**Annual Report for 2011-12**

We started our year with high hopes for a bigger Youth choir in our new surroundings and with our newly acquired piano but we failed to attract previous members from Cloughey, and no new children arrived! After 3 weeks we were forced to admit that this was not going to work. However, refusing to be beaten, we did a big publicity splurge with a jollier poster and fliers which invited anyone and everyone to Come and Sing for Fun, and we relaunched ourselves as The Peninsula Choir in October. It worked. By Christmas we had 14 members, all female, and we were able to join in with the Christmas caroling events in Greyabbey, Kircubbin and Cloughey. This was a very cheering end to a term that had started in such a disheartening way.

Starting up again in January, we gathered more members, and began to feel ourselves as a proper group, able to begin to explore a wide range of musical styles from rounds and canons, through Early Music, more classical and pop/rock. As the term progressed confidence grew and we decided to have a concert at the term’s end for friends and relations. Our programme reflected the work we had done, and included a few of the rounds with which we start our practices. The concert was a great success. We were not perfect, but we enjoyed ourselves being in front of a very sympathetic audience and were pleased with our performance. The evening ended with a marvelous buffet spread to which we all contributed and we ended the term feeling very satisfied with what had been achieved: a solid ‘group’ feeling, a greater confidence in our abilities, and an enthusiasm to take this forwards and find some challenges we might be able to meet.

During the concert evening brief contact was made with a member of the Portavogie Fishermen’s Choir and a light-hearted suggestion made that we might get together to sing as a full choir at some stage. We were also asked to sing for Cloughey Presbyterian Ladies’ Tea for a donation. And after the Easter Break we found ourselves invited to sing for an Assisi Sanctuary fundraiser at Harrisons Garden Centre. The future was looking good!

We are now about to begin work with the Fishermen’s Choir for a concert around Christmas time; the Cloughey Ladies Tea is put back to a date not yet fixed, and we did go to Harrisons, in May, where we experienced our first very public appearance, and again, were pleased with our performance which was well received and appreciated. There was no money offered for this, but we did not feel it would have been appropriate as it was for Assisi. For this occasion we borrowed a keyboard and experienced a few gremlins, which has made us focus on funds and funding.

During our third term we felt we should look for a proper electric piano for outdoor gigs or where a piano is not available. Some members went to a car boot sale at Mount Stewart, and this raised over £100. Grants are hard to come by and seldom are available for capital funding, so we need to find ways to generate enough income for our needs. We also need to purchase proper folders for performances, and a few music stands would be very useful for songs requiring body percussion.

We now have 21 members, with ages ranging from 10 to 60+. I am delighted with the progress we have made. Above all there is an atmosphere of joy and pleasure in our weekly meetings as abilities have been tested, ears more keenly tuned and confidence increased. We have discussed the possibility of entering a Choir Competition, and will continue to look for bookings for functions such as the above mentioned.

We ended our year with a party at Sara’s house on a beautiful summer evening with wonderful food, and great cheer.

It has been a very joyful year for me, working with such a keen group, and I hope we can continue to expand our membership and our repertoire over the coming year, and find many more opportunities of bringing our love of singing to the wider community.

My thanks go to all our friends and Choir members, and especially the Committee – Sara Brown, Bubsy Stephens and Carol Orchard. Sara has stepped down as Treasurer, and this task has been taken by Donna Moore. We are also very grateful to Maxwell’s Courtyard who have made us so welcome.

So we look forward with enthusiasm to another successful and harmony-filled year.

***Bee Kupicha.***

***Chair of the Peninsula Choir***

***4 September 2012***