

Steeton Male Voice Choir

**Steeton
Chimes**

Edition Number 79

Spring 2013

Editorial

SMVC has a full programme again this year included the summer tour which should be great (as usual).

Some of us took part in the Cancer Research Festival of Voices in November. They produced a DVD which I am happy to let people borrow if they want to see what it is all about. I would encourage choir members to give consideration to the next one (in 2015) and see if we can improve our representation at this fantastic event.

I am using my privileged position as Editor of this auspicious magazine to promote the Margaret Carey Foundation Concert in May. Dave Brown runs this charity and I am chair of the board of trustees. This concert has a double purpose: one being a fund raiser and the other enabling SMVC to take part in a larger and different concert with a substantial audience.

We have engaged the services of a young folk/roots singer/songwriter (and BBC finalist in the 2013 Folk Awards) , Luke Jackson – he has a great voice and guitar style – and should attract a younger audience to whom we can sell ourselves. We also have one of Gareth Malone’s BBC Workplace choirs (The Manchester Airport Choir – who are providing their services free to support the charity).

For reasons I won’t bore you with the date and venue has changed: it is on Friday May 3rd at Beckfoot School in Bingley, with an audience capacity of 300 and parking for 180 cars. Tickets for our usual choir supporters and patrons are on offer at £5.

We hope to sell this concert out so please support it – it’s different and it should be great!

I have included in this edition some Pen Portraits including some of our new choristers. I intend to ask them all to provide a portrait for future editions.

ian (as far as possible please contact me on: ianmcd51@hotmail.com)

Steeton Male Voice Choir – Chairman’s Report 2012

Requests for our services remains good (our programme is full for 2013).

2012 was a more varied year in terms of performances thanks in no small part to our increasingly proactive and effective publicity machine in the form of Eric Parker. We continue to be in demand from both previous organisers and some new ones.

We have once again been involved across the performance spectrum. Twenty three concerts were performed in addition, sadly, to four funerals. There were two joint concerts with other choirs Mousehole and Anston in September both of which were immensely successful, playing to packed houses. The proceeds from the Mousehole concert allowed us to contribute £1200 to Gordon Sugden’s Spinal Unit at Sheffield Northern Hospital. We had our usual concerts in local churches; The Annual Concert in Ilkley, again with a full house; appeared at an Edwardian Garden Party at Broughton Hall and sang at a Rugby League Final featuring Leeds at Headingley, which was extremely well received by the crowd, with promises of more to come of that ilk. The Queens Diamond Jubilee year spawned a Queen’s Accession concert at Ilkley run by the Parish Council at which we were extremely well received and this led to us being invited to sing at the concluding event of the Ilkley Summer Festival on the Grove in Ilkley where we sang out of sight in a marquee to protect us from the pouring rain – except for Alan who braved the elements and nearly froze. However the sound system was superb and a young couple who heard us booked us for their wedding celebration in an Art Café in Leeds. That evening was a resounding success. I don’t believe the choir have sung to such a young audience for years, if ever.

Finally I must mention the patron’s concert at Cullingworth where we celebrated Alan’s 500th concert. Alan was presented with a gift and a certificate to mark the event and Dorothy with a bouquet of flowers. It was a truly splendid evening where Alan and Dorothy generously provided the buffet. It was also the occasion when we presented Len Wilson with his certificate to become Honorary President and a bouquet of flowers for his wife Margaret.

We have also visited Gordon Sugden, a valued friend who was seriously injured a year ago in a traffic accident last Christmas. He is in the Spinal unit at Sheffield Hospital and we visited him on two occasions to see him and sing for him and his fellow patients. On the second visit we went to sing carols and Gordon was dressed in his choir uniform and sang with the choir – after all he is still a member. On both visits the hospital did us proud with buffets and a superb roast Christmas dinner. Both visits were a humbling experience for all who attended.

Last year Both Alan Clark and I in our reports made the point that we should focus on recruitment. Subsequently a recruitment drive was launched, led by Alan and supported by Eric Parker as part of a subcommittee chaired by Steve Fenton. From that we have around eight new men spread pretty equally around the four voice parts.

Four new men Steve Parsons (Baritone), Peter Taylor (baritone), Peter Heady (bass) and Trevor Devine (2nd Tenor) were successful in their Voice Assessments and were awarded Red Jackets and Steve Parsons also made his debut singing with the choir. In total we have recruited twelve new men. So congratulations to all.

The pleasure of receiving new men is tempered by the sad loss of colleagues. Mike Harrison and Berti Gesting have retired due to ill health. John Rawlings and Allan Hainsworth are also long term absentees due to ill health although Allan is optimistic about returning before too long.

We were greatly shocked to hear of the sudden death of Barry Tayler, who always looked young and fit. We shall greatly miss David Birtwistle and Peter Sprat and were saddened to hear of the loss of ex choir member Tom Shuttleworth, all of whom died from ill health in 2012. Our thoughts are with their families.

The Choir remains financially healthy and as you will see from the Hon Treasurer's report we have raised £12,104 for various charities and other good causes – an excellent result. Alan Howell continues to do an excellent job as Treasurer- thank you Alan.

I am happy to repeat from my report of last year that many members continue to volunteer to carry out vital roles for the smooth running of the Choir and I would like to thank everyone who keeps the choir running smoothly. Recruitment still remains a key issue. We need to continue attract new men and we will continue to build on the progress so far.

I would like to thank Alan and Anne supported by Noel and Peter for their continued musical leadership and Peter Kitching for the way he has seamlessly taken over the role of General Secretary. Also thanks to Norman Hudson as assistant secretary who has taken over the organisation of the coming tour to Devon in May/June this year. Michael Trott and Peter Lofts have completed their tenures as Part Reps and I thank them for the diligence with which they have carried out their roles.

Len Wilson has been unanimously voted in as Honorary President for life. I would like to thank him for the superb work he has done for many years as General Secretary before retiring early in the year. His are indeed large shoes to fill. He

does however remain a singing member and is always on hand to give advice and do the honours at prestigious occasions when required.

