



ISSUE 15



LLAIS Y FRO

The magazine of Cowbridge Male Voice Choir

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Highlights Jan-June 2025



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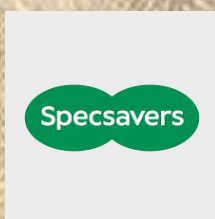
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This page: Chris Rooney, Easter Bonnet.

Cover photo: Lake District Tour Party

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*Jon Wilks
Chairman, CMVC*

We have all enjoyed the most fantastic first half to 2025. Indeed, I cannot recall a busier or more productive time for the choir. From concert performances to tours, staging to planning, we have been at it from the first day of the year – and there is a lot more to come for choristers, music team and supporters, with some really exciting stuff in play.

CMVC is now the largest in terms of chorister numbers that it has ever been, with nearly 90 active choristers. This is testament to the welcome that new choristers receive and the encouragement and enjoyment that the choir offers. Furthermore, we know from feedback that the sound we are now making is truly impressive. With the efforts and commitment of those who give so much of their time to ensure this state of affairs, the future is very bright.

Editorial

It has been a huge sadness, therefore, to say a last goodbye to one of our founder member choristers, Glyn Jones, an obituary for whom you will find later in the magazine. We send our condolences and sympathies to his wonderful wife Rose and all the Jones family.

The choir packing out the stage at St German's church in Cardiff



Perhaps the standout...

Perhaps the standout for many choristers in the first half of the year was our tour to the Lake District in May. Brilliantly organised by Barry Doughty, supported by tour secretary Stu McCullouch, the tour afforded new friendships to flourish and enabled many of us to enjoy the beauty of the Cumbrian countryside.

Performing at the Winter Gardens in Morecambe where giants of entertainment such as Laurel and Hardy, Morecambe and Wise and even The Who have trodden the stage boards before us was a huge thrill and Barry's organisational efforts were very much appreciated by all of us.

Later this year we will be visiting Bavaria for two major concerts with our friends from Northumbrian Brass and German Winds, whom we hosted in South Wales last year. This will be a magnificent occasion and excitement is building rapidly.

Work tirelessly...

If you hadn't already realised it, CMVC is indeed fortunate to not only have a large number of choristers, but also a fabulous ancillary team who work behind the scenes to ensure that we can do what we do best – sing. We are particularly indebted to a number of people in this regard who never take the stage but work tirelessly to make sure that we can. A big shoutout to Stu McCulloch, our tour secretary who is doing a wonderful job to line up Bavaria.

Major thanks also to our newly formed support team, comprising several of our wives and partners and led by Sian Andersen and Jenny Edwards who have wonderful plans for us! Continued gratitude to Nikki Wood, our official photographer too.

Many thanks for your continued, fantastic support. Do please follow us on social media to get the latest news and information regarding our performances.

Jon Wilks, Chairman

TEMPLE OF PEACE



Raising money for the super charity that is 'Life for African Mothers' was our first official concert engagement for 2025 and took place in the stunning architecture that is the Temple of Peace in Cardiff. With its vaulted colonnades and secret basement commemorating the Great War's fallen, the stage was set for a great evening and a capacity audience was not disappointed.

It was a really fulfilling concert performance and the gratitude of the charity was delightful as we raised nearly £3,000 from ticket sales and other promotional activities.

Big thanks to Top Tenor Mike Payne who organised a fabulous afterglow for us at a very grateful nearby pub who were astounded when 50 thirsty men entered on what would ordinarily have been a quiet Thursday night for them!

*Immaculate stage management
From Geoff Smallbone (BB)*



ST DAVID'S DAY



With Musical Director Rhiannon Williams struggling with illness for our showpiece patron saint of Wales concert, the bold decision was taken to enrol the services of Jack Harries for the evening.

Jack sings with Treorchy Male Choir and is an active musical director in his own right with Tonyrefail Ladies' Choir, as well as being a student of choral musical direction. Jack liked us, we liked Jack and so it all happened.

This will certainly not be the last time that the choir performs with Jack at the helm!





MAGGIES AT LLANDAFF

If there is one person who has laid the music foundations for the choir's current repertoire then it must be Dr Alwyn Humphreys. He has been a huge supporter of the choir for many years and has personally arranged well over a dozen pieces for choristers since 2021.

When Rhiannon was unavailable due to a prior commitment to lead the choir at our fundraising concert for Maggies at Llandaff Cathedral, it was quickly agreed that Alwyn should be approached to see if he would like to take the baton.

He readily and generously agreed to do so and, well, it was just fabulous.



It is never easy for choristers or musical director to be thrust together for a single event, but Alwyn made it seem effortless. His conducting style was intuitive to follow and, based on a single rehearsal, it was remarkable how he managed to achieve such a strong performance from the choir.

Maggies is a great cause very close to a large number of our chorister's family and friends, and we were delighted to collect several thousand pounds on their behalf.



NEW STAGING & THE M5 BLOWOUT!

For some time now the choir has been on the lookout for purpose built staging capable of providing tiered standing for up to 60 of us. Over the Easter weekend, we became aware that Barnstaple Male Voice Choir were selling theirs – and we had about 48 hours to make a bid and arrange to collect it. Despite fierce competition from several other choirs, our Treasurer put aside his Easter egg and the funds were made available to enable us to seal the deal!

All that remained was to travel to Barnstaple to pick up the staging and trailer, so Ray Pascoe (BB) and Jon Wilks (TT) set off with great excitement in their hearts.



The pick up was arranged for the Aldi car park in Barnstaple, a brief demo of how it fitted together was provided by Barnstaple MVC representatives and then we waved them goodbye. What could possibly go wrong?!

