



GMVC Newsletter February 2022

Vol 15 No.2

Chairman's Notes, contributed by Geoff Hampson

Hello and welcome to our February Newsletter.

Back to a somewhat normal January and being able to have an AGM after two years without one it is good to have the coming year planned out, well at least as much as possible so time to relax a little and get on with our singing which is what we are all about.

From the platform of singing all else flows, friendships, banter, the opportunities to perform in concert and of course if we do everything well then we can enjoy and be proud of our choir. The theme of our AGM reflected that and it is only the hard work of the choir pre pandemic that left us with the resilience to come through it at least thus far at any rate.

For now there is not much more for me to report which won't be covered elsewhere in the newsletter. We do have a concert coming up in March at the Ibstock Palace with our friends the Gresley Colliery Band so we, like them will be hard at work rehearsing for that during the coming weeks. It was a really enjoyable evening last time we were there so we are looking forward to getting on the road again as we build up to a more normal programme of concerts.

Hopefully I will have much more to report as we start moving forwards.

If you know anyone who would like to come along and join the choir then please encourage them to give it a try. They can be assured of a warm welcome and plenty of help. I would be delighted to answer any questions and give further details.

Just call Geoff on 07804306891. Singing is proven to have many health benefits.

1. Singing makes you feel better

There's an increasing amount of evidence that singing **releases endorphins, serotonin and dopamine** – the 'happy' chemicals that boost your mood and make you feel good about yourself. Scientists believe that's one of the reasons why people report being on a high during choir sessions and continuing to feel positive, uplifted and motivated afterwards. "It has been a beacon in these difficult times, to have an appointment to meet with other people and do something so uplifting."

– Participant, From Couch to Chorus: The Festive Edition

Singing also counts as an aerobic activity as it **introduces more oxygen into the blood** leading to better circulation – and a better mood.

2. Singing enhances lung function

We often take our lungs for granted, but most of us rarely use them to their full capacity. The way singing requires you to breathe makes you do just that, **increasing your lung capacity** as well as **engaging the muscles** around the ribcage.

"The controlled nature of breathing in singing increases lung capacity and can also help people who are on a road to recovery."

– Jennifer Sterling, Choral Learning Team

That's why singing has been used to help rehabilitate people recovering from lung conditions and, more recently, to benefit people suffering from long Covid.

3. Singing helps you beat stress and relax

As well as benefitting our lungs, breathing properly and with more awareness is good for releasing anxiety and helping us transition to a state of rest and relaxation. "Simply by singing along to a favourite song or humming long notes can reduce stress levels and create a greater sense of internal balance." – **Marie Claire Breen, Choral Learning Team**

If you've had a bad day, give singing a go. We promise its stress-busting properties will help you forget your worries and simply be in the moment.

4. Singing helps improve memory

Singing can help improve **mental alertness, memory** and **concentration** as it involves focusing on multiple things at once, engaging many areas of the brain in the process. Music is also increasingly becoming a feature of dementia care, in part because it has proved a powerful tool in sparking memories often long after other forms of communication have diminished.

"The visits from Opera North allowed our residents to really open up emotionally giving us insights into their pasts that they had never shared before. It was great to see the happy smiling faces of those with advanced dementia as they sang along and really engaged with the experience."

– Jo Bailey, Wellness Co-ordinator at Simon Marks Court

5. Singing builds a sense of community

Even with choirs going virtual, singing is still a fantastic communal activity. Singing with other people, whether in the flesh or on screen, can help **build connections** and feelings of togetherness. Recent research has also shown that the sense of self-other merging we experience by synchronizing our voices with others is a great way to fast-track **social bonding**.

"The sense of community and belonging when singing in group settings, even over Zoom, can have a huge impact on stress reduction and can even synchronize your heartbeat and regulate your breath, so you're all breathing as one huge lung."

– Marie Claire Breen, Choral Learning Team

There's also the pleasure to be found in sharing an interest, ensuring you always have something to talk about before or after the session.

6. Singing lets you express yourself

Singing is the perfect way to let go and express how you feel. In [From Couch to Chorus](#), the repertoire is chosen to tap into a range of emotions with contrasting pieces. Of course, when you sing in a group, there's the added fun of watching other people enjoying themselves too!

"It's about just enjoying yourself, enjoying the process of being with people, creating with people."

– Gordon Shaw, member of the [Chorus of Opera North](#)

7. Singing can help with pain relief

By supporting wellbeing and giving participants a healthy dose of joy, singing can be beneficial for people who are living with persistent pain. **Dr Frances Cole** who set up the [Footsteps Festival](#) explains why they were keen for Opera North to offer [Step into Singing](#) sessions as part of the year-long celebration:

"Singing brings joy to people's faces and lives. It helps them shift from yet another day 'enduring pain' to having joyful, fun times and feeling connected to others. We also find it helps with confidence, reconnecting people with themselves in positive, fruitful and compassionate ways, enabling them to live well."

