

CORNWALL COMMUNITY CHOIR

More and more people are joining choirs and taking up singing as a hobby. There are rock choirs, school choirs, male voice and ladies choirs, church choirs, work choirs and community choirs, the vast majority of which meet in an evening.

Many people struggle to get out and about due to a lack of transport and some people are particularly worried about going out on dark nights. Young mums and dads are sometimes pre-occupied with family commitments in the evenings and are unable to commit to an evening choir. A new singing project in West Cornwall could change all that.

St Erth based music teacher, organist and choir trainer Neil Shepherd is more than aware of a huge new interest in singing. The BBC's "Last Choir Standing" has had a major affect on the resurgence of interest in singing generally. Other prime time tv programmes like "X Factor" and "Britain's Got Talent" have contributed to the current resurgence of interest. Neil formed a small chamber choir with 12 singers in March of this year and now has over 40 people meeting regularly at Paul Church near Penzance. Now with over 40 members, "Laudate!" is in huge demand for events throughout Cornwall. Neil also conducts the well known Newlyn male Choir and the Bristol based Schola Cantorum Choir.

Neil's next project, "**Cornwall Community Choir**" will be just that, an open "fun" style Choir with no auditions catering for a wide range of people including young parents who may not be working during the day, retired and unemployed people. Everyone from 18 to 98 will be welcome with the accent on "singing for fun" and, in Neil's own words:

"Everyone from 18 to 98 is welcome to come and join in this exciting new project – these informal groups will include everything from folk songs to Abba!, including spirituals, show tunes, part songs, light classics and a host of other music besides"

He explains:

"People will be able to travel to their choir rehearsal during the daytime, with more mature members able to make use of free bus passes. They will not have to be concerned about dark nights and evening parking charges, and they will be home in time to enjoy the 6 o'clock news. But this will not be an inferior group musically, it will be group of singers who work to achieve a high standard and entertain its audiences".

"Another unique aspect of the Cornwall Community Choir will be singing in five-part harmony. As well as the traditional soprano, alto, tenor and bass lines, we will introduce the opportunity to simply sing the melody line. This means that anyone who has no previous singing experience can sing the tune to their heart's content. There will also be social trips and opportunities to meet up with other Afternoon Choirs."

The first meetings of the "**Cornwall Community Choir**" will be in early July with daytime rehearsals and the choirs will run all year round, with three groups initially running in Central Penzance, Hayle, St Ives and Truro. Everyone is welcome.

Neil would be interested in hearing from other choir trainers, accompanists and community musicians who may be interested in becoming involved in the project.

To register your interest, please contact Neil Shepherd on 01736 759944, e-mail him at neilshepherd@yahoo.co.uk or visit www.cornwallcommunitychoir.co.uk