

Archive - 2014

A Cheque for Forget Me Not



The Choir's supported charity at our recent concert with Sir Willard White in Huddersfield Town Hall were delighted to receive a cheque for £1563.28. Lisa Calvert from the Forget Me Not Children's Hospice thanked the Choir for a great night's entertainment and hoped the Charity and Choir could team up again in the future. Lisa is pictured with Steve and Alan.

Singing with a Knight - Sir Willard White!

After months of preparation we finally shared the stage with Sir Willard White in Huddersfield Town Hall. The date, Saturday 11th October 2014, will have to be added to the Choir's list of memorable nights. It was emotional, entertaining and fun. Sir Willard had the audience in the palm of his hand and they just didn't want to see him go. The Choir, backed by Sir Willard and Gordon Stewart on the organ, produced an unforgettable World War 1 remembrance sequence including a first performance of Robert Cockcroft's arrangement of *In*



Flander's Fields which contrasted brilliantly with the light hearted *Just George*, a tribute to George Formby.



Choir Stall in Holmfirth September 2014



The Promotion Group once again organised a stall in Holmfirth to promote the choir. Interest from the public was heightened this year by the offer of chocolate cake on the stall and by Robert and Steve to motorists stopped at the lights by the Library.

It soon became obvious that talking about the choir and handing over leaflets and beer mats doesn't work.

However giving cake, especially to the children, soon resulted in smiles followed by gratefully receiving choir literature. Thank you to everyone who turned up to help.

The event was a joint venture with the Forget-Me-Not trust, our charity for the Sir Willard White concert.

They made a welcome 78 pounds on the tombola.



The general view was great product but there was not enough footfall where we were situated, even though we got rid of 144 slices of cake and made lots of contact with passers-by.

We are going to explore other sites in Holmfirth and Huddersfield to have a stall



Gent, Bruges and the First World War Battlefields

When 60 people spend 5 days away from home visiting a foreign city it is difficult to summarise their collective experience.

What is written on this page is a personal view. Others will have different recollections based on their itinerary and experiences. Dave Walker has put finger to keyboard and gives his thoughts [here](#) and [here](#).

One thing is certain, the coach journey to and from Gent was definitely the stale crust around the mouth watering filling. Our mode of transport will be reviewed next time. However, within minutes of arrival, at 11:20pm local time, we were enjoying the first of many beers at a local and welcoming bar, the strangely named 'Monopole'. According to Wikipedia, a 'monopole' is a hypothetical magnet with a single pole. It succeeded in attracting us so maybe the name is not so peculiar. The habitual residents were Dick, Pete and Gert, ably served by a laconic landlady who did not seem to understand the concept of 'closing time'. On our last night, Pete was so overcome by the experience of a British Choir singing in Gent that he emptied his pockets (several times!) in a desperate attempt to secure copies of our CD's. We obliged by leaving a full set with the receptionist at our hotel before departing for Blighty the following day. I hope he wasn't disappointed.



A trip to Ypres, the Menin Gate and First World War Battlefields was first up. Human destruction and misery on a massive scale. Machine guns, mud, gas, disease and barbed wire sweetened by gallows humour. From the distance of 100 years it's difficult to comprehend. The immaculately laid out cemeteries dangerously close to becoming 'tourist attractions'. God forbid some deranged bureaucrat doesn't decide that what is needed is a Visitor Centre and Cafe!

We paid our respects in the only way we could, by singing. A small token to a lost generation. Several in our party had closer ties with the various monuments. Members of their distant family had their names engraved on the stone. No graves, just a name.



We will all have had different emotions at these locations. I couldn't help noticing the names of the 9th Bhopal Infantry on the Menin Gate. Victims in the first war where gas was used to kill and disorientate who hailed from a region which later suffered the Worlds worst industrial accident - in a gas leak!



Our guides for the day, native Belgians, were excellent. Knowledgeable and efficient, especially when it came to arranging an impromptu lunch stop. Five euros for a first rate sandwich and a beer was the bargain of the day.

