



## Andy Whittaker

### *A Tribute*

We have all been greatly saddened by the news that our friend and fellow chorister Andy Whittaker passed away on Friday 27 November at the Grange Hospital Llanfrechfa.

Andy had been a loyal member of Monmouth Male Voice Choir since he joined in 2013. With his mellow baritone voice and true understanding of music, he offered a dependable and reassuring presence for other choir members. One of the highlights of his singing life was performing at the Royal Albert Hall in the London Welsh Festival of Male Choirs in 2014 where we sang 'Anfonaf Angel' - this remained one of his favourite pieces. Two years later he made his 'debut on the pitch' at the Principality Stadium before the Wales-Scotland match when we entertained the crowd of 70,000 and sang the anthems with millions watching on TV.

He had been a chorister all his life and as a young man sung with the choir of St George's Church Stockport and also Stockport Male Voice Choir. He qualified in accountancy at Ealing Technical College and worked as an accountant at the Charrington Brewery in London's East End. He and Lesley were married in 1974 and moved to Monmouth in 1987 where they brought up their two sons Jonathan and Nicholas. He pursued his profession as a chartered accountant through the AIMS partnership supporting small businesses with clients that included several choir members. One of his fellow accountants has paid tribute to Andy's 'warmth and kindness.'

Andy was a modest and understated person who joined in the banter and fun but never spoke ill of others. On hearing the sad news of his passing choir members immediately spoke of him as *'a true gentleman and an excellent chorister who will be greatly missed....his voice seemed so true and soft....a great chorister and a lovely chap, our thoughts go out to his family....so sad*

*when one our colleagues passes on, he was a very nice and gentle man.... a true gent and one of the better baritones'.*

When Andy heard the choir's recently produced lockdown video 'What Would I Do Without My Music?' he replied *"Thanks for sending me the video, it was great to see and hear so many of my old friends performing. I found it really uplifting, I hope to be back with you all in the New Year once restrictions allow"*.

Another of his passions was Manchester United. His office at home was adorned with pictures of famous players and historic moments and a few months ago he was proud to have completed an epic Lego model of 'The Theatre of Dreams' which he had been given last Christmas.

One of his last appearances on stage was the Music on the Wye Festival at Redbrook where he was pleased to have friends and family watching on that hot summer day. In the past couple of years Andy was away from the choir as he underwent hospital treatment for throat cancer but bravely returned for a number of rehearsals before lockdown and hoped to return when the choir resumes.

Lesley reminds us that Andy's favourite piece in the repertoire was 'Morte Christie' - the male voice arrangement of 'When I Survey the Wondrous Cross' with its inspiring musical ending and final words - 'Love so amazing so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all '

Andy Whittaker gave something of his soul to our choir. We will pay our tribute to him when we can on a suitable occasion and proudly support Lesley's chosen charities: Velindre Cancer Unit and the Bridges Centre Monmouth.

We extend our sincerest sympathies to Lesley and her family.

