November 2026

Registered Charity
No. 1148490

The Quarterly Newsletter for Friends of KPMVC

On the Beat!

Who Are We?

The Choir was formed in 1978. It performs around fifteen concerts a year, singing at fund raising charity events around the County of Kent.

In its history, the Choir has appeared in Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium as well as in the UK, appeared on national television in the UK and Canada and has helped numerous local charities to raise significant amounts of money.

The Choir is open to serving and retired police officers, civilian staff, those with links to the service and also members of the community. It is an ambassador for Kent Police and is supported by them, although it is self-financing.

The Choir rehearses weekly at Police HQ, Maidstone. Members meet at 7.15 p.m. on Thursday evenings and rehearsals conclude at 9.30 p.m. Please contact us through these pages for information about joining the Choir; you can be assured of a warm welcome.

Christmas Gifts

A message from our Chairman

On behalf of our choir I welcome you to this festive edition of On the Beat.

You will know that it is edited, produced and published by that angel Sally Biggs. We remain hugely indebted to Sally who freely gives of her time and expertise for our collective benefit; a sort of Christmas gift to us every quarter. *(This paragraph was included under protest – Ed.)*

The choir love the Christmas season, so much so that we start rehearsing some carols in August each year (a bit like all those Christmas specials on tv that are filmed mid-summer with trees in full leaf and pretend snow thereabouts - except we sing indoors with the air conditioning on!). I find Christmas is a time to reflect on the past year and in the choir's case to remain thankful that we continue to perform in concert for the benefit of good causes and charities in Kent, for this is our rationale.

Martin Rendle, our MD has, since early summer, been undergoing treatment meaning his forced absence from our choir, however we have been extremely fortunate in his stead to have benefitted from the most talented man we know as our new MD at rehearsals and concerts. Stewart Biggs is an absolute hero; not only is he a singer and our Honorary Secretary but so much more that it would embarrass him to catalogue his achievements. So, another early Christmas gift to the choir. We fully expect Martin to join us once again in the New Year. As this occurs we shall be singing and waving good bye and offering our thanks to Karen Barton-Holman our accompanist for the past 16 years. Karen has provided the choir with so much that we are truly grateful to her for being one of us for so long. As we bid farewell to Karen we wish her every success and good fortune in her life away from the choir.

Talking of gifts - you will notice the article in these pages concerning our brand new double cd containing 44 gems of songs just for you. Compiled from our best recordings it will, I know, make a most wonderful Christmas gift for music lovers of every age. Hurry while stocks last!

2027 will be the choir's 49th year, and yes there are some 'founder members' in our number. Next year will be a busy one for the choir as it prepares for its 50th birthday celebrations. We already have a full diary of concerts for 2027 and very much look forward to seeing you as we perform. Thank you for being part of the KPMVC as a performer, supporter and friend. On behalf of all of our members we wish you a very merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and peaceful New Year. ***George R***

With Love and Gratitude



At Christmas we say "goodbye" to Karen Barton-Holman. Here she reflects on her time as accompanist and 16 wonderful years with Kent Police Male Voice Choir.

Dear Kent Police Male Voice Choir,

After 16 wonderful years of playing the piano for the choir, the time has come for me to retire from my role as your accompanist. It is not an easy decision, as I have so many happy memories, special moments and of course, plenty of laughter to look back on.

We have shared so many memorable experiences together over the years, both on and off the stage. From the incredible occasion when we had 100 voices singing at All Saints Church, to the many concerts we have performed together, there have been countless moments that I will treasure. One particular memory that always makes me smile is our trip to Germany, when I was quite literally kidnapped by our host choir to play the organ in their church! The funniest part was that not a single singing policeman seemed to notice I had disappeared! I still wonder how I managed to go missing without anyone raising the alarm! Another very special trip was to Ypres, where the choir sang at the Menin Gate. That performance was unbelievably moving and is something I will never forget. Making a CD together was another wonderful milestone, adding yet another chapter to our shared musical journey. My husband Luke so enjoyed our mini tour to Wales and is very grateful for the opportunity you gave him to be there. Of course, it is not just the concerts, trips and performances that I will remember, but the friendships, camaraderie and fun we have enjoyed along the way. I will miss the choir enormously, and I will miss your partners too, who have been such a lovely part of this extended choir family.