Finally I would like to pay tribute to the continuing support given by our Ladies group who work hard fund raising and providing direct help with refreshments and raffles at concerts organised by the Choir. The group raised £968.90 during 2012.

So, thank you all for turning out on many occasions throughout the year, without you there would be no choir. And thank you for your support to me during 2012. Here's to a successful 2013 musically, organisationally and taking our choir forward to greater heights.

David Borley Chairman SMVC

28 January 2013

Pen Portrait : Michael Levine



I was born in Garforth, near Leeds on April 12th 1940.

I went to Garforth St. Joseph's RC Primary School and then to Garforth Secondary Modern.

I left school at 15 in 1955 and worked on a farm in Garforth until I joined the Royal Air Force Boys Entrants in 1956 and served at RAF Cosford in Staffordshire.

Leaving the RAF in 1960 I went to work in a coal mine as a pony driver at Ledston Luck near Castleford. This was in the period of many strikes in the mines and being newly married I was seriously short of money through lost pay during strikes.

It was during this time that I joined 269 Field Regiment RA Territorial Army. One day I happened to say to the adjutant that I was sick of having no money. He suggested that I join the Regular Army so I joined 45 Field Regiment RA for 13 years and ended up going to Germany, Malaya, Borneo and Northern Ireland.

I left in 1973 and joined the prison service working at Wakefield, Leeds and Wormwood Scrubs before ending back in Leeds. I left the prison service in 1979 and went to work for Leeds City Transport and ended up as an Inspector.

Leaving that job in 1985 I started up in business as a Taxi Proprietor in Horsforth, Leeds. I sold the business in 1990 and went into courier work with my own van which I did until retirement in 2005.

I was in the school choir from 13 years old until a year after I left school and I thoroughly enjoyed it. I have always enjoyed singing and was in the Wormwood Scrubs Prison Officers Choir for 2 years.

I read in the Keighley News that SMVC was looking for new members so I volunteered and so far have really enjoyed it.

My hobbies are steam and model railways, singing, karaoke and music. I have about 900 old 78rpm records, over a thousands LPs and hundreds of CDs and tapes. I also enjoy reading.

My main music is rock 'n roll, traditional jazz, country and western, classical and ballet.

Desert Island Discs – Tim Bastow

In 2007 I presented a version of Desert Island Discs for the local Tangent group of ladies and in 2011 I gave a shortened version as an after-dinner speech for Bingley Soroptimists. I am reverting to the full version for The Chimes and if it sometimes sounds like a talk it's because that's where it started.

Of course every Desert Island Discs should start with **By the Sleepy Lagoon**, by Eric Coates, so I am starting with that, but it doesn't count towards my eight records.

My first piece is a rousing Welsh hymn, sung by Steeton Male Voice Choir. It's called **Rachie**, supposedly after the daughter of a friend of the composer, Caradog Roberts. She was called Rachael. This recording is from Steeton's CD Music in the Aire and it is a good piece to clear the tubes at the start of a concert.

There was a Radio Three announcer who had a problem. Actually, it is so long ago it was probably the Third Programme. Anyway, this Third Programme announcer couldn't pronounce "Rimsky Korsakov". He practised and practised but to no avail. The time came when Rimsky Korsakov was composer of the week. With trembling steps he went to the notice board to look at the duty roster. Oh Horror, he was on duty on the Monday morning. He did not sleep for a week, and over the last weekend he resorted to alcohol.

Monday morning came, and the time signal, beep beep beep beep beeeeep. "Good morning everybody. This is the BBC Third Programme. The composer of the week is Rimsky Korsakov."

He'd said it! He'd actually got it right! He was elated, over the moon, if Third Programme announcers are allowed to be Over the Moon.

"The composer of the week is Rimsky Korsakov. And the first record we are going to play for you is The Bum of the Flightle Bee."

So that's my next record: Rimsky Korsakov's **The Flight of the Bumble Bee**, from The Tale of Tsar Saltan, played by the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, conducted by Sir Neville Marriner

When I was a very small boy, around 8 years old, my father, who was deputy head at Highfield Secondary School, produced HMS Pinafore and The Pirates of Penzance at the school. I had never seen anything so wonderful and that love of the Savoy Operas has stayed with me all my life.

We had a gramophone which played through the wireless and the only set of records we had was a full copy of HMS Pinafore, which of course was very well used.

In 2001 I joined Haworth West Lane Baptist Amateur Operatic Society, who put on one of Gilbert and Sullivan's Savoy Operas every November and since then I have appeared in Yeomen of the Guard, The Mikado, Princess Ida, Ruddigore, HMS Pinafore, Trial by Jury, The Zoo, Patience, The Sorcerer, The Gondoliers, Iolanthe, and The Pirates of Penzance.

I've got to admit that I'm not very good when it comes to acting and very bad when it comes to dancing, or even moving rhythmically, but I and the rest of the company have a wonderful time putting on these immortal gems. And, remarkably, every year the audience say that our performance was the best yet. This can't be true all the time but it gives us a great buzz to think that we are keeping our standards up.

My favourite Savoy Opera is The Gondoliers. For my money this is the most musical and joyful of the Opera, and my favourite bit is the quartet from the first act, when Marco and Giuseppe, the gondoliers, who are newly married to Tessa and Gianetta, have found out that one of them, they are not sure which, is the King of Baratania, and so one of the girls, they are not sure who, will become a Queen. The quartet is **Then one of us will be a Queen and sit on a Golden Throne.**

Now a piece of Mozart. Mozart requires no introduction, no justification. I once heard Andre Previn talking about Mozart and he was, for once, a little lost for words but finally he burst out with "I think he must have been an Angel." That may be so. My next record is the Allegro movement from the **Piano Sonata no. 16** in C major, played by Maria Joao Pires.

