

BUILTH MALE VOICE CHOIR

Côr Meibion Llanfair-ym-Muallt

Charity No. 1061889

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY NEWSLETTER - FEBRUARY 2019



LLAIS GWY / WYE VOICE

Builth Male Voice Choir celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 2018 with a full programme of events. The highlights of the year were the Gala Concert with guests Shân Cothi and Mousehole Male Voice Choir on 8th September, the tour to Harrogate and Chester on 3rd – 7th October and the Celebration Dinner on 1st December.

The choir entertained audiences eight times at the Metropole Hotel, which has become something of a fixture in our calendar. We sang at seven concerts and three weddings.



BUILTH MALE VOICE CHOIR 2018

Metropole Hotel – 6th January

Our 50th anniversary year started on Saturday 6th January when we put in a surprise appearance at a dinner given in the Metropole Hotel for Edwards Coaches personnel and guests.

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### **Greyhound Inn – 6<sup>th</sup> January**

The focus of the evening then turned to the Greyhound in Builth, in order to celebrate the 80th birthday of Kevin Coughlan. Over a hundred choristers and guests turned the evening into a special event and thanks go to Kevin for the wine and refreshments he had organized.

He has been with the choir for over six years and was commended by President Jim Evans before a number of special individual “performances” ensued. Ray Morgan sang “May each Day”, Trevor Morgan sang “Young at Heart”, Bruce Watkins recited his poem about Monmouthshire and Yvette Evans made everyone laugh with a tale from years gone by.

Compere Dave Power then challenged each table to show its musical initiative, before the familiar strains of “Galway Bay” and “Running Bear” heralded the customary afterglow.

Bruce’s Poem:

*In 1968 the call went out,  
let’s form the choir we talked about,  
so the boys from the cricket and rugby teams  
united so they could fulfil their dreams.*

*Some sang high, some sang low,  
then a voice rang out, I know I know,  
there’s bass, baritones and tenors too,  
one just right for me and you.*

*It wasn’t easy at the start,  
but these boys from Builth they had some heart,  
they started singing in clubs and bars,  
then a voice rang out with this call,  
what about the Albert Hall.*

*We laughed and joked, I and all,  
and forgot about the Albert Hall,  
the years rolled by, our name grew tall,  
and we were invited to the Albert Hall.*

*We sing and practice every week,  
some songs new, some songs old,  
but we just sing what we are told.*

*Now fifty years have gone by,  
and our choir will always try,  
to give to you music grand,  
to echo through our lovely land,  
so Builth in Wales will stand tall  
and be loved by one and all.*



### ***23<sup>rd</sup> February – St David's Day Concert at the Strand Hall***

On Friday 23 February for the first time for many years Builth Male Voice Choir was able to hold its St David's Day Concert in the newly refurbished Strand Hall. A large and appreciative audience was treated to a feast of music in the annual charity concert which this year supported the Brecon Mountain Rescue Team.



The Concert featured SORELA, a singing trio of talented sisters from Ceredigion, and the children in Builth Wells Primary School Choir and was compered by Viv Jones, Immediate Past Chairman of the Choir. SORELA, an acapella folk trio who frequently appear on S4C television, sang an eclectic mix of traditional Welsh folk songs, 90's pop hits, 50's classics and original works all in acapella. Their performance enchanted the audience and particularly members of the Male Voice Choir who really appreciated their controlled close harmonies.

The young choristers from Builth Wells Primary School also charmed the audience with their lively and entertaining performance of three songs – Sing Hosanna, Calon Lân and Song for Every Season – and received a standing ovation. Builth Male Voice Choir showcased two new items – the traditional Welsh hymn Prysgol by William Owen and Sanctus by Cherubini – as well as a number of traditional favourites including The Creation by Willy Ritcher.

The Concert concluded with SORELA, Builth Male Voice Choir and the audience singing Calon Lân. Proceeds from the well supported raffle were match funded by Barclays Bank resulting in £1,000 being raised for the Brecon Mountain Rescue Team, the emergency service staffed entirely by volunteers and funded by donations.

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1st May – Entertaining the Historical Vehicle Club of Belgium

The Choir was asked to entertain members of the Historical Vehicle Club of Belgium (www.hvcb.be) who were touring Wales and staying at the Metropole Hotel Llandrindod Wells. David Power was the compere with Luned Jones conducting and Ann Bufton the accompanist. The programme of ten songs was greatly appreciated by the Belgium audience who gave a standing ovation prompting an encore of “American Trilogy” from the Choir. The Chairman of the Vehicle Club thanked the Choir for showcasing traditional Welsh Male Voice Choral music and presented a Rally Sign to the Choir as a memento of the event.

