

2014

A History of the Cornish Male Voice Choir: The Relationship between Music, Place and Culture

Skinner, Susan Margaret

<http://hdl.handle.net/10026.1/2894>

<http://dx.doi.org/10.24382/1314>

University of Plymouth

All content in PEARL is protected by copyright law. Author manuscripts are made available in accordance with publisher policies. Please cite only the published version using the details provided on the item record or document. In the absence of an open licence (e.g. Creative Commons), permissions for further reuse of content should be sought from the publisher or author.

Copyright Statement

This copy of the thesis has been supplied on condition that anyone who consults it is understood to recognise that its copyright rests with its author and that no quotation from the thesis and no information derived from it may be published without the author's prior consent.

**A HISTORY OF THE CORNISH MALE VOICE CHOIR:
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MUSIC, PLACE AND CULTURE**

by

SUSAN MARGARET SKINNER

A thesis submitted to the University of Plymouth
in partial fulfilment for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

School of
Humanities and Performing Arts
Faculty of Arts

July 2013

Susan Margaret Skinner

**A History of the Cornish Male Voice Choir: the relationship
between music, place and culture**

Abstract

This thesis documents and examines the history of Cornish male voice choirs from their origins in the late nineteenth century through to the present day. The evolution of the choirs has hitherto been charted largely through scattered oral testimonies, whereas this work traces the rise, decline and resurgence of the male choral tradition by drawing from a range of primary sources, including newspapers and repertoire in addition to oral history.

The thesis is organised chronologically and the main chapters chart the development of Cornish male voice choirs from the Methodist point of origin, to the subsequent expansion of the male choral movement between the wars and thereafter its seeming atrophy. The opening two chapters focus on the background and emergence of the choirs from c.1820 to 1918. The interwar period is covered in three diverse but linked chapters, assessing the socio-economic context, musicological influences and the importance of geographic locality or 'place'. The impact of the Second World War on the choirs is examined in Chapter Six. The following chapter traces how the choirs remained vibrant in the face of encroaching secularisation during the 1950s and 1960s, and the final chapter assesses the detrimental effects for the choirs of changed musical behaviours and generational issues in the late twentieth century choir.

Four key themes which run throughout the chapters are the influence of Methodism, its teachings and choral hymnody; the significance of repertoire and musical directorship; the importance of the male demographic within the local economy; and secularisation and mass popular culture. The connecting thread of the argument for the thesis as a whole is that male voice choirs both reflect and help shape Cornish identity. As will be seen, identity is a fluid, multi-layered concept, but analysis of the changing role and influence of male voice choirs contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex relationship between music, place and culture.

Table of Contents

<i>List of Illustrations and Figures</i>	viii
<i>List of Tables</i>	ix
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xi
<i>Author's Declaration</i>	xii
Introduction	1
Chapter One The socio-economic and cultural-religious context, c.1820-1918	32
Chapter Two Early Cornish male voice choirs: a musicological framework	70
Chapter Three The interwar years: a shifting social, economic and cultural framework	114
Chapter Four Musicological factors in the expansion of the male choral movement	148
Chapter Five Impact of place: shaping local choir identities between the wars	181
Chapter Six The world at war: Cornish male voice choirs, 1940-1945	219
Chapter Seven Encroaching secularisation: re-affirmation of a Cornish male choral identity, 1946-1968	252
Chapter Eight Music, place and culture: generations apart, c.1970-2000	294
Conclusion	326
Bibliography	337

List of Illustrations and Figures

A	Administrative Districts pre-April 2009	35
B	Bal maidens	37
C	Crying the Neck	47
D	Tindall's Wesleyan Methodist Atlas of 1873	53
E	Gwennap Pit c.1900	57
F	St Peter, Mithian, 1861	59
G	Male Voice Choirs 1896-1914	66
H	<i>Sumer is Icumen</i>	79
I	<i>The St Day Carol</i>	81
J	<i>Awake, Awake the Lofty Song</i>	84
K	<i>Hark the Glad Sound! The Saviour</i>	86
L	<i>Awake, Æolian Lyre</i>	89
M	Marazion Apollo Choir	104
N/Na	Male Voice Choirs 1919-1939 and 1896-1914	116
Oa/b	<i>Strike The Lyre</i>	167
Oc/d/e	<i>Strike The Lyre</i>	169
Pa/b/c	<i>An Evening's Pastorage</i>	171
Q/Qa	Male Voice Choirs 1919-1939 and Administrative Districts Pre-April 2009	182
R	Looe Choir Members 1940	228
S/Sa	Male Voice Choirs 1946-1968 and Male Voice Choirs 1919-1939	270
T	1983 Southampton Programme	316

List of tables

1	Male Voice Choirs 1896-1914	65
2	Regular Choral Repertoire	75
3	Regular repertoire of Marazion Apollo Choir	106
4	County Music Festival Venues 1919-1939	150
5	Indian Queens Music Festival	155
6	Wadebridge Music Festival	155
7	Camborne Music Festival	155
8	Mabe Music Festival	157
9	Stenalees Music Festival	157
10	Music Festivals – Various	158
11	Repertoire common to Welsh [pre-WWI] and Cornish [1919-1939] Male Voice Choirs	162
12	Regularly performed repertoire [1919-1939] by Cornish Male Voice Choirs	164
13	Music Festival Test Pieces 1920s – Various	174
14	Music Festival Test Pieces 1930s – Various	175
15	Length of Tenure of Choir Conductors → 1939	178
16	The Fishermen’s Choir – Various Concerts/Services	195
17	Delabole Male Voice Choir	201
18	Indian Queens Festival Participation	204
19	St Austell Festival Participation	205
20	Festival Participation by leading choirs in west Cornwall	212-4
21	Climax Orpheus Choir Concerts	244
22	Male Voice Choirs – Miscellaneous 1940-1945	248
23	Community Hymn Singing 1947-68	260
24	Sankey Evenings 1954-68	262
25	Merritt’s Carols and Anthems 1946-66	263
26	Male Voice Choir Sacred Concerts 1950-4	266
27	Male Voice Choir Sacred Concerts 1955-9	267
28	Male Voice Choir Sacred Concerts 1960-8	268
29	Music Festivals 1946-49	275
30	Choir BBC Radio Broadcasts 1946-67	281
31	‘Traditional’ Repertoire common to decades 1970s, 1980s and 1990s	311
32	‘Traditional’ Repertoire in two of the three decades	312
33	Programmes related to choirs	312
34	Popular repertoire across all 3 decades	314
35	1980s-1990s decades. Musicals	314
36	Popular Choral Arrangements by the 1990s	314

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to all those involved within the tradition of male voice choirs in Cornwall who generously gave of their time in granting me an interview. Their hospitality and evident love of choral singing impressed me deeply. I would like to thank in particular Stephen Lawry, musical director of Mousehole Male Voice Choir and Angela Renshaw, music teacher, County leader of the SingUp programme and musical director of Cornwall Boys' Choir, Cambiata and Holman Climax Male Voice Choir, who gave additional assistance. I thank my supervisor Professor Kevin Jefferys who has helped in shaping my thinking and provided invaluable advice and guidance. Finally, I thank my mother for her support and encouragement when I set out on this road of discovery, and my brother Michael for his time and patience in reading the final drafts.

This work is dedicated to the loving memory of my mother,
Kathleen

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award without prior agreement of the Graduate Committee.

Word count of main body of thesis: 71,835

Signed.....

Date.....

Introduction

In 2003 the inaugural British International Male Voice Choral Festival took place in Cornwall and in subsequent years has established itself as a biennial festival of international repute. The original idea was conceived and brought to fruition by the then director of the British Choral Institute, Dr Roy Wales, an inspirational catalyst in the launch of this major cultural enterprise. English and Welsh choirs numbered among the international gathering participating in both the competition arena and Festival concerts and events. At the conclusion of a performance by one of the overseas choirs, a Yorkshire choir member commented: 'Technically they are superior to our choirs ... And it's good to see a lot of young people in the European choirs. The average age of the British and Cornish choirs must be well into the fifties.'¹ A Finnish choir integrated innovative choreography into their choral performance, prompting the following remark from a 'bewildered' choir member from Manchester: 'How do you compete with that?'² Couched within these remarks is a concern for the future of male voice choirs, though neither comment overtly states this. Presentations from eight international speakers at the International Male Voice Choral Festival two years later focused on the subject of the long-term survival of male voice choirs relative to choral traditions.³ The one-day symposium debated the issues of

¹ *Western Morning News*, 5 May 2003.

² *Western Morning News*, 5 May 2003.

³ *Western Morning News*, 12 April 2005. See also Cornwall International Male Voice Choral Festival Souvenir Programme 2005, p.11.

decline in numbers, a rise in the average age and the negative effects from an ever-expanding and intruding multi-media industry along with fast changing life-styles.

