cornwall's north coast frequently appears on our itinerary. And it was Chris who had ensured that we were invited to make our debut on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> August in the Castle Grounds for the Bude Lifeboat Weekend.

Despite coming in the midst of our Quay Concert programme, we had a decent Choir turnout on what was a glorious day. Some members had taken advantage of the weather by arriving early to enjoy the festivities on offer. A huge marquee was in place for the various events of the weekend, complete with changing room and fully licensed bar for our comforts. It also contained a large stage on which our risers were set, so that we and the audience had great views of one another.

By the time we came to sing in the evening it was standing room only, with some 600 in the audience, while crowds also gathered on the Castle Green to listen.

Joining us were Cousin Jack, a local group of seven singers and three musicians, who performed a mix of sea shanties, Cornish and other Celtic songs. Adrian Wilton was also there, bringing the house down with his silly



stories. Our *Mister Blue Sky* and *Back to the '60s*, which completed the second half, both brought standing ovations, during which a bucket collection secured in excess of £900 for the RNLI.

Chris Bale's organisation of the evening went with military precision, with each of us all being handed a



*Adrian Wilton tells one of his stories*

ticket for a free pint chosen from the ten different St Austell brews on offer. Warm pasties followed to complete a long and very successful day. Huge thanks also go to Paul Horsman and his contingent of helpers, who brought and set up the risers and keyboard.

