



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.

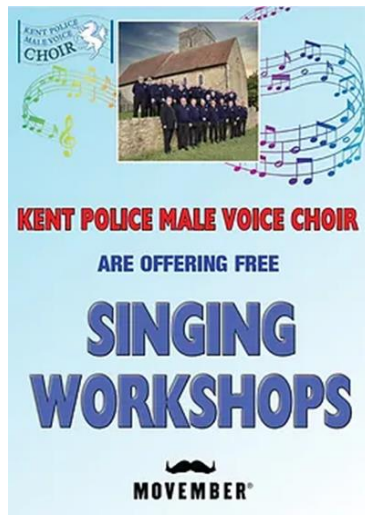
The Choir is open to serving and retired police officers, civilian staff, those with links to the service and also members of the community. It is an ambassador for Kent Police and is supported by them, although it is self-financing.

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.

MOVEMBER is coming!!

'Singing away the worries of the day!'

It's an established fact that choral singing is beneficial to individuals' well-being and contributes to developing positive mental health. Kent Police Male Voice Choir are offering an opportunity which is simple and will, we believe, be of benefit to any men prepared to join in. The overall aim of our project is to raise awareness of this and promote positivity through social interaction and co-operation between individuals by participating in singing workshops and rehearsals, culminating in a fun, relaxed and family-friendly fund-raising concert for the **Movember** men's mental health charity. The concert will take place at Invicta Grammar School Maidstone on Saturday 2nd November at 7.30pm and will be open to the public from whom audience participation will be expected! The legacy of our project and concert will, we very much hope, be for participants to choose to continue singing with the Kent Police Male Voice Choir thereby fostering social connection and interaction in a supportive environment; well-being through music-making; and a sense of purpose by contributing to charity concerts throughout the community of Kent. There will be no charge to take part in the workshops – all we ask is enthusiasm and willingness to commit to the project. *Read on for more details....*





Starting at the end of August, we will be staging five singing workshops in Maidstone, Pluckley and Borden. At the workshops, participants will learn to sing a number of simple pieces and be joined by current choir members who will offer support and encouragement. There is no requirement to read music but participants must be able to hold a tune. Our Musical Director, Martin Rendle, will be present to conduct the choir.

Workshop dates are:

Saturday 31st August and Saturday 14th September at Borden (The Forge) ME9 8JN

Saturday 21st and 28th September at Pluckley (Village Hall) TN27 0QZ

Saturday 12th October at Holy Family Church Hall, Maidstone ME15 9PS.

All between the hours of 11am and 1pm

More information is on our website www.kpmvc.co.uk Please get in touch if you would like to be involved.

For more information about **Movember**, please go to www.uk.movember.com



KPMVC prides itself on its work over the years raising money for good causes.

On 6th April, KPMVC gave a concert at St Peter & St Paul Church, Yalding. The funds raised from the concert were in support of the **SchoolGambia**.

For the last 24 years the charity has supported a school and its village in The Gambia, West Africa. From a gathering on 80+ children with two untrained teachers under a mango tree, the school has developed into two buildings of 16 classrooms, employing 25 trained teachers, three ancillary staff and a senior management team. They have built a well for fresh water, two toilet blocks, a computer suite, solar electricity, and market for food vendors. In 2023 the charity built and stocked a large library and have written a Gambian reading scheme. As a result, pupils gain top results in national exams. The charity is also pleased to be supported by students and teachers from the Sir Roger Manwood school in Sandwich who spent two weeks earlier this year at the school.



PIG TALES AND ALE

In the dim and distant past the KPMVC met up with a Male Voice Choir from the Kitchener/Waterloo area of Canada. These boys and their partners were on a short tour of the UK. They were an absolutely great bunch of guys. who knew how to entertain folk and really enjoy life. They all resided in an area not far from Niagara Falls - a magic area especially in "the Fall."



Amongst this group were two "larger than life" ladies, who also had the gift of living life to the full; both having spent time serving Canada in the Wrens. Mary and Mamie (some of the older members of KPMVC will remember them), were so much fun to be with and followed their Police Choir wherever they performed. Having so enjoyed the company of the choir (and Mary and Mamie). it seemed logical that we should pay them a visit on their home soil!

So it happened that a small group of our Choir arranged as visit to Waterloo, and hopefully sing with our friends from "across the pond". Jan and I were billeted with Mary, who really was a laugh a minute, so much fun and wanting to show us as much as possible of Canada. She met us on her doorstep and our fun started straight away. After getting rid of our luggage Mary suggested that we go to "The Club" for lunch "The Club" was the local Naval Club not far away. and this was to become our second home. Such a warm welcome was given, and was asked the all important question "What are you drinking?" The face on the young lady at the bar was something to behold when I replied, "A bitter beer please, an ale and preferably a dark ale." Her face really was a picture! She told me that they didn't have a beer of that description on tap, but she could get a keg in for me with one stipulation - I had to drink it all before we left Canada. She kept her side of the bargain and I did my very best to finish the barrel. I don't know whether I managed, but I did try to keep my promise. The kitchen at the club provided a substantial menu. which included a much-loved dish of pig tails - YES! PIGS TAILS, and they were great! If you could overlook the part of the pig's body they came from, they really were tasty with plenty of meat.