I would like to say a **massive thank you to George, Martin and Stewart** for everything you have done over the years. Your support, kindness and all the things you have made possible have meant so much to me, and I am truly grateful. I will especially miss the cheeky smiles and knowing looks that I so often catch during rehearsals! Those little moments say so much about the wonderful bond we have built over the years, and they have brought me no end of amusement.

Although I am retiring from playing regularly, I very much hope there might still be a way for me to be involved during the choir's **50th Anniversary year**. It would be lovely to share such a special milestone with you all. Thank you for 16 years of music, friendship, laughter and memories that I will carry with me for the rest of my life. It has been a real privilege to sit at the piano and be part of the Kent Police Male Voice Choir family.

Please take care of yourselves, keep singing and keep smiling! I look forward to seeing you at concerts from time to time and cheering you on from the audience.

With love and heartfelt thanks to you all,
Karen

THE ESCAPE FROM MOSCOW

by Aidan Boulter

Micky Pepper asked me to write something about my exploits in the film & TV industry which reminded me of one particular episode.

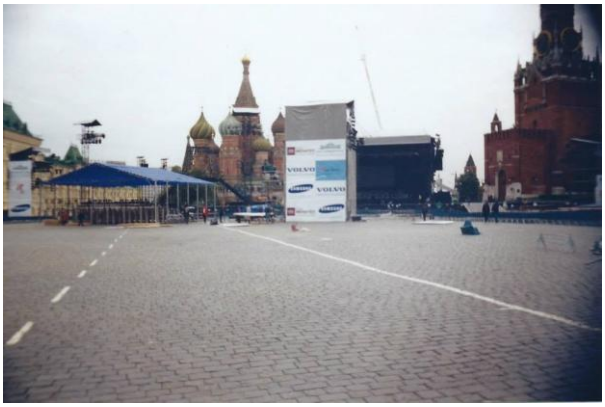
SONGS & VISIONS and OUR ANCIENT CAPITAL

Produced by Tony Hollingsworth, Directed by Gavin Millar and Andrei Konchalovsky

I was called by my agent who told me that I was being offered a two concert gig: one was at Wembley Stadium with Chaka Khan, Jon Bon Jovi, k.d. lang, Mary J Blige, Robert Palmer, Rod Stewart, Seal, Steve Winwood, Toni Braxton & Yazawa and the other was all a bit secret but would be in Moscow and was I interested! I had to do both or none was the deal.

The Moscow gig was first and a few of us, Production Manager, two Producers and myself were flown out to be greeted by a minibus with blacked out windows and driven around the city, which was a little confusing as we hadn't dropped off our luggage at an hotel prior to the Producers holding a high level meeting with a Russian counterpart. Those of us not at a high enough level, were left in the back of the van! Eventually we were taken to a very plush hotel The Four Seasons in the corner of Red Square which was to be our base for the next two weeks.

The following morning at breakfast, our producer Alan Broach told us that we were to be taken to a barracks in the middle of the city which would act as our rehearsal room. This was quite unusual because I was used to dusty church halls and still had no idea of what the gig was meant to be. I later discovered that it was supposed to be a Pavarotti concert, but Luciano had pulled out leaving Tony Hollingsworth – the Executive Producer with a massive headache; he'd promised the Mayor of Moscow a big show and had to supply one.



When we arrived there was a big, empty space with a few desultory soldiers wandering around in their high leather boots and thin tunics. We needed tables, chairs and communications and at this point Alan's wife who was also a Producer, stepped in and took control giving orders to our host who was a Russion Colonel. At the time, I had a tiny Ericsson mobile phone. I was the only person there with a cellphone, but it proved to be absolutely vital to the operation. Glyn asked if she could borrow it to which I agreed as long as she promised to pay the bill – roaming fees were astronomical in 1997! The final phone bill was £743.00 (about £1520 in today's money)!

The next thing we saw was the Hollywood entourage. Tony had employed a Russian defector who'd become a Hollywood Director, to create the show. Andrei Konchalovsky was well known in our circles because his movie "Tango & Cash" had just been a big hit in the UK.

We were confined to barracks, literally for two weeks. We rehearsed with the Bolshoi and Kirov Ballets, an enormous aluminium dragon built at Shepperton Studios which breathed fire and smoke and was operated by Russian special forces, two hundred horses of the Russian Cavalry and various other elements all accompanied by a soundtrack played on a battery operated cassette player! It was hot and sunny, so we spent the time wearing T shirts and shorts and gaining nice tans.