From the mid-twentieth century to the present day, the socio-musical transformations evident in popular music have reflected generational and gender issues impacting on society to a degree not previously observed. One example is the popularity of music 'reality' talent television shows which have come to hold the public's attention. In 2004 *The X Factor* first appeared on our screens and a television series in 2008 called *Last Choir Standing* made a one-season's appearance.⁴ Martin Ashley, in his 2009 study on the young male voice comments on the formulaic construction of such shows, observing how they encapsulate the problem facing choir styles. Ashley highlights the more traditional choral concept of performance within a modern cultural context: 'A high level of hype is deemed important, with much back-stage drama ... Whilst the musical standards of the choirs presented are undoubtedly high, the choirs are also required to project strong stage presence. Merely standing still and singing will get them nowhere'.⁵ These 'reality' examples serve to illustrate how age, life-style and social group identity constitute elements which commercial markets thrust to the fore, elements which factor into determining the road taken by the 'face' of popular music culture.

⁴ 'Last Choir Standing' <http://www.bbc.co.uk/lastchoirstanding/archive.shtml> [accessed 5 October 2011].

⁵ Martin Ashley, *How High Should Boys Sing? Gender, Authenticity and Credibility in the Young Male Voice* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), p.151.

When the focus is specifically on Cornwall there appear to have been additional factors contributing to a decline in male choral singing. Prior to chairing the symposium at the International Male Voice Choral Festival in 2005, Roy Wales made particular reference to Cornwall's situation:

In Cornwall's case, this trend has also been influenced in part by the loss or decline of traditional industries, such as fishing, mining and agriculture, which reinforced the concept of inter-generational continuity ... Because people no longer attend church in the numbers they used to, the religious links have also declined accordingly.⁶

Wales reflected that choirs were surviving but with increasing numbers of members in their seventies and eighties and with fewer new entrants below thirty to forty years of age. The view of academics and professional choral musicians at the close of the 2005 Symposium was that a range of factors pushed against cultural traditions, particularly in Cornwall.⁷

However, in contrast, many of those intimately involved in male voice choirs in Cornwall do not perceive survival in the twenty-first century as problematical. An article in the periodical *Cornish World* in 2007 centred on this very subject. The author, a long serving choir member, held an optimistic outlook:

Many of the men had grown up in villages where the chapel was the centre of village life, where the singing of hymns was normal, essential ... Will we see male voice choirs in 60 or even 100 years time here in Cornwall? I fancy we will ... The cry that young people are not coming into choirs will be answered when these youngsters get older.⁸

⁶ *Western Morning News*, 12 April 2005.

⁷ Scott Harrison, *Masculinities and Music: Engaging Men and Boys in Making Music* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), p.161.

⁸ *Cornish World*, Issue 49, December/January 2007, pp.52-7.

Such optimism was echoed a year later by Douglas Williams, journalist, Cornish Bard and also a life-long male voice choir member: 'My convinced view, from experience, is that the top choirs are actually in better vocal form, with higher quality and more varied repertoire and greater musicality, than ever.'⁹ To these public statements, one can add the view of the present musical director of Mousehole choir, arguably the most renowned Cornish male voice choir: 'The growth the choir has experienced in the last few years is very encouraging, and the commitment of members bodes well for the future'.¹⁰

From the above quotations of those closely connected with male choral music, it is apparent that there prevails a duality of views regarding the future of the choirs in contemporary Britain. On the one hand, we can take the evidence-based position of the professional/academic who argues that a transitional period has been reached and there is a need to employ educational and recruitment strategies to counteract an apparent decline.¹¹ Alternatively, one can side with the amateur choir member from Cornwall, proud of the Cornish tradition of male choral singing, whose optimistic view is based on cultural memory and an implicit belief in the difference and identity of what it is to be Cornish. In seeking to shed light on the validity and possible reconciliation of these contrasting

⁹ *Western Morning News*, 15 July 2008. Article, 'Male choirs have never been in better voice' by Douglas Williams.

¹⁰ Douglas Williams, *A Century of Song The Story of Mousehole and its famed Male Voice Choir* (Penzance: Headlands Printers Ltd., 2008), p.3.

¹¹ Clare Hall, 'Gender and boys' singing in early childhood', *British Journal of Music Education* 22:1 (2005), 1-16. See also: Adam Adler, 'Male gender issues in music education : A three dimensional perspective', (Research paper presented at Research in Music Education Conference, Exeter University, UK, April 2001 and at the New England Symposium on Research in Music Education at Regis College, October 2001).

views, this thesis sets out to provide a written history of Cornish male voice choirs, tracing the origin and development of the male choral movement from the closing decade of the nineteenth century to the dawn of the twenty-first.

This study was initially conceived as one with the main focus on choir histories, music and repertoire; of interest perhaps primarily to those involved as participants, the Cornish diaspora, those affiliated to ex-Cornish associations and male choristers from other Celtic nations and male voice choirs. However, recognition that the relationship between music, place and culture was historically complex and changing over time stimulated a re-direction of focus. Because, as will be seen, 'choir identity' metamorphoses and acts as a mirror, reflecting a host of socio-economic and cultural religious factors, so it assumed a central importance, thus helping to locate this thesis in the field of modern social history. The methodological approach taken will be primarily historical, while also drawing in places from other disciplines such as musicology and Cornish Studies. But before setting out the methodology and chapter structure in more detail, it is first necessary to explore existing literature on the history and role of male voice choirs and the significance of such writing in framing what follows.

Literature Review

Any assessment of the place of the male voice choir tradition must take account, in the first instance, of literature relating to studies of Cornish identity, a prominent connecting thread in the thesis. Recent and contemporary academic research specific to Cornwall has posited the historical presence of a distinct

Cornish identity, a central and much debated issue within the inter-disciplinary approach of the Institute of Cornish Studies, Exeter University. The year 1993 saw publication of the first volume of *Cornish Studies* (second series), edited by Philip Payton, the leading academic in the field of Cornish history. Included in each annual edition of *Cornish Studies* are articles that debate a diversity of issues within cultural, socio-economic and political frameworks. The thrust of much of the resulting work is that there exists a strong sense of Cornish differentness, distinctiveness, and ultimately a 'Cornish identity'. Payton expressed it thus in the introduction to the first volume: 'It is a "difference" that exists not in parochial isolation but is an integral part of that wider pattern of European culture and territorial diversity'.¹² Response to the question of what is deemed Cornish differentness was led by Ivey and Payton who formulated an identity theory: 'A Cornish identity theory should have as its aim the generation of a positive sense of self and a positive sense of Cornwall's cultural history.'¹³ Far from being narrowly focused on the cultural heritage of the individual, Ivey and Payton focused on the 'processes of ethnic identity' and drew on 'cultural identity theory as a systematic form of meaning making'.¹⁴

Those facets of society and culture that give meaning and form to notions of Cornishness and Cornish identity are as potent to those who have taken on the

¹² Philip Payton, 'Introduction', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 1* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1993), pp.2-3.

¹³ Allen E. Ivey and Philip Payton, 'Towards A Cornish Identity Theory', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 2* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1994), 151-63.

¹⁴ Ivey and Payton, 'Towards A Cornish Identity Theory', p.153.

mantle by association as for those with links through genealogy and Cornish descent. This concept of Cornish identity manifests in the twentieth century notion of Cornish nationality. Benedict Anderson's study into the construct of 'nation', what he terms 'imagined communities', investigates how the sense of belonging beyond any national political movement encompasses the personal and the cultural.¹⁵ Drawing on social identity and identity theories established by the work of Durkheim, Erikson, Glover and others as well as taking account of the outcomes of 'national' identity studies (principally by Moreno and Anderson), research by Joanie Willett has established as 'social fact' the existence of a Cornish identity. She argues that beyond population numbers who were Cornish by ethnicity (Cornish born or of Cornish parents and/or ancestry), respondents regarded themselves as Cornish through a 'civic' identity – that is, through a sense of 'belonging'. Whilst acknowledging the need for further research Willett was able to state that Cornish identity was a social reality: 'It is complex, dynamic, and a significant factor in the lives of the majority of people in Cornwall'.¹⁶ This is both helpful and supportive in understanding the socio-cultural dynamics which frame the notion of a distinctive Cornish traditional male choral movement in this thesis.

¹⁵ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006).

¹⁶ Joanie Willett, 'Cornish Identity – Vague Notion or Social Fact?' in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 16* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2008), p.200. See also, Rob Burton, 'A Passion to Exist: Cultural Hegemony and the Roots of Cornish Identity', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 5* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1997), 151-63.

