

GMVC Newsletter February 2021

Vol 14 No.2

Chairman's Notes, contributed by Geoff Hampson

Hello and welcome to our February Newsletter.

As I am starting to write this piece the sun is shining on a cold wintry day with a good covering of snow which looks really nice. I am sure I wouldn't have been thinking that if I was just leaving home at 5am in the morning for what was my daily commute of some 22 miles when I was still working.

However, it was lovely to see all the children enjoying it which I feel sure made for some light relief at these difficult times.

The more I long to return to singing the more difficult the picture seems but it is great to see some of our members and supporters are beginning to get their first vaccines and the odd ones have had their second. How fantastic are our NHS, Scientists and our Armed Forces, it is unimaginable to think where we would be, if as some predicted it might have taken at least a couple of years before a vaccine would have been available.

I should also include the fantastic army of volunteers who have offered to help out with the roll out of the vaccine service. We have a few in **David and Chrissy Wright** and **Phil and Carol Lunn** who joined the ranks, David and Carol have already helped out at Measham Leisure Centre the North West Leicestershire Vaccine Centre.

We have been looking at how we might return to some kind of normal rehearsal but of course it is almost impossible at the moment to see how and when any restrictions might be lifted so for now at least all we can do is carry on as best we can but above all keeping safe and well, getting together much as we have since last March.

With most of our weekly news covered by David's excellent catch-ups there is little more to add but hopefully once we get up and running again we will have much more news to share and we are all certainly looking forward to seeing you all.

It is with much sadness I have to report the passing of **Terry Bassett**.

Terry joined the choir in 1979 until ill health forced him to resign in 2010 after which he was made a Life Member. He was in the Baritone section of the choir for his 31yrs of service, he also sang solo occasionally and was an auditor for the choir for 16yrs.

Terry will be remembered for his kindness to people, if anybody was in trouble he would be the first to ask if there was anything he could do.

He supported the choir when on tour and attended the festival held at the Maurice Lea Memorial Park every year. It was Terry who supplied all the materials for the popcorn stand and helped sell the popcorn.

I sang next to Terry myself when I first joined the choir and was always amazed how little he needed his copy when we were learning new music. He was a very experienced and accomplished singer. His love of singing and being a member of the choir was something Terry held very dear even when he wasn't well enough to attend. Unfortunately, again it is so sad we are unable to show our full appreciation and respect by not being able to be a part of Terry's funeral service, something he so much wanted.

We all wish Terry's family our heart-felt best wishes at this very difficult time.

MAVORO Ladies Club, contributed by Maureen Hickman

The Ladies would like to send their sincere condolences to the families and friends of both **Joan Clamp** and **Alma L'Oste Brown**. Joan and Alma were very active supporters of the Mavoro Ladies, Joan having been the Chairman for many years and Alma supporting many of their events and helping with Choir functions.

Joan Clamp by MAVORO Ladies

It was with great regret that we heard in January of the death of **Joan Clamp**.

Joan being the wife of Jack, a long-standing member of the choir not just in song but was always first to volunteer if anything was needed for the choir, i.e. music stands and boxes (which he made himself) for all the instruments etc.

GRESLEY MALE VOICE CHOIR

FESTIVAL PRIZE WINNERS - RADIO, TELEVISION and INTERNATIONAL CONCERTS

Jack and Joan went on all the choir tours, including America.

Joan was a hands-on very active member of MAVORO having been President for several years. She was made an Honorary President of MAVORO when she stepped down, for all her hard work in raising money for the choir and charities.

Joan was always at the forefront of organising socials for the choir including New Year parties, Spanish and Italian evenings, many of which were held at their very good friend's home of Rita and Ken Wildes. Joan and Jack would dress up in the appropriate costumes and take the lead in all the games and entertainment.

Joan and Jack loved dressing up so much that they would spend months making costumes so they could go to the Burton Arts Ball at the Burton Town Hall.

They will always be remembered.