While all this was going on, our TV Director Gavin Taylor arrived with his crew of 95 people. Camera, Lighting, Sound, Caterers, Riggers, Carpenters, Scene and Prophands, Production Secretaries, Drivers and a whole variety of people, all hanging around at the Moscow Hotel getting bored, but that's another story! Eventually we moved to our stage. An enormous affair which spread from the Execution Tower to the Spassky Gate (Spasskaya Bashnya) of the Kremlin. Behind it was an entire production village made up of little wooden huts, and a huge marquee for the caterers.



The show, entitled “Our Glorious Capital” was the story of Saint George (also the patron saint of Russia) defeating the Dragon. It was in celebration of the 850th birthday of Moscow, to be performed in front of an invited audience of three thousand people which included Mayor Luschkov and Boris Yeltzin, and broadcast live to the entire population of Russia – 148 million people. No pressure there!



On the second day of camera rehearsals the temperature plummeted from a balmy 26 degrees to about 5 celsius and nobody was quite prepared for it. Glyn stepped into the breach again. She saw an enterprising young man with a cardboard box hanging by a piece of string from his neck, selling hats. She asked how many he had, and at the time he only had a few but within twenty minutes he’d returned with enough for the whole crew. She wanted to send him off again to find thermals, but he said they weren’t available there so she asked if he could provide tights instead, which he promptly did. There’s nothing funnier than watching a camera operator pulling tights over hairy legs, but once they’d got their jeans back on, they were very grateful!



The show was a massive affair: we had two huge choirs, the Moscow State symphony orchestra, performers from the Bolshoi Opera and Ballet, the Kirov Ballet, a troupe of Cossacks and the previously mentioned cavalry and Dragon. Suffice to say that it went extraordinarily well and was a huge success locally, but the final day came and it was time for us to leave. Now the fun started!

At 07:00 on the morning we were due to leave, the production manager rang us in our rooms and told us to bring our suitcases to reception. We were supposed to catch coaches to the airport but the roads were blocked and this wasn’t possible, so the coaches took our luggage and we were meant to follow on the subway. When we left the hotel, there was a sea of humanity as far as the eye could see, walking into the city centre. The main highway which has four lanes in each direction, was closed to traffic and absolutely full of pedestrians. We’d been divided into teams of six, each with a Russian translator who would be our guide to the airport, so we traipsed following the pink umbrella to the underground station. These are glorious affairs with crystal chandeliers and marble platforms and I’m glad I was able to briefly experience it, but the tube was so busy, we went one stop and the Police closed the stations because they were worried there would be an accident. So now here we were in the suburbs with no knowledge of the cyrillic alphabet and totally reliant on our translator. He suggested that “his friend who had a BMW” come to collect us, but that wasn’t acceptable on several levels, so I turned to my trusty Ericsson again and rang the Producer to ask his advice. He told me to call the hotel and arrange transport through them which I did, and a short while later an enormous brand new Caddillac stretched limousine arrived complete with ice bucket and chilled champagne. After a brief negotiation and a whip round (our group had somehow swelled to eleven) we paid the driver US$350 and were driven in some style to the airport. As we arrived, so did the Producer in a beaten up rusty Mercedes with no hub caps. You can imagine the expression on his face!

We rushed into the airport and there in front of us in a huge pile in the middle of the departures lounge, was our luggage. We then had to grab our bags and keep straight faces as we were asked if the luggage was ours, did we pack it and had it been out of our sight!

Keeping with the overseas theme… but this time something more recent

Report from our man in Singapore

As I lay awake at 0530 in my essentially air conditioned hotel room, considering the time difference back in dear old blighty, a haunting voice is echoing out across the city easily penetrating the triple glazed windows, this beautiful mystical sound is calling the faithful to prayer at the Mosque, and the chap can really sing. A pure baritone dependable and reliable as they all are.



We are SKling at the moment in Singapore, not thundering down snow covered slopes, but Spending the Kids Inheritance!. And Singapore has been on the wish list for a long time. To sum up Singapore in one word it would have to be mad and steamy, ok that's two words but the humidity and the temperature are unavoidable at the moment.