The notion of Cornish identity is clearly complex and fluid, involving history and geography as much as socio-cultural considerations. Longer term historical perspectives are outlined in the seminal histories on Cornwall by Payton and Deacon.¹⁷ A late twentieth century perspective regarding Cornwall's geographical position set within a regional framework, is to be found in an influential study by The Cornish Social and Economic Research Group (CoSERG), *Cornwall at the crossroads?* This study highlights the inter-connectivity of socio-economic factors such as industry, employment and housing, which the authors claim continue to influence the construction of a contemporary Cornish regional identity.¹⁸ The writers put forward strategies for future development at a time when the United Kingdom government and European parliament are concerned with re-defining 'regions' according to implementation of socio-economic policies.¹⁹ An awareness of the historical and the geographical background helps to facilitate an understanding of the demographic mapping of the county,²⁰ thus helping to frame an analysis of the male choral movement.

¹⁷ Philip Payton, *The Making of Modern Cornwall* (Redruth: Dyllansow Truran, 1992) and *Cornwall A History* (Fowey: Cornwall Editions Ltd., 2004). Bernard Deacon, *Cornwall A Concise History* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007).

¹⁸ Bernard Deacon, Andrew George, Ronald Perry, *Cornwall at the crossroads?* (CoSERG [The Cornish Social and Economic Research Group] Redruth: Earles Press, 1988). See also, Philip Payton, 'Territory and Identity', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornwall Since the War* (Redruth: Dyllansow Truran, 1993), pp.224-52.

¹⁹ Bernard Deacon, 'Under Construction: Culture and Regional Formation in South-West England', *Urban and Regional Studies*, 11(3), 213-225, (London: Sage Publications, 2004).

²⁰ Ronald Perry, "'The Breadwinners': Gender, Locality and Diversity in Late Victorian and Edwardian Cornwall", in Philip Payton (ed.) *Cornish Studies 8* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000), 115-60; Ronald Perry, 'The Making of Modern Cornwall, 1800-2000: A Geo-Economic Perspective', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 10* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2002), 166-89.

Further to these contributions from the sphere of Cornish studies, a second distinct arc within the discussion of identity materialises from historical studies on Methodism. In that this thesis will argue that the origin and evolution of the Cornish male voice choir stems directly from Methodist hymnody and the part-singing of the mixed choirs and congregations, the historical, social and cultural place of Methodism needs to be examined. To comprehend the distinctive nature of Cornish Methodism the social history case studies by John Rule provide significant contextual background. Their value rests on how in certain cases he foregrounds the importance of Methodism in west Cornwall and its cultural significance both philosophically and musically.²¹ The distinctive nature of Methodism in west Cornwall is further underscored by both D. H. Luker's doctoral thesis 'Cornish Methodism, revivalism, and popular belief, c.1780-1870' and contributions to the Cornish Methodist Historical Association (CMHA). The CHMA is a source of studies which shed light on Methodism within the county from Wesley (1703-1791) to the present day. John C. C. Probert and Thomas Shaw provide a sound historical perspective but a deeper understanding of the waning of Methodism and the spread of secularisation in late twentieth century Cornwall is gained from *The Next Chapter, Cornish Methodism 1965-2005* by Ian Haile.²²

²¹ John Rule, *Cornish Cases: Essays in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Social History* (Southampton: Clio Publishing, 2006).

²² John C. C. Probert, *The Sociology of Cornish Methodism to the Present Day* (Cornish Methodist Historical Association, 1971); Thomas Shaw, *A History of Cornish Methodism* (Truro: Oscar Blackford Ltd., 1967); Ian Haile, *The Next Chapter, Cornish Methodism 1965-2005* (Truro: The Cornish Methodist Historical Association, 2011).

The exposition of the argument in this thesis gains clarity through the recognition of the different strains of Methodism in the county at the time of the 1851 Religious Census. Of six denominations, the Wesleyans and the Bible Christians had the greater strength in number, places of worship and ministerial circuits, though the Wesleyans were always the main denomination. The United Methodist Free Churches and Primitive Methodists had a smaller following reflected in the size and geography of their ministerial circuits.²³ The Methodist New Connexion and Wesley Reform Union were represented by three and two circuits respectively. Circuits evolved with a certain flexibility but when seen in conjunction with the location and numbers of chapels in Cornwall,²⁴ the predominance and significance of mainstream Wesleyanism in west Cornwall is brought into focus. These differences are further explored in Chapter One for which the CHMA studies have proved invaluable resources, not only when assessing the origin of male voice choirs but in contributing to an understanding of why this occurred in west Cornwall.

Over and above relevant literature from the fields of Cornish studies and Methodist history, this thesis draws from the historiography of popular music from the late Victorian period to contemporary times. General histories which include an examination of amateur music and society observe how music

²³ Cornwall Record Office, *Sources for Cornish Family History* (Cornwall County Council, May 1991), pp.11, 19-20.

²⁴ Roger F. S. Thorne, 'Chapels in Cornwall' in Sarah Foot (ed.), *Methodist Celebration A Cornish Contribution* (Redruth: Dyllansow Truran, 1988), pp.35-47.

recognises and reflects social class and socio-economic changes.²⁵ Writing which considers popular music from the mid-twentieth century onwards focuses predominantly on youth culture and its associative musical behaviours and styles.²⁶ However, in seeking to determine the roots of male choral music this thesis draws more from social histories of music which encompass the Victorian period to 1914; these works illustrate the depth, variety and the level of commitment exercised by the populace and exemplify the historical richness of amateur music-making in both vocal and instrumental spheres.

There exist a number of general music histories that greatly illumine the picture of amateur music in society. Henry Raynor's *Music and Society since 1815*²⁷ places considerable emphasis on the socio-cultural positioning of music within both the amateur and professional music worlds. Further histories such as Edward Lee's *Music of the People*,²⁸ Eric Mackerness' *A Social History of Music*²⁹ and two informative volumes by Pearsall, *Victorian Popular Music* and *Edwardian Popular Music*,³⁰ follow the same basic approach and process of investigation. In

²⁵ See the relevant chapters in: Theodore K. Hoppen, *The New Oxford History of England The Mid-Victorian Generation 1846-1886* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); John Caldwell, *The Oxford History of Music Vol.2 c.1715 to the Present Day* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

²⁶ I. Bontinck (ed.), *New Patterns of Musical Behaviour of the Young Generation in Industrial Societies*, (Vienna: Universal Edition 26246, 1974); D. Mark (ed.), *Stock-Taking of Musical Life* ISME Edition. No.1 (Vienna: Doblinger, 1980); Bill Osgerby, 'From the Roaring Twenties to the Swinging Sixties: continuity and change in British youth culture, 1929-59', in Brian Dwati and Harriet Jones (eds.), *What Difference Did the War Make?* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1993), pp.80-95; Simon Frith, *Sound effects - Youth, leisure, and the politics of rock* (London: Constable, 1983).

²⁷ Henry Raynor, *Music and Society Since 1815* (London: Barrie and Jenkins Ltd., 1976).

²⁸ Edward Lee, *Music of the People* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1970).

²⁹ E. D. Mackerness, *A Social History of English Music* (London: Routledge and Keegan, 1966).

³⁰ Reginald Pearsall, *Victorian Popular Music* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1973), *Edwardian Popular Music* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1975).

these studies the evidence demonstrates the correlation between social classes and styles of music popular within each, be it folk tradition, madrigals, partsongs, broadsheets, music hall, operetta or opera. The authors draw their source material from the main industrial regions of the North and Midlands, from London and some provincial regional cities. Within these general music histories, the substantive body of evidence illustrates the importance of choral societies, that is, mixed voice choirs, with few references to the secular genre of male voice choirs. Attention is drawn, in some detail, to the rise of the mass choral movement in Victorian times, hegemonic in its social and cultural status.

Placed within this socio-cultural framework is consideration of the tonic sol-fa movement, a system of sight-singing for schools and congregations developed by John Curwen.³¹ In *Music in Educational Thought and Practice*,³² Bernarr Rainbow, a noted teacher and historian of music education, gives a precise account of the national implementation of Curwen's method. This contributes greatly to an understanding of the wider context regarding the acquisition and development of choral skills and repertoire, and the realisation that tonic sol-fa was a seminal influence on both the secular and sacred choral genres. Together these works provide a backdrop of over a hundred years of amateur music-making against which, and into which, this thesis can place the socio-cultural experiences of Cornish secular and sacred choral music.

³¹ John Curwen, *Singing for Schools and Congregations (1852 edition of 1843)* (Ireland: Boethus Press, 1985).

³² Bernarr Rainbow, *Music in Educational Thought and Practice* (Aberystwyth: Boethus Press, 1989).