The next day it was Bruges. A tip-off that an unscheduled (and unwanted?) visit to a chocolate factory was on the itinerary saw Ged and myself get on our bikes for the short ride to Bruges. Some assume that Belgium, being flat, must be cycling heaven. It is not. It falls well short of the dazzling variety of landscape that our native New Mill hills and valleys have to offer. When the maximum gradient encountered is that offered by a bridge over a canal things can become tedious. On a leisure ride sweating is not an option. Belgium does, however, offer an insight into the differing mentalities portrayed by motorists and cyclists alike. When encountering busy junctions it takes some moments to realise that the traffic has stopped for YOU! Everyone is waiting for you to make a move and you're expected to do it quickly and confidently just like the matron on the bone shaker off to do her shopping or the leggy blonde bombshell carving majestically through the traffic. Speaking of which, when we were padlocking our resplendent steeds to the pipework provided for that purpose outside the Cathedral, I mentioned to Ged that they should be OK provided 'the Goon' who owned the sturdy steel roadster in the adjoining bay exercised some care when releasing their machine. As I closed the padlock Ged murmured that 'the Goon has just arrived'. I looked up to be confronted by a vision. She was all legs, teeth and flowing blonde hair. A nod and a flashing smile set us up for the day.

Then it was off to the Cathedral to sing. The acoustics were great and we made the most of them. Some in the audience stayed for both halves, others dipped in and out according to time and inclination. Hopefully they enjoyed what they heard. We were satisfied with our performance and enjoyed the whole experience.



The main course on Day 3 was a concert at St Bavo's Cathedral in Gent. The Cathedral exhibited all the overpowering magnificence that these buildings contain. One thousand years old, two hundred years to build and home to one of the most iconic works of art in the world. The Gent Altarpiece was painted 600 years ago by the Van Eyck brothers and today's experts still struggle to comprehend how it was done. Coveted by, among others, Napoleon and Hitler, it has survived fire, attempted arson and several transfers of location. The Cathedral is vast but provided a surprisingly intimate singing environment. Unlike Bruges, this was no echo chamber and we gave a solid performance of several Choir standards.

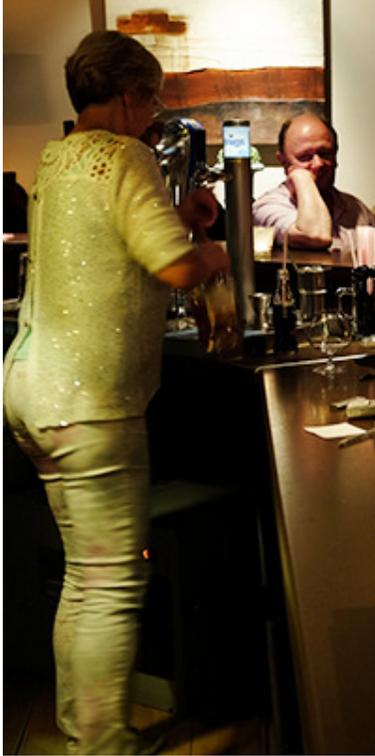
After the concert we dispersed to different bars and restaurants but, as if our body clocks operated as one, turned up at the Corenmarkt tram stop en-masse at 11:00pm. It must have been every teenager's nightmare as a bunch of mildly inebriated OAP's struck up the old Everley Brothers hit 'Let it be me'. Try telling that story to your Mum in the morning!



Day 4 was free to enjoy as we pleased. Shopping, sightseeing and culture all made it in to the itinerary. Ged and I attempted to navigate the cycle routes to the west of Gent but gave up as a combination of road works, detours and crass map reading ate in to our time.

The evening was dedicated to what had become labelled as 'The Last Supper', a mass meal at the local Rambler Restaurant. Ably organised by Robert and Adam, it was a lively and noisy event. The food was good and the staff served us with skill and speed.

A final beer at the Monopole and it was off to bed to prepare for the long drive home the following day.



One final image

A New Mill butcher waits for the Spangly Landlady with the Wrinkly Tights to draw his beer.

Lowerhouses School - A Workshop with a Difference!

It was a partnership, two parties cooperating and giving something to each other through music.

On Wednesday May 21st, after school, twenty or so choir members arrived in dribs and drabs to be electronically signed in at reception by their chairman, Adam Brown. There were several spelling mistakes, not by Adam.

We were greeted by Mrs Tracey, choir mistress, who explained how the action-packed session would go. The juniors, some really small, began with Music Memories illustrated by elegant choreography. Then 'You Raise Me Up' complete with signing for the hearing impaired.

The men did their set unaccompanied. First 'Let it be me', the most popular version of which was released in 1960 by The Everly Brothers. Second 'African Trilogy' which was a tad rusty it has to be said. Two traditional Zulu melodies are combined with the South African national anthem. The first song, 'Siyahamba', is now well-known as the hymn 'We are marching in the light of God'. The second item, Shosholoza, is a road gang work song. The trilogy concludes with the anthem Nkosi Sikelel'i Afrika, sung in English. We were due to do it again as a joint item, but the two very different versions couldn't sing to each other.

