

**Coming up ! Vivary Park,  
June 2nd, 3pm at the  
bandstand.**

## Letter to the editor

## “ Watch The conductor”

We should all heed this mantra and I do my best to follow his instructions. Once I've positioned myself to get a clear view of the conductor, all is well until people in the front row start moving side to side or even up and down ! This causes a ripple effect as I try to maintain my view. From recent audience comments, this is a distraction from our performance and loses focus on our singing. So please try to restrict your movements except when called for by the conductor.

Anon T1

## SELFIE

## Malcolm Phillips T2

Every Male Voice Choir needs some Welsh members and we are very lucky to have Malcolm amongst our second tenors. Malcolm won a scholarship from his Welsh village school to the local grammar school where he began his rugby career playing for the first fifteen. At one point, he had a trial at scrum half for Welsh

schoolboys with his fly half of the day going on to become a Welsh international at senior level. He went on to play for his university and the RAF. He qualified as a doctor at Sheffield University Medical School. He enjoyed his national service in the RAF so much that he signed up for a commission and served as an RAF Medic in many parts of the world rising to the rank of Wing Commander. After leaving the RAF he worked for a time in America and at the Royal Marsden Hospital in London. In 1970 he was appointed as the first clinical haematologist at Musgrove Park Hospital in

Taunton where he developed the Haematology and Oncology departments. He founded the Musgrove Leukaemia Group and became a member of the Medical Research Council Committee on Leukaemia in Children. He has also been elected a member of the American Society of Clinical Oncology, an honour requiring endorsement from the leading clinicians on both sides of the Atlantic. He is truly a remarkable man – he could even have been a baritone



## Me and my flute

## Nick Thomas

As you know, I play a number of instruments and people often ask me which one I enjoy playing the most.

The instrument I favour is the flute. I feel really connected to this instrument. I wish I had been born with a good voice but the flute is my voice. I have control of the sound I make by blowing, and I have developed a good sound and technique over the years, where I am now able to access and perform some of the most beautiful music by great composers.

It all started when I was quite young and was taught recorder in primary school, I eventually performed in the Bath festival and did well. Having had piano and violin lessons from a kind lady in my home village at about the age of 8 the recorder fell by the wayside, as often they do.

When I was 13 or so, my Grandfather brought home a flute from a sale. I don't even think he knew what it was. I soon made a sound on this and having an understanding of how wind instruments work through my recorder playing, took lessons at school and soon went through the exam system. I developed my technique by playing along to recordings of Mozart's flute concertos and being inspired by the beautiful sound of James Galway who was all the rage at the time. I also do a good Jethro Tull impersonation.

At college I gained a distinction for my final recital of French Flute music.

I have a forever flute now, which was made in Somerset by the brilliant flute maker Stephen Wessel and there is nothing more I like than to spend a couple of hours of uninterrupted practice and finding new music to challenge me, be it classical, folk or rock.

So when you see me play with my eyes closed I am in the "zone".

## Ron Williams

## VoiceMale editor

This Spring edition is my penultimate masterpiece! Due to holidays and consequential lack of 'copy' there'll be no VoiceMale in September. Please let me have your contributions for my final December edition by November 22nd. I've really enjoyed the singing this season... and your company. Wishing you all a wonderful summer, see you in September. Ed





### WHO IS IT ?

This choir member has met the conductor Neville Mariner, had an interesting tête-à-tête with Jade Jager (daughter of Mick), had tea with both Charles Dance and Robert Robinson, has met Craig Charles (Red Dwarf) and bumped into Hank Marvin. He has lived in the same house for 73 years but was born in Bristol and arrived in the area at 3 weeks of age having been fostered he thinks.

For nearly 40 years he was what the Zulus call a Injini yocingo. He plays in a popular local rock band.