A further substantial work regarding the social history of music is Dave Russell's *Popular Music in England 1840-1914*.³³ A wide range of amateur music-making is detailed but it is in Russell's later work that investigation has centred on music and regional identity. It was Russell's doctoral thesis, 'The Popular Musical Societies of the Yorkshire Textile District, 1850-1914', in conjunction with his later regionalised socio-music inquiries, which added impetus to this inquiry.³⁴ Another influential study is Reginald Nettel's *Music in the Five Towns*. Nettel's succinct and perceptive history of the choral society movement centred on the Potteries, and details progression from 'early singing classes and the spread of tonic sol-fa' to a repertoire which expanded from glees to large choral works.³⁵ Both Nettel's and Russell's socio-music histories are class orientated, each being a study in local history and the social influence of music.

However, the specific development of male voice choirs does not factor into any of the above studies in a meaningful way. Direct contributions to the historiography of male choral music are limited to two major works. Christopher Wiltshire's doctoral thesis 'The British Male Voice Choir: A History and Contemporary Perspective' is one seminal work.³⁶ The second is a study of music

³³ Dave Russell, *Popular Music in England 1840-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987).

³⁴ David Russell, 'The Popular Musical Societies of the Yorkshire Textile District, 1850-1914: A Study of the Relationship between Music and Society' (unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of York, 1979); 'Music and northern identity, 1890-c.1965', in N. Kirk (ed.), *Northern Identities* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp.23-46; 'Singing the North', in Dave Russell (ed.), *Looking North* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), pp.208-35.

³⁵ R. Nettel, *Music in the Five Towns 1840-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1944).

³⁶ Christopher Wiltshire, 'The British Male Voice Choir: A History and Contemporary Perspective' (unpublished Ph.D thesis, Goldsmith College, University of London, 1993).

and society in the valleys of south Wales by Gareth Williams, *Valleys of Song: Music and Society in Wales 1840-1914*, which provides substantive evidence of the rise of Welsh male voice choirs.³⁷ Both these valuable academic studies contribute to this thesis in a major way, providing a context into which this detailed research on Cornish male voice choirs can be set.

The primary focus in Wiltshire's thesis is the broad history of the traditional male voice choir and its associated choral music. Placing the genesis of male choral music within the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries, Wiltshire traces the evolution of the secular genre from catch clubs, attended by gentlemen, through to the middle-class glee clubs of the nineteenth century before the emergence of the traditional male voice choir, thereby drawing a timeline against which the chronology of Cornish choirs can be measured. Wiltshire's evidence illustrates that the traditional English male voice choir was not a working class phenomenon. During the Commonwealth period, 'Private music meetings began to flourish particularly in cathedral cities where there were trained musicians, denied by the Puritans their musical activities'.³⁸ Organised and attended by gentlemen and members from the professional classes, a set of practices became instituted, practices which have carried through to present-day male choirs.³⁹ The middle-class English male choral evolution is an important

³⁷ Gareth Williams, *Valleys of Song: Music and Society in Wales 1840-1914* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003).

³⁸ Wiltshire, 'The British Male Voice Choir', p.24.

³⁹ Wiltshire, 'The British Male Voice Choir', p.25.

point within the debate when issues of chronology and comparative origins are being raised.

Throughout his historical treatise, Wiltshire's discussion of repertoire is illustrated through musicological analyses of the catch, glee and ultimately the partsong. The impact of the Victorian choral movement is reflected in Wiltshire's detailing of the eclectic nature of works within the accepted repertoire. Writing about the contemporary situation in the 1990s, Wiltshire questions the willingness and ability of choirs to manage change to ensure their survival. With a continuing adherence to traditional repertoire and age and generational issues relating to choral traditions, Wiltshire felt these concerns were impacting on male choir identity. The questions he raised in the 1990s still resonate today.

Whereas Wiltshire's research is important in its comprehensive overview, musicological stance and analysis of musical texts, Gareth Williams' *Valleys of Song* provides the most important music template for the comparative socio-cultural approach adopted in this thesis. Williams examines music, place and culture within the context of a dominant industry, mining, with a male workforce. The specific socio-economic context of the Welsh iron- and subsequent coal-mining industries, inter-choir rivalries, local politics and the creation of a national identity all factor into Williams's in-depth study. He looks at the seminal role of tonic sol-fa, its influence on the hymnody of the Welsh Nonconformist churches and the impulse it provided for the establishment of musical literacy within the working class population. Williams places

considerable emphasis on the impact of personalities who rose to prominence through the position of conductor, confirming the integral role that the post-holder has to the success or failure of a choir.

In conjunction with Wiltshire's research, the detailing of repertoire, whether for the competitive arena or concert platform, provides material for comparative judgements in relation to the early repertoire of Cornwall's male voice choirs. Furthermore, both Wiltshire and Williams provide valuable information through festival, concert and tour dates, enabling a time-line to be constructed against which the origin and development of the Cornish male choral movement can be juxtaposed. It is these aspects of investigation regarding the correlation of music, place and culture similarly found within Cornwall's male choral history that steer this study.

As what follows is centred on a male single gender cultural experience, Amy Wharton's work *The Sociology of Gender*, offers different perspectives on gender-identity. Wharton values three approaches: 'individualist', where gender is viewed as 'part of the person'; 'interactional', focusing on gender emerging from 'social interaction'; and 'institutional' which emphasises how 'gender is built into organisations, social structures, and institutional arrangements'.⁴⁰ But important contextual background has been provided by literature concerned with issues of male bonding and camaraderie. In this regard, some histories have

⁴⁰ Amy S. Wharton, *The Sociology of Gender* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012). For male gender issues see, Stephen M. Whitehead, *Men and Masculinities* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002); Stephen M. Whitehead and Frank J. Barrett (eds.), *The Masculinities Reader* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001).

often focused on cultural identity arising from the team sports of rugby and football, with overtly tribal associative behaviours and vocalizations. Masculinity in conjunction with sport have been recognised as aspects of Northern and Cornish identities,⁴¹ but as male bonding and camaraderie are evident within the corps choral group it is apparent from the important work of the anthropologist John Blacking that these associative behaviours are not confined to sport.⁴² What is clear though is that within the context of the recent and current re-positioning of Cornish historiography, research in the field of popular music culture is in its infancy, initially accommodating youth culture.⁴³ The evident imbalance is only now being addressed with academics drawing on cultural folk traditions by employing oral history techniques.⁴⁴

Some writers from the field of music psychology have argued that internal choir relationships are reciprocal in nature and are manifested in 'men's perceptions of social processes in the learning, rehearsing and performing of songs',⁴⁵ as well as perceptions in connection with the role of the conductor and

⁴¹ Mike Huggins, 'Sport and the social construction of identity in the north-east of England 1800-1914', in Neville Kirk (ed.), *Northern Identities* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp.132-62; Andy Seward, 'Cornish Rugby and Cultural Identity: A Socio-Historical Perspective', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 5* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1997), 164-79.

⁴² John Blacking, *How Musical is Man?* (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1983).

⁴³ Alan M. Kent, 'Alex Parks, Punks and Pipers Towards a History of Popular Music in Cornwall, 1967-2007', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 15* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2007), 209-47.

⁴⁴ Mervyn Rex Davey, 'As is the manner and the custom – Folk tradition and identity in Cornwall' (unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Exeter, 2011).

⁴⁵ Robert Faulkner and Jane W. Davidson, 'Men in chorus; collaboration and competition in homo-social vocal behaviour', *Psychology of Music Vol.34 (2)*, (2006), 219-37; Betty A. Bailey and Jane W. Davidson, 'Effects of group singing and performance for marginalized and middle-class singers', *Psychology of Music Vol.33(3)*, (2005), 269-303.

singing and the 'shaping of singers' identity.⁴⁶ This thesis draws on such works because they bring another layer of understanding to the concepts of identity and culture and the social processes at play within a choir structure and the wider male choral movement. Furthermore, the contextual background material which such studies provide can be applied to the male choral movement historically.

Finally, the thesis also draws on studies from the field of music education. The *British Journal of Music Education*, for example, presents a body of material reflecting a breadth of international research relevant to an evaluation of music education, boys' singing and related music gender identity issues.⁴⁷ In Australia, the leading advocate in this field is Scott Harrison, whose numerous and pioneering studies have brought a new focus to this important research area.⁴⁸ In Britain, contemporary research into the inter-related issues of curriculum content, gender and boys' singing has recently gained prominence,⁴⁹ resulting in

⁴⁶ Colin Durrant, 'Shaping Identity Through Choral Activity: Singers' and Conductors' Perceptions', *Research Studies in Music Education*, No.24 (2005), 88-97.