I have mentioned Steeton Male Voice Choir and Haworth West Lane Baptist Amateur Operatic Society and now it's time to come clean about my third musical group. It's called the Ritardandos, which is a posh Italian word meaning those who are slowing down. We are a group of twelve singers, plus a pianist, who entertain afternoon groups of elderly people, church dinner parties, people in wheelchairs - in fact anyone who can't get away quickly enough. Our performances, lasting about 45 minutes to an hour consist of solos - musical and poetic; choral pieces; jokes; and inconsequential chit chat. We are definitely not serious. But one of my fellow Ritardandos said to me that out of all the musical

things we did the Ritardandos was the most satisfying because “we go into a room filled with mournful looking people and leave them all smiling.” You can’t get more satisfaction than that. One of our Ritardandos pieces is another Welsh song - the well known **Myfanwy**, by Joseph Parry. The legend is that Parry went off to the States to seek his musical fortune leaving his childhood sweetheart behind. When he returned some years later, not surprisingly, she had married someone else so he composed this piece to show that he had no bitter feelings towards her. It is sung by Steeton, but this time from a very early recording, conducted by John Smith.

From 2007 to 2012 I was Chairman of Haworth West Lane Baptist AO, and many times during those five years Janet and I were invited to other societies to see their productions. So we saw a fair selection of musicals around the area. The most common was, of course, My Fair Lady and the most uncommon, but really well performed, was Ilkley’s The Hunchback of Notre Dame, adapted from the novel by Victor Hugo. One that we didn’t see was from another Victor Hugo novel, Les Miserables. This is not my favourite musical. I find it too gloomy, too “the same”, too “brown”. But it has some wonderful songs, and Steeton’s version of Fantine’s song **I dreamed a dream** really brings out the magic.

One of the most inspiring events I have taken part in was a massed choir of 10,000 male voices, called The World Choir, held at Cardiff Arms Park in May 1992. Over 150 choirs took part and the soloists were Tom Jones, Dennis O’Neill, Dame Gwynneth Jones, and Oliver Sammons, who was choirboy of the year. Owain Arwel Hughes was the guest conductor. The whole concert was accompanied by the massed bands of the Guards Division. The choir was ranged in a great horseshoe around one end of the arena with the audience in the side seat and some lucky ones on the sacred turf of the park. I was sitting next to some top tenors from Morrision Orpheus Choir in Swansea. While Tom Jones was rehearsing during the afternoon one of them leant across to me and whispered “He wouldn’t get into our choir, boy!”

During the evening of the performance, a tremendous thunderstorm broke over Cardiff. BBC Wales had put a cameraman at the top of an enormous crane for some bird’s eye shots of the arena. When the lightning started he came down in double quick time. Then the rain came down in torrent, so the lucky members of the audience out on the park got soaked, as did the guardsmen and the conductor. The kettle drums soon filled with water and gave a good demonstration of wave formation every time they were hit. The tuba player could only manage a few bars before he had to empty his instrument. We in the choir were fortunately well under cover, but when Tom Jones came on to sing you could plainly see the black hair dye trickling down his cheeks.

Luckily the storm passed over by the interval, and after that all proceeded normally. I would have liked to have chosen the wonderful sound that we heard, being in the middle of such a great company of singers, but the recording couldn’t cope with the fact that the basses were about 200 yards from the top tenors so the voices were coming to the microphones at different times. The resulting

sound is very confused and mushy. However, a highlight for me was Oliver Sammons singing a Welsh folk song called **Bugeilio'r Gwenith Gwyn**, which means, I understand, Shepherding the White Wheat.

When I think of that little boy, standing alone in that great arena, I am amazed at the quality and assurance which he brought to the performance. Incidentally, Dame Gwynneth Jones is one of the performers in *Quartet*, a wonderful film, which you all should go and see.

No selection of music would be complete without something from Handel, and that has to be from *The Messiah*. Janet and I heard The Huddersfield Choral Society sing this in Huddersfield Town Hall in December 2006, and we, along with the packed audience, were moved and lifted by the glorious sound. So my next record is London Musici and Chamber Choir, conducted by Mark Stephenson, singing **And The Glory of the Lord**.

Now back to Gilbert and Sullivan. One of the best known operas is *The Pirates of Penzance* and in the second act the pirates have resolved to attack Tremawden Castle, the home of Major General Stanley. In our production at Haworth we pirates had to match our steps on to the stage with the loud chords from the orchestra. Pom pom-pa pom POM, Pom pom-pa pom POM, pom POM, pom POM, pom POM. Guess who got out of step every night. Incidentally, the Policemen are all hiding behind tombstones and interspersing the pirates' song with Tarantaras.

I have chosen the D'oyly Carte Opera Company, **With Cat-Like tread**.

For my last choice of record I'm going back to Steeton Male Voice Choir's CD, *Music in the Aire*.

Alwen Humphreys was conductor of the world famous Morrision Orpheus Male Voice Choir from Swansea, and he has done many wonderful arrangements for male voices. Mickey Newberry's **American Trilogy** takes three songs from the American Civil War and weaves them into an historical pattern and Alwyn Humphreys' arrangement is my final choice of record.

I need to choose a luxury to take with me to the Desert Island and being a practical sort of chap I would like the largest and most all-encompassing Swiss Army Penknife I can find. (So I can open a coconut or make a dug-out canoe).

For a book I thought I would take my Kindle but that is cheating so J.R.R.Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* is my choice. Even after more than a dozen readings this book still entertains and delights me, and I can always find something new in it.

Pen Portrait :Peter Headey (Bass)



Born in Liverpool into a strong Methodist background I grew up on hymns. In fact my first piano teacher was the church organist and this is probably why today, 60 years later, I have a love of four part harmony.

At school I learned the 'cello but quickly sold this for a guitar which was much more popular in the 60's! and which I still have today. However, for my special birthday last year my children bought for me, as a complete surprise, another 'cello to enjoy playing again in my retirement along with singing in the choir. I have an eclectic taste in music.

From Liverpool I moved to Southport and then Halifax. My teaching career began in Oxford where I met my wife Hilary who is also a teacher and a singer too (far better than me!)

We moved to Cheshire in the 70's then to North Yorkshire in 1988. We have both taught at various schools in the locality and now gracefully ending our careers helping out in a school in Halifax.