40 miles up the M5, and we found out as one of the trailer tyres simply exploded. Great driving and awareness by Ray meant that we limped off the motorway and managed to find a replacement tyre at Tyre West.

It is a gold standard staging set up and was used for the first time at St German's Church.



All set up for a first test...

It works!



Tyre West and Ray Pascoe to the rescue! Then some Hammerite and the concert!





St GERMAN'S CHURCH

Remarkably the choir had never previously performed at this iconic Cardiff church, and we were thrilled to do so to accomodate our guests from Taunton Dean MVC in early May.

The occasion also allowed us to test out the new staging and the result was a really impressive 'wall' of sound for our audience to enjoy.

Bravo to Taunton Dean with whom we look forward to performing on their home turf later this year, and also to our newly formed Support Team for the excellent Welsh Cakes and tea offered to our guests on arrival.

The church was packed for the concert and the song delivery, captured on video courtesy of Niki Woods, proved to be everything that we hoped for. Many commented that the acoustics were some of the very best we have ever encountered, so another visit to St German's is definitely on the cards.





LAKE DISTRICT TOUR!

When Barry Doughty (TT) approached the committee last year and advised that he was prepared to organise a tour to the Lake District, none of us expected the level of detail and excellence that he subsequently delivered. Every hour was organised to perfection and the tour was an absolute triumph as a result. Bravo Barry!

Morecambe Bay's incredible Winter Gardens was the venue for our first concert, with ticket money going to the incredible restoration project currently underway.

Following a warm up to sing 'bring me sunshine' at the Eric Morecambe memorial statue on the sea front, the choir went through its concert repertoire to great acclaim.



Concern was raised as one of our choristers was taken ill at the end of the concert but prompt first aid and a stay in hospital means that he is now recovering well.

The Saturday was a packed day of a steam train and Windermere boat excursion, lunch in Grasmere and then a swift return to get changed and make our way to Barrow in Furness for our final concert with Barrow MVC. The sold-out church was treated to a really first-rate evening.

Again, huge thanks to Barry Doughty and tour secretary Stu McCulloch for a fantastic tour.





CONCERT WITH ACHORD CHOIR

It's incredible to think that in May 2024 the choir was enjoying a week in the Mediterranean on the island of Cyprus as guests of Achord Community Choir.

So it was a huge pleasure to welcome Achord to South Wales as a reciprocal 'thank you' on their tour of Wales that took place in early June this year. Thanks to the hard work of concert secretary Bruce Edwards, the church of St Mary's in Bridgend was booked for our joint concert and a wonderful evening was enjoyed by all, as well as an afterglow.



WESTON SUPER MARE



Weston Super Mare was the venue for our recent concert for Rotary charities, enjoyed with our friends from Mendip MVC, with whom we will perform in the future.

A fantastic evening of really enjoyable singing and fellowship took place, with new many new friendships being established. Special mention must go to the brilliant Dave Carr (TT), Paul Owen (2T) and Chris Rooney (TT) who took it upon themselves to lead the afterglow with their guitars. A new standard has been set!

The event raised nearly £1,000 for Rotary and both choirs were thanked by the regional coordinator.





THE ANNUAL!

It's the biggest event in the choir's year. A chance to show the Vale of Glamorgan people, invited dignitaries and, of course, friends and families, just what we have managed to achieve during the year.

This year's event on July 12th was fully sold out the week before and took place on probably the hottest day of the summer, with the temperature hovering around 32 degrees.

Luckily, the Leisure Centre in Cowbridge had some air conditioning and once everyone was seated, we provided a full and rich concert experience for everyone. Massive thanks to our friends from Cor Bryn Owain who supported us and contributed wonderfully to the evening's entertainment.

Our staging was also in action for the first time at an annual concert and added enormously to the sound experience.



Huge thanks to our heroic music team who performed magnificently as the temperature increased, as well as to Mike Payne who led on all of the administrative arrangements for the event. A huge shout out also to Jen Edwards who personally typeset our newly designed 52 page souvenir programme that was an absolute triumph.

The annual is a uniquely stressful occasion given that it is such a big local event for us, but we did the occasion proud and put a smile on everyone's faces.





LOOKING AHEAD!

19th SEPT 2025

Rotary Concert with Mendip MVC,
Llantwit Major 7pm



3rd & 4th OCT 2025

Concerts in Bavaria – ticket details soon



9th OCT 2025

Concert for Welsh Air Ambulance,
St Cadoc Church, Raglan 7pm



**Tickets for all these events are available from CMVC
ticket agent, Geoff Winnard - 07580 565465.**

OBITUARY: GLYN JONES



Glyn Jones was a remarkable farmer, chorister and family man (as he would have it, in that order). He was there at the very first rehearsal of the Cowbridge Male Voice Choir in 1971 where he was proud to sing 'Michael Row The Boat Ashore' as the first piece the choir adopted.

Thereafter, Glyn was an ever-present, taking his place in the second row of the top tenors and giving his all to performances and rehearsals with equal vigour and enjoyment. He was always precise about notes and would gently and helpfully guide anyone around him who hadn't quite got it right! His own voice was sweet with top notes and he could be relied upon for even the most demanding pieces.

As well as singing with us for 50 years, Glyn also acted as unofficial recruiting sergeant, perhaps bringing as many as 30 choristers into the choir over the years, including many of the choristers filling our ranks today.

In recent years his health deteriorated but, with the devoted help of his wife, Rose, he would still grace us with his presence at rehearsals when he felt strong enough and memorably joined us on stage for the National Anthem in 2024.

He will be much missed by all associated with CMVC and we send our love to Rose and family.

RIP Glyn Jones, TT CMVC Chorister

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.
- Lapel badge.

GOLD gives you:-

- ALL the silver benefits PLUS...
- Choir CD
- Certificate of thanks
- Patrons Association gold 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