*Bude-ifull house!*

## Ivor Morcom

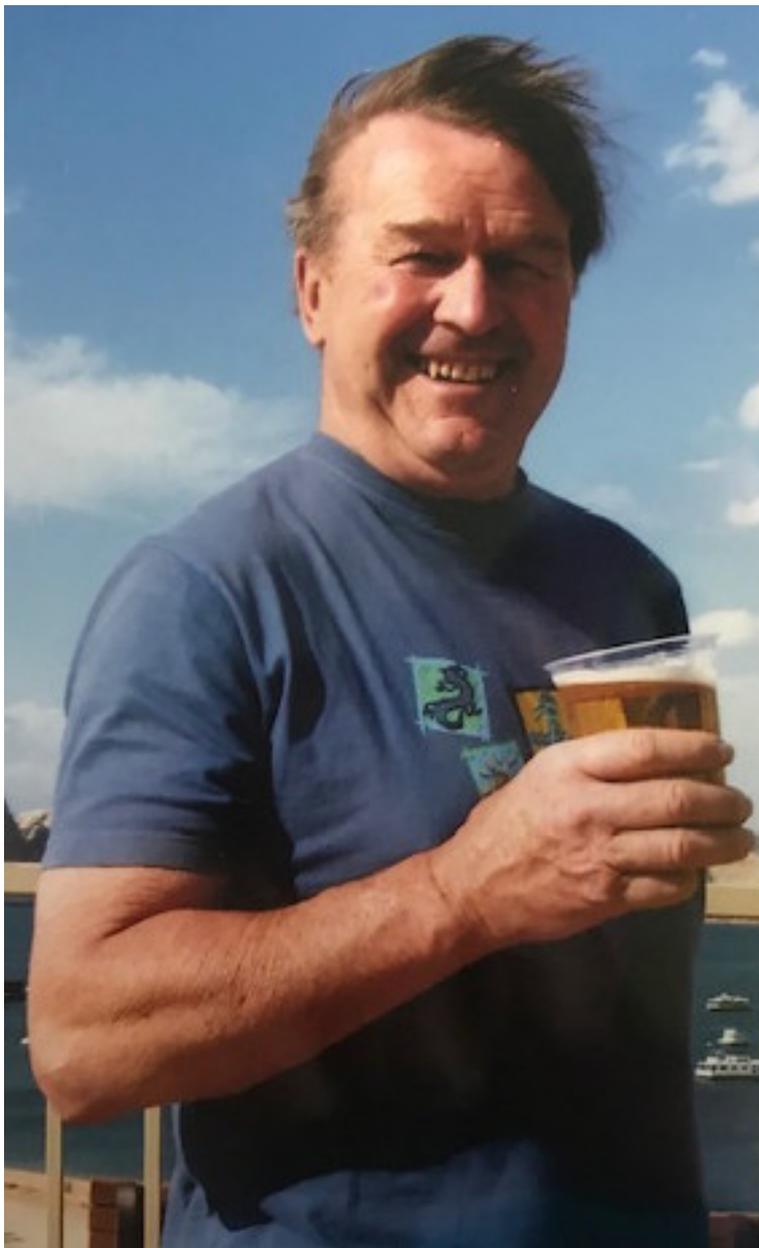


*Ivor*

It was in a brimming St Stephen Parish Church that we paid our last respects to Ivor Morcom on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> October, a fitting tribute to “one of the world's gentlemen in every sense of the word”, as one Choir member put it. Ivor was 86 when he passed away at the end of September, having arrived in this world on 26<sup>th</sup> April 1932. Ivor joined us in 1991 as a Top Tenor; “His 27 years with Mevagissey Male Choir were among the happiest days of his life,” daughter Lorraine told us. And it wasn't just about singing. “He and Joan [whom he married in March 1956] did so much to help the choir's fundraising in the days before we started marketing our CDs. ‘The Barn Dances are memories which will stay with those who took part,’ another member reminded us. As indeed will his yodelling, which he took great delight in entertaining listeners in pub and club. Who else would have exited his own funeral service to Frank Ifield and *She Taught Me to Yodel?*”

Although ill health had prevented him from joining us on the risers over the past year or two, he would still appear, hand in hand with Joan, at our local concerts and other events. We are all the poorer for his passing!

## Ron Hocking



*Ron*

Just five days later, on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> October, we gathered again, this time at St Andrews, to say goodbye to Ron Hocking. Ron, who was 75, was a founder member of the Choir and sang for many years with his father – together they were known as ‘Man Ron’ and ‘Boy Ron’!

Born in Mevagissey, Ron was a proud Cornishman. He married Margaret in 1965 and they had two children, John and Debbs, both now with families of their own. The common themes that came through from family members in their reminiscences were his smile, his love of motorbikes and beer, and his love for his family.

Ron was a man of few words, but his rich voice will be greatly missed by the Choir, and particularly by his colleagues in the Bass section, although he was often an octave below them! “He sang with such confidence, guiding us all,’ said one. He, like Ivor, will be a huge loss to our Choir.

## FLORENCE BECOMES OUR NEWEST FAN

On a happier note, congratulations are due to Top Tenor Charlie Addison on the birth of Florence Elise, a sister for 6-year-old Harry. Charlie tell us that both Mum - Mevagissey girl Charlotte *nee* Mutton – and Florence, who weighed in at 3.45kg – ‘7lbs 9 oz, for those with an aversion to SI units’, says Charlie – ‘are doing well. Her favourite toy is the fluffy lion that big brother Harry bought her - and her favourite hour of the day to wake up is 3am’, he sighs wearily. Good opportunity to go through those teach tracks, Charlie!



## …AND CHRIS & WENDY GET SPLICED

Congratulations also to Second Tenor Chris Bale, who, our sources tell us, slipped away quietly to the Isles of Scilly to get hitched to long-term partner Wendy. We understand the celebrations afterwards weren't so quiet – there was a large turnout and a lovely afternoon singing, according to one jubilant participant.

# ***Good Time Charlie? More ‘Not Before Time’***

## ***Charlie***

The big question for our newest member, Second Tenor Charlie Whetter, is ... how come it took him so long?

Born and raised just a mile or two from Mevagissey, in Treveague, Gorran, and loves to sing. Nailed on for MMC, you would think. But Charlie took the long route. He started singing back in 2007, with a group called Blue Phoenix, which subsequently morphed into Note-Ability, now a local community choir, where he has become a popular occasional soloist. He also sang with Alison Harvey's St Mewan Community Choir for a few years, and he still has 'regular therapy' with St Austell soprano Suzanne Manuel.

So why not MMC? It seems it just hasn't been practical up to now. "We have always admired Mevagissey Male choir," he admits, but there have been too many other commitments. Until last year he was running a B&B in St Austell with partner Nige and spent all his spare time support ailing parents (Charlie is a qualified nurse). Sadly, he lost his much-loved father as recently as last May. "We're now trying to support Mum as she adapts to life without Dad."

It was largely to look after his parents that he and Nige moved back to Gorran Haven last year. "And we decided that now was time for Mevagissey Male Choir. My Dad had been particularly keen that I should join." Sadly Dad died just a week after Charlie's first practice, and before having the chance to hear his debut at Feast Week in June. "I'm sure he was there in spirit", and that he would have enjoyed it," says Charlie, adding: "He was that chuffed that he paid for my uniform before I passed the voice test!"