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### ***11<sup>th</sup> May – Entertaining the MX-5 Owners Club***

The Choir performed its second concert in two weeks at the Metropole Hotel, Llandrindod Wells – this time to entertain members of the MX-5 Owners Club International Meet. Viv Jones was the compere and the concert was conducted by Adrian Morgan with the choir performing a wide range of songs including With a Voice of Singing, Yfory, Bring him home, Hallelujah, Gwahoddiad, The Water is Wide, Homeward Bound, American Trilogy.

At the end of the concert there was a standing ovation and call for an encore which was followed by the Welsh National Anthem. The appreciative audience came from Wales, England and across Europe. After the concert one couple from Arnhem, Holland, who had sung in choirs all their lives, said that the concert was excellent and that the control and quality on the quiet sections was superb. Afterwards a number of the audience started their own singing session in the bar having been inspired by the Choir.

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19th May – Rorke’s Drift Rally Brecon

In May 2018 the Choir was once again asked to take part in the Rorke’s Drift Rally at Brecon. Adrian Morgan was the conductor and Ann Bufton was the accompanist for a programme of stirring songs which was enjoyed by a very noisy and appreciative audience. Starting with Stout Hearted Men the Choir sang ten songs.

A highlight of the event was a recitation by Top Tenor Bruce Watkins who brought a hush to the marquee with his rendition of a poem about the Battle of Rorke’s Drift which culminated in a standing ovation. Another highlight for the enthusiastic audience were two leading organisers of the Rally – The Zulu Chief and the Zulu Witch Doctor – who were called to the front of the stage where the Chief proposed marriage to the Witch Doctor! This was followed by the Choir finishing with Men of Harlech when members of the audience, some dressed in Red Coats and Pith Helmets and others dressed as Zulus, joined in the singing and celebration.

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### ***7<sup>th</sup> June – Entertaining Great Rail Tours Guests***

The Choir once again was called upon to entertain guests staying at the Metropole Hotel, Llandrindod Wells – this time visitors from the Great Rail Tours visit to Wales. David Power was MC and entertained the audience with his dry wit – Adrian Morgan conducted and Ann Bufton was the accompanist.





Songs included *When the Saints*, *Speed Your Journey*, *Away From the Roll of the Sea*, *Homeward Bound*, *Hallelujah* plus other favourite songs from the repertoire. The concert finished with an encore – *Stout Hearted Men*.

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16th June – Wedding Reception at The Bleddfa Centre

The Choir was delighted to sing in Bleddfa on 16th June at the wedding reception for Jo, Rob and Barbara Shelton's daughter. At the beginning of its performance the choir accompanied the bride who sang a solo in the traditional New Zealand love song *Pokarekare Ana*.



The Choir also sang a wide variety of songs including Welsh favourites *O Gymru, Calon Lan* and *Rachie* and their performance was thoroughly enjoyed by the guests who had travelled from all parts of the UK.

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#### ***4<sup>th</sup> July – Prince Charles & Duchess of Cornwall Visit Builth***

After visiting Llandovery Railway Station where celebrations were taking place to mark 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the heart of Wales Line years, the Prince and Duchess came to Builth by train to re-open the newly renovated Edwardian Strand Hall.

Builth Male Voice Choir & Builth Ladies Choir joined together to sing *Calon Lân* to welcome Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall on arrival at The Strand Hall. They visited the Farmers Market taking place there and saw a performance by local Young Farmers. On leaving the Hall the two choirs joined together to sing *Unchained Melody*.



Credit - [www.supated.com](http://www.supated.com)

#### ***11<sup>th</sup> August - Entertaining Great Rail Tours Guests***

The Choir once again performed for guests from The Great Rail Tours who were staying at the Metropole Hotel, Llandrindod Wells on their visit to Wales. David Power was MC with both Luned Jones and Adrian Morgan conducting the Choir and Ann Bufton being accompanist. The audience, which included a potential new conductor, thoroughly enjoyed the Choir's performance and many bought CDs as mementos after the concert.

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27th August – Presentation by Supporters Group

In preparation for celebrations to commemorate the Choir's 50th Anniversary the Supporters Group made a presentation of a new banner to the Choir's Chairman Derek Hope at a recent practice night. Megan Jones and Tricia Davies from the Supporters Group are seen with Jim Evans (President), Derek Hope, Luned Jones (Musical Director) and Ann Bufton (Accompanist). The banner was seen on stage at the Gala Concert at Mid Wales Pavilion on 8 September.