It was a chance meeting over a garden wall with the choir's latest recruit at the time, Steve Parsons, who actively encouraged me to come along and have a sing. Gardening is another activity that I am looking forward to spending more time doing during the next few years. So thank you to Steve and the warm welcome I have received since September. I have passed the voice test and by the time you read this I will have made my first appearance, at Beanlands. I look forward to many melodious years to come with SMVC.

STEETON LADIES GROUP

Our next fund raising event is to be a plant and cake stall at Bingley in early May, date to be confirmed later.

All you gardeners out there – if you feel like potting a few cuttings then now is the time - if you can manage a few plants please let one of the ladies know and we can arrange to collect them.

Any ladies who would like to contribute a cake or two just let us know.

Also any ladies out there who would like to come along to our group we meet every third Monday at Steeton Hall. The next meeting is Monday **18th March** so don't be shy come along 7.00pm onwards.

Best wishes

Steeton Ladies Group.

Ashton Hall Concert, Lancaster December 1st 2012

It certainly was a winter's day - cold and clear and icy underfoot. I believe we had a near disaster in the car park in Steeton – it's just as well our compere (Dave Jenkins) is relatively young and bounces.

SMVC headed for Lancaster to sing on behalf of Cancer Care North Lancashire and South Lakeland.

The coach ride over the Pennines was, I am led to believe, something of an ordeal. Not just because we were crossing the 'border' but as a consequence of some winding Pennine roads and a large coach not combining too well. Kwels would have been helpful but were not available.

The stage crew had a pleasant trip over earlier in the day and enjoyed the Pennine scenery and a winter sunset – and a fine early meal in the local Weatherspoons!

The choir party duly arrived at Ashton Hall but had difficulty gaining access as the doors had not been formally opened for the audience.

It all adds to the fun!

Ashton Hall is a classic early Edwardian edifice to the success of industrial northern Britain in the past. Its grandeur was a bit battered in places but nevertheless it was a fine example of a public auditorium in an early 20th century Town Hall. It would have been enhanced with a considerably larger audience. Nevertheless it was a great venue to sing in. (see below)

SMVC, slightly disappointed but undaunted, produced an excellent performance that was worthy of such a good cause. The response from audience members was excellent and the choir responded with a performance that grew in confidence.

For many of us the highlight of the evening was the solo performance by Rebecca Godley (the winner of the Arthur Wilson Memorial Prize, endowed by the Choir). She has a wonderful, clear, mature, powerful voice for such a relatively young singer. The range, control and apparent ease of singing style were extremely impressive and she clearly enjoyed performing – and couldn't she hold a note! The mixture of the repertoire was also a delight, from classical solo operatic pieces including Dvorak's 'Rusalka Song to the Moon' and the Queen of the Night aria from Magic Flute to a selection of Christmas music in the

second half. O Holy Night was stunning and some of the choir couldn't resist providing some low key backing for her rendition of The Holy City.

Some of the comments from the WAGS suggested our overall performance was very good and some of the highlights were as follows. Leonard Cohen's Hallelujah and the Fields of Athenry were particularly well sung with excellent dynamics and expression. Mike Templeton wowed another audience with Stenka Razin and our rendition of Jesus Christ, Superstar showed great confidence. There were lots of positive comments about our overall diction. The audience clearly appreciated the more 'fun' numbers particularly Nothin' Like a Dame (and Richard was word perfect!).

A controversial suggestion is that we should learn Nessun Dorma in Italian!

The journey home on the coaches was a replay of the trip over and the troops were relieved to get back to Steeton and not only because it is in Yorkshire. The road crew also noticed an interesting county comparison. When we left Lancaster it was -6 degrees but as we crossed the border it went up to -2.5 which is another reason why Yorkshire is better!!

Ashton Hall.

This was built and paid for by the Williamson family (Lord Ashton) as the local council could not afford to build a new Town Hall. The family business made its fortune out of oil cloth and linoleum.

The architect was E W Mountfield who was also responsible for Sheffield Town Hall and The Old Bailey.

It was formally opened in 1909 and the cost £155,000! That's inflation for you.
Ed.

Pen Portrait



I am one of the newest recruits to the choir, Peter Taylor, a young 61 I like to think. I am semi retired now doing a couple of days a week I had 36 years self employed in the building trade doing extensions, kitchens and bathrooms. You name it and I did it.

I had a bad fall 10 years ago and broke by back but recovered well. I spent the last 6 years working as a site manager (posh name for caretaker) at the primary school where my wife was deputy then head teacher

I have 4 daughters and 7 grandchildren. I started singing as a club turn when I was 52, trailing round pubs and clubs on my own with all my PA gear and 20,000 backing tracks. I did a few hundred gigs in 6 years.

After I packed it in 2 years ago I realised I still missed the performing but not dragging gear around and the constant bingo. As I was looking for a choir to join I spotted the advert about SMVC.

I contacted Ken and yes, come along Tuesday. I arrived and parked outside a little apprehensive, watching everybody arrive. I have to say everybody looked quite old in the dark and I chickened out and went home telling my wife it looked like a rehearsal for Dad's Army. I was persuaded to return by my wife and daughters. Ken was also badgering me and was very pleased that I did come back. Everybody is very friendly and I am quite ashamed of myself thinking as I did about it looking like a doctor's waiting room. There are even a few younger than me, well two I think. (Might even be more! ed.)

I have taught myself to play a bit of guitar these last 3 years and am a keen road cyclist getting out twice a week. I did London to Paris at Easter and in June will be doing the route that is 2nd day of the Tour de France, 140 miles in one day for Macmillan nurses. (I will remind you a bit nearer the time)

I look forward to many happy years with SMVC

That's about it really and I for one should not think that because people are mature in years that they are not up to it. My father was 52 when he married and went on to have 13 children, last one at 74. My mother was 30 years younger. No fridge, no washing machine, no hobbies... well!

Leeds Wedding by Ann Pratt

When Richard and Bill came back from their "reccy" for Steeton's Wedding booking they said the venue was "different". How different it was!!

Our coach arrived on Kirkstall Road (never the most genteel area of Leeds). We were ushered into Full Circle (billed as a Cultural Centre and Creative Hub) via a black curtain behind the service door and up dark steps to the mezzanine floor where we found a piano for Ann and a hearty buffet.

