

This page is blank - but your choir's news could be on here next time if you tell me!



# CHOIRLINK

*The Prayer and Praise bulletin of the Festivals of Male Voice Praise*

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*Where did our summer go in the UK? After what seems like endless rain here in Central England, we're hunkering down in readiness for the onset of colder weather, just as our Southern Hemisphere brethren are anticipating spring and summer. As Christmas approaches, choirs are readying themselves for seasonal programmes, as you will see as you read on. We begin, however, with Council deliberations.*

## **COUNCIL REPORT: SEPTEMBER 2024**

*Ian Stangoe, Chairman*

Council met on 4<sup>th</sup> September on Zoom with 8 attendees. The Chairman opened, reading from Colossians 3:16-17, 23-24 with the reminder that it is the Lord's work we all are engaged in and should do so to the best of our ability.

Paul had provided a financial statement which shows a balance increase from last year and Council were asked to consider

missions or causes where some of the funds could be distributed. Paul also indicated that he feels the time has come for him to step down as treasurer and Council thanks him for his faithful work over many years. Any future financial correspondence should be sent to the secretary (Mike Dewhurst) in the first instance.

Council agreed that as there is sufficient choir music available

there would be no more new music produced from FMVP. All existing music is available on the website or on memory stick from Alfred Tarring if choir leaders require one.

Concern was raised that choirs continue to stop functioning or are limited in taking on engagements due to balance, age, etc.

However it is encouraging that there are a few choirs which are flourishing and have had new members added in the last year.

The meeting closed in prayer from Houston and Allan.

May the Lord continue to bless you in your labours for Him.

## United Kingdom

### UXBRIDGE GOSPEL MALE VOICE CHOIR *Gerald Durrant*

We have just started working on our Christmas programme with a maximum of 5 at our practices including me on the piano. Because our numbers are so small we have decided to meet at my house instead of Waterloo Road Church in Uxbridge.

For the first time since the pandemic, we have 2 engagements this year. The usual one at my church in South Ruislip but also a Care Home in Hayes. As ever we are dependent on help from our friends in Luton and Hertford.

### SWANSEA GOSPEL MALE VOICE CHOIR *Huw Jones*

We had a break after Summer Praise in July. We then had two Friday night practices before singing at Verdi's Restaurant in Mumbles on August Bank Holiday Monday. We were to sing in two half hour sessions, but a gentleman in the restaurant had a heart attack just before our first session. In God's provision there were two medics on hand. The gentleman was then rushed to hospital. We understand he has recovered. As a result we sang one forty minute session. The Lord blessed the singing and those present much appreciated our witness.

## Worldwide

### BAY OF PLENTY MEN'S CHOIR

*David Cantwell*

The BOP Men's Choir have had a break in August/September as our pianist was away visiting family in Australia. We are now back and working on a busy schedule for the Christmas season. We have 3 concerts to do with 2 retirement complexes and 1 Christmas concert to raise funds for the Bible Society. We

have had another enjoyable year singing God's praises and have a small but dedicated group who are singing well and enjoy the fellowship and camaraderie within the choir. With the events happening in the world about us it is so encouraging to have a Christian hope which guarantees a bright and secure future. And we love to proclaim this through singing the words of our faith.

*Picking up on David Cantwell's thoughts, we seem to be living in very uncertain times, when the world appears to teeter on the edge of madness. Christians in the UK are beginning to join the ranks of those persecuted for their faith. Even in our churches and church institutions, ideas are gaining currency that put Bible-believing Christians in the firing line amongst their own brethren. This is when we need to put our trust in Christ, our Rock and our Redeemer. He is a secure anchor amongst the shifting tides of popular culture and the destructive waves of dissent and disagreement. As the song "Nothing is Impossible" puts it:*

*The Word of the Lord is an anchor secure  
When winds of uncertainty blow  
Though man in his weakness may falter and fail  
His Word will not fail us, we know!*

*May we cling to Him and proclaim His Word in these troubled times.*

*Please let me have items for next Choirlink by Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2025, and may I wish you and yours a very Happy Christmas - when it arrives!*

*Yours in Christ, Vaughan*

In common with others, we too are losing men and finding it difficult to get opportunities for witness. However, we trust in the Lord and will continue to witness for as long as we are practically able to do so.

Through Choirlink we extend to you all our thoughts and prayers and remember you all with fond memories of what the Lord has done and continues to do for us. Let us encourage each other to "press on" in all we seek to do for Him.

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**MORAY MALE VOICE  
GOSPEL CHOIR**  
*Neil Gordon*

It is with great regret that I must inform you that as of Tuesday of 7<sup>th</sup> October the Moray Male Voice Gospel Choir ceased to exist. In common with many other choirs we have been in declining numbers for quite a while now, due to men passing away, suffering ill-health, none of us are getting any younger, and invitations have ceased to come our way. There are one or two members who either don't read music, or can't follow it, (either staff or tonic solfa), which causes frequent discords,

etc. It is not a good witness for our Lord and Saviour, not to mention demoralising for those men who do know what they're about!

We held a meeting on the Tuesday, our normal practice night, and following a long discussion it was agreed that we would stop the choir before our "performance" got any worse, and our testimony was further diminished.

Our conductor, John Buchanan, did advise the meeting that the opportunity exists for individuals to take up the offer of Associate Membership of the FMVP movement if they so desire.