1st September – Wedding at St Edmund's Crickhowell

It was a pleasure for the Choir to be invited to sing at Elizabeth and Gregory's wedding at St Edmund's Church, Crickhowell. The Choir sang to entertain guests prior to the wedding ceremony and during the signing of the register.

It may seem incongruous that this church is dedicated to Edmund the Martyr who was King of East Anglia from about 855 until his death in 869. Almost nothing is known about Edmund but he was the first Patron Saint of England. Several unsuccessful attempts have been made to re-instate him as it seems St George was a Roman soldier who probably never even visited England.

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### ***3<sup>rd</sup> September – Entertaining Probus Club of Sandbach***

The Choir's performance at the after dinner concert in the Metropole Hotel Llandrindod Wells was enthusiastically received by members of the Probus Club of Sandbach. The Choir sang two sets of songs conducted by the Musical Director Luned Jones and Assistant Director Adrian Morgan. Ann Bufton was the accompanist.

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8th September – Gala Concert

Builth Male Voice Choir hosted a stunning concert to celebrate its fiftieth anniversary at the Mid Wales Pavilion Llandrindod Wells on Saturday 8 September. A capacity audience of 450 were enthralled by the wonderful music on offer professionally performed at a grand venue. The event also raised a substantial contribution to Amser Justin Time Pancreatic Cancer Charity Wales.

To mark this anniversary milestone Builth Choir had invited Mousehole Male Voice Choir, from Cornwall, Welsh personality Shân Cothi and local harpist Martha Powell to perform with them. The joint masters of ceremony for the evening were choristers Viv Jones and David Power – the Ant and Dec of Builth Male Voice Choir – who kept proceedings flowing with guile and humour.



Builth Male Voice Choir started the concert with a rousing rendition of Sanctus by Cherubini followed by a sailors song, Cytgan Y Morwyr by Joseph Parry, under the baton of their Musical Director Luned Jones with accompanist Ann Bufton. Builth Choir concluded the first half with their Assistant Musical Director Adrian Morgan conducting Bring Him Home from Shönberg's Les Miserables and a new piece for the Choir, The Prayer made famous by Celine Dion and Andrea Bocelli, which was greatly appreciated by the audience.

Mousehole Male Voice Choir, the best known and largest choir in Cornwall, were visiting Mid Wales for the first time in their one hundred and ten year history. With over sixty choristers on stage the choir performed an extensive repertoire including the Welsh classic Calon Lân arranged by Nick Rogers, a former conductor of Rhayader Male Voice Choir. Under the leadership of their talented musical director Stephen Lawry Mousehole Male Voice Choir is one of the few male voice choirs to have doubled in size over the past fifteen years and their musical prowess blossomed through their whole performance. Their accompanist was David Ceredig-Evans and two items were also accompanied by flautist Maureen Nicholls, partner of one of the choristers.

The show also starred soprano and Welsh personality Shân Cothi whose classical and music theatre repertoire has enthralled audiences throughout the world. Shân was accompanied by Jeff Howard, the internationally famous accompanist, organist, arranger and vocal coach who expertly played for Shân's two sets of songs. She delighted the audience when she serenaded Viv Jones, a former Builth Choir Chairman and the evening's master of ceremonies, in a rousing and comic rendition of the Laughing Song from Die Fledermaus.

The young Welsh harpist Martha Powell from Brecon also performed in the Concert. Martha had selected a very broad selection of music from traditional Welsh airs to modern film themes which was thoroughly enjoyed by the audience and choristers. The Concert concluded with the choirs combining to sing together conducted by Stephen Lawry and their first piece We Rise Again arranged by Canadian Stephen Smith was very moving. For their second combined item the choirs were joined by Shân Cothi to sing Rogers and Hammerstein's You'll Never Walk Alone which received a standing ovation. For an encore the choirs performed Morte Chryste.

The Concert concluded with presentations to those taking part. In 2008 Shân Cothi set up Amser Justin Time Pancreatic Cancer Charity Wales following the loss of her husband Justin Smith. A cheque in the sum £2,500 was presented to Shân by Megan Jones and Tricia Davies representing Builth Choir Supporters Group who had run a raffle to support this charity which funds essential research to help pancreatic cancer patients in Wales. Shân was overwhelmed at the support and generosity of the audience and thanked everybody who had contributed prizes for the fundraising.



