**Annual Report for 2012-13**

Another happy year for the Peninsula Choir!

We began the year in September 2012 with a few new members, and over the course of the year we lost our teenagers and some other members, but gained several more ladies just after Christmas, and this has become a very solid group, whose ability and confidence has grown noticeably. We are now firmly an all-women group.

The Choir held and took part in several events. Our first outing was to sing at a Charity fundraiser for Assisi held at Harrison’s Garden Centre. This was the biggest audience we had sung for, so far, and the Choir did very well. We borrowed a keyboard for this occasion, which led us to think about getting one of our own. At Christmas we sang in the Square in Portaferry for the lighting of the Christmas Tree, and again in Kircubbin for their celebrations. We then held our own Christmas Concert in Maxwell’s Courtyard. This event was very well attended. We decorated the room with fairy lights and Christmas trimmings, and afterwards had mulled wine and mince pies with our audience. We also managed to video the concert, which was to give us much pleasure to see, but also pointers to further improvements – very valuable indeed, and it also prompted us to think about a more sympathetic venue, acoustically, for the next concert which was to be our Midsummer Music concert. For this we hired the Abbacy Church, Portaferry. Again, the venue was packed with friends and visitors, and we really appreciated how much better the sound was for us all. The concert was followed by a small feast (!) in the church as the weather let us down. Finally, a smaller group met for extra rehearsals after the year’s official end, to work up 3 songs for the wedding of the daughter of one of our members. For this Carol, our pianist, was not available, so Michael Yeomans took over, and the event was a great success.

At all our concerts we hope to get donations, and our audiences are always generous. Out of these donations we aim to give 1/3 to a Good Cause, and thus it was that at Christmas we were able to send Leukemia Research £75, and from our Midsummer concert we gave £120 to Love Ukraine, a cause dear to the heart of one of the Choir.

We realized this year that we would need a proper electric piano that could accompany us when we sing in a place that has no piano. Therefore after a great deal of research on the part of Carol Orchard, we found the very thing and it has already proved its worth for us. Of course this was a large expense for the Choir’s slender resources, but we have not only raised money through our concerts, but during the year we had a Seed Swap and attended another Car Boot Sale. The piano is not completely paid for yet, but we are confident that this transaction will be completed during our first term.

We have thinking how we can raise our profile, this year. A Facebook page was set up, and an attempt was made to set up a website, but neither of these were a success! We have a permanent presence in Around the Ards in the Chronicle, and posters and flyers are distributed around the area for concerts. We seem to attract members mostly by word of mouth, and have no trouble filling seats for our concerts, but we would like to attract bookings and need to find a way to do this. Over this year we have begun to feel that we have a body of work that we could dust off and perform at short notice, but it has taken this year to arrive at a place where we feel confident in our abilities, so we are now ready, I believe to begin to show ourselves to a wider audience. We had hoped to join together with the Portavogie Fishermen’s Choir for a Christmas concert, but it has been extremely difficult to move this further than a Good Idea, and we have abandoned this for the time being.

Our Choir is a source of great joy and pleasure to all our members. We come from such a diversity of backgrounds and a mix of ages, but when we meet on Tuesdays the outside world melts away, and for many this is one time in the week where one can forget everything but the music, the harmonies, the concentrated endeavor of the work, and the feeling of being absorbed into the oneness of the singing. This translates into a very happy atmosphere when we sing, and because of this we would like to be more of service to the community with our singing, perhaps by going to Care Homes in the area, and we plan to sing in the Ulster Hospital near Christmas time.

Membership of the Choir stands at around 20 now, and we expect a few new members in the year ahead. Our Treasurer, Donna Moore, decided to step down from this position due to family circumstances, and Christine Jendoubi is now our new Treasurer. I would like to thank the committee for all they do for the Choir, helping it to be the success it has become.

We look forward to many challenges, both musically and in our meetings with the wider world, and hope to go from strength to strength.

***Bee Kupicha***

***Choir Leader and Chair***

***Date: 3 September 2013***