*Charlie swaps tuning for pruning*

He and Nige have been together since 1992, undertook a Civil Partnership in 2006 and "upgraded to Married Status" on Christmas Eve 2013, which got backdated to the Civil Partnership date. "It was just a 10-minute formality, but a very important one."

Now that they no longer have the B&B, they have more time for other interests, too, such as gardening and food, he says, while Nige is a volunteer walk leader with Caradon Monthly Walkers. "We are part of the Treveague Whetter Clan and related to many people in the area," he proudly says.

Asked which is his favourite choir piece, Charlie identifies *We Rise Again* and our *Back to the '60s* medley - "but they all sound good to me," he adds. However, he chose *Tell My Father* for his voice test - 'It was just so apt!', he poignantly explains.

Charlie says the Choir 'has been a brilliant diversion after a very sad time in my life and I have found the group very supportive. I have been very proud to be part of the Choir already.'

## A TRIBUTE FROM ST MAWES

We've just come across a lovely tribute from the July edition of the Roseland magazine. "Wow, what a night! Just back from enjoying the Mevagissey Male Choir's performance in St Mawes. This 40-strong brotherhood of talented voices and musicians delivered an outstanding performance to a packed hall.

"The cleverly constructed programme carried us joyfully from hit musicals to Robbie Williams and Freddie mercury .... to the heart wrenching *Tell My Father*, capped by a *Back to the '60s* medley. Special mention should made of the talented choir accompanist Matthew Fox and the amazing guitar playing of Graham Hoskins." It was too good a compliment not to share!

As was the following, from Cornwall visitors M & S Taylor, who, back in July, wrote in the St Andrew's Visitors' Book: *'Loved watching and listening to the male choir tonight. Brilliant sound and wonderful camaraderie'.*

## PLEASE...

Once again, a plea for your support. Many of you are already very generous with your donations, which enable us to purchase the new music with which we like to keep our repertoire fresh. However, it's a never-ending task, so, if you like what we do, please keep your contributions coming – every little helps, as someone once said. Almost all the money we raise from the concerts goes to charities and other good causes. So it's you we rely for the help we need in keeping our Choir going. This can be done by cheque or by BACS, made payable to Mevagissey Male Choir and sent to our Treasurer Graham Hoskins at 71 Tehidy Road, Tywardreath, PL24 2QD. Our BACS details are Sort Code: 20-74-20 and account number: 70717940. Please write your surname followed by 'MMC Friend' in the payment reference field.

**Finally**, thanks once again to all those who have contributed to this edition with photos, reports, production etc. They include Peter Bowker, Carolyn George, Graham Hoskins, Jane Stubberfield, Mike WD Thompson.

## NEW CD IN THE MAKING

A number of our followers have asked whether we are planning a new cd. Apart from our Christmas album, *Sing for the Child*, in 2017, our most recent was *Mevagissey Bay* – published back in 2013. Since then we have added well over a dozen new and well-received pieces to our repertoire and, earlier this year, we began recording some of these. It is currently the intention to add more this winter. If we can perform them to Graham's satisfaction, who knows, we could have a new CD for you some time in 2020!

## UPCOMING EVENTS

<b>Date</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Time</b>
Fri 6 Dec	St Andrew's	Christmas concert	7.00pm
*Mon 9 Dec	Penrice House	Private	7.30pm
Sat 14 Dec	St Augustine's	St Petroc's in aid of homeless	7.30pm
Sat 21 Dec	St Austell Brewery	Brewery Charitable Trust	2.00pm
<b>2020</b>			
*Mon 13 Jan	St Andrews	AGM	7.30pm
**Sat 18 Jan	Carlyon Bay GC	Choir & Friend's Dinner	7.30pm
Sat 25 Jan	Tywardreath Church	Hospice 40 <sup>th</sup> Anniversay	Tbc
Sat 22 Feb	St Mary's Truro	With Red River Singers	Tbc
Sat/Sun 26/27 Sep	Eden Project	Sing Eden	Tbc
Sat/Sun 16/17 Oct	Birmingham Symphany Hall	Massed Cornish Choirs	Tbc

\* **Private**    \*\***Non-singing event – all welcome**

Please check our website for updates. [www.meva-choir.co.uk](http://www.meva-choir.co.uk)