Drumming was next and each choir member received an instrument. 'Quieten down children,' did not always apply to the children. There were three drumming sections, in a round, alternating with singing.

The children then sang their favourite song about Mr Miller and his band. Some great trombones and saxophones. The choir is usually unable to perform with added movement or action, but the men gladly joined in, some better than others.

'You raise me up' came again, this time with a tutorial for the men on signing by Mrs

Thomas. Again we had no option but to multitask and sing and sign together. It was hard. Confusingly, whilst the actions and sounds are performed at the same time, signing and singing don't necessarily use the same words. Recorded by more than one hundred artists, You Raise Me Up was originally composed by the duo, Secret Garden. In 2005, it was popularised in the UK by Westlife. Today, it is also a church hymn. The men finished with 'Let there be Peace on Earth'.

The partnership was between children, starting out on life's journey, and men in their fifties and sixties with something left in the tank. The children, and the teachers, received somewhere that deep soulful sound that men can make together. The men, uncoordinated granddads, smiled a lot. It was fun, and moving.

Thanks to Dave Walker for the above.

Two events in two days!

On Friday 11th April, New Mill Male Voice Choir sang at the funeral of one of its members, Derek Haigh, who died suddenly on holiday in Cyprus. He was a sunny character who had a great business career (see Derek's own words below) and who loved his music. In 2003, he and his wife, Jocelyne, were responsible for inviting the choir to two big concerts in aid of Rotary and Inner Wheel at The Winter Gardens, Blackpool and The Spa, Scarborough. Over 300 attended the service at Kirkheaton Parish Church. Tributes came from Mirfield Rotarian, Paul Cusworth and Graham Dawson, representing the choir. The congregation progressed to Woodsome GC for refreshments, golf being another of Derek's passions.



The following day, the choir sang at The Salvation Army Citadel, Scarborough with Manhattan Voices, a dozen or so ladies linked to the choir by a long-standing friendship between their musical director and Ray Thompson, the choir's music committee chair. They smiled a lot and their repertoire was popular and well sung, an excellent foil for the choir's mostly traditional male voice pieces. Sadly, for a great venue with great singing, the audience, mostly camp-followers and Jocelyne, numbered little more than 40. The afterglow was enjoyed at The Red Lea Hotel, prior to an eleventh hour departure on the coach. Two events in two days. Unusual for the choir, and well supported. Two sacred venues, one for a solemn celebration of a life, the other secular and joyful. Two strong singing spaces, ideal for the male voice genre. Pity about the unequal audience sizes. Two contrasting experiences, brought together by Jocelyne and Derek.

Derek Haigh - 1936 - 2014



Derek passed away in Cyprus on 24th March.

An article, written by Derek about his life, was published in the 2007 winter edition of the Choir Newsletter and is reproduced below.

Derek Haigh - Second Tenor New Mill Male Voice Choir from 2001

DEREK BURDETT HAIGH

Skilled Swinger

I was born in High Flatts, where my parents were in business, and I was their only child.

As my father played the euphonium in Denby United Silver Prize Band, and my mother played the violin, it was not surprising that I took up the piano at an early age.

I was keen on all sports, playing football, cricket and also tennis (as we had a grass court at our home).

My secondary education was shared. I attended Brookfield Co-ed Quaker school at Wigton in Cumberland, where my music rapidly developed, but after my mother became ill, I completed my education at Penistone Grammar School.

Later I studied Electrical Engineering in Huddersfield, graduating with a diploma in Electrical Engineering, subsequently becoming a member (and lately a Fellow) of the Institution of Electrical Engineers and a Chartered Electrical Engineer.

During my school days the Vicar at Upper Denby Church invited me to learn to play the church organ, and I continued to play, whenever available, at Services and Weddings for over forty years.

I am happily married to Jocelyne, but it was with sadness that we lost our twin boys, born prematurely, at only 3 days old. Jocelyne has been a great encouragement in my musical life, and was very pleased when Dr. Martin Dey suggested that I join NMMVC seven years ago. I enjoy classical, big band, choral and country and western music. The first classical piece I heard was Mendelssohn's 4th Symphony, and this has remained a favourite of mine - although Mozart, Beethoven and Rossini are also very high on my list.

I have been very fortunate in having a successful business life, first with a large electrical contracting company in Huddersfield, and then moving on to the joint positions of Director of Pennine Engineering Ltd and Managing Director of Derek B. Haigh Ltd - which employed nearly 400 staff in Brighouse.