### Grateful to All – Reflections on our Holland trip

Organising trips like the one we have just done to Holland is a bit like cooking a special dinner for friends. Takes all day to prepare but then gratefully devoured oh so quickly. The weekend away went like a flash although we fitted in much to keep our interest. When you are responsible for moving a large group around, you want it to appear relaxed and chilled and present a picture of the swan gliding effortlessly over the water, but paddling furiously beneath the waves.

When Hazel and I visited a couple of choirs in Holland last summer it was clear that Christelijk Mannenkoor “Prins Alexander” fully understood what we were attempting and their enthusiasm was not diminished when Stuart Gifford and I visited again in January this year. Stuart has been the economics man behind this trip and an excellent ‘brain to pick’ although he thinks that there is less of it than there was. Thanks must go to the high level of cooperation amongst the choir and wives for being timely and ever cheerful as we moved around. Would I do it again, probably! *Thanks to Steve Reed*



### RETURN FROM THE NETHERLANDS

I’m sorry we decided to leave you all for the return journey, but the idea of another 8 hours on the bus was not something I was keen on, and it seemed a shame not to call in on Amsterdam, since we haven’t been for several years. Travelling with a wheelchair can be a challenge, but not an insuperable one. You have to keep your luggage to a minimum, and leave plenty of time. Cobbles don’t help. Rotterdam Alexander, our first destination, is a small unmanned commuter station, just around the corner from the Alexander church- 2 tickets to Amsterdam cost a total of 31.50 euros. We had to travel into Rotterdam Centraal station, then change to catch the mainline train onwards. We didn’t have long to wait, for either train, and both were clean, comfortable and exactly on time. It was very interesting to see Rotterdam Centraal from inside. The whole roof



is made up of transparent solar panels. When you think about it, a large station roof is ideal for that purpose. The inter-city to Amsterdam Centraal was a double decker train, something we don’t have at all in the UK. It took just over an hour, going via Harlem. I believe there are quicker trains, but we weren’t in a hurry. We had a good time in Amsterdam mooching around, and visiting the Stedelijk museum, bit like Tate Modern; we made the naïve mistake of just turning up at the Van Gogh museum, and trying to buy a ticket. You need to book online in advance, for a timed slot. We also visited a fantastic new food hall in an old tram depot. A food hall is definitely what Taunton needs. In the evening we had a meal with Pat and Tony Moore, indifferent Italian food, but good company. The smell of cannabis still wafts around in the streets, as it always has, but, serious question, now that smoking indoors is banned in the Netherlands, how do the “coffee shops” still operate? Do you have to take the product away with you? I will have to go back and check. Our hotel was right next to the main station, and getting to Schipol Airport to catch a 10am flight was easy. There is a train every few minutes, for 5 euros, and it takes about 15 minutes. Schipol is a huge airport, but easy to navigate, and easyjet got us back to Bristol just a few minutes late, with a flight time of only 55 minutes. The weather was clear and, as we flew over Rotterdam, it was possible to see the main channel, and the barrier which we had visited. We then caught the Falcon Flyer bus home to Taunton Blackbrook, with the added advantage that, with a bus pass, that part of the journey was free. We were home in time for lunch, and then just had to collect our bag, which Paddy and Emilia had picked up for us; we didn’t tell them about the concealed drugs. I have to say though, we slept very soundly on our first night back at home!. *Barry & Jane Havenhand*

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## The story of the Bui Doi

The term *Bui Doi* refers to a child born sometime during the Vietnam War, whose father was an American soldier, and whose mother was Vietnamese (Amerasians). Literally translated, *Bui Doi* means "dust of life". These children, along with their mothers were the outcasts of the Vietnamese society, and were discriminated against by all. In 1975, approximately 50,000 children of mixed races were left behind in Vietnam. This was a massive problem. Obviously, each of those 50,000 kids was going to have to fight for their lives everyday, and many of them would die prematurely. Each day they congregated in a park called "Amerasian Park" not far from the former Independence Palace in Saigon. Most of those that lived on the streets. The lucky ones lived with grandparents and a few lived with their mothers. They all dreamed, of coming to the United States. They were, after all, American citizens by birth but without the ability to prove it -- other than with their complexion and features. When they heard that visiting



