



ISSUE 7



LLAIS Y FRO

The magazine of Cowbridge Male Voice Choir

MAY 2023

Shrewsbury & Llandaff concert photos



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This page: a picture of concentration in rehearsal for our Shrewsbury concert.

Cover photo:
Our Shrewsbury concert in full swing!



Jon Wilks
Chairman, CMVC

Editorial

Aside from the 80 choristers and key members of our musical team, the next most important elements for our choir are our supporters. They are many and varied, ranging from friends and family of choristers, through to people who have happened upon us via social media and choose to 'follow' us.

There is a reason that we regularly fill our concert venues and, whilst the quality of our singing is fiercely protected, the loyalty and love of our supporters comes a close second.

At the pinnacle of demonstrating support for our choir has been, for many years, vice presidency. A core of around 50 people have sustained the choir with an annual donation of £10 and, in exchange, they carry the accolade of being a vice president of CMVC and enjoying access to priority seating at our annual concert. Beyond that? Well, truth told, we haven't really made the most of their loyalty and commitment to our choir.

Aside from our singing, there is good reason for why we fill concert venues!



Our new Patrons programme...

That is about to change and I am hugely excited to launch our new Patrons programme.

The CMVC Patrons Programme replaces the vice presidents programme. Honorary Vice Presidency will remain an honour that is bestowed at the choir's discretion on individuals who have done great service for the choir, and all other vice presidents will transfer to becoming patrons.

You can read all about the new programme, for which we are indebted to great work from vice Chairman Chris George, secretary Phil Insley and Choir Administrator Frank Maynard, on page 10.

Why should you consider becoming a patron of Cowbridge MVC?

Because it is the perfect means by which you can demonstrate your support in really practical terms for our choir. All of the money that we collect through the patrons programme will support choir activities and the purchase of music equipment.

Demonstrate your support

Just to set the pulse racing a little, we have decided to set ourselves a target for the new Patrons programme of attracting 200 of you to the scheme!



You help us do what we do...

Do please help us try to achieve it!

Imagine attending your next concert by CMVC, wearing a patrons badge, perhaps even some Patron's clothing merchandise, and knowing that we are enabled to do what we do by your generosity and support. You'll float there and back!

Thank you for your continued fantastic support.

Jon Wilks, Chairman

Shrewsbury Concert – in aid of Samaritans



Michael Carding

Your editor cannot recall ever having a poet as soloist at one of CMVC's concerts, so it was a welcome and refreshing change to applaud local Shrewsbury poet Michael Carding to the stage. Michael managed to produce some humour whilst also drawing attention to the problems of homelessness in Shrewsbury, a cause to which he gives a huge amount of time.



Susan Forgie

Susan is the local coordinator for Samaritans in Shrewsbury and was almost single-handedly responsible for the organisation and hospitality that the choir enjoyed. Thank you to Susan who is simply a fantastic example of community service – humble and yet bursting with commitment and effort.



John Williams

When your booked hotel in Shrewsbury for 60 choristers and guests starts mucking you about, threatening the viability of the entire Shrewsbury concert, then you need a concert secretary with nerves of steel.

Step forward John Williams who dealt with the threat and ensured that the concert could go ahead. Bravo John.



Sensational Shrewsbury!

Wow! What a venue! What a concert!

Theatre Severn in the heart of Shrewsbury is a magnificent setting and it is fair to say that the choir rose to the occasion. This was a highly polished, confident performance from CMVC that rightly received massed applause and rave subsequent reviews.

From the excellent and ordered stage entry and discipline through to the sustained concentration, this was real high quality.

With one of the largest choirs to stage in recent years, it was imperative that every chorister gave a good account of themselves if that size was to be put to full effect. And they did.

Expertly led by MD Rhiannon Williams, with accomplished playing from accompanist Sandra Williams and organist Scott Williams, Theatre Severn enjoyed a real treat from CMVC and there is no doubt that we will return. A huge sum of over £5,000 was raised for Samaritans by virtue of the concert and it was fitting that the choir enjoyed a wonderful afterglow to celebrate.

Thank you to all who made the concert possible – it felt like a real privilege to be involved.



Rhiannon's Roundup

**“Cascading &
caressing each
grain of sand, a
warm embrace
between sea and
land”**

Edel Copeland's poem paying homage to waves and beaches is apt as I prepare to lead the choir on our long awaited and now eagerly anticipated tour to Cyprus. Postponed twice thanks to Covid and very nearly cancelled altogether as the hotel decided to enter refurbishment, we are now ready.

Preparing for an overseas tour means, at least for the musical director, double the stress!

Aside from the vital preparation in ensuring that the choir are ready to perform to their usual best standard, a foreign tour to a hot country such as Cyprus involves further advance prep.

