



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 in 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.

Out with old... in with the new

A message from our Chairman, George Rogers

On behalf of the whole choir, I am pleased to be able to announce that we have a full programme of concerts for this year; across most locations in our county there is certainly at least some that you our most dedicated followers and new friends can attend. Between Christmas 2019 and Christmas 2021 we performed the huge sum of one concert - albeit our burning desire to perform more were understandably thwarted by that virus. So - with a minimum of 12 concerts planned we very much look forward to your company.

The choir now resplendent in a new contemporary uniform (more on that on page 2) and with an ever-growing number of some of the finest male voices in Kent we are rehearsing for our inaugural concert of 2022.

Whether you are a chorister, conductor, accompanist or audience member we are truly fortunate to be able to perform in concert once again; to meet our overriding rationale of raising monies for Kent's good causes and charities.

Here's to a tuneful, successful and wonderful 2022.

Memorial Concert – Sat 26th March With Sittingbourne Orpheus Operatic Society

Our first concert for 2022 will take place at Fulston Manor School and is a in memory of a greatly missed choir member, Pat Keast.

Pat sadly died in May 2020, a victim of Covid. At the age of 73 he had been a member of our choir since 2010 and was also a member and Treasurer of Sittingbourne Orpheus Choral Society. The choir is honoured to take part in this very special concert.

***Many thanks to everyone who has contributed to this edition of
"On the Beat"***

New Uniform

The Kent Police Male Voice Choir have changed their uniforms from the bright blue army style officer's mess jackets to a modern style, navy blue open neck Charles Tyrwhitt shirt and black flat fronted trousers. We will also have a high-quality navy-blue woollen jumper with the choir logo for use in colder weather.



Over the past few years, it has become very difficult to find companies to make and supply the mess jackets we have worn, coupled with this has been the rising cost that currently amounts to over £500 to kit out each new member. We have been fortunate and have managed to fit out the majority of newcomers from stock and the expert sewing skills of Brenda Burrows the wife of one of our bass singers. However, a large number of choir members suffer from "expanding waistline syndrome" and it has become increasingly difficult to alter the jackets and maintain our high standards of appearance. Whilst acknowledging that it can look smart on a choir member with the right physique, it has to be accepted that there are a number of choir members who do not fit that criterion! The committee spent many hours deliberating the issue and the decision was made that it is not sustainable for the choir to continue funding such expensive uniforms. The committee discussed the issues involved at length, and whilst accepting that the old uniform will be missed by many it was felt that perhaps a more

relaxed, modern look may encourage younger men to join. Committee members also commented that the militaristic style of the old uniform could give the wrong impression of the choir to some who may wish to join. In addition, the new uniform has a contemporary feel to it and will give the impression that we are a progressive choir, keen to appeal to a wider audience. The more casual uniform is affordable and sustainable. New stock and replacements of outgrown, worn-out or damaged items can easily be obtained.

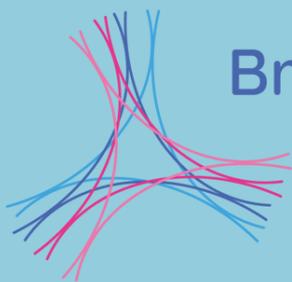
Since the decision was made and announced to the members, we have received many comments (not all positive!); however, a long-term follower of the choir told me that although she was not in favour of the change, she understood the reasons and as long as we look smart when we perform it is the quality of our singing that is important!!

Judge for yourselves when you come to see us perform in our "new look" at the Pat Keast Memorial Concert with the Sittingbourne Orpheus Operatic Society Millennium Hall, Fulston Manor School, Brenchley Road, Sittingbourne on 26th March. Other concerts are available.

Mick Pepper - Uniform Officer
(and our man at C&A)!!



