

November 2023

40th Edition



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 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.

Our '*On the Beat*' magazine is produced edited and published by one person...

Since its inception some years ago the publication has got better and better, even more professional (if that is possible), and gone from print to digital format yet remained true to its ideals - to inform a wider audience and ourselves of the work the choir does month in month out - all to further its rationale of raising monies in support of Kent's good causes and charities.

Certainly, the material for OtB comes from within and is written at times-tongue in cheek - but always in a clean, informative, and educational manner. The magazine often showcases young musicians who perform during our concerts and when relevant involve all our 'friends of the choir' members and wider supporters.

Of course, in this our 40th edition we offer sincere thanks and gratitude to that one person who not only made it all possible but who continues to spend much of her own time and expense for the benefit of the choir.

You would not believe how difficult it has been to persuade Sally Biggs to publish this missive - such is her character. A wonderful woman and most loyal supporter of the choir.

Sally - we salute you and offer our congratulations on this our 40th edition.

Thank you so very much.

George H Rogers
Chairman
KPMVC



The first edition of our Newsletter, published in the Autumn of 2011 to coincide with the launch of the Friends of KMPVC.

Highlights from 40 publications of ON THE BEAT

To mark this milestone, I've looked backed through past editions of our newsletter and collected some of the highlights which will hopefully bring back some fond memories.

Sally Biggs, Editor

Our first publication in the Autumn of 2011 featured a photograph taken of the choir singing at Tyne Cot cemetery in Ypres, Belgium earlier that year. In the April of 2012, a presentation was made to "Help for Heroes" charity of £1900 reminding everyone of the importance of the Choir's commitment to raising funds for charities and worthy causes. In July of that year KPMVC joined forces with Thanet Male Voice Choir for a Gala concert in Cliftonville. Moving on to 2013, in March the choir performed at St. Helen's Church in Cliffe and were delighted to find that Jools Holland was in the audience; in a conversation with George Rogers, he mentioned how impressed he was with the singing. After the concert, George wrote to Mr Holland inviting him to become a patron on the choir which he agreed to do and remains in this role to this day. If you don't ask....

The Autumn edition of 2013 featured the choir's memorable trip to the Moselle Valley in Germany. Organised by John Pearce, 47 members of the choir and their partners travelled to this region, enjoyed some sight-seeing and wine tasting before joining with the Mannerchor 1878 for a concert in the Matthaskappelle, Koblenz-Gondorf. In October, another concert with Thanet Male Voice Choir, this time in Maidstone, which raised in excess of £7,000 for The Heart of Kent Hospice and Demelza. In 2014 there were the usual concerts around the county, including at Rochester Baptist church in June. Organised by ex-Superintendent Ken Tappenden MBE, the concert raised funds for Macmillan Cancer Support in memory of his daughter Janita who lost her battle with cancer some years previously. In July the choir said farewell to longstanding choir member John Vowles and his wife Shirley who moved to Wales (and continue to enjoy life there). *On the Beat* featured greetings from John and Shirley in their new home. The Spring edition of 2015 featured the launch in the previous December of the choir's new CD "A moment in Time" recorded at Godmersham Church.

Jumping forward to June 2016, another trip for the Choir, to Essex. We were invited to sing with the Essex police choir at St Luke's Church in Tiptree. In July, a friendly match of "stoolball" took place in Ashford against our friends from Thanet MVC who were the victors on that occasion. In December, 20 members of the choir made an early morning trip to Radio Kent's studios in Tunbridge Wells to sing a few Christmas songs and bring some Christmas cheer to the listeners. June 3rd 2017 was an important date for our accompanist Karen Barton as it was her wedding to Luke Holman and the choir were privileged to be invited to sing at the service in St. Peter's Church, Boughton Monchelsea. It took many months for our MD Martin to adjust to Karen's newly married status when he introduced her at concerts under her now married name of Barton-Holman! If you were in Herne Bay on 30th July, you might have witnessed choir singing on the pier on what was a very windy day! In November of 2017, the choir shared the stage at Rochester Cathedral with *Revelation Strings*.



2018 was the choir's 40th Anniversary year and there were many events to celebrate this remarkable achievement. "40 years of Singing" was the mantra throughout the year which included a Cream Tea in May, an Anniversary Concert at St Mildred's Tenterden in July, a trip to Ypres in September to sing at the Menin Gate, and a 3-choirs concert also in September at the Winter Gardens, Margate. 2018 also saw the launch of the choir's "Young Artist's Programme" which aims to give young musicians and singers an opportunity to perform in front of an audience outside of the school environment. In February 2019, our MD put together a concert featuring some of these young artists at St Michael's Village Hall in Tenterden. *On the Beat* has featured profiles on some of these performers to give our readers an insight into their musical journey.