It's a true melting pot of religions cultures and behaviours, all conducted under a government with very strict rules and expectations. But against the backdrop of rules of law people seem to enjoy great freedom and they certainly know how to enjoy themselves. Visiting a Taoist Temple was new ground for us but quite an eyeopener. The kneeling man praying to his favourite deity casts two wooden items from his hands, they are shaped to resemble a pair of human lips, and depending on how they land will give him his answer to the question he has just put to his God. There are three possible results yes, no and maybe, and you get to take the best of three! The temple is massively overshadowed by the tallest high rise in Singapore, being poor of land resource they certainly build them high and spectacular.



Singapore is mad and marvellous. I would not hesitate to return before the kids run out of money. We are heading to Raffles Hotel tomorrow (later today) to look at Singapore of the Past, this was the birthplace of the Singapore Sling, a gin based cocktail. But at 44 Singapore Dollars a pop (£26), it could be a brief visit. Mosques clearly invest a lot of money in their sound systems but this type of religious public broadcast cannot catch on in The UK, the only thing I get up for at 0530 is a pee!

Mark Santer
Asian correspondent

2027 Concert Programme ….so far…..

Saturday 24th April 7.30pm
St Mildred's Church, Church Road, Tenterden

Saturday 15th May 7.30pm
St Mary's Church, Teynham

Saturday 18th September 7.30pm
St George's Church, Wrotham, Sevenoaks

Saturday 11th December 7.30pm
Christmas Concert (TBC)
Ss Peter & Paul Church, The Street, Borden

Sunday 19th December 2.30pm
Christmas Concert (TBC)
Kent College, Canterbury

Check the website for updates www.kmpvc.co.uk

Young Artists Programme

meet Cloe Godman



In 2018 the Choir introduced a Young Artists Programme whereby young musicians are invited to perform at one of our concerts. This gives them a platform to perform and encourages them in their musical skills. Since its launch we have had performances from vocalists, a harpist, a recorder player, cellist, pianists and many more. In September we were delighted to welcome Chloe to play piano at the concert at St John the Baptist Church, Wittersham. During the concert she played two solo works, Dietro L'Incanto by Ludovico Einaudi and The Little Shepherd by Claude Debussy.

Chloe has always been interested in the creative arts. A keen musician and dancer she started learning piano at primary school. She is currently studying for her GCSEs with the aim of continuing her musical journey into A level and beyond. As an active member of her school music department she has participated in a tour of the Rhineland and Belgium and at the Forster Theatre School in Tonbridge in the production of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. As well as developing her skills as a soloist, Chloe has been fortunate in gaining experience as accompanist and recently played with the West Kent Youth Orchestra. She further participates in chamber music groups as well as playing the flute and piano in her school orchestra. Chloe particularly enjoys playing music from the Romantic period onwards due to the rich textures. Thank you, Chloe, for entertaining us. We look forward to welcoming you again in the future.

Remembrance Day marked at Kent Police College Maidstone

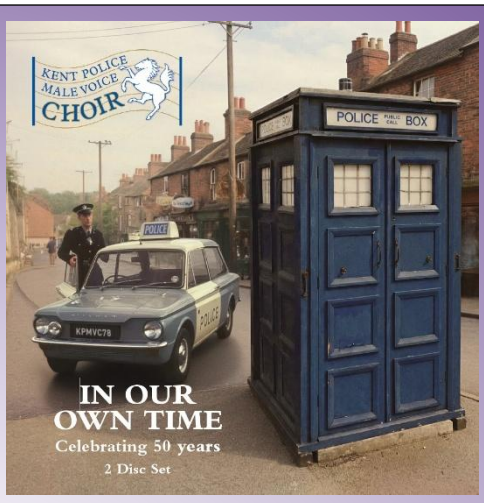


24 members of the choir and members of the Kent Police Band joined Senior Police Officers, the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner, Police cadets and College staff at the Remembrance service at Kent Police College. The service particularly honours those officers who lost their lives in active service, from the beginning of the First World War to the present day.