Every year KPMVC supports a nominated charity by raising funds through retiring collections at their concerts. From 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023 our charity will be:



Breathing Matters

“Breathing Matters” seeks to improve the lives of every pulmonary fibrosis, bronchiectasis and respiratory/lung infection sufferer through ground-breaking medical research.

www.breathingmatters.co.uk

FORTHCOMING CONCERTS

Saturday 26th March 7.30 pm

Pat Keast Memorial Concert
With Sittingbourne Orpheus Operatic Society
Millennium Hall, Fulston Manor School,
Brenchley Road, Sittingbourne

Saturday 2nd April 7.00pm

St Peter & St Paul's Church, The Street, Borden,
Sittingbourne

Saturday 23rd April 7.30pm

St Michaels Village Hall, St Michaels, Tenterden

Saturday 7th May 7.30pm

St Peter & St Paul's Church, Church Walk, Headcorn,
Ashford

Saturday 28th May 7.30pm

St Peter's Church, Old Church Road, Pembury,
Tunbridge Wells

Saturday 18th June 7.30pm

St Helen's Church, 145 Church Street, Cliffe,
Rochester

We have a full programme of concerts this year – for a complete list of the dates please go to our website:

www.kpmvc.co.uk or contact us at

secretary@kpmvc.co.uk

friends@kpmvc.co.uk

Following on from his previous contribution to "On the Beat", Wayne Boothroyd, reminds us why he is grateful to be part of KPMCV

As a new member of the Kent Police Male Voice Choir, the music we have sung over the time I have been with the Choir reminds me of my time in the Metropolitan Police Male Voice Choir who I sang with from 1966 to 2018, about 53 years. The Metropolitan Police Male Voice Choir became the Metropolitan Police Choir when they became a Mixed Choir. For me, singing in a mixed choir is not the same, and being introduced by Chris Daniel to your choir was like a breath of fresh air. I think you will all agree that the music we have recently sung at rehearsals has been very stirring and although there is no audience, **we** are the audience ourselves. It is excellent to see so many at rehearsals and shows that Male Voice music will live on in the safe hands of Martin our talented Musical Director, Karen our wonderful Accompanist, and our Committee. My thanks to them all. It is obvious that word has been getting round about our choir with all the new members who are arriving each week. One other thing I must mention, in 1954 West Bromwich Albion Football Club, one of the founders of the Football League, won the FA Cup 3-2 against Preston. The reason I mention this is because I have found out that in the Wilds of Kent there is another West Brom. supporter who started supporting the Baggies at the same time as I did, Spooky. I will not mention his name as we need to protect the innocent, but you will have noted that he won the sweep by picking West Brom. yesterday. Thanks to all the members for making all the new members so welcome. May the Choir go from strength to strength.



Christmas 2021 Celebrations



At long last, the choir were able to perform again. On Sunday 5th December 2021 just 16 members of the choir braved the elements to sing Christmas Carols outside The Vines Hotel as part of the Dickens weekend in Rochester. The choir sang for three sessions during the day with Martin Rendle our Musical Director conducting. A number of carols were performed which were enjoyed by members of the public passing on their way to the Dickens Celebrations.

Our one and only concert for 2021 was on Sunday 12th December at St Peter and St Paul's Church, Borden. It was so good to see the church full, an enthusiastic audience joining in with many of the Christmas favourites - a truly joyous occasion.



KPMVC 43rd AGM held on 25th November 2021

At the first "in person" AGM since 2019, 35 members were present. Items covered in the agenda:

- the Chairman's report - a review of the past 2 years
- The treasurers report
- Election of Committee members – George Rogers (Chairman), Mike Clayton (Treasurer), Stewart Biggs (Hon. Sec), Chris Cole, Geoff Fisher, Chris Longfield, Mick Pepper, Mark Santer
- Changes to the rehearsal venue to Holy Family Church in Maidstone
- New Choir uniform
- Adoption of the proposal for Charity of the Year – "Breathing Matters"

'Young' Ken goeswalking!



Ken Whittaker has set himself a challenge for 2022...

As a new recruit, the welcoming embrace of the Kent Police Male Voice Choir took the edge off the pandemic. My greatest morale boost came when greeted as 'Young' Ken. As the ever-youthful Kent Police Male Voice Choir proves, age is just a number, so you may be interested in other opportunities this rookie chorister has planned this year.

