



RETURN TO THE MINACK

We are all looking forward to our visit to the spectacular Minack Theatre, overlooking the golden sands of Pothcurno, on Saturday 14th May, for our first concert of the 2016 season.

It will be our third visit to the world-famous, open-air venue, and we will be hoping to repeat our triumph of May 2014 when, as part of our 40th anniversary

celebrations, we performed with the Plymouth Military Wives Choir in front of a sell-out 750-strong audience – and a super-moon!

This time we will be welcoming as our guests the Culdrose Military Wives Choir, the only Cornish member of the 75-strong Military Wives choral network. Inspired by Gareth Malone's hugely successful TV series, the

Culdrose MWC was formed in May 2012 by women attached to RNAS Culdrose in Helston. The ladies have since performed at some of Cornwall's most prolific events, including Armed Forces Day, the Emergency Services Ball at Pendennis Castle and concerts to sell-out audiences at the Hall for Cornwall.

Since February 2015, the ladies have been led by Paul Triggs, who has been involved in Cornish choral singing for more than 40 years, with long tenures directing Treverva Male Choir, City of Truro Male Choir and Penzance Orpheus Ladies Choir.

For us, this engagement also represents a further strengthening of our links with the Military Wives movement. In September we will be hosting the Plymouth ladies at Truro's Hall for Cornwall and, a month later, we fly to Cyprus for a week-long tour, including two concerts, one of them with the Akrotiri and Episkopi MWCs.

At the time of going to press, tickets for the Minack concert were still available via www.minack.com at between £5 and £11.50.



Our last Minack appearance in May 2014.

How the Choir Became Amy's University Project

Earlier this year we were contacted by Amy Griffin, a student studying Press & Editorial Photography at Falmouth University. She wanted to create a project based on a community group in Cornwall. "I have read about the Mevagissey Male Choir," she said, "and I think that it is really lovely that such a large group of men come together with their love for singing, and that modern pop music is incorporated into an often traditional hobby."

She asked us for permission to photograph/document the Choir "and all that you do"! She added that we would have access to all of her imagery and/or videos for our website, etc.

Flattery can get you everywhere, we told her! We invited Amy to a Monday practice evening, where she snapped us practising in St Andrew's (and later in the pub!). And she agreed to come back a few weeks later to photograph us more formally on the quayside. The image on the front of this newsletter is one of hers, as is the one below and there are others elsewhere in these pages.

Our thanks go to Amy, who has charmed us all from the start. She will be at the Minack on the 14th as our guest and has promised to bring her camera.



Just one of our secret practice night rituals that Amy has exposed!

CIDER...

There is every chance that Charlie Addison – the first of two new Top Tenors to win their places on the risers so far this year – is destined to become one of our most popular members. Why? He makes cider!

“A stag party trip to Skinners Brewery five years ago got me interested,” he reveals. “I started with fruit from my mother-in-law’s tree. After a lot of reading, and an equal amount of luck, I came up with a halfway decent first attempt.” Now he’s planted a few trees of his own. “My recipe is always evolving; each year I try a few tweaks to my process.” If you’d like a second opinion, Charlie, you won’t be short of volunteers....

Charlie married Mevagissey girl, Charlotte Mutton, in 2011 but they lived in his home town, Plymouth, until son Harry was born. “We decided to move out of the city” and with Charlotte’s Mum Denise still living here, Mevagissey was “the only place we considered”.

It wasn’t long before he bumped into our new-ish Baritone Mike S Thompson, who suggested he came along “to have a listen”. At his first practice session he was “blown away by the quality of the singing. I decided it was for me.” He also thinks the social side is a great aspect to the choir. “I really enjoy the evenings in the Fountain learning the old songs.”

Charlie arrived with a certain amount of musical experience. Besides a brief spell with his church choir, he played trumpet in a swing band for a while “so I’m quite at home in the treble clef!” He adds “I’d certainly like to break out the horn again and have a good blow.” Move over, Graham Hoskins and guitar!

‘*Calm is the Sea*’ was Charlie’s choice for his voice test, perhaps not surprisingly given his profession. After attending the Duke of York’s Royal Military school in Dover, he trained as a hydrographer / cartographer and works offshore on wind farm power cables, making sure they are correctly charted. Sadly for us, it means he is often at sea for a month at a time, so he won’t make every concert.



In between mapping pipelines and brewing cider and singing, Charlie is “running the south west coast path”. “I’m slowly trying to cover the south section”, he explains, “no more than six miles a time and usually less. This summer I’ll be out doing the Roseland coast and St Austell Bay.”