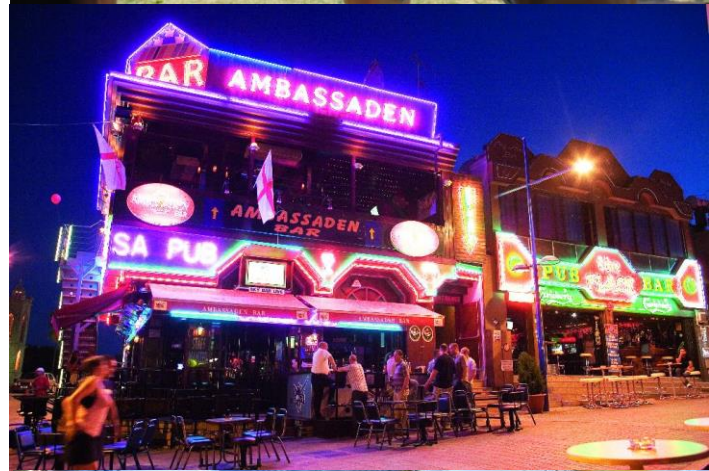
What, for example, should I wear? One of our concerts will be at an outdoor amphitheatre at 7pm. Fine for the choir – they simply don or doff their jackets, but it's a little trickier for the MD! Careful wardrobe selection is critical...

Then there is the consideration around performing in unfamiliar places where we have had no chance for a sound check. What will the acoustics be like? How might this inform our song performance selection? I'll need to have my antennae tuned!

In Cyprus we will be singing for one of our concerts alongside another choir (the Accord ladies choir, based in Cyprus). How will the vocal dynamics work and will they be able to effectively blend with our choir in the joint numbers? How should we arrange the positions of both choirs to obtain best sound quality and sight lines to me as conductor?

Whilst I will be working through all of these questions with my musical and tech team, choristers will be lying by swimming pools, taking an occasional beer, perhaps wandering off to do some shopping and maybe enjoying some local food. Whilst they do this I can't help but be anxious for them about sun stroke, heat stroke, dehydration, tummy trouble and maybe even getting lost! Truly an MD can never relax.

But after all of this, I know that they are CMVC. It really will all be OK!?



CMVC PATRONS ASSOCIATION

NOW LIVE!

After a huge amount of work from our vice Chair, Chris George, our Secretary Phil Insley and choir administrator Frank Maynard, our new Patrons Association is now live.

Available to anyone interested in the Choir, the Patrons Programme replaces Vice Presidency as your way of showing your support.

It costs a surprisingly large amount of money to run the choir (including the cost of uniforms, hire of rehearsal venues, cost of transport to venues, and the increasing cost of the purchase of music necessary for us to expand our repertoire)

As a charitable organisation the choir relies on its members, families, friends and donors to cover these costs. That's where the Patrons Association comes in!

Available in 2 levels, joining our Patrons Association confers fantastic benefits on you, that vary depending on the level you choose.

SILVER gives you:-

- Discount tickets to our annual concert
- Your name in our Annual concert programme and on our website.
- Your own direct link to our bi-monthly Llais y Fro online magazine.

GOLD gives you:-

- ALL the silver benefits PLUS...
- Choir CD
- Certificate of thanks
- Patrons Association car sticker
- Patrons Association lapel badge
- Other special stuff that we are working on!

SILVER level costs £20 per year
GOLD level costs £50 per year

Contact the Patrons Association coordinator, Chris George, to register your interest:- chrisgeorge4880@icloud.com





Llandaff

Spectacular!!!

Llandaff Cathedral is one of those venues that every chorister in any choir would love to have the opportunity to perform in.

Well, we were again given the opportunity to do so, on behalf of the brilliant charity that is Maggie's Cancer Centres, an organisation that has touched the hearts and minds of so many people in South Wales, including several of our choristers.

Partnering with the fantastic talents that are Howell's Prep School Competition Choir, this was an evening that gladdened the soul and lifted the spirit.

The Choir sung wonderfully well, as did Howell's, and the event raised over £5,000 for Maggie's and the incredible work that they do.

I know that its easy to say 'you should've been there' but this is one where only a physical presence to allow you to experience the sound and spirit of the performance would do.

Bravo to everyone who took part and special thanks to our musical team of Rhiannon, Sandra and Scott, who truly excelled.





Spotlight on:
RAY PASCOE
(Stage Manager)