My Co-Directors and I were later persuaded to sell out to a Public Conglomerate based in Derby, and I continued employment with them. Four years later the Conglomerate sold our companies to a newly privatised Utility Company in Nottingham, who retained our services for another three years. Later they decided to close down these Companies and several other Companies which they owned. I was approached to join a Northern Ireland Group, and became Managing Director of their Leeds subsidiary. I continued there until my retirement five years ago.

I was also employed, on an Electrical Consultancy basis, by local Architectural practices, and a multinational agriculture Conglomerate, where I worked on local and international projects for the World Bank, Crown Agents and the ODA amongst others. All this slotted in nicely with my contracting activities, with no conflict of interest.

My sporting activities are now limited mainly to golf, through my memberships at Woodsome Hall and Scarborough South Cliff Golf Clubs, and with Jocelyne being a talented golfer, our holidays are mainly spent chasing around the fairways and greens of the world!! If I was cast away on a desert island, my luxury would be to have a piano, but a stock of good wine would also be very acceptable! To pass the time, I would like to have the complete 29 world best-sellers by Alistair MacLean.

Although we spend a considerable time away from Huddersfield, I really enjoy life with the choir, and the happy times we have at rehearsals and concerts. I hope that I shall continue life with NMMVC for many years to come.

David Marshall - 1938-2013



David passed away on the last day of 2013. The Choir had the honour of singing at his funeral in St Mary's Church, Mirfield. He is pictured, on the right, during rehearsal with the Bass section. Below is a summary of David's life, written by Dave Walker and published in the Choir newsletter in 2006.

David Marshall - Bass New Mill Male Voice Choir

David tells me he sits on the second row of the basses, next to John Rotchell and Clive Hetherington. Clearly a row of literary giants.

His early influences were as you'd expect - parents, relatives, school masters, church and youth club. In and amongst there was cycling, tennis, table tennis, golf, running, model making and jazz. Of these, golf, the church and singing remain and uniquely, I imagine, he is still in touch with a particularly influential school master.

After school it was a higher education in science - an external London University degree in maths, physics and chemistry. Then the world of work. Over 2 years with Thomas De La Rue banknote, stamp and security printers before moving to Allied Colloids where he's been into dyestuffs, plastics, printing inks, paints, water treatment, paper manufacture, agriculture, superabsorbent polymers, oil industries. Finally, he worked in new ventures - 35 years in total.

In 1963 he married Ann. Three boys came along - Richard (graphic designer), Ian (golf professional) and Adam. Adam died of leukaemia aged 5. Now it's grandparenting and DIY, golf, politics and holidays, committee choir work, gardening and walking. He's clear about their order.

He loves making music when voices of different registers, if controlled properly, make great sounds. He enjoys choir camaraderie and describes his vision of the choir as carrying on regardless.

Can I add a couple of things? First, the dry way he takes the mickey out of us when we ask daft questions about why, where, who and what we have to do to get to a concert on time. Second, he's made the Bui Doi solo his. Who needs Willard?

First published winter 2006

Dave died 31.12.2013

Footnote

During the choir weekend away, January 2014, Steve Davis paid a tribute. A stalwart and very important to the basses as a mentor to new members. He sat with them and helped them through that tricky first month or so. Steve was fortunate to stand next to him in concert. David was spot on, not always the case for some of the other, larger basses that have sung with the choir in the past. He will be missed.

Scarborough Workshop - January 2014



A Review by Dave Walker

That time of the year again.



Rupert arrived at the hotel on time but was late for rehearsal. He'd given Alan Hicks a lift, regaling him for 2 hours on the rights and wrongs of how to pronounce breakfast and whether it was grammatically appropriate to use thankfully or fortunately.

The baritones were asked by the tenors to move along as they had insufficient room to sit down. We complied and added a chair to our line, next to me as it happens. It remained vacant for the duration. A phantom tenor. Are there one or two about?

The warm-ups included a trick to encourage us to sing a phrase correctly. It didn't work for a while. We also had a left-right rhyme to coordinate with walking. I'm not sure we cracked that either, but, unlike the first ruse, it wasn't integral to learning new music. For some reason the size of baths in the bedrooms came up for discussion. Apparently one singer was fortunate to have an enormous one, complete with optional water-wings and life-belt as standard. No theory this year, though we did get legged up in chord inversions during a bass-baritone session. Rupert shook his head and looked into the distance.

The new music is as follows:

'He Ain't Heavy'. First recorded by Kelly Gordon and then The Hollies in 1969. For Rupert's benefit, the title is an example of parapsydokian in which the second half of the title causes the hearer to reinterpret the first half (wikipedia says so). See also The Justice Collective.