⁴⁷ *British Journal of Music Education* issues - 18:3 (2001), 275-91; 19:1 (2002), 31-48; 20:2 (2003), 147-63; 20:3 (2003), 243-45; 22:1 (2005), 1-16; 24:3 (2007), 267-80.

⁴⁸ Harrison, *Masculinities and Music*; Scott Harrison (ed.), *Male Voices* (Victoria: ACER Press, 2009); Clare Hall, 'Singing spaces: Boys getting vocal about singing in and out of school' in *Redress*, 16:1 (2007), 23-27; Adam Adler and Scott Harrison, 'Swinging Back the Gender Pendulum: Addressing Boys' Needs', *Questioning the Music Education Paradigm, Vol.2: Research to Practice* (Toronto: International Society of Music Education, 2004), 270-89; Susan Monks, 'Adolescent singers and perceptions of vocal identity', *British Journal of Music Education* 20:3 (2003), 243-45.

⁴⁹ Ruth Wright, 'Gender and achievement in music education: the view from the classroom', *British Journal of Music Education* 18:3 (2001), 275-91; Christina Williams, 'Does it really matter? Young people and popular music', *Popular Music Volume* 20/2 (2001), 223-42; Alexandra Lamont, David J. Hargreaves, Nigel A. Marshall and Mark Tarant, 'Young people's music in and out of school', *British Journal of Music Education* 20:3 (2003), 229-41.

new Government education policy initiatives undertaken by 'New Labour'.⁵⁰ These studies, alongside the associated political initiatives, have provided the context for an assessment of the future of Cornish male voice choirs in the twenty-first century.

Methodology and Terminology

In the edited collection of essays entitled *What is History Now?* published in 2002, David Cannadine refers to a profound transformation in recent historiography as a 'shift in interest from causes to meaning, from explanation to understanding'.⁵¹ The approach taken here attempts to bridge the twin concerns of traditional history's 'causes' and the more recent concern of cultural history with 'meanings', examining how the former give rise to evolving patterns and meaningful structures in society. This doctoral thesis is principally based on the standard empirical methodology of history, seeking out and analysing a range of primary sources outlined below; though as already noted it also draws from other disciplines such as Cornish Studies and musicology. As Russell, Wiltshire and Williams found, perhaps the most extensive of the available primary sources for studying choir history are local and regional newspapers. The wealth of detailed material collated from regional newspapers, such as *West Briton* and *Western Weekly News*, is supplemented in what follows by concert programmes

⁵⁰ Department for Children, Schools and Families *Every Primary School To Become A Musical School* November 2007 www.dfes.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn.

⁵¹ David Cannadine, 'Preface', in David Cannadine (ed.), *What Is History Now?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp.vii-xiv.

and music, printed and recorded. Field research has extended the investigation to include concert performances and rehearsals. The contribution of audio and visual media sources has informed the broader socio-cultural context from both historical and contemporary perspectives. Analysis of photographic images adds texture to what can be found in other forms of evidence.⁵²

In addition, oral history makes a major contribution to the narrative concerning the latter part of the twentieth century and the opening years of the twenty-first. To record the personal testimony of senior choir members, musical directors and/or conductors, accompanists and a recording engineer was a decision based on the premise that from those intimately involved an invaluable insight into the history of the male choral movement would be gained, illuminating on several levels an understanding of cultural change. A criticism sometimes voiced against the employment of oral history is the overlapping of memory by later experiences. But even so, it is a widely publicised technique and its strength lies in its complementary relationship to other primary sources.⁵³ In this thesis personal testimony reflects how present-day participants seek to frame their own choir's identity, its changed character through the loss of inter-generational continuity and the presence of 'in-comers', all meaningful social and

⁵² John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2010), see Chapter Nine.

⁵³ Ken Howarth, *Oral History* (Stroud: Sutton, 1999). For further discussion on oral history methodology see Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). The Cornish Audio Visual Archive (CAVA) was established in 2000, with an oral history programme undertaken 2003. The Tamar Valley Project of 2006 explored 'the historical and contemporary identity of the border country through oral and visual research'. (*CAVA Review* 2006, p.5).

cultural evidence unobtainable from any other primary source. All quotations from interviewees have been made anonymous. Presented with an assurance of anonymity, interviewees exhibited a relaxed confidence in expressing personal recollections and intimate observations.

In handling a mass of empirical data, one method frequently employed in this research project is to tabulate the evidence, for example, Chapter One (p.65). This allows in turn for clear interpretation and comparison where different historical and/or musical data is being analysed and assessed. Details related to dates, subject matter, cultural influences and trends can all be assimilated, weighed up and conclusions arrived at based on the evidence thus presented. Importantly data can be transcribed to give cartographic representation and by so doing a geographical-spatial understanding is facilitated.

As what follows draws from disciplines where terminology can vary, the three major terms 'identity', 'culture' and 'musicology' and the manner in which they are applied here needs further elaboration. In relation to 'Cornish identity' and 'Cornish cultural identity', the consensus within *Cornish Studies*, as we have seen from the discussion on pages 5-8, is that the notion of a Cornish identity applies to differences in ethnicity, culture and economic history relative to definitions and interpretations arising from an English or British perspective. Such interpretations constitute a particularism that stands apart from an English or British identity. So too 'regional identity', which is used interchangeably with 'Cornish identity' here and throughout the work. In discussing Cornish identity

theory, Ivey and Payton drew on recognised studies by social historians concerning ethnicity, whilst Willett constructed a conceptual framework from social identity and identity theories. In both instances the starting point is that identity is 'a constructed meaning-making system for viewing oneself and others in a cultural context'.⁵⁴ In *Identity and Difference* Kathryn Woodward explains how identity 'can be seen as the interface between subjective positions and social and cultural situations'.⁵⁵

However, the essence, and indeed the problem concerning the application of the term identity is that it has multiple readings and can be open to several interpretations even when applied to one and the same context. Stets and Burke, for example, in their important article on 'Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory', recognise that to 'disentangle group identities from role identities' and to 'separate the group and role identity from the person identity' is not easily achievable.⁵⁶ The notion of multiple identities is deployed in this thesis when speaking of, for example 'choir identity', a term that can refer to a group regarding itself as a festival choir, or equally to an identity framed by a single individual, the choir conductor. Both identities are applicable because as Stets and Burke note: 'Person identities penetrate role and group identities in the same way as role identities infiltrate group identities'.⁵⁷ Hence in what follows there is

⁵⁴ Ivey and Payton, 'Towards A Cornish Identity Theory', p.152.

⁵⁵ Kathryn Woodward, 'Introduction', in Kathryn Woodward (ed.), *Identity and Difference* (London: Sage, 1997), p.1.

⁵⁶ Jan E. Stets and Peter K. Burke, 'Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory', *Social Psychology Quarterly* Vol.63, No.3 (Sep. 2000), 224-37.

⁵⁷ Stets and Burke, 'Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory', p.229.

the recognition that 'different identities are organized in a hierarchy of inclusiveness ... the levels are floating and contextual'.⁵⁸ In some cases when 'identity' is being discussed it simply means being Cornish or from Cornwall, or exhibiting regional characteristics associated with the clay country or east Cornwall as distinct from west. 'Choir identity', as noted, can refer at the musical level to a distinctively Cornish repertoire, be festival or non-festival, or it might take account of other influences such as Methodist origins. The key point is that identity must be treated as multi-faceted and fluid, changing over time and having different meanings according to circumstance and historical context.

In recent years historians have moved away from viewing culture, the second term needing explanation, as object-orientated, that is the means of assessing cultural worth through actual products. In stating that the term culture was 'one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language', the cultural critic Raymond Williams succinctly references how problematical its use is in contemporary society because 'it has now come to be used for important concepts in several distinct intellectual disciplines and in several distinct and incompatible systems of thought'.⁵⁹ In *The Pursuit of History* Tosh explains the usage by historians of a broader interpretation of culture, away from the 'artefacts or texts'. The current and now broadly accepted definition of cultural history is understood 'not as a "high" or "low" culture, but as the web of

⁵⁸ Stets and Burke, 'Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory', p.231.

⁵⁹ Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fontana, 1983), p.87.

meanings that characterize a society and hold its members together'.⁶⁰ Thus it has been argued that the sets of practices which define cultures have a synergy with 'the social groupings and institutions which constitute society at any given time and in any specific place'.⁶¹ In exploring the 'web of meanings' associated with belonging to a male voice choir, Chapters Six and Eight, for example, reflect how core meanings and values can come under stress depending on outside pressures and influences.