THE CMVC STAGE MANAGER

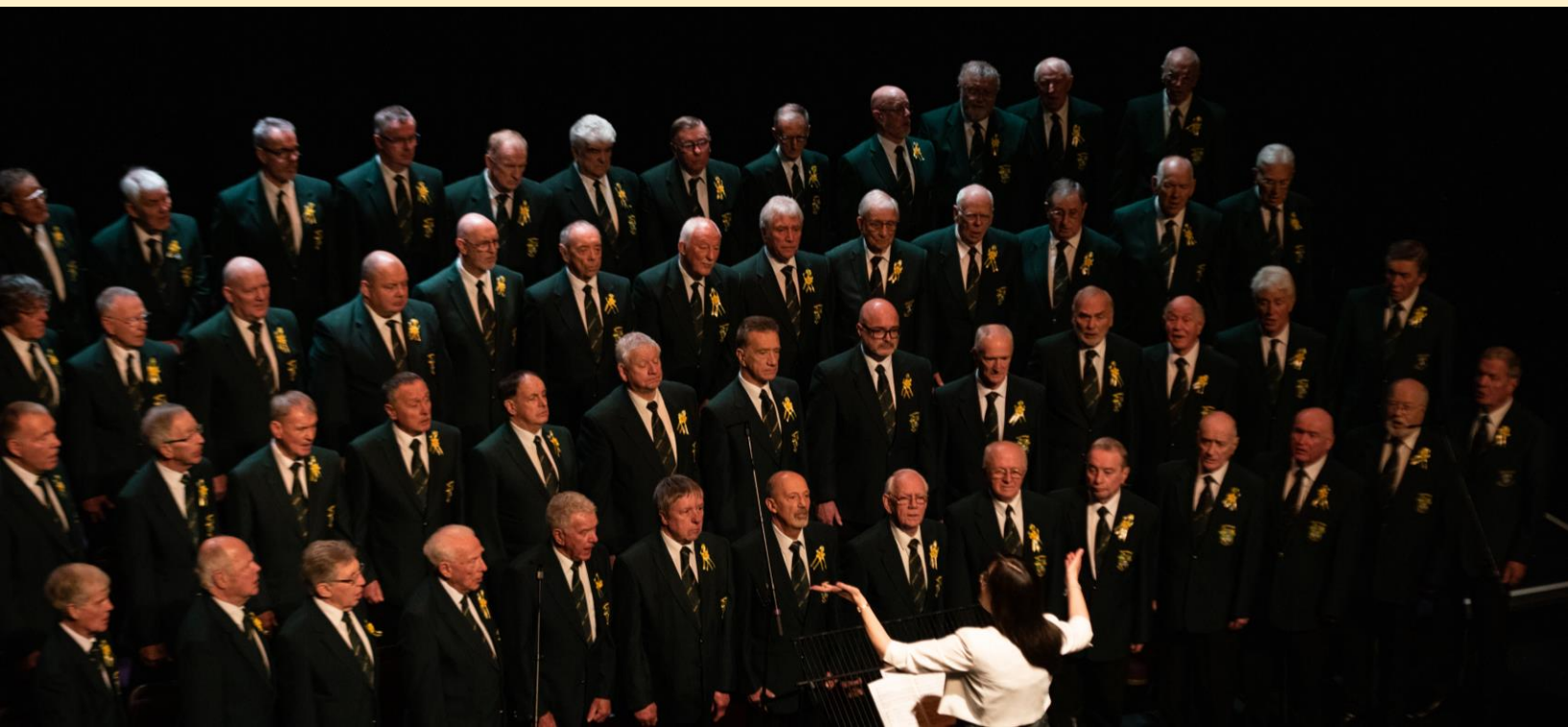
Have you ever tried herding cats, knitting fog or persuading an excited group of 70 choristers to line up in a particular way? Ray Pascoe is a master of the first two elements – that's the qualification for trying to do the third!

Being CMVC's Stage Manager is a huge and difficult responsibility. He must liaise across the choir to know who will be attending a concert and where the MD would like each to stand. He must then devise a system for getting everyone on and off stage efficiently (and safely), whilst retaining his good humour and patience.

Its an unsung hero kind of a job. Nobody ever says at the end of a concert "gosh the stage manager was good". It is an unseen but critically important role for which lots of people have ideas, but few have the ability to put them into practice.

Thank you then to Ray Pascoe, who will be doing his thing every time we perform – but you as an audience are very unlikely (hopefully!) to notice!

The results of stage management perfection at our Shrewsbury concert...



The Afterglow!!!

For many choristers, friends and families, performing in major venues to appreciative audiences is the culmination of lots of hard work. So how do we relax and allow the adrenaline rush to calm?

With one of our famous After Glows!

Typically taking place in a nearby hostelry to where we have performed, the afterglow involves the singing of songs that might not necessarily be appropriate for the main stage but are guaranteed to bring a smile to the face and a tap to the foot.

Typically led by our Afterglow master of ceremonies, the one and only Robin Hughes, we now have 3 accompanying guitarists (Chris Rooney, Paul Owen and Dave Carr) as well as several solo acts to entertain and, occasionally, mystify!

Here's some lovely photos from our recent afterglow in the White Lion, Llandaff, following our recent concert:





LOOKING AHEAD!

10-17 MAY 2023

CMVC Tour to Cyprus. 3 major concerts
in aid of local charities.



*The magnificent amphitheatre near Paphos,
site for our concert on Sat 13th May*

15th JULY 2023

CMVC Annual Concert – Cowbridge
Leisure Centre, from 7pm.



*The Cowbridge Leisure Centre will
be full to capacity on July 15th.*

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