I have been closely and actively involved within the FMVP movement for approximately 55 years, and it is going to be a big personal miss, so I am sorry that this situation has come to pass, and that our choir has been consigned to the history books!

Your brother in Christ,

Neil Gordon,  
Secretary, Moray MVGC

*[The above taken from a note Neil sent to Mike Dewhurst]*

We have now started practising for our Christmas Praise. This will be held in The Waterfront Community Church in SA1 on Saturday December 14<sup>th</sup>. We will be singing some well known carols and some choir favourites such as "From the Squalor", "The Epiphany Carol" and "When A Child is Born". We as a choir are very thankful to our two conductors, John Davies and Gareth Radford. Also we are richly blessed to have Helen Dykes as our accompanist.

Our chairman Kenny Dykes is now taking us through many of Our Lord's Parables before each practice. We Praise God for His provision. We are hoping to sing in The Swansea Quadrant Centre on the 21<sup>st</sup> of December as it will be very busy with Christmas shoppers. Please would you pray for good health for choir members and that our singing will bring Glory to God.

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**HIGHLAND GOSPEL MALE  
VOICE CHOIR**  
*Eric Halkett*

May the Lord be praised for His amazing love and mercy.

Again, we lose some and we receive some. Iain Macleod, who was blessed with a wonderful second Tenor voice is now with his Lord. He faithfully attended all engagements and practices during a long period of illness and our prayers are with his wife Jane and their family. We have been blessed with a new recruit in Dan Coulson, a second Bass.

It is with sadness that we heard that Moray Choir has now decided to cease [*see page 6*], leaving ourselves as the only FMVP choir in the North of Scotland. We pray that the Lord will provide a way for the lads of Moray and Buchan to continue praising the Lord in song.

At our AGM at the end of August the choir retained their dedicated committee members and Eileen compiled a new list of songs to learn and sing at future engagements. We have already sung at the final, beautiful, God-centred Moray Festival and at a local church fellowship group.

It is an answer to prayer that we have been invited again into the local prison during prisoners' week in November to sing the Gospel message to many of the

prisoners, but what has been a tradition for us for over 20 years, the Dingwall Mart, has decided to hold a Harvest Thanksgiving service in conjunction with a local church in place of our choir leading a carol service in the sales ring. Thanks be to our Lord as Dingwall Free Church has kindly granted us an afternoon to hold the carol service.

Please continue to uphold our ageing members in prayer as many are waiting for or undergoing cataract and knee operations at the moment.

May the Lord bless all of you.

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### **CHELTENHAM AND DISTRICT MALE VOICE PRAISE CHOIR**

*David Kendrick*

I have to commence my relatively brief report with an apology for having failed to supply Vaughan with copy for the 23<sup>rd</sup> edition of Choirlink. This was due to two reasons:

- We had not been anywhere to perform as a choir, due to various personal issues with choirmen, and
- I was on protracted holiday

in Cornwall for the wedding of a close friend, which entailed a fortnight in Cornwall, followed immediately by a week in Keswick at week 1 of the Convention, where I met 2 or 3 FMVP colleagues, which was a bonus.

Since returning in mid-July, we decided to take a holiday and arrange to meet in September, however, that did not materialise due to holidays and engagements. Thankfully, five of us were able to meet on Friday afternoon to discuss our future, as the Lord enables and directs.

Christmas is coming and we are really keen to be involved in a programme of singing in our local Care Homes, one of which has requested us to a Carol Service. As our number is very small and we would require total commitment and attendance, we have decided that our best plan is to go as the 'Cheltenham Male Voice Singers' and sing in unison with the help of the staff and residents who are able to assist us, together with a short Christmas message and a suitable Bible passage to accompany. I now have the task of approaching the

Activity Co-ordinators for dates for engagements. We would again value your prayers for us.

We would also value prayer for the healing of our Conductor's wife who has fallen and broken her arm in a very inconvenient place, which is hampering her husband's attendance at our practices and engagements.

May the Lord bless you all as you continue to sing in honour of our Saviour's name and birth.

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### **WHITSTABLE GOSPEL MALE VOICE CHOIR**

*David Casse*

Greetings from the Whitstable choir. As before, we are still meeting once every month or two for a time of fellowship. We have the possibility of a couple of December engagements at places where we have sung previously, but these are yet to be confirmed.

Sadly June, the wife of our leader Ron Ashman, passed away on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> October after a long period of ill-health. Please remember Ron and the family in prayer at this time.

### **BOLTON MALE VOICE PRAISE**

*Mike Dewhurst*

Autumn is now upon us and we have resumed practising once a fortnight from the beginning of August for our winter programme.

We have two engagements over the run up to the Christmas period and we are looking forward to once again being able to have the opportunity to share the good news of our Saviour's birth.

We also have a cause to celebrate ourselves as this September marked our 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a choir. It was in September 1964 that after a visit over the Pennines to Sheffield to attend the Yorkshire Festival of Male Voice Praise that 3 men got together to reform a Bolton choir that existed for about 5 years before disbanding in the late 1950's. We really give the Lord all the Praise and all the Glory for His keeping power and His enabling over the years.

It is so sad to see that many choirs are now struggling and it is always regrettable to see once active groups now closing down.