The first edition of 2020 highlighted the Christmas concert in December 2019 at the Wurlitzer Academy with its spotlight on the Wurlitzer organ (as well as KPMVC's singing, of course!). None of us need reminding of the events in 2020 which completely shut down all choirs and, indeed, public singing of any kind. *On the Beat* was not thwarted by this temporary suspension of activities and produced, in May, a "lockdown" edition and several of our regular contributors rose to the occasion with some amusing and poignant anecdotal stories. A bumper edition in September 2021 featured a report from our chairman, George, as to how the choir had coped during the lockdown months and had, in fact, managed to keep singing (in small groups) once the restrictions allowed. So all was not lost and rehearsals resumed in full in August 2021. There were several noteworthy events in 2022. The first was the choir's new uniform – the headline in the July edition was "It's a marmite thing," which probably still aptly describes how folk feel about substituting the dress uniforms, bow ties and cummerbunds, for a more "casual" shirt and jumper. Some love it, some not so much. The second event of 2022 was the choir's trip to Brecon to sing with the Brecon Male Voice choir. The trip was brilliantly documented by Geoff Fisher in a special supplement for *On the Beat*. The October edition was dedicated to Queen Elizabeth II. Choir members were asked to contribute their memories of meeting the Queen and other members of the royal family and their stories were a joy to read. The edition also included the photoshoot for the new (and latest) official photograph.

And so, to 2023. The first publication in March, paid tribute on its front page to David Vening following his death just before Christmas 2022. David conducted the choir for 28 years before retiring in 2010 handing over the baton to our current MD, Martin Rendle.

Over the 40 editions of this newsletter, we have also commemorated far too many choir members who have died – Paul Cox, Peter Barlow, Raymond Butt, Tony Wheatley, Pat Keast, Alf Ruck, Chris Longfield, Mick Williams, David Vening and Charles Hitchcock. We've also featured many, many stories and anecdotes from choir members, both past and present which have entertained and amused and also included quite a lot of photographic evidence of the choir's activities, concerts and memorable occasions.

I've enjoyed this brief trip down memory lane and was surprised to see that we are not only on our 40th edition, but in our 12th year. Quite an achievement and I would like to personally thank those of you who have regularly contributed your stories and anecdotes – I dare not risk naming names in case I miss someone out, but you know who you are and how much your contributions are appreciated. Keep them coming!





Young Musicians Programme

~ Tara Vidal von Ronn ~

At our concert on 30th September at St Nicholas Church, St Nicholas-at-Wade, the choir was proud to introduce another young musician, Tara Vidal von Ronn. Tara sang 'Far from the home I love' by Jerry Bock & Sheldon Harnick from the musical 'Fiddler On The Roof' and 'We'll Gather Lilacs In The Spring' by Ivor Novello from the musical 'Perchance to Dream'. Here Tara tells *On The Beat* about her musical journey.

Firstly, tell us a bit about yourself, do you come from a musical family?

My grandmother has always been the musical one of my family- but her living in Germany meant that it was left up to me to exterminate silence in my home in Ramsgate, where I live with my parents and two younger siblings. I hold the long-standing position of family dinner DJ and have been musical for as long as I can remember.

What was your introduction to music and what do you like listening to?

My childhood was scored by U2, the Pet Shop Boys, Depeche mode, Aha... I rebuked anything that wasn't Heart 80's radio until age 11. Much to the distaste of my childhood self, I have since caught the contemporary pop bug (as personified by Taylor Swift) and love all genres, with particularly soft spots for French rap and Spanish flamenco fusion. Not forgetting classical- a love for which my dad propagates through persistent, ceaseless, Classic FM.

When did you start singing lessons and do you play any musical instruments?

It was at age 9 that I first started saxophone lessons as inspired by my two profoundly musical best friends and only in my penultimate year of Chatham and Clarendon Grammar School that I have begun singing lessons. I am always singing, but for approximately 40

minutes every week the wonderful Martin is there to tell me that I am doing it wrong (for this I am thankful).

You seemed very confident in front of an audience, was this your first public performance?

Now in my final year, almost too much of my free time is employed weekly by senior wind band, jazz band, choir and CCGS' Advanced Vocal Ensemble (AVE). It is a harmonious community to belong to; giving me many opportunities for public performances on even an international scale. Still, very excitingly, this has been my first solo singing performance! It is entirely due to the Young Artists Programme that this was possible, for which I am extremely grateful. It has proved to be an overwhelmingly positive experience (not to mention the flowers!) and boost of self-esteem for someone like me who has never truly thought of themselves as a 'singer.'

