

Pontarddulais Male Choir - Côr Meibion Pontarddulais - is the **most successful competitive male choir** in Wales; it is internationally renowned, having performed in many parts of Europe as well as Canada and the United States.

Prior to 1960, under the leadership of the late [Noel Davies M.B.E.](#), Pontarddulais Youth Choir had been successfully competing in youth Eisteddfodau but soon became too old for youth competition. The desire of the young men to continue as a choir was strong, and so Pontarddulais Male Choir was born. Stepping into the hotbed of male choral singing was a momentous and courageous decision since at that time, as to this day, there were already several established and distinguished choirs within a relatively small area.

Within a few months, as a result of the infectious enthusiasm of the Musical Director and the commitment of members, the choir grew to over 80 voices. This qualified them to achieve chief choral status.

In 1963 the young choir entered its first Royal National Eisteddfod of Wales at Llandudno. To the astonishment of many people the choir gained a first place, ahead of some very illustrious competitors. Thus began the most successful competitive record of any choir in Wales. The choir is proud to have achieved a record sixteen first place wins and one second place at the Royal National Eisteddfod and also achieved two first places at the Liangollen International Eisteddfod.

Although choir membership has fluctuated over the years, it has never fallen below 100. This is due in no small part to the musical team and the enthusiasm of the choristers, particularly in view of the fierce competition locally from other male choirs and musical interests.

Our choir membership is drawn from all ages and walks of life, but everyone is part of the choir family.

Musical Director
Clive Phillips
Deputy Accompanist
Rachel Saunders
Principal Accompanist
David Last



PONTARDDULAIS MALE CHOIR

Côr Meibion Pontarddulais



Thinking about joining “Bont” male choir?

Inside are some of the frequently asked questions which should help you feel at ease if you want to give us a try.

We rehearse on
Monday & Wednesday evenings
7pm—9pm.

At
Pontarddulais Primary School,
James Street
Pontarddulais
SA4 8JD.

You will not be asked to do an audition; just a simple voice test to see in which section of the choir your voice is best suited.

A few questions answered !

Q. How does a male voice choir work?

A male voice choir is split into four vocal sections: top tenor, second tenor, baritone and bass (from highest to lowest). Each section sings their own line of music. When the four sections are put together they form a rich harmony - well at least it does with a little practice!!

Q. Which is the best/easiest/hardest section to sing in?

Ask anyone and they will tell you that their own section is the hardest and the best! Quite simply, the best section is the one that suits the range of your voice. No section is really harder than any other. Once you are allocated to a section you usually stay there for the rest of your singing career, however occasionally people's voices change over time and they may move to a new section after discussion with the musical director,

Q. Is my singing voice good enough?

This may come as a surprise but not every member of the choir is a Pavarotti. Everyone's voice is unique and no one is perfect. What is certain is that with practice, determination and enthusiasm, your voice will improve over time and you never know - you might be next soloist!

Q. Do I need an audition?

Okay, this is the one that everyone worries about, so let's get it over with. In order to put you in the correct choir section, it is necessary to know how high and how low you can sing. Everyone is different (thank goodness!) otherwise all the harmonies would be very boring!

Putting you in the wrong section could damage your voice so it is necessary to do a voice test with the musical director. He is, however, very sensitive to the fact that most people do not like singing solo and so only the two of you are present. It is NOT like the X factor and usually a few scales will do.

Q. Can I fail a voice test?

If after assessing your voice the musical director feels that you may struggle to sing in the choir, he will discuss this with you. However, in the vast majority of cases you will be allocated to a section and welcomed with a warm handshake.

Q. I cannot read music! Is this a problem?

Join the club! Many members of the choir cannot read music. But, what you do find is that after hours of staring at the black dots and squiggles, they do gradually start to make sense. You can quickly work out when the pitch goes up and down; which are quick notes and long notes; when to sing quietly and when to crank up the volume. Our Musical Director does a great job of telling us what we need to know and, eventually it sinks in.

Q. The choir has a large repertoire, how will I ever learn all those songs?

It can seem an overwhelming task to take on learning the choir's regular repertoire. But ask yourself this - how many times do you have to hear a song before you soon find yourself singing it? Probably not that many. By immersing yourself in your choir section you quickly absorb the material. In fact you will soon find yourself driving your family up the wall effortlessly singing songs whilst driving the car or doing the household chores!

Q. What does it cost?

The choir is a charity therefore we need to pay subs as members. When you first join, the first few weeks are free to give you time to settle in and to see if the choir is for you. The subs are paid monthly.

Q. How much time do I need to commit?

That is largely up to you. The choir rehearses twice a week.

Members can, however find that if they miss a week or so it can take a while to catch up. The more you put in the more you get out.

Q. I like the idea of singing but I am not sure about standing on stage in front of hundreds of people.

There is nothing like the nervous energy of dozens of choristers about to perform something they been practising for months. While it may seem daunting, the sheer number of people in the choir and your newly made friends soon give you the confidence to relax and simply enjoy the power of the sound you collectively make. And, after a good concert, it can take days for the buzz to die down.

Q. Who is in charge of the choir?

The choir itself. It is managed by a committee. All of the committee members are choristers themselves and meet to manage the business of the choir. Each of the choir sections has a representative on the committee and issues can be raised through them. Rehearsals themselves are managed by our Musical Director.

Q. How can I get more information?

We pride ourselves on having dedicated people within our membership who will ensure your smooth induction into the choir. Our choristers understand new members' concerns and challenges, as they have experienced these themselves.

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