Our host and owner of Full Circle, Anthony, sporting a fea and a ponytail, greeted us warmly. The bride Fran, looking stunning in a retro wedding dress (identical to ones worn by two of Steeton Ladies 40 odd years ago) and the groom Jon welcomed us eagerly.

Steeton, grouped in a square formation. Sang in front of the said black curtain, Ann played the piano in semi darkness up on the mezzanine floor, while Alan conducted from halfway up a spiral staircase between the two. No room for a music stand so Alan conducted off the cuff.

Alexander's Ragtime Band kicked off the singing and was very enthusiastically received with lots of whoops and cheers from the young people and a lot of dancing from the "older" ladies on the mezzanine floor. Una Paloma Blanca and Dames were also treated to much cheering and clapping.

Some Enchanted Evening and The Rose provided a more romantic element and brought tears to the eyes of at least two of the girls. JESUS Christ Superstar, the chorus of which nearly everyone seemed to join in, ended the first half and the applause would have done justice to a rock concert. Unfortunately I missed John and Steve's performance as I was negotiating the pitch black corridor outside the loos!

The second half started wonderfully with Hava Nagila to get everyone's feet tapping. It was great to be dancing the Hora while Steeton were singing – maybe we should dance in the aisles at the next concert?!!

Softly as I Leave You made a lovely contrast and then we had another chance to dance with Razzle Dazzle. This again was received with loud calls for more. Let It Be Me and Pretty Woman were also good choices and the response was deafening. What Would I DO Without My Music was an excellent choice for a group of young people who all had musical connections and Fran and Jon both said it was one of their favourites. The shouts, whistles and cheers prompted two great encores with Saint and You'll Never Walk Alone.

The whole evening rounded off with more dancing and another buffet of bacon butties, hot dogs and profiteroles from the wedding cake for some of us, served by really helpful, pleasant young waiters in various garb (one in Jeeves and Wooster style plus flat cap, one as a goth and one all in black with a trilby). As we got on the coach to return to Steeton most of said it had been a "memorable evening".

Hi Eric

Well... we don't really know where to start! Thank you so very much for making our wedding a truly special and memorable day. Having you there was just fantastic, and we're so grateful to you all for putting on a brilliant show. You made us laugh and cry, and so many friends and family members have said how amazing it was. We really hope that you enjoyed it as much as we did and that everything was ok for you.

It was lovely to meet you finally, and to have a little dance with some of the members! One of the men mentioned something about a competition that you're involved with in the new year - please let us know details so that we can come and support you!

Thank you again, you've helped us to make the most fantastic memories.

Fran & Jon

Christmas Concert Bingley

As first-time visitors to Bingley without any prior knowledge of local cultural activities or the long history of the Steeton Male Voice Choir, my wife and I had no idea what to expect when invited by Ian and Maggie McDonald to this concert in All Saints Church on Saturday December 15th. We did have advance knowledge of the evening's programme so we knew it would include a bit of everything but we did not anticipate how much we would enjoy this excellent and varied performance by the choir expertly directed by Alan Clark and ably accompanied by Anne Mott.

The programme got off to a flying start with Una Paloma Blanca (a white dove) followed by the Lennon and McCartney classic Yesterday. Later in his career Paul McCartney wrote a song called Silly Love Songs. Yesterday is certainly not one of those and the choir brought out the youthful pain of lost love. Puccini's Nessun Dorma followed and by now SMVC was in full voice and its members, the great majority of whom are of a mature age, were obviously enjoying themselves and looking at least ten years younger. Not as young, however, as the fan we were about to be introduced to. Kieran (Jay Kerr's grandson) first heard the choir when only six months old and, now four, has been a regular attentive member of its audiences since he was two. This devotion was recognised with the presentation of a choir jumper to Kieran and the performance of his favourite amongst the SMVC repertoire – Hallelujah. The choir captured the stirring spirit of this much covered Leonard Cohen anthem although it would have been better, as in the original recording, to take advantage of poetic licence and adopt the rhyming 'ya' rather than 'you'.

Accompanist Anne Mott then showed her versatility and gave us a poetic reading about a young girl's longing for the shiny thing at the top of the Christmas tree. The programme continued with the jazzy syncopation of Alexander's Ragtime Band and the more staid modern style of John Rutter's Gaelic Blessing. From here the choir rocked and rolled into a combined version of two Roy Orbison hits and a medley from Jesus Christ Superstar - surely the modern musical with the most memorable and tuneful songs.

The evening's programme included communal carols which gave the audience a chance to stretch their lungs and legs and show what they could do. At the interval they were generously rewarded with ample supplies of wine and mince pies, something the choir members also appeared to appreciate.

The second half began with the lively Israeli traditional song Hava Nagila followed by Let It Be Me. This allowed the rest of the choir to have a short break and they responded with an excellent moving rendering of The Fields of Athenry which brought tears to this reviewer's eyes and demonstrated the powerful emotional impact which can be achieved with well directed harmonised male voices. SMVC maintained this high standard with How Great Thou Art, an arrangement of the Lord's Prayer, and Take Me Home.

We were then treated by Tim Bastow to a fine reading of the closing paragraphs of A Christmas Carol depicting Scrooge's dramatic conversion to the true spirit of Christmas and demonstrating why Dickens' writing in Victorian times had, as it still has today, such wide appeal.

The choir rounded off their impressive and versatile performance with the finger-snapping Razzle Dazzle, What Would I Do Without Music and Elgar's There is Music in the Air, Music all around us. There certainly was music in the air and around us at All Saints that December Saturday and it gave a great deal of pleasure to all those who were fortunate enough to be there. I hope we get invited again.

Peter Graham (from Leicester)

**Tribute to Peter Spratt at Memorial Service,
Ilkley Parish Church, Dec 14th 2012**

Peter was a man of many loves: of people, laughter, a glass of whiskey, walking on the Moor, singing - though not necessarily quite all at the same time! He was a man who loved life.