What are your plans for future study and where do you hope that will take you in the future?

In the future, I hope desperately to study International Relations at the London School of Economics where I will learn more about politics, history, language, and macroeconomics to unite the people of the world in much the same way as music does.

CAPTION COMPETITION



Chris Cole unearthed this photo of himself and David Line. All he can recall is that, sometime in the mid-80s, they were being Santa's minders for the day in what was then called the Tuffton Centre, Ashford.

- Police called following citizen arrest when Santa catches horse pretending to be a reindeer. "It was the lack of red nose that gave the game away" Santa is quoted as saying.
- *Horse Says:* "Neigh, Neigh!! Claws off Santa!!
- *David to Chris* - 'Look at the size of that horse it's got a huge collar - do you think I could touch it?'
- *Chris to David* - 'You may as well, because it's the closest you'll ever get to feeling a collar'
- "Oi, Oi!! I was expecting Pandas."

But the winner has to be....

- **"Young Chris Cole was a merry old sole and the rest just toed D-Line."**

Sent in by David Line, of course, who confesses to having no recollection of the occasion!

Witnesses For the Prosecution...

I retired at the end of January 1998 and decided that to celebrate, I would arrange a lunch at the Stade Court Hotel in Hythe. The guests I invited were special friends and their wives with whom I had worked over my thirty years' service. The dining room I'd booked overlooked the sea front and prior to lunch, my guests and I were chatting over drinks and enjoying the sea view. One of the group Dave Ecuyer, had parked his Ford Escort immediately outside, in full view of us and behind a rather nice blue Rolls Royce. We then spotted the driver of the 'Roller' reverse into Dave's Escort. The elderly driver and his lady got out and inspected the rear of their car and appearing satisfied, drove off. The front of Dave's Escort had been damaged and the accident was not reported to police by the 'Roller' driver. When interviewed by police, he vehemently denied any collision had occurred, until he was shown a list of witnesses; Supt George Rogers, D/Supt Dennis McGookin, Supt Chris Longfield, DCI John Pearce, Supt David Vening, DC Dave Ecuyer, Lt. Col. Eddie Weeks, Sgt Eddie Williams, etc. etc. A guilty plea was entered at the Magistrates' Court. *John Pearce*



News from SERV Kent our Charity of the Year



Earlier in the year we were informed that we had been nominated as finalists in the 2023 Kent Charity Awards. These are very prestigious and sought after in the charity world so just to be nominated is a big thing.

On 21st September, the Awards Gala evening was held at the Great Danes Hotel and I had the honour, with Hugh Curtis, Janet Stewart & Jean McNally, of representing SERV Kent - Bloodrunners during the evening. There were around 200 people attending which included not only representatives from each charity but the event sponsors & judges. There were several categories and SERV Kent was placed in the 'Best Use of Volunteers' category, along with Demelza Hospice & Pathways to Independence (who provide supported accommodation for homeless ex-offenders). These charities provide invaluable support to those who need it. And WE WON!

This is a fantastic testament to all our volunteers who selflessly give their time and resources to helping our local communities and also to our charity management & controllers for the organisation and hard work that goes into making everything work so successfully.

To be named the best charity in these awards will raise our profile immensely.

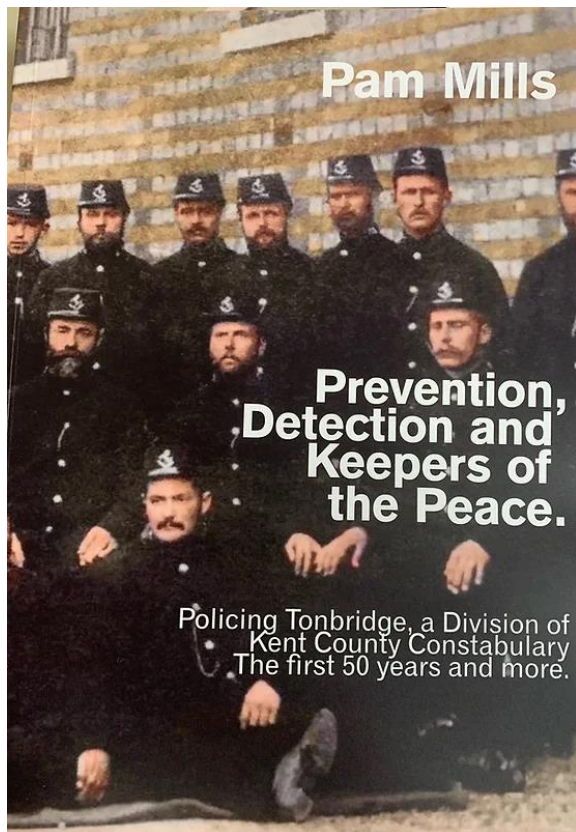
Trevor Sayer
Events Co-Ordinator Serv Kent



The news about the passing of Bobby Charlton reminded me of the evening when Manchester United won the European Cup. I had entrusted my young brother with his ticket before we got off the tube, just in case we got parted, but as we joined the crowd on Wembley Way he discovered that he had lost the ticket. Fortunately, as we lamented his loss, we were overhead by a family from Manchester one of whose friends was unable to attend and they insisted that he take the spare ticket, so although we didn't see the game together, we had more than one reason to recall that memorable evening.

