



The Worcester Warbler

The newsletter of Worcester Male Voice Choir
Charity no. 1141309



Edition 4
March 2022

Editorial

Welcome to another edition of the Worcester Warbler. I was expecting to be reporting excitedly about the huge success of our first Pop-ups in this edition but the gods laugh at mortal plans. (It sounds better in, what I am told is, Yiddish: "Men tracht und Gott lacht"). Having essentially avoided the dreaded virus for two years we were hit by an outbreak that scuppered our plans. I am pleased to report that we are now getting back on track and rehearsal attendance is increasing steadily.

Anyway, the year moves on apace, the snowdrops have wilted, the daffodils erupted on cue for St David's Day and the bluebells can't be far away, so it felt like time for another Warbler.

As always, my thanks go out to my contributors and I hope more of you will be encouraged to put pen to paper (or the electric equivalent) in the months ahead.

A message from our Chairman:

I am very sorry to have to announce the recent passing of **Bill Lane** and am grateful to Ivor Cook for writing an obituary for this publication.

Bill's funeral is at 10am on Monday 21st March at the Vale Crematorium, Fladbury and all are welcome. Choir Members are asked to wear full uniform with black shirt and Choir tie.

At the end of February and in early March the COVID 19 virus finally caught up with Worcester Male Voice Choir and approaching 10 members succumbed, myself included and I must say for me it was a particularly unpleasant experience. Gladly we all seem to have made a full recovery.

At its height we considered it prudent to cancel rehearsals for a week to break the transmission link and that seems to have worked. Numbers of attendees at rehearsals is building healthily again now with well over 30 members at the most recent rehearsals and I am pleased to report we seem to be getting back to normal, whatever normal is?

Preparations for our Friends Remembered concert on Saturday 19th March at The Baptist Church in Sansome Walk are in full flow and going well. This is a very special event where we will finally be able to pay proper tribute and say a proper farewell to the 9 choristers and 2 lifelong supporters who have departed so sadly and so suddenly since 2020.

The concert programme has been put together by a team of choristers with input from several members of the audience, all this being fronted by our inspirational Musical Director, Scott Woolfenden, with accompaniment as ever from James Jarvis.

We are fortunate to have the services of our good friend and highly talented organist Keith Hearnshaw to play a big part in this event and we have managed to persuade our multi-talented but modest M.D. to play the trumpet as well as lead us through the evening. Our Compere for the evening is Nicolas Wright and our sincere thanks go to all four of them, I am sure that collectively they will ensure a successful evening.

Due to COVID we had to abandon our planned Pop up performance on St David's Day outside the Guild Hall. This was a huge disappointment to me as I am sure it would have been a very popular and

successful event. We have also deemed it necessary to postpone our visit to sing at The Hive Library but we will definitely bounce back with this particular brand of recruitment campaign very soon.

Our M.D. continues to introduce new pieces of music for us to learn and the repertoire gets more exciting by the minute. Watch out for some really big numbers this year, including big hits from The Beach Boys and Robbie Williams, we are even including a hit from the 21st century, in fact it was a huge hit less than 2 years ago.

Such a Dynamic choir!!!

Future dates for your Diary:

- Saturday 19th March (19:30) – Friends Remembered – The Baptist Church, Sansome Walk
- Saturday 23rd April (19:00) - St Georges Day concert at The Baptist Church in Sansome Walk
- Saturday 28th May (19:00) - Chairman's concert – St Martins Church, London Road
- Saturday 25th June (19:00) - EAMVC concert – Oakengates, Telford.

Pop up's - To be announced after 19th March.

We look forward to seeing you all at the Friends Remembered concert on March 19th at 7.30 pm and hope you will join us afterwards for drinks and light refreshments, courtesy of Ann Bennett and the team, in the meeting room behind the church.

In the meantime, stay safe and stay well.

Les Janes – Chairman, Worcester Male Voice Choir.

Concert Reports

As reported above, there have been no performances since the last edition.

Dates for your diary:

As above plus:

- Sunday 24th July – Picnic by the Lake, Cutnall Green
- Monday 29th August – Pershore Plum Festival
- Saturday 24th September (19:00) - Annual Concert, Henry Sandon Hall
- Sunday 2nd October (13:30) – Awards Lunch, TBC
- Friday 9th December (19:00) – Christmas Concert, Pershore Abbey
- Saturday 10th December (19:00) – Christmas Concert, Pershore Abbey

Other News

As mentioned in the Chairman's message above, we regret to report the passing of Bill Lane. I have received this tribute from **Ivor Cook**:

Tribute to William (Bill) Lane (1933 - 2022)

From an announcement made on Tuesday of last week, 1st March 2022, the sad news was received that Bill had passed away at his home in Beaconhill Drive, Worcester. Together with twin brother Ron, he had been a loyal and active member of Worcester Male Voice Choir and the associated Golf Society for a number of years past.