Milestones

An impending 60th birthday in June has prompted a mid-life awakening. 2022 is the year I activate and share a lifetime of experiences through exciting ambitions that recount some earlier personal milestones. As a young archaeology graduate in 1984, I travelled from London across Europe, through Turkey and into Syria. Over three months I learnt my trade as an archaeologist, proposed to Sandra and benefited from the friendship, hospitality and generosity of the Syrian people, for whom, sadly, the intervening 40 years have been catastrophic.

My 2022 Plan

Objective 1 On midsummer's day I shall take on the National Three Peaks 24-hour Challenge – reaching the summits of Ben Nevis, Scafell and Snowdon over the longest day.



Objective 2 I'm raising funds for the UK resettlement of Syrian refugee families, through the Faversham Refugee Sponsorship (FRS).



I'll not bore you with the rigours of a physical training programme on a mind and body neglected for most of its 60 years. But I'm determined to get up and down the highest peaks in England, Scotland and Wales. I can call on some form, having circumnavigated the South Wales coalfield on foot, covering over 100 miles coast to coast - following the limestone outcrop encircling the unique industrial landscapes and communities that have a heritage and culture of activism, internationalism, solidarity and social justice. Which brings me back to the FRS and their refugee resettlement project here in Kent.

Faversham Refugee Sponsorship

The government-backed Community Sponsorship Scheme permits vulnerable refugee families from asylum countries to resettle in the UK. The Scheme requires community sponsors to provide a warm welcome and friendship from the moment the family step off the plane, accompany them during their first year in this country, but also:

- provide suitable accommodation
- fundraise a minimum of £9K to demonstrate initial living costs can be met, for essential services and to provide for unforeseen emergencies
- help the family adjust to all the cultural changes they will encounter including interpreters and language lessons, accessing schools, benefits, healthcare and employment, so they can participate fully in the community.

Other requirements might become apparent during the initial resettlement, including the complex needs of children who may have suffered trauma of fleeing home and seeking refuge. The good news is that FRS has met many of its headline costs but are still in need of funds to cover interpretation and language lessons. Also, any additional funding raised will be shared with other community sponsors who are resettling other families.

Getting Involved

I'm asking you to help make my 2022 Plan a success by offering encouragement over the next four months. You may also want to learn more about the Community Sponsorship Scheme from Syrian families who have already successfully resettled in the UK.

Here are just a couple of the families who have new futures.

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=PaCBJYx1YBE&feature=share> and <https://youtu.be/1TYldLkd9Qs>

I shall share my adventure with regular updates during choir practice and have set up a Just Giving account for those who wish to contribute to the fund raising.

Postscript

If you were wondering what become of that proposal in 1984, Sandra accepted, and we shall be married for 37 years in October. In the same month she also reaches this birthday milestone. She's opted to provide basecamp support!! **Ken Whittaker**



Restoration Project for a local Hero

In Margate cemetery rests P.C. John Richard Rolfe of Margate Borough Police. John lost his life on duty when he perished in a fire on the premises of George Mence Smith, Market Street, Margate, on January 23rd 1905. The fire had started at 1.20 am that morning. The shop contained quantities of paraffin, turpentine, methylated spirits, linseed oil, matches and candles. Mr Richard Haddon the 51-year-old manager, lived on the premises with his wife, daughter, son and a servant girl. Hearing cries for help, Police Constables Lepper, Creed and Rolfe rushed from the nearby Police Station. They saw Mr Haddon wearing just his nightclothes, standing in the doorway of number 17 and number 18 was burning fiercely. Mr Haddon went back through the flames to rescue his wife and family, closely followed by Constable Rolfe. Mr Haddon heard P.C. Rolfe stumble and warned him to be careful and that was the last he heard of him. P.C. Rolfe it seems, had made his way to the top floor to see if anyone was there and was almost immediately overcome by the heat and fumes. The Fire Brigade were on the scene very quickly. Mr Haddon had managed to leave the building with the other occupants and reported that there was no one left on the premises, believing that P.C. Rolfe had made his way out. The fire was under control remarkably quickly, but in the confusion, it was not until after 2 am that P.C. Rolfe was missed. Two firemen entered the building and found him lying on an upstairs landing. A Police surgeon arrived and instructed that P.C. Rolfe be taken to the Police Station where he pronounced him dead through asphyxiation. The 25-year-old officer with just three months service, had been due to marry in three months' time. You can see from the condition of his grave at Margate Cemetery where he's buried in 'Heroes Corner', that it has been neglected for many years. As a result, myself and another former Margate officer, Eddie McManus, have refurbished the grave.