8. Singing boosts your confidence

Many people get nervous at the thought of performing in public, but singing in a group can actually help **boost your confidence** and fire up your self-esteem – and the more you do it, the more confident you'll feel. Good posture is also a key factor in hitting the high notes, so

you'll find you're **naturally standing taller** by the end. In fact, it works so well that singing has even been used by Opera North to build confidence, self-belief and personal impact in the workplace during training sessions with its [Corporate Partners](#).

"Wow! That was definitely something I have never experienced before. What a great way to engage people, put them out of their comfort zone ... but make it fun! Very thought-provoking"

9. Singing features in wellbeing studies

Don't just take our word for it! The University of Leeds is so convinced of the impact music can have that they offer a MA in Music and Wellbeing, exploring in more depth the relationship between engaging with music and the positive effects on health and happiness.

Dr Freya Bailes, who leads the MA, explains why she believes this is such an important area of research:

"When we challenge our students to think critically about whether there is really anything special about music for wellbeing, the answer seems to be that music has it all! Singing with others contributes to positive mood, is engaging, promotes relationships with others, is experienced as meaningful, and can afford a strong sense of accomplishment

10. Singing is for everyone

The good news is, it doesn't matter whether you think you can sing in tune or not: the health benefits will still be the same. If you fancy a bit of guidance our Choral Learning Team offer plenty of hints and tips during [From Couch to Chorus](#) (all sessions can be captioned for even greater accessibility) – and singing in the comfort of your own home over Zoom means no-one can hear the sound you're making anyway, so you can simply let go, have fun and experience for yourself the wellbeing singing brings.

"Everybody has a voice and everybody can sing. It's a brilliant way of just giving yourself some time. Simply tune out the rest of the world and enjoy the physical sensation of breathing in and creating a note with your body."

– Oliver Rundell, Opera North Chorus Master

SPC Notes, contributed by Mick Robey

February is the time for the Special Purposes Committee to start work in earnest, especially now that it appears (hopefully) we will see our regular concert programmes evolving. We will be holding our first Committee meeting next week which commences with the election of our Officers for the coming year.

We already have several events in the pipeline for 2022 so next week we commence the "nitty gritty" of sorting and finalising all the minute details of these engagements so that all events and performances proceed as planned without any hitches or hold ups.

The events in question are our "Brass and Voices" concert on **Sunday 24th April at Burton Town Hall** commencing at 4.30 p.m. Note the day and time as this is somewhat of an experiment for us as it differs greatly from our usual day and time. On this occasion the Brass part of the programme will be performed by the internationally acclaimed Desford Colliery Band who have World and European Championships as well as UK national championships on four occasions in their historical record.

Our annual tour this year is a repeat of three years ago to Norfolk as we have received invitations to return. We will be departing on **Friday 20th May** and stopping off to sing at Sandringham on the way to our hotel in Norwich. This was very special last time as we unexpectedly performed before a packed church where the audience even spilled outside. It was great to sing in the church which most of us have only seen on the TV when the Royal

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family attend for Christmas Day service. Other concerts will be in Aylsham Parish Church and also Upper Sheringham Parish Church before our return home on Monday 23rd May. A reminder to all going on the tour this year, your balance of payment is due by 25th March and I will be in touch with you personally in the near future to let you know what the balance is.

The annual charity concert will be on **Saturday 18th June** at the ancient and delightful parish church of St. George's in the village of Ticknall. The charity this year is "Prostate Cancer" which is very close to our hearts as several of our members are currently suffering from this condition.

Now is the time we start planning for Christmas, no kidding! We have to start planning now for our Annual Christmas Concert which will be on **Saturday 10th December** this year.

Further details on all these engagements will appear in next month's Newsletter.

MAVORO Ladies Club, contributed by Maureen Hickman & Hilda Oates

Friends and family are most welcome to join us for our social occasions.

If you would like any more information about our ladies' evenings or events, please contact any of the numbers below:

Hilda Oates	- 01283 536144	Maureen Hickman	- 01283 703218
Jan Masterman	- 01283 814553	Sue Littlewood.	- 01283 810291
Josie Ivens	- 01283 212914	Pat Hurd	- 01283 542746
Janet Auwkit	- 07902 498391		

Programme 2022

February 4 th	AGM	
March 4 th	Research into Local People	<i>Gillian & Alan Talbot</i>
April 1 th	Bringing up Babies	<i>Kath Reynolds</i>
May 6 nd	Painting Demonstration	<i>Jayne Good</i>
June 10 th	An Australian Adventure	<i>Shirley Horton</i>
July 1 th	Dames & Knights of the Theatre	<i>Paul Newsham</i>
August 5 st .	Meal	
September 2 th	A Grand Day Out in the 1950's	<i>Alan Hiley</i>
October 7 th	Ghosts in Grandeur	<i>Jo Golby</i>
November 4 th	Have Yourself a Wild Christmas	<i>Kevin Reynolds</i>
December 2 th	Party Night Buffet	