Finally, definitions of 'musicology' as set out in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* are varied. Firstly, it can be regarded as a methodology for 'scholarly' musical analysis, high culture as befits 'classical' music and high art; secondly, as the investigation of 'the art of music' as it relates to the 'physical, psychological, aesthetic, and cultural phenomenon'. And thirdly, it might be seen as an interpretation allied to social history whereby the study of music centres not on the music 'but on Man, the musician, acting within a social and cultural environment'.⁶² In Chapters Two and Four, the term musicological is interpreted and applied in these three differing modes of investigation and could be said to be an over-arching, umbrella term. As Ruth Finnegan found from her study of music-making in an English town, individuals connect with different sections of

⁶⁰ Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, p.247. Tosh cites Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (London: Temple Smith, 1978), where Burke defines culture as 'a system of shared meanings, attitudes and values, and the symbolic forms (performances, artefacts) in which they are expressed or embodied', (p.270).

⁶¹ Judy Giles and Tim Middleton, *Studying Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), p.31.

⁶² Stanley Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Vol.12 (London: Macmillan, 1995).

society and formulate varying identities.⁶³ Music and music-making clearly have multiple identities and the term 'musicological' is therefore applied with that in mind.

Structure and Research focus

The main chapters in the thesis are related to four defined periods of time. Chapters One and Two are both concerned with the nineteenth century, from c.1820, through to the Great War, 1914-18, the period which witnessed the formation of various Cornish male voice choirs. The years between the two World Wars, 1919-39 are detailed in Chapters Three, Four and Five. Chapter Six deals specifically with the Second World War and as such acts as a bridge between the interwar period and post-World War Two era. Chapters Seven and Eight cover 1946-68 and c.1970-2000 respectively. Interwoven within this chronological framework, four themes are particularly important – Methodism; the significance of repertoire and musical directorship; the nature of the male workforce who joined the choirs; and secularisation. In relation to Methodism, questions are raised about its influential position within the county, the tradition of its teachings and choral hymnody. The cultural impact of the Wesleyan strand of Methodism is examined with particular reference to west Cornwall. The establishment of a core Cornish repertoire, the impact of festivals and the role of Methodist choirmasters are significant issues to raise relative to the second focus of the research. The third strand of inquiry concerns the composition of the male

⁶³ Ruth Finnegan, *The Hidden Musicians* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2007).

workforce within the local economy and main industries and is examined particularly where it relates to emigration and the erosion of the traditional, inter-generational historical avenues of employment. The final theme focuses on the impact of secularisation and the radical divisions in popular culture which became manifest from the 1960s. Here, the impact on traditional Methodist choral music of social and cultural change is traced through repertoire, the age profile of participants and levels of commitment.

The opening chapter reveals how music, place and culture were historically interwoven in tight-knit Cornish communities; distinctive social groupings which defined the people, the fabric of society and a Cornish way of life. Comparisons are made between the choirs in Cornwall and the industrial mining area of South Wales, the argument being that the differences outweigh the similarities. An analysis of the seminal role of Methodism, particularly the Wesleyan strain in west Cornwall, reveals the centrality of Methodism within Cornish society and is investigated through its choral music and teachings. The correlation between location of early choirs and the ministerial centres of Wesleyan Methodist circuits further strengthens the argument that Cornish male voice choirs are identifiable by their Methodist roots.

Chapter Two traces how early male voice choirs stepped out from the organic body of Methodist mixed choirs to embrace secular male voice choralism. The major focus of this chapter is musicological and a more in-depth understanding of the origins of Cornish choral singing and congregational part-

singing is gained from firstly detailing the rise and implementation nationally of the tonic sol-fa movement. Placing attention on the predominantly Wesleyan west Cornwall, the focus next turns to a comprehensive examination of compositional techniques, early repertoire, establishment of the County Music Festival and the importance of the choir conductor. Within this discussion, the canon of sacred compositions by the Cornish composer Thomas Merritt is accorded prominence because of its cultural, as well as musical significance. As the narrative underlines the notion of a confident, established male choral tradition by 1914, the inauguration of the County Music Festival in 1910 is placed within both a socio-historical and musicological context. The chapter suggests that the male voice choir and the music festival each became one of two types of 'invented tradition' as defined by the historian Eric Hobsbawm; the former 'emerging in a less easily traceable manner within a brief and dateable period', and the latter, 'constructed and formally instituted'.⁶⁴ The final focus of the chapter centres on Marazion Apollo choir, the oldest extant Cornish male voice choir. Its early history serves to illustrate how musicological factors were formative in shaping a regional identity.

From different perspectives Chapters Three, Four and Five reflect how the concepts of continuity and change permeated the interwar period. Its two decades witnessed a considerable expansion in the male choral movement with choirs established across the county. Hence, these three chapters will argue that

⁶⁴ Eric Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions', in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p.1.

the interwar years constitute a significant period. Chapter Three sets out in detail the changed social, economic and political contexts in which Cornish male voice choirs came to be situated. Those national factors which changed the nature of the landscape of these islands, affected Cornwall no less. The socio-economic deprivations experienced in Cornwall in the 1920s are explored through studying the short history of the Tinnners' Choir and the early history of the male voice choir of Holman Engineering Works. The gathering momentum of 1930s economic prosperity is reflected in improved living standards, and a broadening of leisure interests and activities. The expansion of choir numbers across the county demonstrates that through times of adversity and prosperity, male voice choirs were able to continue to develop and adapt in times of change.

Chapter Four places the focus on the musicological influences relating to the growth of the male choral movement between the wars and are shown to shape regional choral identity. A study of music festivals is undertaken from which regularly performed pieces in the Cornish repertoire are identified and placed within the context of English and Welsh repertoires. Musical analyses of different song forms demonstrate advancement in choral ability and performance. The final focus is on the influential role of the conductor. To close the analysis of this period, Chapter Five looks at place and how it factors in to moulding patterns in the musicological development of choirs. Regional distinctions and differences in choral direction are observed within a geographical framework.

The Second World War years form the basis for Chapter Six. An outline of national socio-economic policies is followed by detailing how Cornwall conformed to the exigencies of war. The socio-cultural effect on the indigenous Cornish population by the influx of evacuees and American service personnel is conveyed by chronicling the history of Looe Fishermen's male voice choir. The impact of the war on choral identity is illustrated through an examination of the manner in which choir numbers, size and composition of choirs fluctuated. Within a re-configured male population, there materialised choral groupings that can be classified into three distinct formations: pre-1939 choirs which continued throughout the war period, newly formed wartime choirs identified through uniform, and civilian choirs formed as a direct result of the war. This chapter concludes by showing how and why male voice choirs continued to hold a central place within the community.

Chapter Seven covers the 1950s and 1960s, noting how the social and cultural dynamics of the time began a reshaping of the population mix in Cornwall through the distinctive nature of in- and out- migration. The chapter highlights the enduring strength of Methodism and sacred choral music through an examination of community hymn singing, Sankey and Merritt evenings as well as sacred concerts. Festival participation and musical directorship are again shown to be crucial in the continuing expansion of male voice choirs as a Cornish choral identity is re-established. Growing national and international recognition is acknowledged as an additional factor in ensuring Cornwall's choirs remained

immune to the radical changes in popular culture and the generational gulf opening up by the 1960s. The body of evidence enables this period to be classified as the 'golden age' in Cornwall's male choral history.

Chapter Eight shows how assimilation of a more universal popular culture from the 1970s onwards, one in which youth, with its associative social and musical behaviours, side-lined traditional practices moving them from mainstream to the category of minority cultural interests. An explanation of the marginalisation of male choirs is based on the importance of generational differences, changes in the English music education curriculum, anxiety over repertoire and financial concerns. With newspapers long since curtailing detailed reportage of male voice choir concerts, significant data is collated from personal testimonies and concert programmes. The chapter demonstrates how contemporary society was forcing change and adaptation upon the male choral movement, but the age of the choir membership meant a reluctance to adapt.

Finally, the Conclusion brings into focus how the traditional male voice choir is situated in today's youth orientated and secular society and how it is endeavouring to create a more positive and meaningful socio-cultural standing within Cornish culture. As regards the debate between the optimistic and the pessimistic viewpoints outlined at the outset of this Introduction, the argument here is that Cornish male voice choirs can be regarded as dynamic entities, with a multiplicity of identities. The contemporary scene reflects a continuing importance of historical themes such as male camaraderie, a sense of belonging

and community identity found within choir membership and a choir's festival participation. Trewirgie and Roskear Boys' choirs of the interwar years have been reborn in the shape of Cornwall Boys' Choir, a direct result of the Government education policy initiative *Sing Up*. As Cornwall develops a new choral tradition through the boys' choir and the recently formed Cambiata, a boys/youth choir for 12-25 year olds, the traditional Cornish male voice choir appears to have a promising future. Fresh initiatives and the involvement of a younger generation reflect a move from a period of stagnation and seeming atrophy to one of revival; the recent developments reflect an enduring, constantly evolving relationship between music, place and culture as the traditional male voice choir continues to both mirror and express a contemporary version of Cornish identity.