“I’m very much looking forward to my first concert, albeit it with a touch a nerves.”

What You’ll Be Hearing Next!



Since completing our Christmas CD in January, we’ve been hard at work on a number of new pieces, the first of which – *‘Every Time I Feel the Spirit’* - will be heard at the Minack. It’s a lively spiritual etc. dating from before the American Civil War. This summer should also see the gradual roll-out of the Andy Williams hit, *‘Home-Lovin’ Man’*; Barbra Streisand’s, *‘The Way We Were’*; *‘Can You Feel the Love Tonight?’* from *‘The Lion King’* and Mark Hayes’ 2011 composite arrangement of *‘Lean on Me’* and *‘We Shall Overcome’*.

…WITH ROSEY



Peppermint Mountain, Nevada – but dreaming of singing on Mevagissey quayside.

When it comes to treading the boards, our new Baritone is an old hand. Robin Murphy has been an actor all his life. He's sung in bands, on his own, on stage and on TV. He's toured most of Europe with various productions, including Alan Ayckbourn's theatre-in-the-round company, and even played the lead in *'The Mousetrap'*, the world's longest running show, in London's West End. (But he still won't tell us who dun it!).

About the only thing he hadn't done was to sing in a choir. So when he saw our recruitment poster, he couldn't wait to pop along to St Andrew's. "I'd wanted to join ever since seeing a number of performances on the harbour, when Rosey and I first moved back down."

Robin was born in Portmellon, "in a little cottage with no electricity and no running water, on the lane to Chapel Point. Both Dad and Mum were in RAF Bomber Command during the war and afterwards sought a bit of peace and quiet in Cornwall!" Later they moved to Mevagissey, first above the harbour, and later to the bottom of Tregoney Hill.

Four children and four grandchildren later, they are back - a couple of hundred yards further up the hill – where he and Rosey, who works for Savills in Truro, have been “trying for years to get the house into a shape that will fit them all in one go – it’ll be a great Christmas, when it’s finished!”

Robin’s other great love is motor sport. “I was based at Brands Hatch, and oversaw all events there, as well as at Oulton Park, Snetterton, and Cadwell Park. In my time we held the rights to the British F1 Grand Prix, World Superbikes, British Superbikes and British Touring Cars.” He instigated many events, including the Ferrari Festival at Brands, for which he also put on a concert, starring Eric Clapton and Jules Holland. He still commentates at both bike and car events.

“Our huge joy is travel,” he says, “which we try to combine with music. Three years ago we saw the Stones in London, then the Eagles in Dublin, then, last summer, Fleetwood Mac in Amsterdam. This summer, it’s Amsterdam again, for Neil Young.”

Robin is, of course, in no doubt that Mevagissey Male Choir represents a new peak in his career. “I’m really looking forward to performances with the choir – I thoroughly enjoy the Monday rehearsals, but nothing compares to a live performance!” His favourite Choir piece is *‘Au Fond du Temple Saint’*, known by us as ‘The Pearl Fishers’. “I’m a sucker for such a beautiful melody, and such a rewarding big ‘choir’ finish.”



Monday night in the Fountain – Robin is far right.

STEVE FINALLY TAKES THE PLUNGE

Our second new Top Tenor this year is not a man for acting impulsively. Steve Truscott had been 'thinking about' joining a choir for years, he says - "usually after meeting choir members"! Until recently, however, his singing career comprised a brief spell with Foxhole Sunday school choir as an eight-year-old and, later, "sessions while gathered around the pianos that were always part and parcel of the clay country public houses".

Then, last year, he joined Fowey Gallants Sailing Club's Safety Boat team, where he found himself working alongside none other than our own Chairman, 'Nick' Nicholls. "It occurred to me that, if Nick was an example of a Mevagissey Choir member, then the rest cannot be too bad, either." He can't have been that convinced because still he hesitated. Finally, he saw our regular notice in the Cornish Guardian, encouraging new recruits to come forward. "It was worded in a way that convinced me to have a go." So he contacted Recruitment Officer Graham Rundle, "and with his help and support, everything fell into place."

It took no time at all for him to pass his voice test, singing '*Calm is the Sea*' – even though his favourite choir piece (so far!) is '*Cornish Hearts*'. "The piece was suggested to me by Choir colleagues. I hadn't heard of it before but I practised it to the point where the wife now knows the words as well!"



"Will this do for the safety boat, Nick?"

