Pontnewydd Male Choir
Celebrating 120 Years

CHOIR NEWSLETTER
December issue
Year 29 December 2025

Welcome to our December newsletter and I hope it finds you all in celebratory mood as we approach the big day! So, here's wishing you all

This month we celebrate:

December 3 is the First Sunday of Advent, marking the beginning of the Advent season. The word "advent" comes from the Latin "adventus" which means "coming" or "arrival" and, as the name suggests, it is a time to prepare for the birth of Christ and, hence, Christmas.
December 6 is the feast day of Saint Nicholas who was the Bishop of Myra, in Asia Minor (now modern-day Turkey) in the 4th century. He is the patron saint of children and is the model for Father Christmas and gift-giving.
December 21 is the Winter Solstice—the astronomical day when the Earth is farthest away from the Sun
December 26 is the "feast of Stephen" as in the carol "Good King Wenceslas". Stephen was the first Christian martyr.

Did you know:

The month of December also has some special significance for Wales:
In December **1905** Wales defeated New Zealand at rugby, winning by 3 points to nil. The Welsh try was scored by winger, Teddy Morgan. The match is also notable for being the first time that a nation's anthem was sung before a sporting event. The Welsh team started to sing Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau in response to the All Black's haka, and the supporters soon joined in.
In December **1916** David Lloyd George replaced Herbert Asquith as British Prime Minister, making him the only Welshman to hold the position.
Here's one for you beer aficionados – in December **1935** the Felinfoel Brewery in Llanelli produced Britain's first ever canned beer and thereby transformed the nation's drinking habits!

December birthdays.

Only 3 birthdays this month but important nonetheless!
Gary Jeffries (T2) Wednesday 3rd John James (B2) Sunday 7th Keith Jones (B2) Wednessday 24th

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Chorister updates.

Generally, the vast majority of our choristers have been in robust health over the last month and attendance at practice has benefitted accordingly. Baritione John Sheppard is home following a fall that left him with broken ribs and damaged pride. He has made a steady recovery and is gingerly returning not practice employing baby breaths!
Bottom Bass **Graham Roberts,** although out of hospital, is making a slow but steady recovery. It may be a few weeks before he's fit enough to return to practice. **Bill Adshead** is resiliently battling through his cancer treatment and remains as positive as ever.
Our best wishes go to all for a speedy and complete recovery

Recent engagements

The last 4 weeks have proved a busy period for the choir with a variety of different engagements:

Church of St Cadoc's, Raglan
PMC performed at a fund-raising concert at St Cadocs Church, Raglan where the choir's repertoire was supplemented with a variety of additional items which included a number of songs from Peter Binding, a humorous monologue from Ian Evans and a collection of unintentionally hilarious entries from church magazines from Keith Jones.
All items were well received by the audience**.**
The church itself dates from the fourteenth century and was dedicated to Catwg or Cadoc, one of the most revered of Welsh saints, and known as Saint Cadoc the Wise.
His father, Gwynllyw (or Woolo in English) and is the legendary founder and patron saint of the City of Newport, living in the 5th century. According to medieval tradition, he was a feared warlord and livestock raider who was acquainted with the mythical King Arthur, but later encountered religion and became a hermit, founding St Woolo's Cathedral in Newport.

Remembrance Concert
We followed this with a Remembrance Concert at St David's Catholic Church on November 7th, raising funds for the Royal British Legion and where we were joined by guest soloist, Lee Cander. Both PMC and Lee Cander were on top form and a video of the choir's performance, including a recording of a new piece to the choir of "Tell my father", can be found on our Facebook page. Lee's rendition of Nessun Dorma was exceptional and can also be heard our Facebook page.
Our thanks to Lee for his contribution on the night and to Debra Norman, a member of Cwmbran Brass Band, for playing the "Last Post" followed by "Reveille" which helped to make the choir's remembrance section of the concert both poignant, appropriate and memorable.
£300 was raised for Royal British Legion whilst several choir members volunteered to sell poppies in Sainsbury's over the following weekend, demonstrating our great commitment to a worthy cause.
Thanks to everyone who helped to make this occasion a very special event.

Joint Remembrance Concert
Our joint concert as guests of City of Newport Male Choir on November 14th unfortunately fell foul of the extreme wind and rain that accompanied Storm Claudia. Safety concerns led to the concert's cancellation, but we hope that it will be rearranged at an appropriate time in the future**.**

Thomas Gabrielle Nursing Home
On November 17th, we sang at Thomas Gabrielle Care Home in Cwmbran where a number of the residents and visitors contributed to a very enjoyable afternoon. It was particularly pleasing to see Bernard Morgan, an ex-chorister and now resident in the Home, joining in enthusiastically with our songs.
It was yet another example of how the power of music stimulates positive memories and enriches people's lives.

. **Here's the latest list of our next engagements**

PMC - Confirmed Concert bookings

Item	Date	Arrival Time	Venue	Address
Thomas Gabriel Nursing Home	17/11/25 Monday	3:30 4:00 start	Thomas Gabriel Nursing Home	Victoria St. Old Cwmbran. NP44 3JP
Kingsway Certre	29/11/25 Saturday	1:30 2:00 start	Kingsway Centre	Kingsway Shopping Centre, Newport NP20 1HY
Concert Cwmbran Library	03/12/25 Wed	6:30 7:00 start	Cwmbran Library	Gwent House, Gwent Square, Cwmbran. NP44 1PL
Noahs Arc at Ikea Cardiff	14/12/25 Sunday	1:30 2:00 start	Ikea Cardiff	Ferry Rd. Cardiff. CF11 0XR
Leadon Court	16/12/25 Tuesday	3:30 4:00 start	Leadon Court	Thornhill, Cwmbran. NP44 5TZ
Tesco Extra, Risca	20/12/25 Saturday	1:30 2:00 start	Tesco store	Pontymister Ind Est, Risca, Newport NP11 6NP
Gethin Evans Benefit Charity Concert	23/01/26 Friday	6:30 7:00 start	Croesyceiliog Secondary School	Woodland Road, Cwmbran. NP44 2YB
Rehearsal for Annual Concert	17/04/26 Friday	7:00pm	St. Davids Church	2, Station Road, Cwmbran. NP44 1NY
Annual Concert	18/04/26 Saturday	6:45 7:15 start	St. Davids Church	2, Station Road, Cwmbran. NP44 1NY

