



1903 - 2019

CounterPoint



MARCH 2019

Prudhoe Gleemen Male Voice Choir

Neville Fairbairn

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SECRETARY

PATRON CONTACT

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The choir is happy to consider concert engagements. We ask a third of any **profit** made as our fee. All concert requests should be made to the Secretary in writing. Contributions to CounterPoint are always welcome, especially from members and patrons. If you have something you would like us to include in future editions, please get in touch with:

Stephen Gladstone – Editor

Email: audrey.steve@talktalk.net

Have you visited our website?

See all about the choir at **www.prudhoegleemen.org.uk**



After another busy year for the lads as we move into 2019.

Our ranks have been swelled by the arrival of some new members. Ron Charlton, Douglas McKay, Henry Taylor, David Chapman, David Parker and Bernie Kelly have all fitted in well.

Howard Taylor celebrates 75 years with the choir this year and his daughter Alison Williams 30 years as accompanist.

We have started to post short videos on our Facebook page over the Christmas period which has gone down a storm so keep watching for new stuff.

Our annual concert on May 18th will again be at Thorp Academy. We have as our guests this year 'Beati' who last performed with us in 2014.

Beati is a small female vocal group of 10 members (one of whom, Fiona, is Alison and Graeme's daughter, and Howard's granddaughter) all of whom are members of the Harrogate Choral Society. They have now established themselves as a group that gives concerts for charity, performs as a semi chorus with the Harrogate Choral society and sings at weddings.

They are directed by Marilynne Davies and their concert accompanist is Beryl Pankhurst

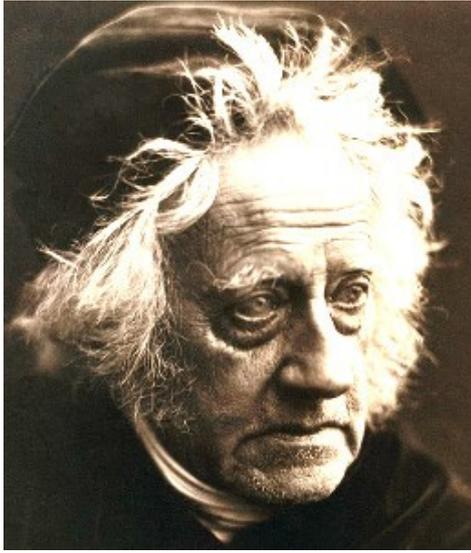


The lads were asked to contribute a Christmas tree for the Prudhoe Christmas tree festival where the choir showed off our creative skills. That along with our Christmas concert was a fitting end to a very busy year for us.

So here's to 2019.

Steve Gladstone

Sir John Herschel FRS (1792-1871)



I would have liked to have met Sir John Herschel FRS (1792-1871), but I was born around 100 years too late. I admire his great contributions to astronomy and celestial mechanics, but I would have enjoyed inviting him to a Prudhoe Gleemen concert. Why? Because Sir John wrote...

"Music and dancing (the more the pity) have become so closely associated with ideas of riot and debauchery among the less cultivated classes, that a taste for them, for their own sakes, can hardly be said to exist, and before they can be recommended as innocent or safe amusements, a very great change of ideas must take place."

How I wish I could have invited Sir John to our 2019 Annual Concert to witness Judith's new arrangement "**North East Folk Songs Medley**" so he could rest assured that a "very great change of ideas" has taken place. I imagined Sir John asking "Who is this Cushy Butterfield of whom you sing?"

Pete "less cultivated" Barrett

PIANO ROLL

In the “parlour” of my great-grandmother’s house in Bradford there was an upright piano. Yes, I know, most parlours had a piano in those days. But this particular piano had a cupboard door above the keyboard, and inside the cupboard was a horizontal roll of wallpaper. Well, it looked like wallpaper to a six-year-old boy.

The roll of paper was peppered with many small rectangular holes. Now, by turning what appeared to be a car starting-handle in the side of the piano, there came forth magic! The piano began to play a waltz. This piano was known as a “player piano”, and the rolls of paper, for there were several, could be changed to provide different tunes.

So, at a very early age, I thought I understood the meaning of “piano-roll”. But sixty-odd years later, I learnt that this noun can also be used as a verb. To piano-roll is the action of moving a heavy piano up or down steps, usually at Prudhoe Methodist Church, in order to create a performance area for a concert.

A special apparatus is required to piano-roll. It comprises a folding metal ramp and three wooden rollers which resemble broken cricket-stumps. I think one of these has Len Hutton’s autograph on it. Use of the ramp and stumps requires the combined efforts of three or four hefty choristers, one of whom will usually squeel “Dad, do you know the Piano’s On My Foot?” in memory of Mister Shifter’s son in the PG chimps advert.