The musicians Stephen Lawry, Jeff Howard, Shân Cothi, Luned Jones, Adrian Morgan, Ann Bufton and Martha Powell after the Gala Concert at The Pavilion, Llandrindod Wells

Derek Hope, Chairman of Builth Choir, gave thanks to all the very talented performers and accompanists who had made the evening such a success. After the concert praise was also lavished by members of the audience. One member said – “it was the best concert I have ever been to, with exceptional quality all the way through and sprinkled with just enough comedy from Dave, Viv and Shân to make the time fly, so that when it finished I was surprised that it was nearly 11 pm.”

15th September – Wedding at Sugar Loaf Barn Abergavenny

The Choir was privileged to be invited to take part in Hannah and Gareth's wedding at Sugar Loaf Barn Abergavenny. The choir had an exciting ride to the barn in a tractor drawn carriage and sang a mixed variety of songs for guests prior to the wedding. During signing the register the Choir sang "The Prayer" and concluded the ceremony with Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah".



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### **30<sup>th</sup> September – Concert for The Bracken Trust**

The Choir was pleased to take part in a fundraising concert for The Bracken Trust in a marquee near Llangunllo on Sunday 30 September. A full audience was entertained by a number of young local artists as well as four sets sung by Builth Male Voice Choir. Proceeds from the event, which amounted to £900, were presented to the Bracken Trust who passed on a huge thank you to the Choir. The Bracken Trust supports people who are living with cancer and their families.



Luned conducted : *Benedictus – Still as the Night – Calon Lan – Pokarekare Ana – Let it be me – Yfory* and Adrian conducted : *Pan fo'r nos – Away from roll of the sea – Unchained Melody – Stout Hearted Men – Homeward Bound – Hallelujah*



### ***3<sup>rd</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> October - 50th Anniversary Tour to North Yorkshire & Cheshire***

Builth Male Voice Choir celebrated its fiftieth anniversary this year and members took part in a very successful tour to North Yorkshire and Cheshire as part of a busy programme of activities in the anniversary year. Thirty nine choristers and nearly forty supporters travelled to Harrogate for three nights stay at the Cairn Hotel where they were made most welcome and wined and dined in high quality Yorkshire style.

On their first day in North Yorkshire the group travelled to Pickering on the edge of the North Yorkshire Moors and sang an impromptu concert on Pickering Railway Station before departing by steam train to the seaside town and fishing port of Whitby. The steam train was a very nostalgic journey for many on the trip reminding them of their childhood trips to the seaside. On their arrival in Whitby the Choir performed their second impromptu concert on the harbour front before touring the historic seaside town.

On their second day the group explored the spa town of Harrogate before a joint evening concert with Harrogate Male Voice Choir. The Harrogate Choir is also celebrating its fiftieth anniversary this year and like Builth has just over fifty members. The choirs sang a wide variety of pieces from their extensive repertoires and joined together at the end of the concert to sing *Morte Christe*, *Unchained Melody* and *American Trilogy* under the baton of musical directors Luned Jones and Adrian Morgan from Builth and Patrick Lee from Harrogate with Ann Bufton accompanying on the piano. Proceeds from the concert were presented to the Royal British Legion North Yorkshire Branch.



Luned conducting joint Builth & Harrogate Male Voice Choirs

The following day the group travelled to Chester for an evening concert hosted by Chester Ladies Choir. The Ladies Choir sang an eclectic mix of songs under the direction of their musical director David Bebbington which was greatly appreciated by the capacity audience. Builth Choir performed two sets of songs including two new items – The Prayer and Cytgan Y Morwyr – and finished the concert singing Morte Chryste with the Chester Ladies Choir. Derek Hope, Chairman of Builth Choir, thanked the Ladies Choir for their hospitality and presented a Builth Choir Shield to commemorate the visit. A raffle organised by the Ladies Choir raised funds in support of Hope House Children's Hospices which provide care and support to life-limited children, young people and their families from Shropshire, Cheshire, North and Mid Wales.



Adrian conducting combined Builth Male Voice & Chester Ladies Choirs

Special appreciation from all the choir members went to the dedicated music team leaders Luned Jones, Adrian Morgan and Ann Bufton and also the Events Manager John Carruthers for the seamless organisation. Derek Hope, Chairman of Builth Male Voice Choir, said the trip had been a great success and it was good to see a large number of supporters joining the choir to celebrate its fiftieth anniversary year.

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9th November – Remembrance Concert

The Choir was pleased to be invited to be part of Builth Wells Royal British Legion Remembrance Concert at the Strand Hall to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the end of WW1. The Choir performed two sets of songs under the direction of Luned Jones and Adrian Morgan with accompaniment by Ann Bufton.

