

Tone's Tidings

October – November 2017 Issue 22



St Edmundsbury Male Voice Choir
Patron: The Rt. Hon The Earl of Iveagh
President: Paul Deane
Vice Presidents: John Balaam, Dr John Meers
Registered Charity No. 1028123



Halloween and Bonfire night have gone with November's nights so dreary
Yuletide is the next in line with Christmas, Bright and cheery.
Reports of our past concerts are written on these pages.
I hope you like this little rhyme, to write it took me ages.

St Mary's Church, Stratford St Mary, 30 September

As a choir member of late 'more in the breach than in observance', and having heard tell of some recent developments in performances, I was looking forward to seeing the results when I attended St Edmundsbury Male Voice Choir's concert in Stratford St Mary.



The first half of the concert started on what to me was happy and familiar ground: some well-remembered Welsh hymns and standards, including a fluid performance of Eric Whitaker's *Seal Lullaby* (a personal favourite) and an ever-dramatic *Morte Criste*.

The ringing in of the changes came in the second half, which introduced an expanded accompaniment, with electric guitar and bass joining the choir's piano instrumentals. The piece, *An American Trilogy*, was well chosen to introduce the new sound and, played with sensitivity, this blended very well with the choir and piano accompaniment.

St Edmundsbury Male Voice Choir SEMVC is fortunate to be supported by the combination of quality musicianship and sense of fun which is brought by director Mark Jefferson and accompanist Calvin Goymer. This was well in evidence in the performance of *Rhythm of life*, performed by the choir with enthusiasm but not lacking care and clarity despite the conductor taking a seat at the piano, while Mark and Calvin entertained with an ebullient accompaniment.

Another introduction new to my ears was a selection of songs from Burt Bacharach and Hal David. It is not easy for a choir to achieve the relaxed-sounding approach to rhythm and timing which this style demands, and fight against the temptation to revert to rigid 'march time', but SEMVC have clearly made strides; and again the smooth guitar accompaniment complementing the choir well and helping to set an easy feel. I particularly enjoyed *Anyone Who Had a Heart*, which hit all the right notes.

Credit must also go to violin soloist Elena Lyutserina, ably accompanied by Steve Cook, whose selection of pieces brought a pleasant contrast of mood between the choral performances. The combination of violin and ukulele was a surprise but worked very well – in the Russian pieces, I wondered if I could hear the strains of a balalaika through the uke.

My thanks go to Mark and the choir for an enjoyable evening and for making an 'occasional' member welcome. Also to Tony Farr – for his patience while I collected my thoughts.

Matthew Satchwell

The Dalesmen Male Voice Choir's 30th Anniversary celebration with SEMVC and Mansfield and District MVC, Derby Cathedral, 14 October

Dalesmen Musical Director, Paul Marshall, welcomed the audience and over 120 choir voices to the Cathedral which has a contemporary and bright feel and superb acoustic.

The programme began with all the choirs reflecting the title of the concert *Let all men sing*, conducted by Paul. He continued with the Dalesmen alone singing *Anthem* (Chess) and *Rhythm of Life* (Sweet Charity). Both pieces were sung a little too fast and as can be the case with the second piece when that happens, it makes it difficult



to enunciate the words without fear of losing dentures! Meryl Chambers, Mansfield and District Choir's Musical Director, led the joint choirs in *With a Voice of Singing*. With this number, as with some others in the programme, when the accompaniment stopped the singers voices seemed to rise as they sang from the heart and lifted the audiences emotions. Mansfield continued with their tribute to Nelson Mandela, *African Trilogy* and *Shenandoah*. The ending of the first piece was more melodic than when SEMVC perform it and I preferred their version.

SEMVC's Musical Director, Mark Jefferson, conducted all choirs in *The Rose* - a song about love being like a flower that blooms, dies and then blooms again in the spring. SEMVC's choices for the first half continued the theme of love with *Autumn Leaves*. This time about lost love, gone like the leaves that fall and disappear. Their second piece was *Cantique de Jean Racine* which has a fiendishly difficult piano accompaniment but SEMVC's accompanist, Calvin Goymer, made it sound easy. Sung in French is tricky for the choir members who don't speak French.