Chapter One

The socio-economic and cultural-religious context, c.1820-1918

Cornwall is unique in its geography. It is the only peninsula county in Great Britain and is contiguous with only one other county, Devon. The greater part of its one boundary is the river Tamar; thus the very topography physically separates Cornwall from mainland England. Cornwall's location forms part of its identity, perceived by many on both sides of the 'border' as isolated, remote, nationalistic, different to the rest of England; a distinct region recognisable by its actual and imagined characteristics.¹ Stuart Rawnsley's description in *Northern Identities* of one part of Britain as 'a reified landscape which encapsulates various rhetorical interpretations of the past and present, of classes and cultures, and of geographical and topographical features' could equally be applied to Cornwall.² In his book *Cultural Geography*, Mike Crang writes of landscapes reflecting 'a society's – a culture's – beliefs, practices and technologies. Landscapes reflect the coming together of all these elements just as cultures do ... since cultures can only exist socially'.³ Hence, it is important to

¹ *Cornish World*, Issue 51 April/May 2007, p.14. An article about Cornish identity records: '...a genuine border, fixed by royal decree in 936 ... medieval maps show Britain as four countries – England, Scotland, Wales and Cornwall.' There are no references in the article to substantiate these facts.

² Stuart Rawnsley, 'Constructing "The North": space and a sense of place', in N. Kirk (ed.), *Northern Identities* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), p.3.

³ Mike Crang, *Cultural Geography* (London: Routledge, 1999), p.15.

recognise that Cornish cultural identity exists not only within a clearly defined social space but also within a determined geographical and topographical space.

The traditional male voice choir, which both reflects and helps to shape Cornish identity, is a discrete musical genre. The mining industry and associated male workforce of both Cornwall and Wales have generally been regarded as the common point of origin for the male voice choirs within both regions. This chapter sets aside that long-held perception and posits instead that the male choral movement in Cornwall arose directly from Methodism, its music and teachings. The argument here is that it was not simply a spiritual adherence to Methodism that arose in the mid-seventeen hundreds but that in Cornish society, particularly in west Cornwall where mainstream Wesleyanism was concerned, the devotion to the faith carried within it a deeper significance. It transcended spirituality to become a cultural adherence with the chapel holding a central position within communities throughout the county.

The socio-economic context in which male voice choirs evolved is outlined by firstly exploring the issue of the working-class male demographic of west Cornwall. Attention is focused on the composition of Cornwall's main industries – fishing, mining, agriculture and quarrying. Geology, geography and topography were all influential elements within the structure of these traditional, male dominated occupations. Another key element in the configuration of Cornwall's population was the historic question of emigration and its significance relative to size of the male workforce. In analysing the make-up of

the Cornish workforce it will be apparent that there were significant differences between Cornwall and the coal-mining region of south Wales.⁴ The different datelines and social structures of Welsh and English male voice choirs provide data against which Cornish choirs can be compared. The wider cultural context takes account of participation in communal events with their attendant social meaning before attention turns to the general significance of Methodism. With a particular focus on west Cornwall, Wesleyanism and revivalism, Methodism will be shown as the prime driver in the formation of the early male voice choirs. The positioning of choirs in the wider socio-cultural and religious context is then illustrated through choir location and chronology. By the end of the Edwardian period and the onset of the First World War, we will see that male choral singing in Cornwall had become vibrant, entrenched and clearly defined.

1.

Cornish male voice choirs originated in the west of the county, in areas dominated by the metalliferous mining industry. The lands west of Truro were the most populated region by virtue of the geological natural resources which over several centuries gave rise to the heavy industries of tin and copper mining. The main mining districts in the nineteenth-century were Penwith and Kerrier (Figure A), the principal population centres being Redruth and Camborne in

⁴ See Gareth Williams, *Valleys of Song: Music and Society in Wales 1840-1914* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003). Reference is made in the Introduction of this thesis to Gareth Williams's major work from which comparative data is taken.

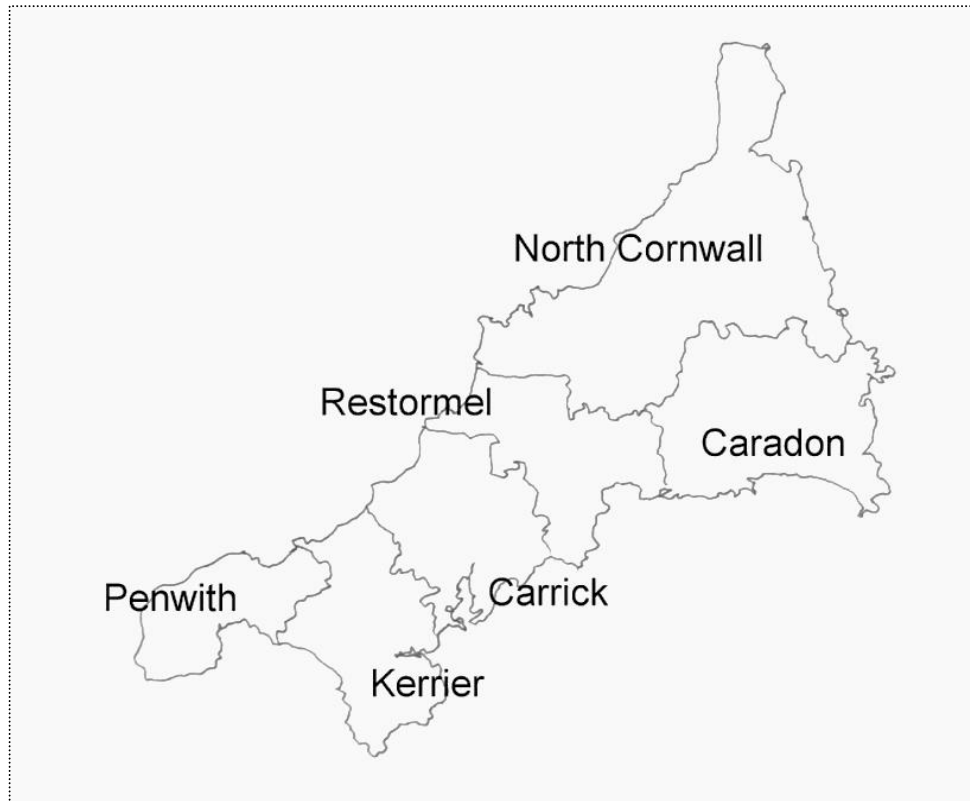


Figure A Administrative Districts pre-April 2009

Kerrier, with St Just-in-Penwith the busy mining centre furthest west. Penwith lies at the most westerly point of the British mainland reaching out into the Atlantic, the last finger of granite which forms the backbone of the peninsula. In places the land rises to heights exceeding two hundred metres crested by a bleak and treeless granite moor. A perpetual economic struggle to survive underpinned life in the far west.

Through to the late Victorian period those involved in mining formed the largest sector of the male working population of west Cornwall. Here was an obvious parallel with South Wales. A study of Welsh choralism and male voice choirs in South Wales by the social historian Gareth Williams shows the central role played by industry and in particular coal-mining. This produced in

Williams's words: 'A robust industrial society fuelled by the labour and social requirements of a young, often single male population ... fertile soil for male choirs, as it would remain into the second half of the next century'.⁵ But any temptation to regard the two regions as identical must be resisted. At a superficial level the vocabulary was different. Terms such as 'Judd and Jenkin' and a 'goaf' were but two examples related to the coal industry, but not to tin or copper mining.⁶ More important, the work and management structure of metalliferous mining in Cornwall constitute the first of two major differences between the male workforce of the two regions. Tin mining was not organised on the same basis as the Welsh coal-mining industry. In a contribution to *Cornish Studies Volume 5*, Bernard Deacon gives a succinct explanation as to how the Cornish system of employment and wages functioned: 'the relatively autonomous labour process ... was underpinned by the tribute and tutwork systems of wage payment ... Tying wages to the price of ore tribute and tutwork contracts avoided the need for collective wage negotiations',⁷ the key point being made by Deacon is that the employment-pay system of tribute and tutwork 'institutionalized cultural ideas

⁵ Williams, *Valleys of Song*, p.122. It is worth noting the quotation which Williams himself provides with reference to Rhondda, 'was both a coal society and a man's world' – Chris Williams, *Democratic Rhondda* (Cardiff: University of Wales, 1996), p.17.

⁶ The Coalmining History Resource Centre, <http://www.cmhrc.co.uk> [accessed 30 January 2012]. The noted nineteenth-century Cornishman, philosopher Simon Drew was, at the age of eight, employed as a buddle-boy at a mine at St Austell.