Following retirement as an Art Teacher at Christopher Whitehead School, Worcester, together with the earlier loss of his wife, Bill joined as a member of WMVC on 26th January 1998. He soon became

a valuable and capable member of the bass section, not only for the contribution he was able to give as a possessor of a very rich and powerful voice, but also with the ability to provide friendly help and vocal support, particularly to new section members as well as for the benefit of others, if and whenever needed.

Shortly after joining as a choir member, Bill decided to take an active interest in forming a golfing section which comprised of other like-minded choir members. He was possibly the only remaining member of the original group who instigated the formation of WMVC Golf Society so many years ago. We all knew him as a very friendly and likeable member of our Society and who devoted so much of his time in organising our weekly games throughout many years past until he reluctantly, had to relinquish his involvement owing to his increasing deterioration and problems associated with his physical health condition for which he had had to endure throughout the past recent years. All golfing members will have so many happy memories of enjoyable times and games played and spent in Bill's company.

In addition to the interest Bill had in all his WMVC activities he also had a great passion with his love of sport. For many years he supported Worcestershire County Cricket Club as a frequent visitor to their New Road ground. He also had much enjoyment from watching all kinds of sporting activities on TV and was a very knowledgeable supporter and viewer who had the capability to easily remember many of the names of sportsmen he had seen.

Bill will be sadly missed by everyone within WMV Choir who had the pleasure of his company on many tours and social occasions throughout the past two decades. He will be remembered as a true friend and gentleman, always immaculately turned out whatever the occasion. He leaves behind a daughter, Sarah, a granddaughter Lillie, as well as his twin brother Ron. Our sympathies and thoughts are with all his loving family at this time.

Ivor Cook

I have received this (rather delayed) update from the Welsh Association:

Greetings from the tropical uplands of SE Wales!

Quite a large number of member choirs are now back to (safe) rehearsals and I know of a number of choirs who have undertaken public performances. I also know that many have decided to wait until after Christmas before restarting their activities. Caution is still the watchword especially in light of the newly arrived Omicron variant – who knew that I would be familiar with the Greek alphabet at my age!!

It has been a tough couple of years and many of us have all lost friends and family to this awful virus. As we come up to Christmas I do hope that you and yours have an opportunity to relax and enjoy time together.....and don't forget to get some singing in!!

Happy Christmas.....Nadolig Llawen!

Executive meeting

The approved minutes for the October meeting are attached for information.

The Executive also met in Porthyrhyd in late November. Key headlines:

- The previously announced dates for the RAH and Cardiff concerts have now been formally confirmed with the venues and the arrangements with the music teams for both concerts have been agreed. Choirs who had booked places when the concerts were originally scheduled will be contacted in January 2022 so that we can check which choirs are still committed to attend.

- A number of possible commemorative events have been suggested to mark the WAMC 60th Anniversary in 2022. The final decision will be made in January.
- Research is continuing on a new model for the WAMC music competitions. Possible changes being considered include replacing the competition with grant funding; smaller regional awards; regional competitions encourage younger entrants. Whichever model is agreed improved communication with, and involvement of, member choirs will be critical.
- Proposals for changes to the Constitution will be brought to the AGM on 22nd May 2022 including the introduction in principle of proxy voting for member choirs.
- Early in the New Year choirs will be invited to regional Zoom meetings. These will be led by members of the Executive and will present an opportunity to share good practice, discuss challenges etc. In time we also hope to run larger Zoom meetings simply to improve communication with and between member choirs.

Amazon Smile charity

The Association can be awarded charity funding via Amazon Smile. Amazon will donate 0.5% of the net purchase price of customers' eligible purchases to the WAMC if the WAMC is the purchaser's nominated charity. Please ask any of your choristers who are Amazon prime members to consider nominating the Association as their chosen charity. Every little helps!

Making Music

The Association is a corporate member of Making Music. As well as gathering and disseminating information and advice on issues of interest to WAMC member choirs we also represent those choirs at various network meetings with Making Music, including the specific network for Wales. Part of agreement we have with Melody Music is to occasionally circulate their messages to choirs. See below.....

Is your choir...

- Looking for an easy way to keep up to date with the latest Covid-19 guidance?
- In need of some support with securing DBS checks or registering as a charity?
- Keen to find new funding opportunities?
- Hoping to be discovered by new members and audiences?
- Reviewing your online presence and marketing activities?

If so, we can help! Making Music offers support to all music groups with whatever they need, whenever they need it. In exchange for membership, we provide everything you need to run your group, such as guidance on recovering from the disruption caused by the pandemic and services to modernise the way you organise your group.

Whether your choir is large or small, new or established, financially secure or just about making ends meet, membership is for everyone. Starting from just £98 per year, membership cost is based on your group's annual income to make it affordable whatever your situation. Membership provides access to our comprehensive group insurance packages, tailor made to amateur music groups and which start from just £43 a year. Additionally, all members of WAMC are eligible for a 15% discount on Making Music membership by entering the code WAMC21 when you sign up. I

Find out more today!

