

Annual Report for The Peninsula Choir 2014 - 2015



Our Choir year began with a publicity push in the Chronicle, which attracted a healthy influx of new members, increasing after Christmas to the sum of 30, at this point we decided to start a waiting list as this number feels optimum for our group. It is wonderful to have such a committed group, and the standard of our performance just gets better.

Carol Orchard stood down from the Committee and Cheryl Williams was co-opted. Cheryl's focus has been on publicity, and we now have a presence on facebook. This together with our website has given us a lot of presence on the internet and brought positive feedback and interest. Christine Jendoubi has continues to maintain our website. Christine and Cheryl attended a Making Music workshop in Belfast, which was focussed on how groups could raise their profile for membership and performance purposes. This was a very useful experience. Cheryl's contribution to publicity has been invaluable and has laid the foundation for more co-ordinated action for forthcoming events. Sara Brown purchased 2 'penguins' bearing our name and our now-official logo, which she also designed. Of course, publicity involves a lot of distribution of fliers and posters, and everyone was involved in this, so it really is a group effort. Christine has been meticulous in the regularising of our copyright licenses for performances and the production of CD's and making sure we all understood the importance of this. We have also been looking at our Constitution, and Bee Kupicha and Christine J undertook to revise it so that it more truly reflects who we are and is sufficient for our needs. We hope this will be ratified at this AGM.

The period up to Christmas was extremely busy for us. For the first time Portaferry and Strangford Trust (PAST) proposed turning the ferry into a Carol Ship for a weekend in December, and to help launch this event the Choir was invited to Stormont to entertain politicians, councillors and other interested parties gathered there. We thoroughly enjoyed this gave a rousing performance, and afterwards had our photo taken on the Great Staircase! The Carol Ship itself was a lot of fun too, and we will do it again. In addition we went to the Ulster Hospital and sang in the foyer and on one of the wards. We will repeat this too, visiting more wards this time. The Gateway Club in Newtownards asked us to come and sing for their Christmas final gathering which we felt to be really worthwhile, and we sang in Kircubbin for the Christmas lights switch-on. These events all took place between November and December, so it was just as well that we had not planned on having our own Christmas Concert as we would not have had time to do it justice.

After Christmas a group of us went to Belfast for the annual Belfast Philharmonic 'Come and Sing' event. As usual we all enjoyed the day, and the programme of music was varied this year, to cater for wider tastes and abilities. We also visited Ard Cuan and Barrhall nursing homes in Portaferry, and had a lovely time with the residents. Apart from being enjoyable, this activity does not require the full choir or a keyboard, so it makes it easier to arrange.

Our two biggest singing events were Bangor International Choral Festival in April, and our own concert in May. We decided to enter the Competition, not with a hope of winning, but to give ourselves an idea of what other choirs are doing and the standard of achievement we may, or may not have achieved. It was thoroughly enjoyable and the Choir sang beautifully, in spite of Bee giving them a false start! We were in a group of 5 for the Ladies Choir section, and the winning group was so slick! Really excellent. But our report from the judges was very fair, with no surprises, and a good bit of praise for us. It is not something we will be aiming to do much of in the future, but we felt it was a really useful experience.

At the beginning of May we held our own Concert in Ballywalter Village Hall. The facilities there were very good, the acoustics kind to us, and we played to a packed house (extra chairs were squeezed in at the back, which was very gratifying). The wonderful audience stayed for a great spread of food produced by the Choir, and it was a very happy evening all round. Our charity donation from the proceeds of this evening was given to FASA in Ballywalter.

We had two major fundraising events as well – The Seed Swap in March, at Donna Moore's house, where, as well as a great selection of plants there was a serious spread of cakes and buns indoors, for which all were grateful as it was a chilly day. As usual, a great success. And we also had The Pub Quiz in June - again, a hilarious night, and both these events raised a good sum for us. Thanks must go to those who worked so hard to make these events a success, particularly Donna and her sister Martine, Madge Smart and Christine Jendoubi.

Finally we thank Mike Yeomans who continues to be our accompanist, with his usual wit and flair, and I thank everyone, singers and supporters of our Choir, for helping this be yet another happy and successful year.

Bee Kupicha
Chair and Choir leader
September 2015