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### ***1<sup>st</sup> December – Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration Dinner***

The Choir's 50th Anniversary Celebration Dinner was held at the Metropole Hotel, Llandrindod Wells on Saturday 1 December. Dame Shân Legge-Bourke, recently retired Lord-Lieutenant of Powys, was the guest of honour at the celebrations attended by nearly 100 guests comprising choir members, vice-presidents and friends of the choir.



Guests on the top table at the 50th Anniversary Dinner

Derek Hope, Chairman of the Choir, welcomed guests to the dinner to celebrate fifty years of singing together and supporting local charities. Guests enjoyed a varied menu in a three course dinner which was followed by David Power, master of ceremonies, introducing the choir's musical director, Luned Jones, who gave a detailed and captivating speech. Luned traced the history of the Choir from its beginning in the Autumn of 1968 to the current day. She noted the choir was formed when a group of enthusiasts led by Jack Francis met at the Builth Wells Cricket and Rugby Club. She welcomed Ceinwen Bufton, from Hundred House, who was the Choir's first accompanist until she left the area on getting married in 1973. Luned took over as the Choir's accompanist at that date and then became Musical Director in 1984 following the retirement of Jack Francis and has now completed forty five years of devoted service to the Choir. In 1984 Ann Bufton became the new accompanist a role which Ann continues to serve today.





Dame Shân Legge-Bourke in French style leading the singing of La Marseillaise

Dame Shân Legge-Bourke then spoke of the national and international trips made by the choir in an entertaining presentation. Adorned in the national headgear from each of the countries toured – France, Germany, Czech Republic, Holland, Belgium and Ireland – she led the guests in songs and music representing each nation. As a mark of appreciation and to commemorate her contribution to the celebrations Derek Hope (Chairman) presented Dame Shân Legge-Bourke with a shield depicting the Choir’s badge.

Luned Jones and Ann Bufton were given the honour to cut the celebration cake for distribution to the guests. Derek Hope confirmed that Luned Jones will be retiring in March 2019 and thanked her for forty five years of unstinting loyal service to the Choir which was met with a rousing ovation from the guests. He announced that the current Deputy Director of Music Adrian Morgan will be taking over the role of Musical Director in March and looked forward to many more successful years for the Choir under his leadership.

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19th December – AGM and Entertaining Visitors

The Choir concluded with “We wish you a Merry Christmas” before retiring to the bar for drinks and impromptu singing.



Choir members after singing to guests in The Greyhound Hotel after the 2018 AGM

30th December – Entertaining Guests at Metropole Hotel

Exactly a year later and we are at the Metropole Hotel again for our last engagement of 2018 – our fiftieth anniversary year. The Metropole has welcomed us eight times this year and approximately 120 enthusiastic guests gave us a standing ovation at the end. Maybe it was the Welsh National Anthem that got them on their feet? David Power again relaxed the audience with his inimitable compering. Luned Jones and Adrian Morgan conducted with Ann Bufton accompanying two sets including some favourites that were much appreciated.



The Choir is always keen to welcome new members who would like to share in the joy of singing and the friendship and comradeship membership brings. Those wishing to make enquiries can find information on the Choir's website www.builthmalechoir.org.uk or by telephoning 01982 552922 / 07938833264 or by email: bmvc.eventsmanager@gmail.com Or you could come along to one of our weekly rehearsals at The Greyhound Hotel in Builth Wells at 8:00 pm on any Monday. You will be very welcome.

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### **The 2018 Committee**

|                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| President:      | Jim Evans       |
| Chairman:       | Derek Hope      |
| Vice Chairman:  | Bryan Morris    |
| Treasurer:      | Bob Jones       |
| Secretary:      | Roger Parker    |
| Events Manager: | John Carruthers |

### **The 2019 Committee**

|                 |
|-----------------|
| Jim Evans       |
| Derek Hope      |
| Bryan Morris    |
| Gareth Jones    |
| Roger Parker    |
| John Carruthers |

### **Choir Officers:**

|                  |                |                 |
|------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Librarian:       | Dave Bridgeman | Dave Bridgeman  |
| Wardrobe Master: | Brian Price    | Brian Price     |
| Webmaster:       | Rob Shelton    | Rob Shelton     |
| Welfare Officer: | Barry Pugh     | John Carruthers |

### **Section Leaders:**

|                |               |               |
|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| Top Tenors:    | Barry Pugh    | Rob Shelton   |
| Second Tenors: | Graham Davies | Viv Jones     |
| Baritones:     | Donald Bufton | Donald Bufton |
| Bass:          | Trevor Morgan | Trevor Morgan |

### **The Music Committee:**

Luned Jones, Adrian Morgan and Ann Bufton