Zurich Insurance

We have received some information from Zurich Insurance (the WAMC Insurers) about an 'event guide' produced by their Local Community Advisory Service which is meant to help organisations

planning events. It covers COVID 19 considerations, safety and links to further information. If you want a copy please let me know and I will forward a download.

Chris Evans

And here are the minutes referred to above:

Minutes of a WAMC Executive meeting held on Sunday September 19th 2021

1 In attendance

Richard Howells, , Paul Reynolds, John Williams, Chris Evans, Ellis Davies, Carl Waters, Aubrey Davies, Hugh Lewis, Leon Fear, Stephen Warner, Derrick Rowlands, Peter Morgan,

2 Apologies

Huw Tregelles Williams, Geoff Smallbone, Dai Lewis, Tom Colbert, Peter Davies, Paul Newman

3 Minutes from the virtual meeting held on 13th June 2021

Approved – proposed by JW seconded by HL

4 Matters arising

None

5 Report from the Events Working Group

ED reported on the work of the group with the following recommendations:

Eisteddfod, Tregaron 2022 – A trade stand has been held over from 2020. Arrangements will continue in the New Year.

RAH Concert - The train of thought was for a number of reasons to start again with the 3- year plan to have the concert in 2024, probably on 27th April subject to availability.

St David's Hall Concert – Following on from the above, the proposal is to hold this concert in Summer 2023. It is much less of an issue than with the RAH with most not needing to stay in Cardiff for the night. I have spoken to SDH after the meeting and Saturday, 24 June 2023 has been 'pencilled in' as the staff member concerned is off until Monday.

JW & HTW will make provisional arrangements with the musical team and soloists in relation to the above. It is expected that the music programme will be identical to that selected for the original concerts.

A letter outlining the concert dates will be circulated once dates have been confirmed. Choirs will be requested to advise numbers in February/March 2022 with preference given to those already on the list for the original 2020 and 2021 concerts.

6 60th Anniversary Working Group

RH explained that the group had not yet met. The original 'grand' idea of a \tour would be scaled down, possibly to a Gala Dinner similar to that which took place to celebrate the 50th Anniversary.

The Working Group would meet shortly; all Executive members to forward suggestions to RH

7 Music Competitions Working Group

The group's first meeting will take place on 9th October 2021. One of the first tasks for the group will be to consult with those member choirs who already run their own competitions

8 Financial report

JW outlined the cash position of the Association. The Executive agreed to JW's request to close one minor account and to transfer the limited funding in that account to the General account.

JW also reminded everyone that it would be helpful if travel expenses could be paid by BACS. All Executive members were asked to forward their BACS details to him.

9 Review of the Constitution

CE and JW explained the recent history of the process which would have brought proposals for changes to the Constitution to the AGM in 2020 in the first instance. There remain four proposals which, subject to the agreement of the Executive, could go for ratification in 2022. They are:

1. Amend objective 2 of the Constitution to 'To foster and promote an appreciation of music through education and practice in order, inter alia, to promote male choral singing in Wales and elsewhere'.
2. Revise the size of the Executive from 12 to 8 with a quorum of 5 (excluding officers) being required.
3. Introduce Proxy Voting at the AGM.
4. Revise the membership categories to Full and Associate following consultation with members not based in Wales.

The Executive would consider these and make a decision at the next meeting.

10 Developing the Association

CE spoke to a discussion paper which had been previously circulated. In a wide-ranging discussion the Executive agreed that the priority areas should be:

Develop and grow the Association – PR and CE to initially map choirs in Wales

Improve communication and networking – consult with member choir on the possibility of local meetings on Zoom/Teams

Succession Planning. Particularly for the Treasurer and Secretary roles – CW expressed interest in shadowing JW and DR expressed interest in shadowing CE. Any other Executive members interested in these shadow roles to contact CE in advance of the next meeting.

Rationalise responsibility for the social media outlets Facebook, Twitter and Website – RH would take this on at the end of his term of office as Chair

Identify possible new products and services for members – LF and CW to lead

Marketing the Association – ask member choirs whether they have any members who might be able to help

Prepare job descriptions for officer/assistant roles to aid succession – JW and CE

11 AOB

DR outlined the details of a recent meeting of the Singing Network which he had attended. He emphasised the need to subscribe to the WellRehearsed app which records data on the link between singing and Covid prevalence. He also explained that the Network, at his suggestion, would be writing the 4 UK Governments to outline the challenges Covid had brought to the sector.

12 Future meetings

November 21st 2021 - Porthyrhyd

January 16th 2022 – tba

March 20th 2022 – tba

May 22nd 2022 (AGM) - tba

Culture

I thought I'd include another couple of images from **Michael Jeeves'** collection "So you think you're having a bad day":



And a reminder

If you have something you'd like to see included in The Warbler, please email me at davepetershome@gmail.com (or even send me a letter)

Stay well

Dave Peters