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		

Post Christmas, contributed by Mick Robey

Let us start this month with some good news for a change. Last month I told you about the "ommer" I had received as a Christmas present which unfortunately has already been put to use, but more about that later. I want to start by telling you about all the other presents I received in January which, due to the Christmas holiday change from 5 days to 1 day meant our distant siblings were not able to visit and so all presents had to be posted. From a dear friend I received an enormous block of soap! It was about 4 times the normal size of a bar of soap and my first reaction was, are they trying to tell me something! Looking at it more closely it was wrapped in green paper and the printed label read "Gardening Soap". This conjured two thoughts in my head: was it to wash my hands when I returned home from the allotment or was it a hint that they intended me to wash all the vegetables I give them before I present them? My second gift was a Trompet, which no doubt many of you have not heard of. You will be familiar with the term "Sawn off shotgun", well this is a sawn off Trombone. It's about the size of a Trumpet and sounds just as nice but the way I play it, it's just as deadly as a shot gun! From my son in Abu Dhabi I received a Golfing Glove with which I was a little disappointed to say the least. Firstly, I thought gloves came in pairs but whether one got lost in the post I don't know because there was only one! What's more, my son knows I am right handed and the glove that arrived was for the left hand. Further to this it did not fit because I have all my gloves made individually to suit. You see, sixty years ago I cut my left hand index finger off and 7 years later they sewed it back on bent where it is still permanent today. So now I have to purchase gloves with a bent finger! Despite this disappointment, the grandchildren saved the day by buying me a new pipe but it was no ordinary pipe. You may have seen that some pipes are very special in that they have figures or faces carved on the bowl – this one had the face of now ex-President Trump carved on it. Knowing my grandchildren it was a trick pipe and sure enough, as I smoked the tobacco down to the bottom of the bowl, it ignited and exploded into a puff of smoke leaving an extinct Mr Trump and a bad taste in my mouth, literally. What a great present which I enjoyed immensely.

January turned very wet but for us, it was as wet inside as it was outside! I awoke one morning to find us without power. To get some light I drew the soaked lounge curtains and was faced with a flood. The bay window, complete with Christmas decorations and presents was under water which I traced back up to the ceiling. I raced back upstairs to the main bedroom above and swiftly emptied it of furniture to enable the carpet and floorboards to come up – hence the usefulness of the "claw ommer". I found flooded floorboards but no leak, just the trace of water coming from the adjoining bedroom underneath the dividing wall. We started a similar operation of removing furniture and on moving a bookcase from in front of the radiator we saw the fountain of water emanating (I used the word persisting at the time!) from the centre of the radiator. Pressurised water must have been leaking for at least several hours for it to soak through carpets, floorboards, ceiling joists and down into the lounge. The offending radiator was isolated and the mopping up operation began. As if that wasn't enough to cope with, during the next night I visited the bathroom which refused to flush. On lifting the lid off the cistern to remedy the situation, the inlet water deflector dislodged and another large fountain occurred flooding the bathroom floor. January cannot come to a close soon enough for us!

GRESLEY MALE VOICE CHOIR

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At least good news came from the gardening. I never stop my tomato plants in the greenhouse and profess to be picking tomatoes into early December. Well, I have this past week removed all the remaining tomato plants from the greenhouse and I still have own grown tomatoes to consume. That's a first for me. Combine that with the 28.3/4 inch long parsnips I am now harvesting (just sown loose in the ground) and the very sweet and tasty brussel sprouts, turnips, swedes, large leeks and cabbage at my disposal, I won't be going hungry anytime soon. I also learned a new tip this year which I have tried and works extremely well which I will pass on. I planted four fruit trees 4 years ago, one of which is a Bramley apple. Mine is not the usual all green fruit type but a nice orange, red and yellow skinned variety which looks more like an eating apple. I was informed if you remove the last of the fruit, wrap them individually in newspaper and store them in a cool place in a box, or as I did in a paper potato sack, they will keep for 3 months. We have been having apple puddings in all sorts of forms every Sunday from October and we used the last ones this weekend. They have kept as good as if I have just picked them off the tree. This past year there was a glut of apples, pears and plums and I have seen tons go to waste, so this is a good way of preserving apples for later (out of season) use.

