

Rob's Review

St Edmundsbury Male Voice Choir
Registered Charity No. 1028123
Patron: The Rt. Hon The Earl of Iveagh
President:
Vice Presidents: John Balaam and
Dr John Meers
Chairman: Rob Bream



St Edmundsbury
Male Voice Choir

2021

Issue No. 13

(10 March)



Hello Everybody

How are you? I hope you have found ways to keep yourselves occupied this winter. Maybe some of you have even been keeping your vocal chords tuned up for singing.

As for the Male Voice Choir, it continues to plan ahead despite Covid-19 rules and conditions changing daily. At present it would seem unlikely that the choir will meet before June at the earliest. The other problem is that the release from a section of lockdown is dependent on the previous five weeks being successful. A number of us have had the first vaccination which should place the second at the end of April but younger members will still be waiting for theirs. Should June be a start date, Mark is prepared to run the choir through the summer apart from the two weeks he is away.

You will be aware that 'Vienna 2021' has been cancelled, there were just too many unknown issues and we would certainly not be prepared sufficiently well for a concert at the moment.

The committee continue to meet monthly by Zoom. As choir members have generously continued to pay their subs and we currently have less demands on our finances the committee agreed that we should replace the horsebox and buy a box trailer (similar to the one in the picture) for transporting stage, platforms etc. The horsebox is very heavy and presents a problem for most people to tow. The new one can have choir logo etc on it. There are also enough funds to replace the sound system. Mark is looking into the most suitable and when



allowed we plan to try one at rehearsal. Ash and Ross are working on some of the staging and Ash has completed some work on Mark's podium and intermediate steps for our stage to make access easier.



Delivery of our recording made at the Apex is awaited but it seems impossible to make contact with them at present since the third lockdown. We may even face another Zoom AGM in June but let's hope we might make it back in time.

It's very sad that this newsletter is virtually an obituary page. We send our condolences and sympathies to the families of the following - Sarah Jefferson (Mark's mother), Cliff Rush (Baritone), Dave Peck (Bass), Paul Deane (Top Tenor, Bass and current President) and Ed Wilson (Top Tenor). There are some articles from members in this Newsletter with memories of these good friends. When we return to some sort of normality we must have a Memorial Concert including possibly a return to the Beacon Centre in Dudley where a carer has asked me if this might be possible.

Paul J R Deane (SEMVC President) August 1938 - 2 February 2021

"It is not the beginning, but the continuing of the same, until it is finished, that bringeth the reward". - The prayer of Sir Francis Drake after sailing round the world.

Paul was in the beginning with David Bailey, Stephen Lyndon and myself. After a convivial meeting in a pub one evening, we four agreed to find anyone else interested in MVC music to join us in the Howard Middle School. I would call it a PTA and we would hire the building for no cost. At the first meeting 11 came, and the following week there were 10. However we continued.

Paul was No. 1 on the register - and always has been.

I knew him professionally, I knew him through his service in the Cathedral through his wider work in community.

The MVC owes an immeasurable gratitude to Paul. The choir was an outlet from the demands of the daytime job. It opened wider friendships for him, and he relished the collegiality that it brought to his life.

His continuing commitment, generosity and the establishment of the Foundation to the ongoing support of the choir will remain in our memories.

"Come in No.1; your time is up"

Rev Brian Raistrick, MVC Life Member 1990

From Rob - We have been informed that Paul very generously bequeathed £2,000 to SEMVC in his will.



Edwin (Ed) J Wilson (Top Tenor) 27 January 1949 - 25 February 2021

Ed's funeral is at the Bury St Edmunds Crematorium on Friday 12 March (live webcast). The celebrants will be Ivor Thulborn and Dan Emery. Tributes to Ed will be made in the next edition of Rob's Review.



We have enjoyed the quiz nights; thank you to all those involved in preparing and running them. It involves a huge amount of work but it's great to keep in contact, even if it's only by Zoom. Thank you to all members who have kept in touch by telephone, it is good to have the chance to talk.

We still have loads of jobs to finish on our house but it can be difficult to get the materials needed.

Let's hope that the next newsletter can report a start date for the choir, it can't come too soon.
Rob

James E Beardsmore (Baritone)

1934 - 27 April 2020

Memories from Richard Everett

I am not sure when Jim joined the choir but would suggest it was around 1990 since when he has been a regular presence on the back row of the baritone section. Working on the Howard Estate, it is most likely that he came to join the choir at the suggestion of one of our early members who lived there.

Sadly, Jim had lost his wife Shirley in 2018 and many of us attended her funeral; few will forget how calmly and fondly Jim spoke of how they met and some highlights of their lives together in his eulogy. The choir was an important part of Jim and Shirley's lives and as a choir we were delighted to be asked to sing at the concert in Barton Mills church to celebrate Shirley's life.