Technology, contributed by Mick Robey

One month into the New Year and how many people have kept their resolutions? It's amazing how a large slice of the populous decide to stop drinking alcohol for January and also how many decide to give up eating meat to signal to their friends they care about the environment. If they keep it up all year round all well and good but many are forgetting a very important point, now is a terrible time to become a vegan. Do they think about where their fruit and vegetables are coming from? Not from Melbourne to be sure, not in the winter. It's all being shipped in from abroad from places like the Americas, Australia, South Africa and the Mediterranean. They are not saving the planet by buying lettuce from Spain or courgettes from France or sugar snap peas from Zambia when you could easily pop in to the butcher's and grab a juicy sirloin that's clocked up fewer than 20 food miles. If they want to clear their eco-conscience they should stop buying imported, intensively farmed food with a high carbon footprint and concentrate more on our home produced seasonal food. So my message to those wishing to go vegan to contribute to saving the planet, start your challenge in July when it is far easier and cheaper to purchase from your greengrocer or local farm shop, and the variety of available fruit and vegetables is far greater and you're not paying for air miles! Becoming vegan isn't going to save the planet but becoming more responsible when sourcing it will help considerably more.

Whilst on the fruit and vegetable theme, next Saturday is the most important day of the year in my calendar. Forget birthdays and wedding anniversaries and the like which last for one day only. Next Saturday, always the first Saturday in February, I visit the garden shop in Derby to purchase my seed potatoes, compost and vegetable seeds for the coming year. I also go online to purchase my 600 bedding plant plugs. The potatoes and vegetable seeds will grow and eventually feed me and my family for many months and the bedding plants will provide colourful enjoyment all summer. So, when it comes to priorities, there's no comparison!

This month's gardening hint: tomato seeds, sweet peas and onion seed can all be set this month in good compost. For good germination they require a temperature of at least 18 degrees Centigrade which means growing them in a propagator, a heated greenhouse or, like me, on the kitchen window sill. If the latter applies, keep a close eye on them as soon after germination they will need moving to a place where they can get all round light otherwise they will go "leggy" (thin and long).

Changing subjects, I received a SMS message on my telephone from my doctor the other day. It read "Please send us your blood pressure reading". Strange request as firstly I don't possess my own blood pressure reading machine as with something so important, I prefer to leave it to the professionals. Secondly, along with thousands of others up and down the country, if you try and ring them to pass over the information you cannot get through, even if you wait half an hour for them to reply. So off I trudged down to Fort Knox (the surgery) to try and explain my predicament. After 10 minutes with my face jammed up to the outside intercom, I eventually persuaded them to wind up the portcullis and suitably masked, they let me in. One minute later at reception I was given a token and told to go and stand on the machine and follow the instructions. Shoeless I mounted the machine, inserted my left arm in a hole and then inserted the token. Just a few seconds later the machine presented me with a read out of my weight, height, blood pressure and BMI. It told me I was too short, too heavy and too fat but I did not mind that one bit as it also told me my blood pressure was the best it has been for many years, so I came home a happy man praising this modern technology! It was just unfortunate that I also had a hospital appointment the following week and my blood pressure was sky high, well above my usual high average, so is technology all it is cracked up to be, I wonder!

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DATE	VENUE	Post Code	Uniform
Saturday 19/03/2022	Brass & Voices Ibstock Palace Ibstock	LE67 6LG	TBC
Sunday 03/04/2022 Proposed	St. Matthews Church, Concert and Afternoon Tea Overseal	DE12 6LQ	TBC
Sunday 24/04/2022	Burton Town Hall Concert Burton on Trent (Further details to follow)	DE14 2EB	TBC
Fri / Mon 20/05/2022- 23/05/2022	Choir Annual Tour Norfolk	TBA	TBC
Saturday 18/06/2022	Charity Concert St. George's Church Ticknall	DE73 7JU	TBC
Saturday 02/07/2022 proposed	Century Theatre Concert Coalville	LE67 3LN	TBC
Saturday 03/09/2022	Unitarian Chapel Concert Hinckley	LE10 1PP	TBC
Sunday 02/10/2022 Proposed	All Saints Church Concert Loughborough	LE11 1EE	TBC
Saturday 10/12/2022 proposed	Christmas Concert Venue to be advised	TBA	TBC

Stay Safe and Well

GMVC Website and Facebook

GMVC has now a new more modern Website with a new address www.gresleychoir.com
GMVC would like to acknowledge the generous support of the family of the late Mr. Roy Atkins and his son Andy, through his company WebCertain, in securing the availability of our new web address "gresleychoir.com" for a further 5 years.

If you need to know **anything**, about Gresley Male Voice Choir, visit our Website www.gresleychoir.com. It's full of pictures, videos and information about the Choir. If you need to email the Website or any of the Officers or Committee, email gmvc.choir@gmail.com. Also, if you wish to keep in touch with events, other members and supporters of the Choir, look at our **Facebook** page, web address: <https://www.facebook.com/GMVC1904>

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Eric Coxon 1st February 2022