



Minety Choir

In the 1920's and 1930's the Minety church choir gained a good reputation for the quality of its singing. This was largely due to the guidance of Minety's vicar at the time, the Rev Ludlow-Hewitt and his family. Below are newspaper articles from the period, which record some of the choir's competition successes, and one failure.

Adult's Choirs' at Devizes Festival

Yesterday, the last day of the Wiltshire Musical Festival at Devizes, proved to be the heaviest. This was the day for adult choirs and societies, and the standard attained was high.

In the class for Working Girl's Clubs, Salisbury G F S Branch Singing Class secured the challenge shield with 178 marks, Warminster G F S being second with 171. The competition was not so keen in the small village choral societies, and the award went to Worton and Marston Choral Society with 169 marks.

There were, however, larger entries in the large choral societies section, and here Minety were placed first with 167 marks and Seend second with 159. In the class for village church choirs, Rowde was first with 166 marks and Minety second with 162; while in the class for town church choirs, Chippenham Wesleyan Church choir, which was the only entrant, received the award with 159 marks.

In the class for women's voices, there was much stronger competition. The Devizes Cecilian Choir repeated their success of the previous year. This choir secured 269 marks, and Salisbury St Ann's Choir, which came second, 260 marks. In the section for male voice choirs Westbury and District Society of Gleemen won with the high percentage of 93 marks, and Bemerton Men's Choir, Salisbury, obtained 90 marks.

The class for large choral societies was well entered, and here Warminster St John's Choral Society secured the award with 82 marks, Devizes Musical and Operatic Society being placed second with 81 marks.

For vocal quartets, (open) Minety won with 178 marks, and Salisbury St Ann's were second with 164. In the open male voice quartet class Westbury and District Society of Gleemen received the award with 172 marks, and Salisbury St Ann's Quartet again secured second place.

In the section for Women's Institutes, Netherhampton received the award with 255 marks, and Red Lynch was second with 253.

The awards were presented at the afternoon concert by the Marchioness of Lansdowne. Mr Plunket Greene was the soloist, and the concert was of a very high order – a feature being the singing of the massed choirs led by the festival orchestra.

Western Daily Press 22 May 1924

Village Choir Contests

Village choirs, choral societies, and clubs competed at the Wilts Musical Festival, continued yesterday at Trowbridge, the tests including hymns and psalms and the festival songs. Again some 600 or more took part, the judges being at the Palace Theatre (Mr H Wiseman) and at the Market Hall (Dr Bairstow).

The former, alluding to the performance of "Praise the Lord, ye heavens adore Him," said the treatment of this by almost all the choirs lacked smoothness.

At the Market Hall, Dr Bairstow said the way some choirs chanted psalms was resulting in driving people from church. It would be better to read the [psalms rather than to chant them badly.

The chief item at the afternoon concert was the performance of Gluck's cantata, "Orpheus," Act II, in which the solo parts were taken by Miss Muriel Hughes, of London., who also contributed "Lullaby" and "Mowing the Barley," being recalled for the latter.

The distribution of prizes was undertaken by Viscountess Long of Wraxall.

Awards

Large Village Choral Societies –

Minety	(Rev T A Ludlow-Hewitt)	256
Seend	(Mr R Morgan Smith)	248
Corsley	(Miss E Martin)	242
Lacock	(Mr L Spackman)	240
Heytesbury	(Miss N P Bouverie)	237
West Lavington	(Rev W H Weekes)	236
Rowde	(Rev W H Weekes)	231

Girls' Clubs –

Swindon Gorse Hill	(Mrs M E Naylor)	169
Trowbridge Tabernacle	(Mrs G N Haden)	167
Bradford-on-Avon	(Miss G C Applegate)	156

Village Church Choirs –

Rowde Church	(Mr H H Baker)	245
Winterbourne Bassett	(unconducted)	242
Bratton Baptist	(Mrs Coombs)	234
Minety	disqualified	

Women's Institute –

Seend	(Miss Monteith)	158
Oaksey		156
Alderbury	(Mr A T Freeman)	153
Kennet Valley	(Miss Clarke)	150
Semley	(Rev M R Rees)	149
Wolcot	(Miss Harrison Smith)	149
Lacock	(Mrs H Hill)	146
Chittoe		146
Redlynch	(Miss M Moore)	146