On **Wednesday 25th May** there will be a rededication service at 2.30pm. The service will take place at the cemetery. Anyone who would like to is welcome to attend.

John Pearce
former member of KPMVC and Honorary Vice President



Croeso i Gôr Meibion Aberhonddu a'r Cylch

The Choir has been invited to Brecon to take part in joint concert on 2nd July with the Brecon and District Male Voice Choir. Originally planned for 2020, we are delighted that this is now able to go ahead with 30 plus members making the journey to the Welsh hillside. We travel up by coach on Friday 1st and return on Sunday 3rd.

Those Were the Days... Or Were They?

I'm in the throes of selling my wife's oldie but goldie 2011 Renault Clio at present with the intention of replacing it with something a bit more up to date. It's done good service and will go to a good home.

When was the last time you bought a new, or fairly new, used car? What a minefield of confusion lies in wait for the unwary! In order to approach the task from a position of some knowledge I had a natter with Rod Stevenson the other evening. Rod, as some of you may know, is a motoring supremo with more knowledge of automobiles in his toenails than most of us have in our heads. Of course, being a baritone, he is well-endowed with brains as well as charm; to paraphrase Cecil John Rhodes: 'To have been born a baritone is to have won the first prize in the lottery of life'. Anyway, moving swiftly on. If your differential is being diffident or your cambelt's creaking then Rod is your go-to man.

He and I discussed at length the merits and demerits of electric cars, hybrid cars and conventional cars and during this conversation I was struck by just how much technology has changed our lives and how different the world is from many decades ago. One of the great things about belonging to our choir is that there are so many of us old geezers around whose memories can recall those halcyon days of yore when one's sap was rising and we wore outlandish clothes and had long hair. We can't remember what we've had for dinner last night but those old days are as clear as crystal.

Back on the car theme. Let's go back to the early and mid-Sixties. I owned my first car around then – a VW Beetle with an oval back window. Silver, it was. Good nick for a 1955 model. Drove well but made a hell of a noise as those old VWs did. Wish I'd kept it – would be worth a fortune now. Even the workshop manual that came with it would sell on E-Bay for silly money.



Then came a Ford Anglia 100E side valve. We lads used to spend weekends listening to the Beach Boys singing about their Little Deuce Coupes and French bikinis on Hawaiian isle beaches by palm trees in the sand. We'd talk nothing but cars and girls and spend ages doing de-cokes and engine tuning and smoke ourselves silly.

We'd drink beer and talk more cars. Those were the days when testosterone was high and income low. I made £6 13s 4d a week as a first-year apprentice compositor – that's about £370.00 a year. Makes you wonder!



As I matured, there was a Singer Gazelle with overdrive (what???)! Smashing car and went like a rocket until it burst into flames one day and I went out one door with the Mem'sahib going out the other. Shame. I liked that car.

There was the Ford Corsair. Sleek, with shark-like lines. I did a de-coke on that one which went wrong and I ended up taking it to the local garage for them to sort out my mistakes. My ears still burn at the memory of the mechanics laughing and pointing at me!!



A Borgward Isabella TS featured somewhere. Lovely German-made quirky car with column change and a bench seat – remember those?

