



March / April 2021 Newsletter

Editor - Phillip Tolley
(all misspellings are mine)

Men of Our Time Part 2

John George Cordey E.M. (Edward Medal) 1885-1934 – First Bass

John was born in Risca in 1885, to Thomas and Mary Ann Cordey nee Strickland. The family moved to Abertillery by 1889. John was a founder member of Abertillery Orpheus Choir, and records show that after a spell as vice-chair, he became choir chair in 1911. He held this position until 1921 before leaving for married life and pastures new. The choir's parting gift to John, of 10 guineas, was presented by Tom Bundred at a social evening held for the occasion. John George Cordey guided the choir through the difficult war years and oversaw the surge in recruitment during 1919 which saw the choir ranks swell by 125 new members.

In March 1926 John was working in North Celynen Colliery where he took part, with two others, in a rescue operation that lasted six hours and saved the life of a severely injured fellow miner. Along with his two colleagues John was awarded the Edward Medal, that was given to miners for acts of great bravery. Only 395 awards have been made worldwide since 1907, just over 30 in the South Wales coalfield. John was the only miner in our ranks to win the Edward Medal.

Private Arthur Llewellyn 1893-1917 - Second Tenor

Arthur appears in Abertillery Male Voice Choir records during 1912. It was not until after the Great War that his three brothers Edgar, Ivor, and Clifford joined our ranks.

Arthur was the son of Marshall Henry (Thomas) Llewellyn, a Collier, and Sarah Ann Tillings, who married in Abertillery in 1892. He was an all-round athlete who excelled at sprint running, and rugby. His performances for Abertillery RFC attracted scouts from Leeds. Arthur made his debut as a three-quarter at Headingley against Dewsbury on 24th January 1914. Scoring a try in an 18-7 triumph.

Arthur enlisted in January 1915 and was soon on his way to France with the 13th Battalion Rifle Brigade. He fought at Loos, and then Armentiers. Arthur was wounded in April 1916, and after recuperating at home, returned to France where he was killed at the Battle of Arras in 1917. His body was never recovered. Arthur Llewellyn is remembered at the Arras Memorial, and at home.

Private Charles William Ponsford Lewis 1890-1916 - Unknown

Charles William Ponsford Lewis was born in Blaenavon, on 10th, September 1890, to William Lewis a Joiner and Undertaker, and his wife Annie. The family later moved to Abertillery. The family were well known in the locality, the mother Mrs Lewis being a sister of the Mrs Vaughan of the Golden Lion Hotel, Abertillery and there were several relatives living at Blaina. Our spartan records do not mention Charles, however, an article in the 'South Wales Gazette' 10th November 1916, confirmed that Charles was indeed a member of Abertillery Orpheus. Previous to enlistment in the 3rd Battalion Monmouthshire Regiment (later transferred to the 9th Welsh), Charles worked at Vivien Colliery. Charles fought at Mametz Wood in 1916, and later that year at Bouzincourt and Stuff Redoubt where he sustained fatal gun-shot wounds. Charles rests in Puchevilliers British Cemetery, France.