Small Village Choral Societies –

Poulshot	(Rev W H Weekes)	161
Corton	(Miss N P Bouverie)	156
Worton and Marston	(Rev W H Weekes)	154
Winterbourne Bassett	(unconducted)	153
Milton Lilbourne	(Rev E H Blythe)	153

Western Daily Press 11 May 1927

Women's Institute Take Part in Wiltshire Festival

A feature of yesterday's proceedings at the Wiltshire Musical Festival, Devizes, devoted to Women's Institutes, Village Church Choirs, Village Choral Societies, and Girls' Clubs was the strong class for Women's Institutes. In this there were 14 entries, and although four did not turn up there were still upwards of 150 voices represented in this important section. The awards were as follows:

Corsley	(Miss E Martin)	257
Alderbury	(Mr A T Freeman)	252
Longbridge Hill Deverill and Crockerton	(Rev Dr J C Morrice)	242
Rowde	(Miss M Mounteney)	240
Landford and Hamptworth	(Miss Olive Boulton)	240
Oaksey	(Miss G Bartlett)	240
Seend	(Miss Monteith)	239
Walcot	(Miss Harrison-Smith)	238
Wootton Bassett	(Miss G Bartlett)	238
Chittoe		229

Referring to the performance of this class in general, Mrs Armstrong Gibbs commented upon the lack of imagination.

In the class for large village choral societies, judged in the Town Hall by Mr Herbert Wiseman, the awards were as follows:

Minety Church Choral Society	(The Rev T A Ludlow Hewitt)	169
Rowde Choral Society	(Miss A D Scott)	165
Corsley Choral Society	(Miss E Martin)	165
Heytesbury	(Miss N P Bouverie)	162

Mixed Choirs

There were only three entries in the novices' class for mixed choirs. Here Aldbourne Primitive Methodist Choir (Mr J Alder) secured pride of place with 179 marks, Alderbury Choral Society (Mr A T Freeman) being second with 169, and Baydon (Mr F E Holmes) third with 163.

Three classes were taken in the Wesleyan Schoolroom by Mr C Hylton-Stewart. In the first, that for Girls' Clubs, there were only four entries, and the awards were as follows:

Warminster G F S	(Mr Moore)	271
Swindon Gorse Hill Girls' Club	(Mrs Dockray)	258
Trowbridge Tabernacle Young Women's Club	(Miss G N Haden)	255
Bradford-on-Avon G F S Singing Class	(Miss G F Applegate)	252

In the village church choir section there were five entries, the markings in which were as follows:

Minety	(Rev T A Ludlow Hewitt)	233
Rowde	(Mr H H Baker)	230
Heytesbury	(Miss N P Bouverie)	227
Winterbourne Bassett		198

Barford St Martin failed to put in an appearance.

There were four choirs in the class for small village societies, and one failed to appear. The Poulshot Society (Mr H H Baker) easily maintained their position as holders of the trophy, receiving 321 marks, being well ahead of Farleigh (Miss E Parsons), 398 and Milton Lilbourne (Rev E H Blythe), 307.

Western Daily Press 9 May 1928

Those Absent Choirs

The French have a saying, often quoted, to the effect that to excuse is to accuse. Representatives of local Church and Chapel choirs have been writing voluminously to the "Echo" to explain why these bodies failed to participate in the recent Musical Festival. The reason given is that the tests were too difficult. But, as Mr Heller Nicholls, of Dean Close Scholl, points out, the choir of a country church, Minety, was equal to the occasion, and what Minety can do, surely Cheltenham should have at least the courage to attempt.

I fear the true explanation is that which was first suggested – namely, that "in choirs and places where they sing" in Cheltenham a spirit of indifference reigned.

What if the tests were a little out of the common rut of anthem music? The object of the Festival is to advance the standard of aim and performance. Next year, let us hope, there will be a healthier tone, a greater spirit of adventure, among our choirs.

