



**Press Release**  
**1<sup>st</sup> February 2012**

On **Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2012** a unique Male Voice Choir concert will be staged in the church of St James the Great, Haydock, St Helens. **Starting at 7.30pm** two world class choirs will be joining forces to Raise the Roof with their amazing choral virtuosity.

**Warrington Male Voice Choir** is one of the oldest choirs of its kind in the United Kingdom, tracing its formation back to 1898. During its long history the choir has performed in many famous concert halls and cathedrals throughout Great Britain, Ireland, Europe and Canada. The choir has taken premier honours at all the principal music festivals in the North and, during the past decade, has demonstrated its choral quality and consistency by outstanding success in national and international competition.

Since the IRA terrorist bombing of Warrington town centre in 1993, the choir has been particularly active in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, promoting reconciliation and an end to sectarian violence. Close links have been forged with Irish peace groups and choir events have come to symbolise hope, raising expectations, strengthening faith and reaching across divisions. The choir has become internationally known as the "Choir for Peace", and it is appropriate that Terry Waite CBE is the choir's enthusiastic patron.



*The Warrington Male Voice Choir*

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The internationally recognised **Australian Welsh Male Choir** is also coming to Haydock as part of its current UK tour. The beginnings of the choir can be traced back to Christmas 1973 in Frankston, Victoria, when a group of predominantly Welsh expatriates, who loved singing, gathered together at the Frankston Pines Soccer Club. They formed a choir known as the “Cambrian Singers”, which gave its first performance on the 20th October 1974 at Glen Waverley as part of the first live outside broadcast in colour by ABC television. In April 1985, the choir became known as the Australian Welsh Male Choir.



In 1984 the choir toured the United Kingdom and became the first choir from outside Wales to sing at the 1000 Voice Festival of Male Choirs at the Royal Albert Hall in London. The Association of Welsh Male Choirs was so impressed by the choir’s singing of traditional songs in the Welsh language that the choir became the first choir from outside Wales to be offered membership.

2012 sees another UK tour for this splendid choir. Members plan to arrive in Manchester on 14<sup>th</sup> March and they will bring their outstanding musicianship to Haydock on the following Saturday.



*The Australian Welsh Male Choir*

### **Why Haydock?**

Apart from providing a near ideal venue for choral singing, the beautiful church of St James the Great, Haydock, has been at the heart of its community since 1866. Through the turbulent decades of the Victorian period the church with its distinctive worship and steadfast commitment served and sustained the surrounding working class families.

Down through the years the timber-framed building has suffered, not only the buffeting of wind and rain, but also the rather serious effects

of mining subsidence! Today the whole building leans towards the south, but still its work goes on.

Recently the church building has attracted the attentions of visiting scrap metal thieves. Their criminal vandalism may have gained them a few pounds in cash, but left in its wake many thousands of pounds worth of damage.

Of their generosity, these two famous choirs are acting in unison to help raise funds for the restoration of the church building. Replacing the waterproof membranes in valley gutters, repairing the window frames splintered as the lead was ripped away, making good the damaged roof structures, repairing and redecorating the water-damaged interior - all these need to be addressed if the church is to continue to serve its community. The choirs have generously given their services so that all monies raised by this event can count towards that worthy objective.

### **Tickets**

We'd like to invite all who love music to come to Haydock on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2012 for this choral extravaganza which can never be repeated. Tickets cost a mere £8 per person, and can be obtained from the Vicarage and from the Churchwardens. Allocation of tickets is on a "first come first served" basis, so to avoid disappointment contact us and secure your tickets very soon. Also you might like to arrive early on the night - doors open at 7.00pm - because the seats are not numbered so the early birds get the best!

Follow the church website for further details as arrangements unfold - the address is <[www.stjamesthegreat.org.uk](http://www.stjamesthegreat.org.uk)>.

Information about the choirs may be found on their websites, which are at <[www.warringtonchoir.org.uk](http://www.warringtonchoir.org.uk)> and at <[www.auswelshmalechoir.org.au](http://www.auswelshmalechoir.org.au)>.

**Don't delay - book today and help us to Raise The Roof!**