From The Choir Research Team

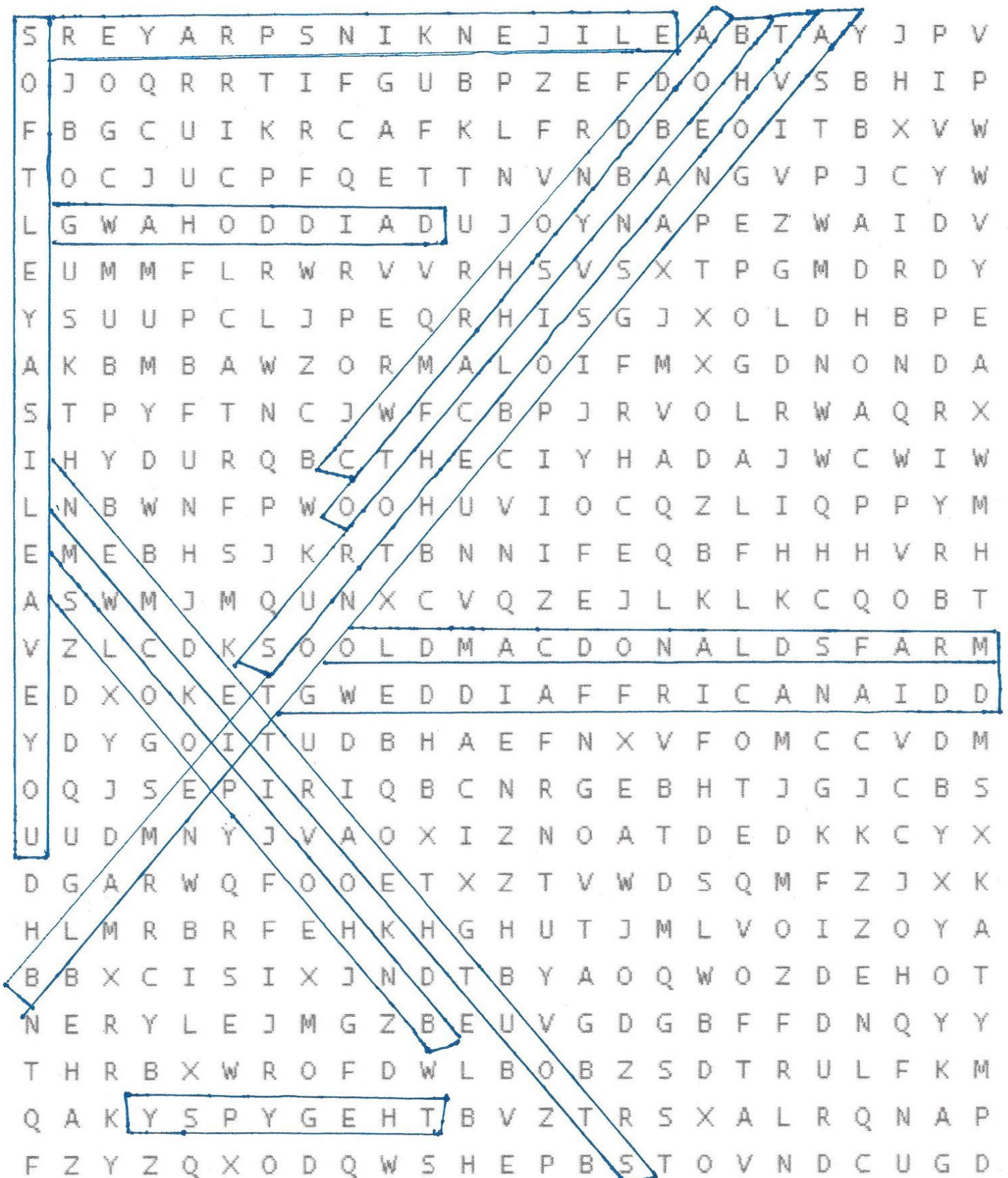
AOMC Repertoire WordSearch (Answers)

The Xmas wordsearch included 24 titles, 16 of which were found in the January Newsletter. The February Newsletter includes the last remaining titles plus four new pieces, making 12 titles as listed below.

Blame it on the Bossa Nova
Gweddiaffricanaidd
Softly as I leave you
Eli Jenkins Prayer
Stout Hearted Men
Cwm Rhondda
Gwahoddiad
Sloop John B
Old MacDonalds Farm
The Anvil Chorus
The Gypsy
Bobby Shafto

See the next page for the answers

February Wordsearch Answers



Articles from Llais Llafur (Labour Voice) 1915

Llais Llafur, 23 January 1915

THE MINIMUM WAGE AND THE WAR. PATRIOTIC STEP IN SOUTH WALES.

As considerable misapprehension exists as to the date when the Coal Mines (Minimum Wage) Act of 1912 expires, it is expedient to give a brief survey of the position so that the matter may be fully understood not only by the miners themselves, but by the general public. It will be remembered that the Minimum Wage Act was passed in the early part of 1912, in order to effect a settlement of the national coal strike, and as a tentative measure it was enacted that the new law should expire on March 28, 1915, when the whole question might be reconsidered.

Owing to the outbreak of war, however, a short Act was passed on August 7 last, entitled "The Expired Laws Continuance Act," under the provisions of which it has been decided that the Minimum Wage Act shall continue in operation until December 31, 1915. The various agreements between the coal-owners and the miners which define the terms of employment in the various districts subject, of course, to the provisions of the Minimum Wage Act, can expire on the earliest date on June 30 by three months' notice being given on April 1.

For some time there has been a general agitation amongst the men for a revision of the rates of pay; but it is believed that the whole question will be deferred until after the war, and this is the course which is being recommended by the miners' leaders.