Now living in St Austell, Steve was born and brought up in Foxhole, and joined English China Clays as an engineering apprentice in 1966. He went on to specialise in plant maintenance and, by the time he retired in 2009, he was Engineering Manager. He met Treviscoe-born Pam while still at school and they married in 1972. They have two sons; Miles, who's in the RAF, and Alex, who works at the British Museum and was responsible for the trip to the Cutty Sark, in Greenwich (pictured) – a birthday treat for his dad.

Steve is spending his retirement carrying renovating his home and “a couple of other properties”, as well as walking the coast path, watching local football and travelling. When he's not singing, of course. “I'm now enjoying learning the ropes, helped by my Top Tenor colleagues - for a 'new boy' this has been very important in giving me confidence. I'm now looking forward to playing a full part in the Choir and becoming one of the team.”

Oh, and now he just wishes he'd joined earlier. “The welcome I received on joining, and since, has convinced me of that!”



Steve, 2nd left, takes his place among the Top Tenors

CHOIR MEMBERSHIP CONTINUES TO FLOURISH

With three new members welcomed on to the risers in the first quarter of 2016, Choir numbers are now up to 57. We have 15 Top Tenors, 13 Seconds, 15 Baritones and 14 Basses. And six 'apprentices' learning the ropes. Our only loss since the turn of the year has been Paul Paterson, who has moved back to London. We're sorry to lose him.

We could still do with more, though! Any man who fancies giving it a try is welcome any Monday at St Andrew's. We start at 7.30. Come along, have fun and make 57 new friends! Or telephone Graham Rundle on 01726 70236.



Another good Monday night turnout

SUE TRUDGIAN

We were all deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Sue Trudgian, widow of popular Top Tenor Skit Trudgian, early in April. Sue and her sister, Joan Morcom, wife of Top Tenor Ivor, were ever-presents at our concerts and huge supporters of the Choir over the years. We said goodbye to Sue at Charlestown Church on 29th April, where, alongside Imerys Mid-Cornwall MVC, we sang 'No Arms Will Ever Hold You', the music for which was donated to the Choir by the Trudgian family, and Padstow's 'Queen of the May', a favourite of Sue.

Please Support Your Choir!

As we embark on another busy summer season, you'll hopefully forgive us for mentioning how much we rely on your donations to fund the Choir and its activities, including this newsletter.

We sing primarily for charity - the proceeds from almost all our concerts go to good causes. We rely on our August quay concerts, our CD sales, members' annual subscriptions - **and you** - to generate the funds we need to buy our music and pay our expenses. Please give generously to ensure the continuing prosperity of our Choir.



Looking good and singing new pieces costs money – please help.

MEVAGISSEY CONCERT

Our Mevagissey concert on Monday 27th June will be a tribute to Robin Hunkin, a founder member, who passed away in August last year. The final week in June this year has been designated by the Mevagissey Feast Week committee as a 'week of reflection' on the life of Robin, who played such a huge and vital part in establishing Feast Week as a major event in the Cornish calendar.

2016 CONCERT DIARY

Date	Comment	Venue	Time
Sat 14 th May	With Culdrose Military Wives	Minack Theatre	7.30pm
Sat 21 st May	(see arrangements)	St Michael's, Newquay	7.30pm
Sat 4 th June	Blessing of the Fleet	Mevagissey Harbour	See website
Sat 11 th June	HATS charity	Holsworthy Theatre	7.30pm
Sat 25 th June	Church Funds	Noss Mayo	7.30pm
Mon 27 th June	Mevagissey Feast Week Concert	St Andrew's	7.30pm (tbc)
Sun 17 th July	With Penzance Orpheus Choir	St Mary's, Penzance	(Time tbc)
Sat 23 th July	Church Funds	St Ender	7.30pm
Mon 1 st , 8 th , 15 th , 22 nd , 29 th August		Mevagissey Quay	7.45pm
Sat 10 th September	Joint Concert with Plymouth Military Wives	Hall for Cornwall	(Time tbc)
Sun 16 th – 23 rd October	Jt with Akrotiri and Episkopi Military Wives	Cyprus	
Sat 29 th October	For Roseland Music Society	Portscatho Village Hall	(Time tbc)
Sat 5 th November		Charlestown	(Time tbc)
Tue 6 th December	Christmas Singalong	St John's, St Austell	7.30pm
Fri 9 th December	Joint Christmas Concert with Mevagissey Ladies Choir	St Andrew's, Mevagissey	7.00pm