Cheltenham Chronicle 26 May 1928

Singing Like "Nothing on Earth"

This festival was continued at Chippenham on Tuesday, when the following were the results:

Women's Institutes and Clubs	1	Aldbourn	238
	2	Alderbury	236
	=4	Minety	220
	=4	Winsley	220

There were 17 competitors, and the judge (Mr C Hylton Stewart) said the competition had been very disappointing, the standard attained being below mark. Some of the choirs sang like "nothing on earth."

Village Church Choirs	1	Minety	334
	2	Aldbourn Primitive Methodists	324
	3	Heytesbury	320

Large Village Choral Societies	1	Minety (fourth year in succession)	250
	2	Rowde	248
	3	Seend	246
	4	Casley	242
Girls' Clubs	1	Swindon Gorse Hill	335
	2	Warminster G F S	320
Small Village Choral Societies	1	Farley	342
	2	Poulshot	327
Novices' Class – Mixed	1	Oare Choral Society	324
	2	East Knoyle Choral Society	304

In the afternoon the Duchess of Beaufort presented the awards at a concert, when the massed choir sang, and the vocalist was Mrs Egbert Cadbury. The festival orchestra was conducted by Mr Goldsbrough (organist of St Martin's-in-the-Fields).

At a meeting of the Trowbridge Council on Monday, it was decided to invite the Wilts Musical Festival (now in progress at Chippenham) to make Trowbridge their centre for the competitions and concerts next year.

Western Daily Press 1 May 1929

The Musical Festival

Last week's Musical; Festival in Cheltenham was the fourth in the annual series, and the Festival may now therefore be regarded as a well established institution. Judging from the entries, it is better recognised outside than inside the town. Every town and many villages within a radius of fifty miles were represented. Bristol, the principal musical centre in the West of England, sent scores of competitors, and there were many from Birmingham. The net result was a total of some 100 more entrants than on previous occasions, while the total number of individuals competing, about 2000, was greatly in excess.

The classes were generally speaking well filled. There were exceptions; for instance, the Suite Music (trios and quartets). This was not surprising since chamber music is a difficult and refined type, requiring much training. What was again disappointing was the complete absence of Cheltenham Church and Chapel choirs – a subject on which, as will be remembered, there was much comment of an uncomplimentary kind last year.

The only entry in this class was the Choir from Minety, 20 miles away. This choir, which owes its inspiration to the leadership of the incumbent, the Rev Ludlow Hewitt and his family, is an example of what can be done by community interest in music. Two members of this choir, a young lady and her brother, both took prizes in classes for solo vocalism. Most praiseworthy. Hurrah for Minety!

I have often asked myself and others the question: Is Cheltenham a musical town? It is difficult to answer. Cheltenham competitors did well in instrumental competitions, but seemed very out of it vocally, though this needs to be qualified in regard to the good work of the Post Office Choral Society and the small Ladies' Choir conducted by Mrs P J Taylor.

Cheltenham Chronicle 18 May 1929

Choirs Compete at Devizes

It was the day for choral societies and church choirs at the Wiltshire Musical Festival held at Devizes yesterday.

The awards were presented by Lady Montgomery-Massingberd.

The champion choir was adjudged to be Salisbury Ladies' Training College, and the Weekes' Memorial Shield was awarded top Swindon (Sandford Street) Boys' Band.

The results were as follows:

Wiltshire Choral Societies

- 1 Devizes Philharmonic Society
- 2 Minety Church Choral Society
- 3 Wilton Choral Society
- 4 Warminster St John's Choral Society
- 5 Devizes Musical and Amateur Operatic Society
- 6 Bradford-on-Avon Choral Society
- 7 Heytesbury Choral Society

Men's Choirs – Wilton Men's Choir

Town Church Choir – Minety Church Choir

Women's Choirs

- 1 Salisbury Training College Choral Society
- 2 Swindon College Ladies' Choir
- 3 Salisbury G F S Branch Singing Class
- 4 Bradford-on-Avon Glee Class and Wilton Ladies' Choir

Wiltshire and Choirs from other Counties

- 1 Devizes Philharmonic Society
- 2 Warminster St John's Choral Society
- 3 Minety Church Choral Society
- 4 Bradford-on-Avon Choral Society
- 5 Heytesbury Choral Society

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