New Choir Website

As mentioned in last month's newsletter, our new website went live on 10th November and its new address is:

www.pontnewyddmalechoir.co.uk

Consequently, the choir's email address has also been changed to:

info@pontnewyddmalechoir.co.uk

PLEASE MAKE EVERYONE AWARE OF THESE CHANGES

Grant awards

We are pleased to report that the choir has been successful in gaining a Communities Choice Grant for £1590 which comes with conditions that we will have to adhere to. This was following our attendance at the community voting day at Thornhill Community Hall recently.
We have also been successful in obtaining a grant from Croesyceiliog and Llanyrafon CC. The presentation evening will be on Tuesday 9th Dec 7:00pm at Llanyrafon Social Club.

New Music

Luciano has recently introduced two new pieces into our repertoire – Yma o Hyd and We'll Keep a Welcome. Here's the background to these pieces.

Yma o Hyd was written by Welsh folk singer, nationalist politician and television personality ***Dafydd Iwan***.

It was first released in 1983. Its composition was set against a backdrop of considerable political turmoil, marked by the devolution of the Welsh government in 1979, the political ideologies of then-Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, and the prevalent economic policies of that era.
Here's a translation of the lyrics:

Cymraeg	**English**
Dwyt ti'm yn cofio Macsen,	**You don't remember Macsen,**
Does neb yn ei nabod o;	**Nobody knows him;**
Mae mil a chwe chant o flynyddoedd	**One thousand and six hundred years**
Yn amser rhy hir i'r co';	**Is a time too long to remember;**
Pan aeth Magnus Maximus o Gymru	**When Magnus Maximus left Wales**
Yn y flwyddyn tri-chant-wyth-tri,	**In the year 383**
A'n gadael yn genedl gyfan	**Leaving us a whole nation**
A heddiw: wele ni!	**And today - look at us!**
Chorus	**Chorus**
Ry'n ni yma o hyd, . . .(X 2)	***We are still here. . .(X 2)***
Er gwaetha pawb a phopeth, . . .(X 3)	***In spite of everyone and everything . . .(X 3)***
Ry'n ni yma o hyd, …(X 2)	***We are still here.***
Er gwaetha pawb a phopeth, . . .(X 3)	***In spite of everyone and everything . . .(X 3)***
Ry'n ni yma o hyd,	***We are still here.***
Chwythed y gwynt o'r Dwyrain,	**Let the wind blow from the East**
Rhued y storm o'r môr,	**Let the storm roar from the sea**
Hollted y mellt yr wybren	**Let the lightning split the heavens**
A gwaedded y daran encôr,	**And the thunder shout "Encore!"**
Llifed dagrau'r gwangalon	**Let the tears of the faint-hearted flow**
A llyfed y taeog y llawr	**And the servile lick the floor**
Er dued yw'r fagddu o'n cwmpas	**Despite the blackness around us**
Ry'n ni'n barod am doriad y wawr!	**We are ready for the breaking of the dawn!**
Chorus	***Chorus***

Cofiwn i Facsen Wledig	**We remember that Macsen the Emperor**
Adael ein gwlad yn un darn	**Left our country in one whole piece,**
A bloeddiwn gerbron y gwledydd	**And we shall shout before the nations**
'Mi fyddwn yma tan Ddydd y Farn!'	**'We'll be here until Judgement Day!'**
Er gwaetha pob Dic Siôn Dafydd,	**Despite every Dic Siôn Dafydd (Note 1)**
Er gwaetha 'rhen Fagi a'i chriw	**Despite old Maggie and her crew,**
Byddwn yma hyd ddiwedd amser	**We'll be here until the end of time,**
A bydd yr iaith Gymraeg yn fyw!	**And the Welsh language will be alive!**
Chorus	***Chorus***

Note 1: Dic Siôn Dafydd was the name of a satirical ballad by Jac Glan-y-gors (1766-1821) about a stereotypical Welshman who has turned his back on the Welsh language and culture, in his bid to succeed in England

We'll Keep a Welcome

"We'll Keep a Welcome" is a popular song composed by Mai Jones with lyrics by Lyn Joshua and Jimmy Harper in 1940. It was introduced in the BBC radio variety show *Welsh Rarebit* and remains strongly associated with Wales.[1]Jones joined the BBC in Cardiff as a radio producer of light entertainment. In this position, she devised *Welsh Rarebit*, a variety show originally broadcast on the BBC Forces Programme and intended for Welsh people serving in the armed forces during the Second World War.

And finally:

The Four Stages of Life

1. You believe in Santa Claus
2. You don't believe in Santa Claus
3. You are Santa Claus
4. You look like Santa Claus

I'm dreaming of a white Christmas……..but if the white runs out, I'll drink the red!

Here's a more celebrial one…..

Faith is believing in things when common sense tells you not to.

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Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Peaceful NewYear.

Nadolig Llawen a Blwyddyn Newydd Dda

Ian