- Pete “Shifty” Barrett

Obituaries



JIM ROBSON

Jim was a baritone with Prudhoe Gleemen since 2007. He died on 5th November 2018 following a short illness. Jim had been a miner, a traffic warden (some said he was much too kind for that job) and a much loved lollipop man for the children of Whickham Parochial Primary School. Jim loved everyone and was well known for his cheery wave and a smile for all who passed by.

Whickham people also remember him for appearing in costume, first as the Tin Man and later as Dorothy from The Wizard Oz. During his holidays at Seahouses he loved to take his binoculars and play at "harbour master" as he watched the boats come and go. It is a testament to Jim's standing in his local community that the children of the Primary School performed two hymns at his memorial service at Sunnyside. We believe that Jim is now singing in his new choir, with the angels. We extend our sympathy to Helen, Sarah and the family.



STAN CROWE (1926 – 2019)

It was with real sadness that we learnt of the death of a greatly respected Life Member of the Choir. Stan Crowe died suddenly in late January on the eve of his 93rd birthday.

Stan joined the Gleemen in 1952 and soon established himself as a key member of the second bass line, serving continuously for the next 54 years and only withdrew in 2006 because of his wife Edith's ill-health. His dedicated commitment more or less covered the second half of last century, almost coinciding with the period of Bob Hull and Colin Smith's years as conductor.

Stan loved his singing, relishing the demanding programme in that period of concert preparation, Festival choral competitions and busy choir exchanges. Equally important to him, the camaraderie of Monday night rehearsals was, and remains so, the most enjoyable aspect of choir life.

From those of us of that time still in the choir, thank you, Stan, for both your singing and your friendship, leaving memories that we were privileged to share.

Howard Taylor

“Geordie” Ridley 1835-1864

(Blaydon Races and Cushie Butterfield)

This Gateshead lad became famous as a comic, singer and songwriter after he was seriously injured in an accident at work.

When he was 8 years old he went to work at Oakwellgate Colliery and then moved to the Goose Pit where he worked for 10 years.

He then went to work for the engineering firm Hawkes, Crawshay & Co where he was crushed by a runaway wagon. His injuries were so severe that he was now unable to earn a living by doing manual work.

But Geordie was a resourceful lad, and he took up a new career singing local and Irish comic songs at the Grainger Music Hall. It was here that he began to write his own songs, starting with the popular ‘Joey Jones’. He later performed regularly at Balmbra’s Music Hall and the Tyne Concert Hall, where he created the comic character of Johnny Luik-Up.

Printed copies of his popular songs sold well, and he is probably best remembered for ‘Blaydon Races’ and ‘Cushie Butterfield’.

Sadly, Geordie never fully recovered from his industrial injuries. He had to abandon his short but productive singing career after just five years due to his declining health. He died at his home in Grahamsley Street, Gateshead in September 1864, now the site of the William IV public house, which bears a blue plaque to the memory of Tyneside’s famous son.

- researched by Pete Barrett



Corbridge Christmas Carols



Once again it was a pleasure to be invited to perform carols at Corbridge Christmas market along with our good friends Hexham Brass.

The weather stayed free from rain and snow and even though there was a nip in the air it didn't deter the many who attended.



One or two of the lads donned the traditional top hats for the occasion.

Once again Judith kept us all together as we sang through our festive repertoire one of which can be seen on our facebook page. After a good sing we adjourned for our well earned homemade broth which warmed us up a treat.



Name That Tune

See if you can work out the 5 songs from our repertoire.

1.



2.

OUT



3.

THE ALL NIGHT

4.



5.



Answers on second last page

BECOMING A GL

IOIR MEMBER?

Contact Neville Fairbairn—Secretary—Tel. 01661-832162 or just come along to one of our rehearsals on a Monday evening at Prudhoe Methodist Church, 7:15pm.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2019/20:

Correct at time of publication. More may be added later.

2019

MARCH 16th - Heaton Methodist Church - 7.00pm

APRIL 4th (Thursday) – St Alban’s Church , Windy Nook - 7.30pm

MAY 18th - Annual Concert - 7.00pm

MAY 29th – (Wednesday) Prudhoe Arts Week – 7.00pm
Prudhoe Methodist Church with Prudhoe Community Choir

JULY 20th – Patrons’ Concert and supper – 7.00pm, Prudhoe Methodist Church

OCTOBER 12th - Centenary Methodist Church - 7.00pm

Our concert diary is never full and we are always on the lookout for more gigs so please could members see whether contacts etc could come up with one or two concert offers to bridge the gap.

If you have a photo you would like to see on the front cover please email it to me audrey.steve@talktalk.net so dust off your cameras.

Name that tune answers. 1 Cockles and Mussels, 2. There’s a coach coming in, 3. All through the night, 4. Sound an alarm, 5. The old woman.



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The Prudhoe Gleemen Magazine

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