As a matter of fact, the South Wales Miners' Federation have asked the National Federation to take the question into consideration with the view of a uniform procedure being adopted in all districts, and the executive will meet at an early date to discuss the subject.

There is said to be a strong feeling amongst both employers and men that the matter should be postponed for the present, in view of national emergencies, but of course, without prejudice to the right of the men to resume their agitation at the earliest possible date consistent with national interests.

Welsh Association of Male Choirs Survey Results

The WAMC recently sent out a questionnaire regarding the long term effects of Covid 19 on their member choirs. This is a summary of the results of this survey.

What have been the biggest challenges during Covid 19?	
Retaining interest from choristers	58.06%
Maintaining wellbeing and mental health	25.81%
Financial loss	9.68%
Other	6.45%
How have you managed to keep in contact?	
Regular newsletters	41.94%
Online rehearsals	19.35%
Regular phone calls	16.13%
Other	9.63%
Online social events	6.45%
Face to face social events	3.23%
Face to face rehearsals	3.23%
What have you been doing to plan for a restart?	
Risk assessment of rehearsal premises	56.67%
Other	16.67%
Consideration of alternative rehearsal venues	13.33%
Revising your repertoire	6.67%
Planning a recruitment campaign	6.67%
What do you think will be the main obstacles to a restart ?	
Continuing restrictions on singing	87.10%
Other	6.45%
Limitations imposed by performance venues	3.23%
Reaching an adequate standard for public performances	3.23%
Reduction in membership	0%
What will be the key factors in determining your restart?	
As soon as we are advised that it is safe to do so	38.71%
When the majority of choristers wish to do so	29.03%
All choristers vaccinated	16.13%
Most choristers vaccinated	12.90%
Other	3.23%



Hello choristers, ladies of the Eurydice, friends and followers.

Once more I am tasked by our indomitable management committee to relay any new tropical developments. I am writing to you again from the BOG office and will report on the growing situation, as follows;

The Currant Situation at the allotment is as reported in my last communication but as spring is in the air again I will keep a close eye on their antics. Hopefully after being admonished and told in gardening terms to shape up, and grow up they will stay in line .

Restricted movements

I am pleased to report all choristers did as instructed and listened for once and are now moving freely within Wales. Mr Drakeford assures me there will be no return to panic buying as he will open things up very slowly .

Allotment sewing classes

After incurring some crop failures last year (poor seed germination), due to poor seed sewing techniques, the whole allotment membership has been attending Zoom sewing classes to sharpen up their green fingers. As you would expect I have excelled and have embroiled a tapestry on an old potato sack . It commemorates this years' Six Nations and the wonderful achievements of the England rugby team. It is embroidered in garden twine and shows the Six Nations table with Edward Jones Esq holding the flag of his uncle George showing the record penalty count. It will be on show at The RHS (Rugby Hall of Shame) HQ. Twickenham. I will deliver it when I attend the 6 Nations fixture review JITA review.

All choristers have received their first dose of the JITA serum with the exception of Russel Porter. He informed me the time stated was not clear on his appointment letter. He was as unsure as he could be, if it was BST (British standard time) or BST (Brynmawr standard time); but the secretary (me) arranged an allotment visit and sent him on his way with a carrot and a stick after giving him the JITAs

Vax Scene and it's variants

The allotment serum, as explained previously, has zero efficacy and has a 100% failure rate against all variants. You will agree this is a marvellous achievement for the allotment research team and it is particularly effective for vegetarians — being 100% organic. We appreciate, as a research team, your concerns with regards to some foreign variants. We have tested all variants in our lab and also those that have not been discovered yet. We have the data and we have tested against all age groups and it's fine - it kills all known germs. The World Wildlife Trust has confirmed it is not fit for animals and this has been endorsed by Dr Who who said "it's out of this world".

Vax Scene passport

On return to practice you will be required to bring 2 coloured passport photos, your Vax Scene purchase guarantee card and your birth certificate. No Photo copies will be accepted as per the constitution. When I have verified who you are (remember I have not seen you for sometime) I will inform Lyndon to take all your double copies of music you are holding.

A Roadmap back to practice and normality

I have chased up our man at the Senedd about a road map and I am to issue you all a town map of Abertillery clearly showing the Ebenezer Church and all relevant car parks. Please send me a stamped self addressed envelope. Special arrangements will be made for Dai Poole in order that he arrives in time to go home after practice.

Signing off at the allotment office

Gareth