There were some tuning issues for the tenors and a lack of distinction at the start of some of the phrases - possibly due to lack of confidence with the French lyrics. However, the rolling and layering of the melody came over well and it was clear why this piece won the competition for which it was originally written.

Paul Marshall dedicated *Gwahoddiad*, the male voice choir favourite, to the Dalesmen choir patrons. The climax of the "Amens", when the accompaniment stopped, proved a fitting end to this half and left the audience looking forward to the second.

After refreshments, Meryl Chambers opened conducting the joint choirs with *An American Trilogy*. This piece builds almost imperceptibly to the final "Glory, Hallelujahs"; we missed the organ played by the late John Ottley. The fullness of the voices was appreciated but the full dynamic range was not used.

A beautiful rendition of *Mansions of the Lord* was sung unaccompanied by Mansfield followed by the lively and dynamic *Comrades in Arms*.

(continued on p. 2)

SEMVC 30th Anniversary Dinner

Saturday 20 January 2017, 7.00 for 7.30 pm

Many of you have already booked your place for the dinner at Ashlar House, Eastern Way, BSE and most of you have nominated a table at which you wish to dine. Please don't feel you need to find a table before you book; there are several vacancies on tables of 10. Ask Ian to find you a suitable place.

(continued from p. 1) Mark took up the baton to conduct all the voices in *Bring him home* (Les Misérables). It reminded me of the comedic version of the song "God its high; this song's too high. Pity me, change the key. Bring it down...". This song always raises emotions in the choir and audience, and Calvin's improvisation was appreciated. SEMVC continued with the Bacharach Medley of *What the world needs now*, *Anyone who had a heart* and *Walk on by*. I felt it was too long, considering that all three pieces were similar in pace and dynamic. However, the guitar accompaniment played by Simon Shirm was beautiful. Simon also accompanied the Robbie Williams piece *Angels*. The guitar and voices seemed to be imbalanced for this piece with the voices lacking power, and the Baritones missed their entry at one point early on.

Paul Marshall again conducted the joint choirs with one of my (and our chairman's) favourites, *Morte Criste*, before leading his choir in *Do you hear the people sing* (Les Misérables). The pace was set a little too fast but the enunciation and tuning were good.

The Dalesmen were then joined by Wil Pearson, winner of the Dalesmen's Young Musician of the Year award. Wil sang *I write the songs* with the choir; a song made popular by Barry Manilow. The voices were not balanced, with Wil using a microphone and the choir underpowered in comparison. It was unfortunate that the massed choirs couldn't be used to give more power. Wil then sang two solo pieces, accompanying himself on the piano; Nat King Cole's *Smile* followed by *Ole Man River* (Showboat) - and we could understand why he easily won the competition. All the voices sang the last three pieces with each Musical Director taking a turn to conduct. Mark lead with a beautifully expressive *What would I do without my music* - an anthem for all choirs everywhere. Ironically a question asked of Calvin as he struggled to find his sheet music for this piece which appeared to be with one of the other musical directors! The accompaniment this evening was even more powerful with Calvin's beautifully ornamented arrangement. Meryl took the choir through the rousing *When the Saints go marching in*, which never fails to catch out a few enthusiastic audience members with its false ending. Paul conducted *You raise me up*.

Accompanists, Margaret Ball, Hilary Griffiths and Calvin, and the Musical Directors were thanked. The President of the Dalesmen gave a vote of thanks to everyone including an explanation for the emotion we all felt when we listened to the choirs sing. "The choirs learn the words and music by heart so that when they sing, they sing from the heart". We certainly felt that this evening.