Sadly, shortly afterwards, Jim was diagnosed with bowel cancer and received ongoing treatment for this. Typically, Jim attended choir practises regularly. He even participated in our *Sing for your Supper* events when it was generally agreed that he was the star of the show at the penultimate gathering as a ventriloquist with his partner Spike, as a tribute act to Uncle Mac of Children's Hour.

Ken Sawyer who stood next to Jim almost from his first days in the choir will remember him for his sense of humour. Until his retirement, Jim owned a greengrocery shop, previously owned by his father on the Howard Estate and he used to promote eggs going 'cheep' and fresh bananas picked in the Abbey Gardens! Ken has a special reason for remembering Jim as, on a choir trip to Dudley some years ago, Shirley introduced him to Pat and the rest as they say is history!

They were regular attendees on Choir tours, when Shirley was renowned for her quizzes which were always well received. They were very much involved in the local flower club which had entered the Sandringham Flower Show with some success. They were much involved in the life of Barton Mills including the church.

Jim leaves a family of three sons who, together with their families all live in, or very close to Barton Mills and we hope they will keep in touch with the choir.

In the ordinary course of events, as was the case with Shirley, a concert was arranged to celebrate her life and it is hoped that when 'Covid' permits, we might liaise with the family to arrange a similar concert for Jim.



David Peck (Bass and SEMVC Librarian)

27 July 1941 – 17 December 2020

Memories from Ivor Thulborn

I was privileged to count Dave Peck as one of my friends as I know many of you did too.

Dave was born in Ongar, Essex and spent most of his working life in the Metropolitan and Essex police forces. Marrying, Suzanne, a Suffolk lady, Dave moved to the county and finished his working life at Highpoint Prison. He joined SEMVC in 2003 and for many years was the choir librarian.



What made Dave so special? A firm handshake? A wicked sense of humour? A great sense of duty? A man who cared? All of these but above all he was both interesting and interested. He was always great fun to talk to as he knew a lot and had many a story to regale you with, but he was interested in you as a person and those around you. A committed choir member, Dave made sure no one was left out always looking out at afterglows and rehearsals for those on their own, particularly new members who he would make most welcome.

Dave, I know I am not just speaking for myself when I say you will be sorely missed.



And from Richard Everett

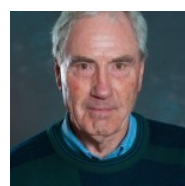
David joined the choir in 2003 and had become a fixture on the front row of the bass section since that date. I remember many years ago Mark had us sitting amongst other sections and I ended up sitting on the front row of the basses between David and the late Vic Durrant; a memorable experience with much frivolity!

When I introduced my brother-in-law, Tony Croft to the choir, he being a bass and a retired police officer, who was the natural choice to introduce him to but David whom he used to call 'Dad'. The popularity of the man was shown by the number of nicknames he had including Gregory (Peck) and the Mayor of Clare, the most commonly heard. David always greeted members on Thursday evenings with a firm handshake and a smile which I will long remember.

He was very involved in the Clare Rotary and I was privileged to be invited by David to some of their meetings.

As a member of the 'Kedington Mob', David had to rely on them for transport as sadly, over his last few years he suffered from deteriorating eyesight, and poor health generally.

For the last ten years or so David had held the position of Choir Librarian, an onerous job in handing out new sheet music as well as issuing music files to new members and collecting old scores from those members leaving. He will be a hard act to follow in this important role and his cheerful countenance will be missed by us all.



Cliff Rush (Baritone)

1934 - 7 December 2020, aged 86

Memories from Richard Everett

When I joined the choir in October 1988, Cliff and his then father-in-law, Alan Tunnicliffe, were already members and both were baritones. During the chairmanship of

Bernard Kime, Cliff acted as Concert Secretary for some time.

Cliff was a quiet character who greatly enjoyed his singing but it was not until comparatively recent years that we stood together in the third row of our section. It was clear after a while that Cliff was struggling and I remember one evening after rehearsals that Cliff sat in his chair laughing and it took Ernie Broom and I to get him on his feet.

He and his wife had separated a long time ago and for many years his partner was Jan who sings with the Aquarius Singers, thus keeping up his musical connection.

Some two or three years ago now Cliff left the choir, I suspect suffering from Alzheimer's but it was good to see him at a few of our last concerts, when sadly he was confined to a wheelchair.

Dates for your Diary

2021

October, Su24 - Concert with Honington Military Wives Choir and Lift (West Suffolk Hospital Choir), The Apex, BSE

December, Su5 - Concert at Trinity College Chapel, Cambridge, CB2 1TQ, with Lauren Hoskins.

Please send your reports and pictures to:-
Chairman Rob Bream, robbream@btinternet.com