As the years went by and the Haynes DIY workshop manuals ceased publishing as cars became more and more complex, further cars followed. I had a Citroen Xantia with a PIN keypad into which you had to punch four numbers so you could start the engine. All well and good until my then 7-year-old son decided to play about with the keypad while I paid for petrol in the Sainsbury's garage. Three attempts were allowed then the keypad locked you out for 24 hours or so. Great anti-theft deterrent but not without its faults. I don't think Citroen accounted for wayward 7-year-olds.

So many cars – so many memories. Today's vehicles are monuments to technology and they're getting cleverer by the minute. Is that a good thing I wonder? Today's youth will miss out on so much by not being able to shoot the breeze with their mates as they sup beer while cleaning out a distributor cap or dismantling an SU carburettor. Call me a dinosaur if you will but those were the days!

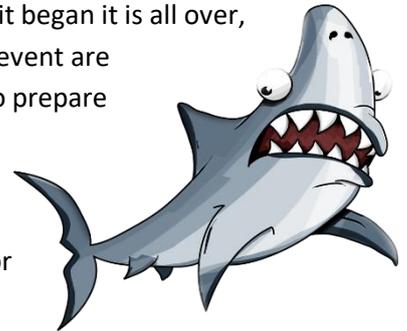
As a PS I used to have a satnav who spoke to me in a lovely female lilting Irish voice. She'd say things like 'turn right at the next crossroads . . . in your own time' and 'where do ye tink ye're going, fathead?'. Now that's technology for you, to be sure! Onwards and upwards.

Geoff Fisher

A new Apex predator

Remember the Petrol Crisis back in October 2021. One choir member (who wishes to remain anonymous!) reflected at the time on the emergence of a new species....

There is a new predator cruising the highways of the south-east, easy to identify and you will all have seen one, in fact you could actually be one; the great white Petrol Hunter or P. Hunter shark for short. The way these sharks operate is to cruise along at a modest speed using as little energy as possible until they are aware of a feasting opportunity, some say they can smell petrol in the air even when it is one part per million, although most are guided to the feeding opportunity by other sharks and social media. So, once the target has been sighted a new behaviour is evident, these sharks are actually queueing to access the forecourt, they seem to know instinctively that there will be enough for all to gorge themselves and seem quite relaxed on the surface, however scratch that surface and you will see the competitive nature of this species, they are red hot with the urge to get to a certain side of the pump, they all know without a doubt that the hose will reach to both sides of the vehicle and yet they jockey for position and curse and jockey some more to get aligned to their filler cap. And then the feeding frenzy begins, it is P. Hunter shark carnage, and not for the faint-hearted to witness. And then as suddenly as it began it is all over, and a serene post feeding air is apparent, the forecourt staff who had to see the event are evidently shocked and remain open mouthed, they may even need counselling to prepare them for a further frenzy when the next tanker can get through to them. But observe the P. Hunter sharks, they are now dissipating from the forecourt, they are back to gliding effortlessly without expending too much effort, they are sated and smugly satisfied. For they know that they will not have to feed again for about a week, and then the intensity will build again for this most voracious of highway predator.



Ghostly Graveyard Antics

Bob Day, a regular contributor to "On the Beat", recounts a tale of policing pranksters!

Like a lot of jobs, even in serious ones, colleagues like playing pranks. Tenterden Police station is no exception. On a late shift one winter a complaint had been lodged at the station and a complaints form was commenced:

COMPLAINT: damage was being caused in the cemetery area of High Halden church.

COMPLAINTS FORM: visit the area once or twice on late turn.

1900 hrs: it's wet and windy. I pull up and park outside the church with my sturdy torch. I creep into the churchyard and head for the cemetery area. I checked the area – no one was about. It was probably too wet and windy. I returned to the main churchyard with its Yew trees and tall headstones. All of a sudden, a body appears from behind one of the headstones making all sorts of noises. What on earth is that, I'm thinking with the hairs on the back of my neck sticking out! I didn't have time to use my sturdy torch. Who was the body? One of the other late turn PCs who had also decided to check out the churchyard and had arrived after me thought it was a good idea to play ghosts!!