We visited the club at least once a day and sometimes twice, and on several occasions dined on the celebrated pig's tails. Well, when in Rome etc. I distinctly remember that the dance craze during our visit was the "Macarena". and most of the females at the club would drop whatever they were doing (including serving pints and meals) to dance whenever that particular music came on; and it did frequently! I wonder how many of our readers remember that dance? Memories come flooding back as well of a "garage barbecue" _ with three KPMVC chaps trying to entertain the assembled throng with their version of a "song and dance" act. but maybe more of that in the next edition. For now - stay happy! **Roy Waller**



~ Two for the Price of One ~

On Saturday 6th July, KPMVC joined with the Maidstone Choral Union for their Summer Concert at St Martin's Church in Maidstone.



The evening was a fantastic celebration music and singing, spanning all musical genres from classical choral pieces to songs from shows and traditional spirituals. MCU, the concert host, performed eight pieces including a moving arrangement of *Avia Maria* attributed to Guilio Caccini & Vladimir Vavilov, and culminating with *Gloria and Cum Sancto Spiritu* from Vivaldi's Gloria. KPMVC also performed eight songs from their repertoire including the ever popular *Bring Him Home* from Les Miserables and a newer addition to their programme: *The Wellerman*, a sea-shanty recently made popular on social media. The two choirs joined together for *You'll Never Walk Alone* at the end of the first half and raised the roof for the finale with *The Rhythm of Life*.

It was a privilege to welcome Councillor John Perry the new Mayor of Maidstone. The Musical Directors for the two choirs were Ciara Considine (MCU) and our own Martin Rendle. The accompanists were Phil Horley for MCU and Karen Barton-Holman, both of were applauded for their performances, playing together (on one piano) for the *Rhythm of Life* – quite an achievement. We should also mention that two chaps sang the whole programme – Clive Lewis and William Lay – being members of both choirs.

At £10 a ticket – definitely, amazing value demonstrated by a sell-out audience (despite the England match on TV!!).



Accompanists Karen Barton-Holman and Phil Horley



KPMVC members Clive Lewis and William Lay sporting their MCU bow ties and jackets as they perform in both choirs

**St Paul's, Yalding
Saturday 6th April**



Audience participation for "A Policeman's Lot"

**St Peter & St Paul, Headcorn
Saturday 8th June**



Martin demonstrates the choreography for "A Policeman's Lot"

2024 Concerts

Singing Workshops

All from 11am to 1pm

Saturday 31st August

Saturday 14th September

The Forge, The Street, Borden

Saturday 21st and

28th September

Pluckley Village Hall, Station Road

Saturday 12th October

Holy Family Church Hall, Bicknor Road,

Maidstone

Concerts

Saturday 7th September 7.30pm

St George's Church, Wrotham

Saturday 5th October 7.30pm

St Mary's Church, Teynham

Saturday 2nd November 7.30pm

Movember Concert

Venue Invicta Grammar School, Maidstone

Saturday 7th December 7.30pm

Christmas Concert

St Michael the Archangel Church,

Smarden

Saturday 14th December 2.30pm

Christmas Concert

St Paul's Church, Canterbury

Saturday 21st December 7.30pm

Christmas Concert

Ss Peter & Paul Church, Borden

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

Things are not always quite what they seem

Bob Day recounts two incidences involving the delivery of a “sudden death message.” Not the most pleasant of duties for any police officer. Thankfully, there was a more light-hearted side to each tale.

One Ashford night duty shift I'm crewed up with a young WPC when we get a call to Kennington. An elderly man has passed away but the doctor cannot issue a death certificate. We arrive at the property; a bungalow and we are met by the deceased sister and his son. All of whom lived at the address.

We were shown into the room where the gentleman lay. Following examination of the body for no suspicious marks etc. we left the room. As we did so I noticed a piano with the lid up exposing the keys. I then explained to the sister and the son that I had a series of questions I needed to ask them. A form for the coroner known as the “Blue Form” (although it was white) needed to be filled out. We sat down in another room and I started the paperwork. After a few minutes, all of a sudden, it sounded as though someone was running their hand along the piano keys from one end to the other. The hairs on the back of my neck stood up! I looked at the wife and she went white. Immediately in my mind I thought that the man had come back to life and played the piano. We

all jumped up and ran into the room where he was. I checked his pulse; he was still dead. Then we discovered what had played the piano. A cat! It had run along the piano keys.



It was 1997, I was on the late turn at Ashford Police Station. Early into the shift I was called into the front office given the details of a sudden death which occurred in West Germany. The deceased was a male who, I believe was in his 50s or 60s. His next of kin was given as his wife who lived in South Ashford. This was to be my first death message. I then thought of my training and decided to put that into practice. The lady lived in a row of terraced houses. I first went to her neighbours on both sides but got no reply. When I then knocked on her door, thankfully she answered.

“Good afternoon, are you Mrs?”

“Yes.” she replied. “Can I come in please?” I asked, and she invited me in.

“Would you care to sit down? I have some bad news to give you.” After she had sat down, I explained the reason for my visit.

“I'm sorry to have to tell you that your husband has passed away suddenly in West Germany.”

“Oh, that's alright” was her response. “We've been separated for 20 years!”



Just when you thought Kent Police Male Voice Choir was established in 1978, this pops up.

This choir was formed at Dartford Police Station in the early 1950s and was conducted by Sgt Sam Kimbell.

(Thanks to John Pearce for this anecdote from the archives)