IN OUR OWN TIME



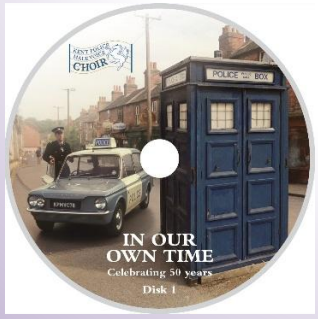
After the COVID pandemic and realising a new CD recording was unlikely in the near future, I had the idea of creating a compilation album using selections from our previous CDs. While converting our music archives to digital files, I identified several high-quality tracks suitable for this project The committee responded enthusiastically, so much so that George even suggested a double CD release to coincide with our 50th Anniversary. I selected tracks and consulted Geoff Fisher on the CD title and cover design. He provided a list of potential titles. Our Chairman quickly chose 'In Our Own Time,' and Geoff and I then worked on the cover design. To ensure a professional result, Carole, my wife, suggested we engage her graphic designer, Kris Wood, who quickly developed a concept that was approved after minor adjustments. I also considered offering the album on both CD and a music USB stick, recognising that many modern vehicles and homes no longer have CD players. Customers can now purchase the album in either format, or both, at a reasonable price.

The CDs contain 44 tracks, totalling two hours and twenty-three minutes, many dating back to 2000 and beyond. I would like to thank the Committee, Geoff Fisher, Kris Wood, and my wife (on behalf of Pressure Welding Machines Ltd) for their valuable contributions to this project.

We hope the album will be well received.
Chris Cole
Honorary Vice President, Attendance, Music Librarian & Webmaster

For a full list of the tracks on the CD please go to the choir's website www.kpmvc.co.uk.

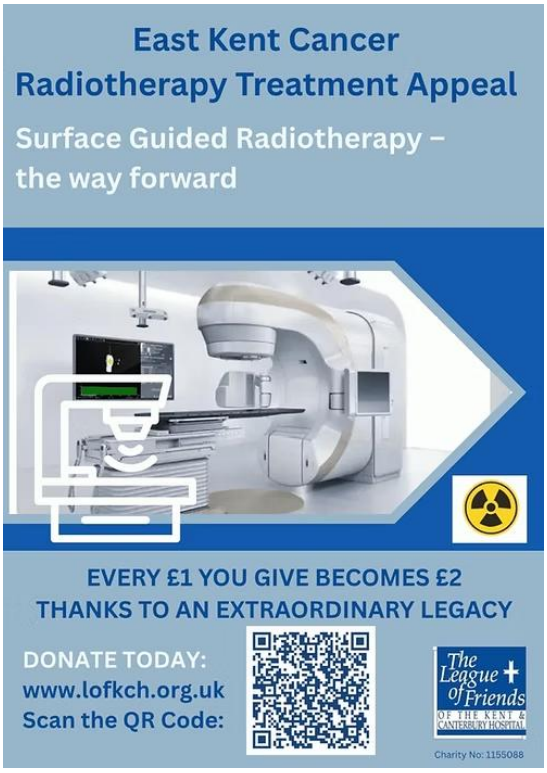
The CD is priced at £7.00 each, and the music USB stick is priced at £5. If you wish to purchase both, then the total price is £10. They will be available at all our concerts or can be ordered by email via our 'contact us' page (postage & packing extra).







If you take a look at the Hillman Imp panda car on the choir's new CD cover, you'll see it has just one fog lamp. From 1967, Imps were used county wide by the Constabulary. In May 1968, a fresh faced twenty one year old PC J. Pearce, arrived at Sittingbourne Police Station straight from training school. His first report to his Chief Inspector pointed out that the four panda cars on the station were being driven in contravention of Road Traffic Regulations. The issue being that the law required fog lamps to be fitted in pairs. It transpired that police drivers countywide had been breaking the law for months and so every car was quickly fitted with a second fog lamp. Needless to say, I'd made an early name for myself. ***John Pearce [former member of KPMVC]***



Retiring collections are taken at most of our concerts which contribute to the donation made to the nominated charity at the end of the year.

Our Nominated Charity for 2026
League of Friends of the Kent & Canterbury Hospital

The League of Friends of the Kent & Canterbury Hospital have been supporting the patients, staff, visitors and the NHS for 72 years. During this time, they have raised over £9 million which has funded much-needed equipment such as MRI scanners and improved the facilities with the new Surgical Admissions Lounge and improved staff rooms to name just two projects. In 2025 they pledged £340k for more vital equipment. They have recently launched their East Kent Cancer Radiotherapy Appeal - they are aiming to raise £800,000 to implement Surface Guided Radiotherapy Technology which is an advanced localisation technique that allows treatment to be accurate, more comfortable and faster, enabling more patients to be processed and a wider range of cancers to be treated locally. They received a legacy of £400,000 which launched the appeal and they have raised another £120k to date. The appeal will continue until they reach their target of £800,000.



