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# THE CLARION

Newsletter of the Nelson Arion Male Voice Choir

President:- Ruth E. Sutton

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Editor: Gerry Brown    **SPRING SUPPLEMENT**

[www.nelsonarion.org.uk](http://www.nelsonarion.org.uk)    2009

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## From our Chairman

Elsewhere in this issue of The Clarion you will find extensive coverage of the choir's participation in the Cornwall International Male Voice Festival in Truro. I can only echo the thoughts of our Conductor, expressed at a recent committee meeting, when he said 'Performing at the festival proved a very rewarding experience and the choir lifted its standards, both in rehearsals and at the festival itself. The choir deserves commendation for its efforts.' High praise indeed from a notoriously demanding musician.

Whilst the festival, has tended to dominate our thoughts, the choir also performed concerts in March, at Gisburn, and in April at Gargrave, as well as Music In May at St Thomas's, Barrowford, only a few days after returning from Cornwall. Again, a review of Music In May can be found elsewhere in this issue, but we were heartened by the audience response to the other concerts, and were glad that the organisers expressed pleasure at our efforts, and were able to raise substantial sums of money.

Our singing activities continue unabated, at least until our summer break in mid-July, and we are particularly looking forward to the visit of the Aurin Girls Choir from Hungary. Those who have heard them on previous visits say that they are really something special, so I urge you to come to St Thomas's on 28<sup>th</sup> June when we shall have the privilege of sharing a concert with them.

## Dates for your Diary

Tuesday 9th June 2009

**Grand Opening**

**of the new**

**Ace Centre**

**NELSON 7/30 pm**

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Sunday 28th June 2009

**In Concert**

**with**

**AURIN GIRLS CHOIR (Hungary)**

**St Thomas's Church**

**BARROWFORD 2/30 pm**

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Sunday 19th July 2009

**In Concert**

**Gibbon Bridge Hotel**

**CHIPPING**

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Sunday 4th October 2009

**In Concert**

**Downham Church**

**Nr CLITHEROE 2/30 pm**

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Saturday 24th October 2009

**Celebrity Concert**

**with**

**Special Guest Sean Ruane (Tenor)**

**Municipal Theatre**

**COLNE 7/30pm**

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Saturday 21st November 2009

**In Concert**

**Wilpshire Methodist Church**

**BLACKBURN 7/30 pm**

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Saturday 28th November 2009

**In Concert**

**United Reformed Church**

**CLITHEROE 7/30 pm**

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We shall finish our concert season by performing at the prestigious and exclusive Gibbon Bridge Hotel at Chipping, where, besides performing for the diners, we are to have a 'photo shoot' in the beautiful grounds.

Finally, at our AGM in July, I shall not be seeking re-election as Chairman, Barbara and Gerry Brown will not be standing as Treasurer and Asst. Secretary, and we also need a new Librarian. Choir members have been aware of this for some months, and I am looking for 'new blood' to fill the vacancies. I am sure that I shall still be involved in the running of the choir in some capacity, but the time has come for a change, with new ideas and a fresh approach. **Ken Hollas**

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**LETTERS**

**This is a response to an invitation sent to the Welsh Youth Choir - YSGOL GERDD CEREDIGION, to bring their kind of music to Lancashire.**

Dear Mr. Brown,

Thank you very much for your kind invitation. The lads will be delighted to hear that you enjoyed their .....

**Letters Cont'd...**  
performance.

We had a wonderful weekend in Cornwall and the warm reception of the audience and choirs at Padstow was one of the highlights. It was unfortunate that we had to leave to return home at the interval. It was a long journey and as it turned out we didn't get home until 3.30 a.m.

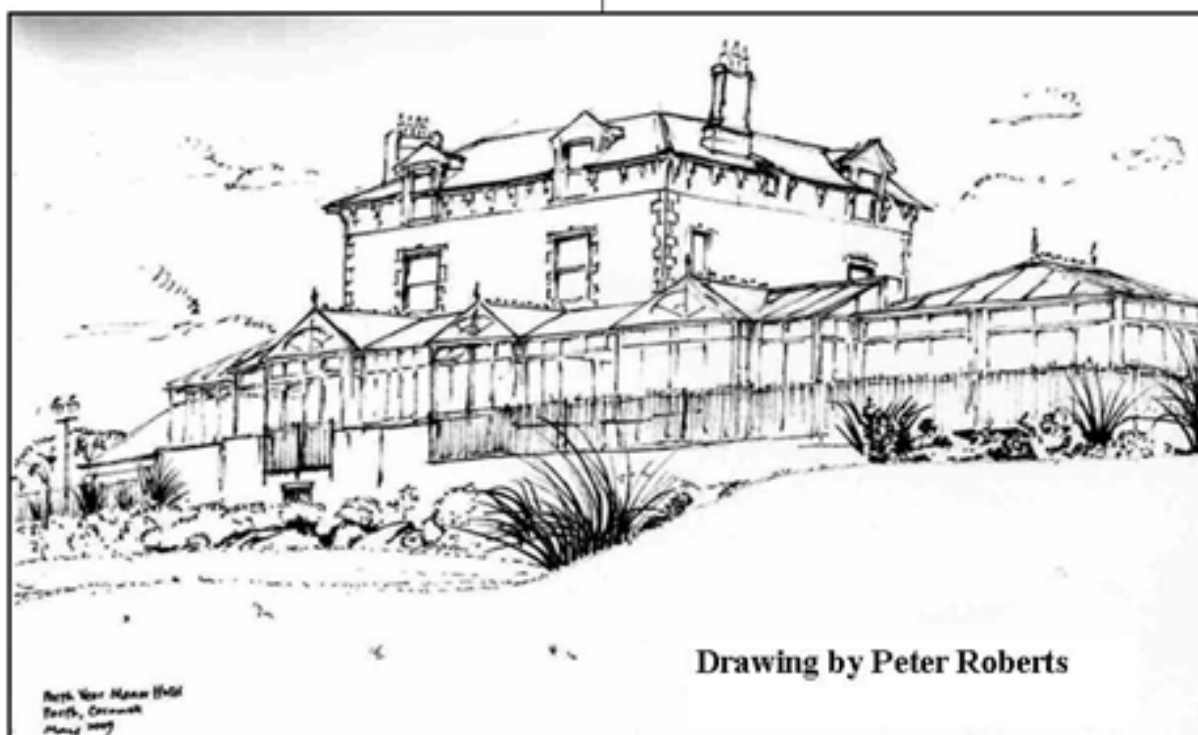
The nature of how our group works amazes me at the best of times. Although I have taught the boys from a young age, several of the lads are now at university, three are working whilst the others are still at school. I can never plan too far ahead as the lads have to put work and educational demands (exams) first. Consequently all major performances have to be organized around school and college vacations