To close this month, it would again appear we are turning the corner in our fight with the catastrophic virus, no doubt due to the fact that 7 million people, including many of our own members, have already received the long awaited vaccine. Personally, I believe the government have done a reasonable job given the uncertainty of a new type of virus, despite the fact our unfortunate mortality rate has now reached 100,000 which is the fourth highest in the world. The speed at which a vaccine has been produced is only just short of a miracle and we lead the world by far in the number of people that have been vaccinated. Yes, I believe things could have been improved along the way or performed differently, as the ambassadors of doom Laura Kuenssberg and Robert Peston keep telling us, but this is only with hindsight. Even I would make a good Prime Minister equipped with hindsight and I am sure we could all say similar! Let's hope many lessons are learned from it and our researchers continue to develop the necessary vaccines to combat all forms of mutations in the future. One thing that struck me as being the most odd a couple of weeks ago was when several people were fined for venturing five miles from their homes for exercise. We were told we must stay at home and exercise local and yet, letters were dropping through letterboxes in our area at the same time, telling us we must travel 40/50 mile to central Birmingham to get our vaccination jabs! We all have our own opinions and would have done something differently. Let us hope and pray we all stay healthy and positive and reach the common goal which we all desire very soon.

“Stay at Home, Stay Safe” and “Unwanted Item”, contributed by Eric Coxon

They said the world was closed today
So I went to have a look,
I found it with the shutters down
And the phone was off the hook.
So I stood there for a little while
But no one was around,
Then silence came and startled me
With the most alarming sound.
I asked him where the others were,
And why the streets were bare,
He whispered 'Life had ran away
While death was playing there'
'Oh no' I said 'It can't be true
For life is not afraid'
'But no one ever goes' he said
'Where death has ever played.'
I understood and walked away
As Hope was standing there
With Courage in her afterglow
And the sunlight in her hair.
She said 'Go home to those you love
This is no place to be,
For if we walk these streets today
Then no one shall be free'.
She threw her light to lead the way
And showed me where to go,

The very road that life had gone
Where the future flowers grow.
Then death showed me another way
But I didn't want to look,
So I stumbled home in time for tea
And I read another book.
It was called The World is Closed Today
And the streets we shouldn't roam,
The first line said 'Just please be safe'
And the ending - 'Stay at Home' stay safe.

Unwanted Item

Excuse me, is this the returns counter?
I'd like a refund for this year
or to exchange it for another one,
with less boredom, death and fear.

Sorry, I haven't a receipt for it.
You see, I got it as a gift.
Not the kind of year I'd have picked myself.
Not my colour. Doesn't fit.

Just look at it. Such a waste of time.
Hard to see what the appeal is.
I mean, who would want a year like this?
It's an annus horribilis.

Yes, I know that it's all frayed and worn,
and splitting at the seams.
But I'd barely slipped the darned thing on,
when it came apart on me.

I'd gladly swap it for a scarf or hat,
but if I can't, I do not mind.
My main wish is that you take it back:
I'd like to leave this year behind.

Brian Bilston



Secretary's Update – contributed by David Wright

GRESLEY MALE VOICE CHOIR - CONCERT/EVENTS 2021

All Concerts are being reviewed on a month by month basis

Please bear in mind there could be further amendments to the list below, extra concerts,
Uniform colour and start times all subject to change.

Tickets available from 07399 417995

Or online via "We Got Tickets" <http://www.wegotickets.com/gmvc>

DATE	VENUE	Post Code	Uniform
06/11/21	RBL Centenary Concert Gresley Old Hall		

I have still been unable to re-book any of the events that we have missed during 2020. We do however have a tentative booking, as above, for **The RBL Swadlincote Branch** who celebrate their 100th Anniversary this year. Hopefully we will be able to carry out this concert, but it is, of course, dependent on Covid restrictions and guidelines. I will be approaching all of the event organizers to re-book the missed concerts as soon as we have the go ahead. We will also try to accommodate further concerts as time allows. I will keep you informed as and when these bookings are confirmed.

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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If you wish, you can also request all data we hold on you to be deleted. If you receive your Newsletter as a printed copy and wish to cease receiving it each month, then please ring Mr D Wright, 07545 472774

Eric Coxon 31st January 2021