He retained a love of his roots in Northern Ireland and developed a love for his adopted home in Yorkshire (his distinctive lilting accent reflecting a merging of both regions). He was born in Belfast in February 1932 and had one sister, Norah (who is here today), but - with both his parents being one of eight - a truly enormous extended family! This was reflected by an incident when Peter was 9, when his uncle sent a telegram to his father to tell him the exciting news of the birth of his first child. Unfortunately young Peter put the telegram in his pocket and forgot about it. In explaining himself afterwards he said it was because cousins were coming every few minutes so he didn't see it as important! (A number of these relatives are those from Northern Ireland mentioned by Pat as sadly being delayed in their travel here today.)

After the War, when Peter was 13, his family moved to the mainland settling in Altrincham, his father working in Manchester. One visual image of those teenage years: a picture of Doris Day pinned on the inside of Peter's bedroom door...

His uncle (another one) ran a textile business over the Pennines in Yorkshire. And so began Peter's career in the textile industry - and his love of the Pennines. He trained in the industry and joined the family business. Sadly it was not a good time to be in the textile industry as it was starting to collapse. So he had to move around geographically - to Northumberland, back to Lancashire and business connections finally leading him to Addingham.

One of the worst experiences for him was having to make others redundant - and he was finally made redundant himself in 1980. He set up his own textile trading business; it was hard work, but he loved it and did well, characteristically doing everything to a high quality and with integrity. He retired in 1996. In recent years

he has been active in the local branch of Probis, the retired businessmen's association.

Woven through all this was Peter's love for his family. He was a deeply caring husband to his wife Irene, building a home and family together. He was an equally adoring father to daughters Helen, Kathleen & Laura. And, I think it is fair to say, he was a deeply adored father - if, on occasion, a slightly exasperating one! Family time was especially precious on holidays in Wales and Western Scotland - often shared with the Smith family with (conveniently) three sons. Parenthood was very much of the old-style - changing nappies was definitely not part of the package - and he was very much head of the household. Laura recalls how when she was about 15 she had the cheek to question his actions. For the only time that she has known he was actually speechless with shock that she had dared to question him! (Peter did seem to recover from that trauma!) When business and family overlapped it was complicated - but the good business man won. Laura worked for him during her holidays from Polytechnic - no pay! Later Kathleen was paid - but didn't fare much better.

Peter was also deeply committed to his own mother - both as a child and in her old-age. Irene herself died just over 10 years ago, after 44 years of married life together. In recent years Peter's close friendship with Barbara was very special to him and one of deep affection. They shared much, including travelling - to India, South Africa, and an especial highlight New York and the Metropolitan Opera House which reflected his love of music - listening both to classical music and jazz and of course singing in Steeton Male Voice Choir. He was gutted that he didn't make it to the recent concert in Albert Hall but he was delighted that they would be here today. Of course he enjoyed the choir not just because of the music but also because of his love of people. As well as being highly sociable Peter was kind, generous, warm, going the extra mile, a true gentleman. He was very caring of others, in both emotional and practical ways. Over the years he served as a Scout Master, helped with the Samaritans, at the Martin House Children's Hospice shop in Skipton, with Talking Newspapers for the blind and more.

One organisation he supported was the John Muir Trust in Scotland, both fund-raising and doing practical work. This also expressed his deep love of nature. Hill-walking was a great passion, whether on the local moors, in Scotland (including bagging Monroes), and further afield in the Alps.

Being outside was one thing that also drew him to golf - both playing and watching. The latter could sometimes be rather spontaneous. He once went to the Isle of Arran in Scotland to watch the golf Open without having booked any accommodation. He turned up at the tourist information asking for accommodation, to which they said there may be a problem since the golf Open is on. He replied, yes I know that is why I am here. But with his optimism, confidence, his Irish manner - of course he managed to get somewhere to stay! That manner was seen in his love of laughter - of banter, blokes' company, a shared beer or indeed whiskey. Where, of course, he could talk - as some people

have said he could talk forever! So dedicated to talking was he that he even learned to talk in Italian in later years (to converse with walking friends in Italy).

His final love - last but not least - was his love of God. He had a solid, personal Christian faith, which was expressed through all these other parts of life.

Spiritually he was closest to God in the mountains, but he had a deep commitment to the people in the local church here in Ilkley.

Here he was a source of strength - as deputy churchwarden, leading a mission group, and as a member of a weekly house-group. With the spiritual encouragement he gave me over the years as my godfather as well as uncle, he must be at least partly to blame for the fact that I now wear a dog-collar! His faith in fact grew through the challenges presented recently by his health – and he was at real peace at the end.

His health deteriorated through this year, but particularly rapidly towards the end.

The family are enormously grateful to the staff at Manorlands Hospice and the Macmillan nurses for the care they provided to Peter. Peter didn't always make things easy for the family: when diagnosed with cancer and it came to the time that he had to tell his immediate family, he said that 'he was not worried so why should you be?' But his humour remained as strong as ever; when working through what he had to give up, he said 'if I don't resign from the Talking Newspapers soon I will be reading my own obituary!'

And so here we are today. I'm sure I speak on behalf of us all, in saying: thank you, Peter, for all you've given us. And the next whiskey is for you.

David Carrington

A Personal Reminiscence of David Birtwistle

It is my privilege, though sad task, to recount my reminiscences of David, a musical gentleman.

I initially came to know David in 1961 when I started courting, and subsequently married his cousin Margaret – both having been born and bred in Colne. At that time David was an employee in the grocery department of the Colne Co-operative Society, having followed his father to become the youngest local branch manager.

As long as I can remember David was always musically very talented not only as a pianist and private tutor but also as a competent church organist.

My first musical association with David was when I had been asked, or more accurately cajoled, to participate in a trio singing the comedy song 'We are three henpecked husbands'. Living in Blackpool at the time there was no opportunity to rehearse before the performance. "No problem" said Margaret, "David is accompanying and you know the tune, it's the one to which we sing the hymn 'The Church's One Foundation' ". Come the performance, with the tune 'Aurelia'

in my mind and not knowing that the church used another tune 'Lancashire', David started to play. I tried to sing the words to the wrong tune and wondered why the other two members of the trio had packed up. How it all ended I'm not sure, except that David took it in his inimitable calm and unruffled fashion.