George Hanlon





The KPMVC has, since 1978, a proud tradition of raising monies for charities and good causes in Kent. In this our 45th year we are very close to raising our first half a million pounds for the benefit of those good causes.

The choir itself is a registered charity and our rationale is only possible through the generosity, support, and good will of the many who give of their time and money which in turn is used to enable us to reach the audiences and communities we perform for thus raising much needed support for them.

The choir has, of course, to financially support itself; but in general, uses the vast majority of its income for others. It is a fact that during the Covid years our expenditure remained constant while we rehearsed (in increasing number as the conditions allowed) but our income stream slid to a halt. We found it necessary to seek and thankfully obtain support in the form of grants, sponsorship and good will from a variety of philanthropic sources for which we remain indebted. We can ironically only support others by being supported ourselves.

One such example of philanthropic kindness was highlighted during our concert at Sandhurst in west Kent on 11th November. Our chairman explained to the audience that a local author, Pam Mills, had approached the choir twelve months previously asking if she could donate monies to the choir - we of course accepted her very kind offer. Pam a former Police Officer and magistrate had written a book entitled 'Prevention, Detection and Keepers of the Peace' (policing Tonbridge a Division of the Kent Police). Once costs had been taken care of Pam donated profits from the sale of her book to our choir. Initially we imagined we may gain a few pounds. After a year of publicising and selling her book, the choir have benefit from upwards of one thousand pounds! A huge amount. We are extremely grateful for Pam's generosity and support - it has made a big difference.

At the concert our chairman George Rogers presented Pam with a bouquet of flowers as a token of that appreciation.

We thank Pam and every other supporter for their continued support. Here's to us raising our first million pounds!!



And whilst on the subject of generosity, we should acknowledge the support of the Friends of the Choir who have contributed over £2300 since its launch.

Also grateful thanks to Pressure Welding Machines Ltd. who have generously agreed to sponsor the hire cost of the rehearsal room for another year.

All of these generous benefactors enable to choir to keep on singing!

Kent Police Male Voice Choir

Supporting the MAIDSTONE ALZHEIMERS ASSOCIATION

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

**SUNDAY 3rd DECEMBER 2023
at 3.00 p.m.**

**HOLY FAMILY CHURCH HALL
BICKNOR ROAD
MAIDSTONE ME15 9PS**

Tickets at £8.00 available in advance from
Denise on 01622 749539



Scan the QR code to find out more about the Kent Police Male Voice Choir



2024 Concerts

Saturday 2nd March 7.30pm
Ss Peter & Paul Church, St Alphege Road,
Charlton, Dover

Saturday 6th April 7.30pm
Concert for School Gambia
Ss Peter & Paul Church, High Street,
Yalding

Saturday 6th July Time T.B.A
Joint Concert with Maidstone Choral Union
Venue T.B.A.

Saturday 7th September 7.30pm
St George's Church, High Street, Wrotham,
Sevenoaks

Saturday 5th October 7.30pm
St Mary's Church, Conyer Road, Teynham

Saturday 2nd November 7.30pm
Movember Concert
Venue T.B.A.

Saturday 7th December 7.30pm
Christmas Concert
St Michael the Archangel Church, Cage
Lane, Smarden

Saturday 14th December 7.30pm
Christmas Concert
St Paul's Church, Church Street,
Canterbury

Saturday 21st December 7.30pm
Christmas Concert
Ss Peter & Paul Church, The Street,
Borden

More details and concerts to be added

Keep up to date with our concert
programme on our website:
www.kpmvc.co.uk or contact us at
secretary@kpmvc.co.uk
friends@kpmvc.co.uk

Kent Police Male Voice Choir

Christmas Concert

**Saturday 16th December 2023
at 7.30 p.m.**

**St Peter & St Paul Church
The Street,
Borden ME9 8JS**

RAFFLE - REFRESHMENTS BY DONATION

Tickets at £10.00 available from
Paul Aspin on 07861 822285 or
from Fr. Rob Lane on
0789 224748



Scan the QR code to find out more about the Kent Police Male Voice Choir