Americans were leaving Saigon, the usually gathered outside the hotel where the visitors were staying and watched them leave -- some waving, many crying, all of them hoping not to be forgotten. So, when the last U.S. military personnel fled Saigon on April 29 and 30, 1975, they left behind a country scarred by war, a people uncertain about their future and thousands of their own children. These children — some half-black, some half-white — came from liaisons with bar girls, “hooch” maids, laundry workers and the laborers who filled sandbags that protected American bases.

They are approaching middle age with stories as complicated as the two countries that gave them life. Growing up with the face of the enemy, they were spat on, ridiculed, beaten. They were abandoned, given away to relatives or sold as cheap labor. The families that kept them often had to hide them or shear off their telltale blond or curly locks. Some were sent to re-education or work camps, or ended up homeless and living on the streets. Forty years later, hundreds remain in Vietnam, too poor or without proof to qualify for the program created by the Amerasian Homecoming Act of 1987 that resettles the children of American soldiers in the United States.

Now, an Amerasian group has launched a last-chance effort to reunite fathers and children with a new DNA database on a family heritage Web site. Those left behind have scant information about their GI dads — papers and photographs were burned as the Communist regime took hold, and memories faded. So positive DNA tests are their only hope. *Washington Post* 2015

Find the musical instrument names. There are 16 names in each puzzle.

If you can't find them all, email **ANSWERS** to [Ron.Williams20@gmail.com](mailto:Ron.Williams20@gmail.com)

u	r	n	b	a	n	j	o	p	o	k	a	u	q	w
s	m	h	n	g	a	n	m	j	p	e	c	k	q	j
y	a	a	o	m	v	l	j	g	i	y	c	x	c	a
e	n	r	c	a	i	w	o	l	a	b	o	f	q	q
s	d	m	w	r	o	w	i	j	n	o	r	l	q	c
b	o	o	w	a	l	h	d	w	o	a	d	u	u	l
d	l	n	v	c	i	z	t	n	r	r	i	t	h	a
r	i	i	c	a	n	x	x	t	x	d	o	e	s	r
u	n	c	w	s	g	u	i	t	a	r	n	p	m	i
m	t	a	m	b	o	u	r	i	n	e	a	s	y	n
m	j	a	t	r	u	m	p	e	t	m	s	r	s	e
v	p	c	b	t	t	v	y	k	y	v	v	m	p	t
l	u	p	l	s	a	x	o	p	h	o	n	e	p	j
t	j	y	j	o	z	u	q	o	d	x	z	b	h	v
u	g	r	e	c	o	r	d	e	r	l	u	b	w	f

c	t	s	q	b	o	n	g	o	s	m	h	c	v	e
c	c	w	n	l	y	r	e	t	r	f	x	y	u	o
i	g	p	t	o	q	o	u	r	y	k	o	m	w	s
p	j	z	h	b	a	g	p	i	p	e	x	b	b	j
d	o	d	o	i	a	n	p	a	t	u	b	a	t	t
v	e	f	z	x	l	c	o	n	g	a	s	l	a	f
p	o	y	i	r	z	h	c	g	p	y	o	s	q	r
q	g	l	c	p	z	x	y	l	o	p	h	o	n	e
p	p	a	n	f	l	u	t	e	n	i	i	g	q	n
e	l	e	c	t	r	i	c	g	u	i	t	a	r	c
b	a	s	s	d	r	u	m	u	d	r	c	g	n	h
a	w	c	o	w	i	v	t	z	r	h	a	r	p	h
h	y	c	e	l	l	o	l	q	z	w	r	b	k	o
u	d	r	u	m	k	i	t	q	o	o	l	g	k	r
i	r	n	x	v	t	r	o	m	b	o	n	e	q	n