He soon progressed musically into choral conducting when he conducted the choir at the then Sutton Baptist Church. Later while living in Keswick David conducted the Keswick MVC for a number of years until 2005.

Apart from music David had many other interests, in particular those relating to sport. He regularly turned out for Sutton Cricket Club as a medium pace bowler. He was a loyal season ticket holder at Turf Moor watching Burnley. This even continued while living in Keswick – he would arrange his regular visits to his mother in Colne to coincide with home matches.

In retirement his sporting activities were confined to less strenuous bowling – both 10 pin and crown green, playing for Cross Hills Bowling Club.

By way of relaxation David would tackle jigsaw and crossword puzzles and it always amazed me how quickly he solved the questions particularly the anagrams.

When David came to live in the South Craven area in the late 1960s, being a cousin and having children of similar ages to ours we were always closely connected.

Years later following their marriage, David and Gladys moved to Oswaldtwistle having acquired a retail business in Accrington selling, amongst other things, tasty home made bacon butties. Eventually in 1995 they moved to Keswick where they were the perfect hosts of their guesthouse.

During his time away from the district David kept in close contact with his former next door neighbour and close friend John Mitchell who kept him up to date with SMVC. On returning to the area in 2005 David needed little persuasion to join us where he quickly became, as all of the choir know, a useful and dedicated member.

During his final illness David showed great Stoicism. He always conveyed a positive attitude, looking forward to continuing his active participation in the choir. His main concern was how he could manage to get up the stairs for part practices!

He has now gone up a higher staircase, but he will be remembered by what he left behind – fond memories and an appreciation of his contribution to SMVC.

Ron Crossley

SMVC Leisure Wear

A reminder to longer standing members and information for newer members. Malcolm Hopkins is in charge of our shop and you or your loved ones can purchase the following SMVC items.

The following items are available for sale:

Blue Lambswools Sweaters	£30
Grey Sweaters	£12
Polo Shirts	£ 5
Silver Grey Ties	£ 2
Blue Ties	£ 5
Uniform Ties	£ 5

The Silver Grey tie was previously official uniform. There are very few left and are reduced to clear, so bag a bargain.

The lambswool sweaters were previously regarded as uniform and were worn with the blue ties.

The polo shirts are available in many colours (we have a large stock) but large sizes are in short supply.

Gift Aid – a reminder

To enable me to claim Gift Aid allowance for the current tax year, which ends on April 5/13, would choir members and patrons, who have not done so, please pay their choir subscriptions/patrons' fees by the end of March if at all possible.

Thankyou
Frank Place (Gift Aid Secretary)

Steeton Male Voice Choir Quiz

We may be a Yorkshire choir but how well do you know your region? (may require some hours of research!!) (answers available from ianmcd51@hotmail.com or at rehearsals)

1. Which 5 Metropolitan Districts make up West Yorkshire?
2. Which is the longest Yorkshire river?
3. Which is the shortest Yorkshire river?
4. Which is the smallest Yorkshire city?
5. Which Dale takes its name from a village rather than a river?
6. Name the 2 largest natural lakes in Yorkshire.
7. Which is the county's highest unbroken waterfall?
8. Which 2 ranges of hills form the northern and western boundary of the North Yorks Moors?
9. Which craftsman carved a mouse as his emblem?
10. Place the peaks in height order : high to low (Ingleborough, Penyghent, Whernside, Great Whernside, Widdale Fell)
11. What is the origin/use of: yan, tera, tethera, fethera, pimps.

12. What is the connection between Otley Chevin and the Houses of Parliament?
13. How many steps are there up to Whitby Abbey
14. Where did a ghostly lady in white appear, saying 'Pity poor Bradford'? (long before the Capital One cup final)
15. Who is the patron saint of Woolcombers?
16. Name the black substance carved into Jewellery since Roman times in Whitby (that's the easy bit) and what was fossilised to create it?
17. Name the 3 great reservoirs of Nidderdale.
18. Which Pirate fought the British Navy off Flamborough Head?
19. What would you do with a Roseberry Topping?
20. In which (then) Yorkshire town was the Sydney Harbour Bridge built?

WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS!



On Sunday, 4th March 2013, the choir qualified for a “green” award by protecting the environment from atmospheric pollution through the reduced use of motor fuel. Choristers travelled to Leeds by diesel-powered coach, but returned home on a cloud of incredulous joy! They had won the “Choirs Rock 2013” fund-raising competition (the second of its kind) in the New Dock Hall, in Armouries Square, Leeds.

It was to be a long day, with departure from the Millenium Industrial Estate car park at 12.15 and arrival demanded by 13.15. There were four other competitive choirs, all of whose average age was well below that of SMVC. Might not the judges favour youthful brio? Not only that; their impressive CVs revealed that all had been prize winners at recent prestigious choral events.

The thousand-seater hall, in one of the many modern buildings of the re-developed dockland area, where river and canal flirt with each other, was

festooned with black drapes generously punctuated by tiny, bright lights, which flickered from one psychedelic colour to another. Consequently, the acoustic seemed a little “dead”: Would this be an appropriate venue in which to obtain best release of vocal sonority?

Never worry. The battery of vast and modern amplifiers took care of such concerns, though not before a lengthy, repetitive and tedious traipsing up and down on to the platform was enacted. The MC, a handsome and energetic young man from Radio Aire had urged all to much rictus grinning and “bounce”. It was apparent that some of the ladies present were much better equipped than SMVC to provide this latter quality. Indeed, some blood pressure monitors soared.

SMVC was, as choir number 5, last to go through the prescribed routines and have a chance to sing a few bars, so that the sound engineers could optimise settings. Hence, boredom was maximum.

Finally, all were released to go and feast on whatever they had brought from home or the just-acceptable packets of biscuits provided. There was time to reflect on the glimpses of splendid sound and movement displayed by the other choirs. How they had gyrated, sashayed, waved and lunged around! Steeton was immobile by comparison and after all, the title said it loud and clear, this event was “Rock”, a term imbued with vigour. The Steeton mood was a touch sombre, but what the heck, the occasion was a lively challenge and would be enjoyed.