'George Formby medley'.

'No Arms Could Ever Hold You'. A hit for Chris Norman as a solo artist. He also had success as part of the band Smokie, an English Glam Rock band from Bradford.

'Abide with Me'. Alan's arrangement for his dad, originally written in 1847 by Henry

Francis Lyte, sung to William Henry Monk's Eventide. Frequently part of religious and military services, films and TV programmes. Integral to the Wembley RL/FA cup final preliminaries since 1929.

The formal entertainment included:

David Thorpe - a singalong version of 'New York New York'. Richard Green said he'd no time for Frank Sinatra's singing. I was a touch astonished as I quite like him myself.

Something about slurring his words - it doesn't make you a bad person.

Clive Hetherington - a gently mocking version of the Kathleen Ferrier Northumberland folk song 'Blow the Wind Southerly'. Born in Blackburn, as you might have guessed, she was said to transcend all boundaries and snobberies of class and taste. Clive's 'blow the wind suddenly', his take on pelvic gaseous effluent, was witty and well sung.

Bill "the voice" Hopwood - following rave reviews for his solo at David Marshall's funeral, a potboiler from the club scene. 'Love is All' by Joe Longthorne MBE.

Alan Hicks - lyrics by Rudyard Kipling, saluting the tommies of WW1 who had to walk miles in the African sun behind their officers on camels. 'Boots', according to Alan is a boring marching song, and remained boring despite his best efforts to give it an animated makeover. Apparently US Navy Seal training uses the poem to simulate torture, for 18 hours at a time. Says it all really.

John Senior - a recitation for a change, 'Arnold the Armadillo' has dodgy eyesight and gets the hots for a concertina ('bright silver buttons' and 'black leather'). "Sex with a concertina is rarely accomplished discreetly". "Picture love as a kind of concerto, poor Arnold his first was unfinished. What let everyone who was there know, was a very loud C sharp diminished". Should have gone to specsavers.

Geoff Gill - another recitation, again flatulence the subject.

'Ibbo' - his best was 'Slow Train' written in 1963 by Flanders and Swann.

Steve Davis - immaculate as ever with 'Steal Away'.

Ged Faricy - an echo of our new music with 'Leaning on a Lamp Post' complete with ukulele accompaniment.

Graham Dawson and Eddie Sykes - Eddie recently met a Cornish lady who sorely missed our concert outside the St Ives' lifeboat station. So did we. I can't remember the link between St Buryen's MVC and 'Perhaps Love' but it's turned into a passion. Placido Domingo and John Denver on CD every breakfast. Ultimately Alan Simmonds' arrangement and today's performance.

Rod and Dave - Dave's birthday today which he shares with Dolly Parton (1946), Ged and Phil Everly (1939). 'Bye Bye Love', a tribute to Phil who died 3.1.14, sung with their usual aplomb.

Rupe and Alan returned home Saturday evening, inversion chords ringing in their ears. That left us with the Saturday night gala at the Highlander, a pub which I've frequented for 20 years, first with my father-in-law and subsequently with anyone who will go.



Sadly, the young lad behind the bar automatically pours me a pint of 1664. The following comments are purely gut reaction. My pick was Andrew Morrison. He sang from his shoelaces to the hair on the back of his head. Everything went into his performances of 'Wild Mountain Thyme', about the hills around Balquhiddy, and 'The Fields of Athenry', an Irish folk ballad set during the Irish Famine (1845-1850) and adopted as an anthem by Irish rugby, soccer and GAA teams (Celtic and Liverpool as well). It is also a rebel song, 'protesting the intervention of the English crown in Irish affairs and the harsh treatment of Irish nationalists by the British' (<http://everything2.com/title/The+Fields+of+Athenry>). Andrew sang it because he loves it, taking the opportunity to throw his head back and just let it all come out. He loved it so much he made several excursions into the back of the bar to share it with those who had just popped in for a quiet drink.

My second pick was Graham Dawson. Smooth Classics, Dinner Jazz, Mel Torme.

John Rotchell and myself ate in the Highlander on Saturday evening. Two couples were dining just behind us. John eavesdropped and discovered they lived in a nearby village and had come just for the New Mill entertainment, having experienced it last year. Fans! I wonder how many we have? We could have sold merchandise and had a bucket collection.



Grahams singing causes a lady to perspire! Is it in anticipation or desperation?



A Significant Birthday for Ged. We bought him some new hair to celebrate him becoming a Burden on the State.