Jill and Paul Davis (Bass)

Dates for your Diary

Th 21 December - Carols and Chips, BSE Rugby ground
2018

Sa 20 January - SEMVC 30th Anniversary Dinner, BSE

Sa 27 January - Concert with Downham Preparatory School and Marham Military Wives Choir, St Nicholas' Chapel, King's Lynn, PE30 1NH

Sa 24 February - Concert St Mary's Church, Barton Mills

Sa 24 March - Concert St Botolph's Church, Colchester

Sa 14 April - Concert with Suffolk Constabulary MVC,

St John the Baptist Church, Ipswich IP4 4QE

Th 10- Su13 May - Werdorf Choir visit SEMVC

Sa 12 May - Concert with MGV 1865 Werdorf e.v., St Mary's Church, BSE IP33 1RT

Th 12 July - Elmswell Over 55s Club, Blackbourne Centre, Elmswell IP30 9GY

F 27 July - Tu 31 - Wales 2018 *details tbc*

2019

Sa 23 March - Three Choir Festival with Mansfield and Bestwood MVCs, Southwell Minster, *tbc*

Edited email from Dalesmen MVC

We hoped to raise money for our adopted charities, Age UK Derby & Derbyshire, Rainbows Children's Hospice and Treetops Hospice. We knew it would be a fine balance as the cost of hiring the Cathedral alone is around £1,200 but we hadn't recognised it was 'Voices for Hospices' weekend with 18 other concerts taking place on the same night including two in Belper, our home town. We did well to get an audience of 176; in the past we have had over 300 and would have raised a good amount.

We are likely to lose around £250 but don't worry I'm not writing to ask for donations. Quite the opposite because it's not all about money but much more about friendship between our choirs; your cost will have outweighed ours given you had hotel and travel costs and gave up a weekend to be with us and help celebrate our 30th Anniversary. It was a wonderful concert combined with such proficient choirs and very good friends. If we haven't said a massive thank you to your choir already then may I do so on behalf of the Dalesmen here and now.

Looking forward to the years ahead of close friendship and harmony with you all. Many thanks.

On behalf of the Dalesmen Male Voice Choir, Rod Straw
(Concert Secretary & Publicity Officer)

A day in Crich, 15 October

Mo Marshall's (Barry Cole (Bass)) report:

The morning after the night before found us travelling to Crich Tramway Museum, near Matlock, Derbyshire.

We enjoyed an interesting few hours there, thanks to a group of enthusiasts who, just after WW2, came up with the idea of a working museum devoted to operating tramcars after a derelict limestone quarry was discovered at Crich. Track, from Stephenson's mineral railway at the site, was being recovered by a railway preservation society.

Over the years, tramcars were restored, tramway equipment acquired, and a working tramway with depots and workshops was built. Later, a streetscape was created with street furniture, a pub, a cafe and shops to create a period village.

During our visit we hopped on a tram and paid our old penny for a trip about a mile out of the village. We took the signposted walk up the hill to the memorial to the Sherwood Foresters Regiment (the regiment of the counties of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire) where two retired Sherwood Foresters told us about its very interesting history. In its stunning location with wonderful views over the lush

surrounding countryside, it gave us a place to sit and rest, with a tiny tearoom offering drinks and homemade cakes.

We walked back down to the village in time for a sustaining pie from Rita's Tea Rooms and a delicious Bluebell's ice cream before continuing on our journey. A lovely ending to a great weekend.



27 Intrepid explorers, 10 unforgettable days, climbing 5,895 m

Sian Wilson emailed "Thank you to everyone at SEMVC for purchasing raffle tickets, donating prizes, buying coffee and cake and for further personal donations in support of my trek. And a special thanks to my mum for coordinating. With your help, I've achieved my personal target of £4,550 for Macmillan. The group has raised over £100k for Macmillan.

Add Tanzania to 2018 SEMVC tour dates - over 50 people singing traditional African songs, a truly amazing and happy sound.

<https://www.greeneking.co.uk/newsroom/our-blog/kili-blog-3/>

Reports and pictures for Tidings are welcome.

Please contact Chairman Tony Farr, 01440 704179,
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