Some of the competition had revealed already their be-tinselled costumes but as performance time proper approached multiple sequined, black, figure-enhancing costumes proliferated. Steeton’s only flash of shine was when a clip-on tie was awry or when a bald pate was caught in the spotlights!

Choirs sat, en-bloc, at the sides of the hall, occupying 200 seats. The remaining 800 were all filled by audience. Leeds was generous in its support of the charities which aid unfortunate juveniles and cancer sufferers.

Lights flashed. Loud canned music belted out. Choirs bounced and grinned, as instructed, on to stage. The talent hinted at earlier was presented by choir after choir with awesome combination of exquisitely arranged and delivered harmony and choreography. Every performance was highly commendable. Pity the poor judges who, with the odd critical advice, commended aspects of each splendid performance.

Finally, it was Steeton’s turn. It has to be admitted that there was no bounce but rhythmic clapping accompanied the entry on to stage. There were the odd Steradent enhanced flashes but there was an urgency and rapidity to assemble which will be demanded at all future SMVC concerts.

Pretty Woman was an inspired choice to start with and brought whoops of support from the kind-hearted ladies in the various choirs. It is a short piece which the choir delivers well. It was a success and confidence grew.

The mood changed with *American Trilogy*. No way could one argue that it was “rock” but it has the virtue of being well known and melodic. The MD coaxed the best out of his charges and the reception was climactic. Hips had not rolled. Heads had not been swung side-to-side. Neither pirouettes nor lunges had been made. Merely, tonsils had wobbled and Adam’s apples had vibrated up and down. The roof, however, was lifted by the final notes of “... marching on”. A fulfilled and delighted choir scampered off stage.

A judge said of one piece that it was *the* performance of the night. Was he merely being kind before letting down Steeton, whose offerings differed in character from those of the other choirs?

The judges retired to deliberate on which two choirs were to go through to a “sing off”. More orange juice was quaffed and more waistlines extended by chocolate fingers. (There was no hot meal. Not a hint of a traditional Sunday roast and Yorkshire puddings).

Choirs and audience reassembled and whilst settling, were treated to professional groups who were not participating in the competition. They entertained with material consonant with the up-beat tenor of the general proceedings.

A lady judge delivered the four-member panel’s verdict, deliberately, slowly and teasingly. A thoroughly deserving large choir of ladies was named first. Tension dissolved into disbelief as the first sibilant of Steeton was spoken. SMVC were finalists at least!

The DaleDivas from Derbyshire were choir A. They added to the bounce and flair of their previous entry. Their tails were up and they delivered a high quality performance. Follow that Steeton.

Steeton did, with *You’ll Never Walk Alone*, at least according to the audience, who voted expensively (£1.50+) and generously through their mobile phones. A raffle was conducted as the electronic votes were counted.

You know the result! The acclaim was loud, sustained and delighted, though without triumphalism: the high quality and generous spirit of the other competitors was respected.

In a brief, photographed ceremony five SMVC officers were presented with a chamfered glass trophy. It will join kindred items in the display cabinet in “The Old Star” at Steeton top.

Footnote:

Readers wanting additional cash should consider consulting the MD, whose prescience predicted, after the first set of performances, that should SMVC be a finalist, it would win because SMVC’s content and style would have greater appeal to the audience, of which he had taken stock. Such a forecasting talent might well advise advantageously on what to back in the 3.30 at York Races.

Peter Lofts

Concert Funds Raised for Charities/Good Causes 2012

Date	Venue	Organisation	£
Jan	Nazareth Unitarian Padiham	Church funds Air Ambulance	£955
Feb	All Saints Ilkley	Leonard Cheshire Disability Schools 4 All	£808
March	Silsden Methodist St Peters Addingham	Church Funds Church Funds	£383 £420
April	St Mary's Burley	Church Funds	£504
May	Otley Methodists Baildon Methodists	Mayor's Charity Appeal Donkey Sanctuary	£598 £350
June	All Saints Ilkley East Morton Church	Church Funds Church Funds	£701 £700
August	Broughton Hall	Carer's Resource	£3700
Sep	Holy Trinity Skipton (with Mousehole MVC)	Special Injuries Centre Sheffield Northern General	£1200
Oct	Cowling Parish Church	Cowling Village Hall Ctte	£475
Nov	St James Crossroads	Church Funds	£310
Dec	Ashton Hall Lancaster	Cancer Care	£1000

Total raised : £1212

Contacts for SMVC

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Top tenor rep			
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Bass rep	David Brown	01535274919	

Concert/ Events Dates 2013 (7.30 unless noted)

March		
Saturday	23rd	Ilkley/ Wharfedale Rotary – All Saints Ilkley
April		
Saturday	13th	Hotel de Ville Burnt Yates for St Andrew's
Saturday	20th	Dinner Dance at St Ives
Saturday	27th	St Alkelda's Giggleswick
May		
Friday (note change from last ed'n)	3 rd 7.00 pm	Beckfoot School -Charity concert for Margaret Carey Foundation (Dave Browns charity) with guest artists Luke Jackson and Manchester Airport Choir
Saturday	25th	Embsay Library - Village Hall
Thursday	30th	Devon Tour - returning Tuesday 4 th June
June		
Saturday	15th	High Bentham Methodist Church
Friday	28th	Bolton Abbey
July		
Saturday	13th	Shipley Victoria Hall with the Glen Singers
Saturday	20th	Tom's wedding
Saturday	27th	Ulverston Methodist - Rotary
Sept		
Saturday	7th	St. Anne's In the Grove, Halifax
Saturday	21st	St. Saviour's, Fairweather Green, Bradford
Oct		
Saturday	5th	Netherfield Road Ind Methodists, Nelson
Saturday	19th	St Johns Methodist Church Settle
Nov		
Saturday	2nd	Annual Concert, Kings Hall, Ilkley
Saturday	30th	St. James Clapham
Dec		
Saturday	7th	St. James' Thornton
Saturday	21st	End of Year Concert – Holy Trinity Skipton