As much as I would love to take the lads to Lancashire I think it would be beyond our means at present.

I'm sorry to disappoint you but thank you once again for your very kind invitation.

Best wishes to you and the choir,

Islwyn Evans



Drawing by Peter Roberts

## TRURO FESTIVAL

The choir were rewarded for making the long journey to Cornwall over the early May Bank Holiday weekend with a creditable second place at the Cornish International Music Festival held in Truro. It was a logistical feat to get the choir and supporters to the Duchy in a mixture of cars planes and trains to compete in the under forty voice male choir class which was held in the Hall for Cornwall an impressive theatre in the main square of the town centre. First place was given to 'Eight in a Bar' a Cornish choir of sixteen voices singing close harmony arrangements. A question was raised with the Festival Director. How were the adjudicators able to fairly judge the performances of a choir with 16 voices against choirs singing 40 voices and under? Was it not easier for a Musical Director to train 16 singers to perfection? The response?. "Actually judging 16 singers against 40 or even 100 voices is very easy. You are listening for phrasing, singing in tune, blend, tone, expression and audience communication amongst other things. The key thing with a smaller group of singers is blend. It is much easier to achieve this with a large group than with a small one. Voices stick out much more in a small group than they do in a larger choir. The great delight for us was the range of repertoire that 'Eight in a Bar' sung and the blend and dynamic range they exhibited singing it". So there we have it!



**Pat & Paul Wrathman aboard  
The King Harry Ferry**

The stars of the festival were two youth choirs from Moscow and Wales (see letters) and the Arion had the pleasure of sharing a concert with each of them on Friday evening before the competition at St. Agnes and the Sunday following at the fishing village of Padstow, made famous recently by the chef Rick Stein. Cornwall was alive with music over the bank holiday as the competing choirs performed at various venues including the Eden project and the Lost Gardens of Heligan. The Arion stayed at **Porth Veor Manor Hotel**, north of Newquay, where they enjoyed the warm Cornish hospitality and some bracing walks along the coastal path in their free time.

On Saturday afternoon members and guests were able to take the ferry to St Mawes before returning to their hotel for a sumptuous meal. **Yes, the Hotel did us proud and are to be congratulated on their very high standards. DR/Ed**

*A special thank you to everyone who sent cards and flowers of appreciation for organising your weekend. To the drivers Paul Wrathman, Roy Webb & Peter Belton, thanks for doing a super job.*

*Gerry & Barbara Brown.*

## MUSIC IN MAY

It was standing room only at St Thomas's Barrowford when the Nelson Arion presented their Music in May concert. The demand for seats was indicative of the popularity of the young guests Arden Youth Choir and tenor soloist Craig Jackson.....

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## MUSIC IN MAY *Cont'd...*

The Arion, fresh from their success at the Cornish International Music Festival, opened the concert with the four pieces they performed in competition including the delightful classic "Hush Sweet Lute" by Stanford. The Julie Andrews song "My Favorite Things" was given a humorous twist when we were reminded of the problems of old age.

Craig, accompanied by his father Barry, was a member of the Arion boy's choir and later trained with Susan Eames is now studying at the Birmingham Conservatory of Music. He sang Maria from Bernstein's West Side Story with the confidence and maturity of a much older voice.

Next was the Arden and they sang the contemporary "Tears in Heaven" written by Eric Clapton with the sensitivity it demands. They ended the first half with a lively "Cantate Deo" borrowing the water music theme by Handel.

Later Craig gave a sensitive performance of a Britten arrangement "O Waly Waly" perhaps better known as The Water is Wide. This was followed by the neopolitan song "Catari Catari" or Calling for You, where his soft tenor voice reached the high notes beautifully.

The girls demonstrated the tongue twister Peter Piper at breakneck speed contrasting this with Hushabye Mountain from the film Chitty Chitty Bang Bang and ending their session with a song they have made their own "The Rose." Both choirs joined together for the finale "Rhythm of Life" and what better way to end an evening of youthful music making. **Duncan Read.**

*How pleased we were to see support from the Briercliffe & Earby Community Groups. Ed.*



**Walter Nutter** has been Librarian for a number of years, but ill health has meant that he has had to resign his position. **Thank you Walter for a job 'well done'.**

The choir library has recently been moved to St Luke's Church at Brierfield and the choir are very grateful to **Neville Hudson** and **Tony Hughes** for all the hard work they put into this project. We will be looking for a new Librarian at the AGM.