⁷ Bernard Deacon, 'Proto-Industrialization and Potatoes: A Revised Narrative for Nineteenth Century Cornwall', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 5* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1997), p.67. For a more detailed history of the wage system see: John Rule, *Cornish Cases: Essays in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Social History* (Southampton: Clio Publishing, 2006), pp.98-115.

of independence'.⁸ The significance of the concept of institutionalised cultural independence cannot be underplayed as it placed the Cornish miner differently in his society to the position inhabited by the Welsh miner in Welsh society.



Figure B Bal maidens

The second and more overt difference in the social structure of those employed in the mining industry and unique to Cornwall were the 'bal maidens' who worked alongside the men on the surface. Regarded as a distinct sector of society, the bal maidens broke the female stereotype of the Victorian period, forming a large workforce in their own right: reputedly 60,000 were employed during the period 1720 to 1920. Mainly single women with a distinctive dress

⁸ Deacon, 'Proto-Industrialization and Potatoes', p.68.

code (Figure B), their role was to break down manually large boulders into powdered ore through the processes of spalling, cobbing and bucking.⁹

Another area of difference could be found in contrasting experiences of mass immigration, which particularly blighted Cornwall's population and economic development. As Patrick Laviolette notes: 'Tangentially, this region has a vast international diaspora of ex-pats brought about by centuries of emigration. This movement of people stems largely from the transfer of mining, engineering and (to a lesser degree) fishing labour.'¹⁰ Population drift could entirely re-configure sections of a community. Analysis of the population statistics of 1841 and 1891 for the coastal town of Marazion demonstrate how distinct social groupings were re-constituted and redefined.¹¹ In his analysis of the issue of emigration, Philip Payton uses the phrase 'Cornwall's Emigration Trade'.¹² And it was a trade, plied by companies and governments with local newspapers and street hoardings advertising free land or jobs.¹³ With the world copper price

⁹ Sharon Schwartz, "'No Place for a Woman": Gender at Work in Cornwall's Metalliferous Mining Industry', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 8* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000), 69-96. Discussion on the uniqueness of the role of bal maidens was broadcast on BBC Radio Four *Woman's Hour*, 30 November 2007. See, *West Briton*, 15 July 2010, p.15. A 1906 photograph of Old Wheal Vor shaft shows bal maidens; *My Cornwall*, Vol.2/Issue 17, April/May 2013, pp.54-59. Also, *Bal Maidens – The Silent Valley* and *Bal Maidens at Work – The Mathematics of the Mole*, www.bbc.co.uk/nationonfilm/topics/tin-mining [accessed 22 January 2012].

¹⁰ Patrick Laviolette, *The Landscaping of Metaphor and Cultural Identity: Topographies of a Cornish Pastiche* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2011), p.20.

¹¹ Christine North and June Palmer (eds.), *The Charter Town of Marazion* (Marazion History Group - Marazion Town Council), pp.53-60.

¹² Philip Payton, "'Reforming Thirties" and "Hungry Forties" – The Genesis of Cornwall's Emigration Trade', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 4* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1996), 107-27.

¹³ *Western Weekly News*, 27 January 1900, 8 March 1902. See relevant photographs in 1890 by Castleline in: Jonathan Holmes, *Penzance and Newlyn in Old Photographs* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1992), p.47.

having failed in 1860 and the Cornish tin mining industry collapsing by the end of the 1870s, the fabric of society in west Cornwall came under ever increasing socio-economic pressures. The impact on a community of male unemployment and economic decline is clearly illustrated by the mining centre of St Just. It lost half its population through emigration. The effect of emigration on social structures and community identities was profound and entered into the literature of local authors.¹⁴

For the women left behind it meant fending for themselves and their families whilst awaiting remittance to be sent home. It created in Deacon and Payton's words 'a culture of dependency'.¹⁵ Cornwall continued to lose its young male population into the twentieth century with advertisements promoting emigration to South Africa, New Zealand and Australia placed in the local news sections of district newspapers.¹⁶ The street placards posted in 1907 were no doubt answering the dashed hopes of a mining revival in those areas.¹⁷ Although rumours of an economic upturn continued¹⁸ young men were still leaving Penwith district in 1910.¹⁹ The evidence presented through these socio-economic indicators, demonstrates a marked disparity between the situation in Cornwall

¹⁴ See the excerpt from 'Wheal Darkness' by D. H. Lowry and C. A. Dawson Scott (c.1906) in Alan M. Kent and Gage McKinney (eds.), *The Busy Earth* (St Austell: Cornish Hillside, 2008), pp.132-3.

¹⁵ Bernard Deacon and Philip Payton, 'Re-inventing Cornwall: Culture Change on the European Periphery', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 1* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1993), p.69. See also: Bernard Deacon, *Cornwall – A Concise History* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), pp.167-69.

¹⁶ *The Cornishman*, 23 November 1905.

¹⁷ *The Cornishman*, 31 May 1906.

¹⁸ *The Cornishman*, 14 March 1908.

¹⁹ *The Cornishman*, 17 March 1910.

to that in Wales. In contrast to the Welsh miner around this time, Cornishmen, who had never set foot in England, left Cornwall to make their futures in Canada, South Africa, Australia and South America. By the onset of the First World War the number of Cornish miners was vastly diminished.

A further aspect of the perceived common Welsh-Cornish origin of male voice choirs is that of the historical image of the miner as the sole type of emigrating Cornishman. Yet in *The Making of Modern Cornwall*, Philip Payton points out that not all emigrants were miners – slate men, farmers and fishermen also set out for new lands.²⁰ Furthermore, where blacksmiths, carpenters and indeed masons were concerned, there was the high probability that economic pressures restricted employment to associated opportunities within the mining industry. In his history of Cornish Methodism, the Methodist historian Thomas Shaw notes:

Cornish Methodism became widely dispersed during the nineteenth century ... The general picture is one of re-settlement of families from the agricultural eastern half of the county, between c.1815-60, and the exodus of West Cornwall miners, mainly in the second half of the century. Methodism was exported with the emigrants.²¹

Evidence of the varied background of Cornish migrants to America is to be found in Gage McKinney's history of the Grass Valley Carol Choir. Whilst his work is principally concerned with the immigrant miner, McKinney records the presence of Cornish farmers settling in Wisconsin and Michigan in the first half

²⁰ Philip Payton, *The Making of Modern Cornwall* (Redruth: Dyllansow Truran, 1992), pp.99-138, provide a comprehensive overview of the emigration dilemma.

²¹ Thomas Shaw, *A History of Cornish Methodism* (Truro: Oscar Blackford Ltd., 1967), p.68.

of the nineteenth century, and notes their distinctive characteristics. Along with hope, McKinney notes that 'the Cornish had cultural collateral ... a command of English, an independent disposition, industriousness, a heritage of self-help, and their Methodist faith'.²²

2.

As far as other areas of employment were concerned, the Victorian and Edwardian periods witnessed important changes to the industrial landscape of west Cornwall. Prospects for working-class families rested on the vagaries of fishing, agriculture and, with the advent of the railways, the tourism industry. With the eclipse of mining the region's economy was more than ever dependent on the prevailing seasonal climate. The severe and relentless agricultural depression of the late 1870s and early '80s was followed by another equally acute depressed market in the 1890s. Social poverty and the lack of government support added to the alienation felt by the Cornish toward the English. The historian G. M. Trevelyan commented: 'The men of theory failed to perceive that agriculture is not merely one industry among many, but is a way of life, unique and irreplaceable in its human and spiritual values.'²³ 1907 proved to be another disastrous year. The broccoli season failed, vegetables were entirely destroyed

²² Gage McKinney, *When Miners Sang – The Grass Valley Carol Choir* (California: Comstock Bonanza Press, 2001), pp.41-2. Further evidence of the Cornishman and his relationship with the Wesleyan strain of Methodism is to be found in: Alan M. Kent and Gage McKinney (eds.), *The Busy Earth* (St Austell: Cornish Hillside Publication, 2008), pp.196-200.

²³ G. M. Trevelyan, *English Social History, A Survey of Six Centuries* (London: Book Club Associates, 1977), pp.554-55. Trevelyan's remark relates to the politicians of the day and Victorian policies related to 'Free Trade'. See also: Alun Howkins, *Reshaping Rural England A Social History 1850-1925* (London: Harper Collins, 1991), p.213.

and neither fruit trees nor potato crop yielded a harvest. The devastation was recorded as 'a pitiable sight indeed'.²⁴

The fishing industry was faring no better. Cornish fishermen worked in small co-operative units called 'seines', community groupings which fostered the pooling of resources at the same time allowing for individualistic enterprise. Beyond local concerns about the weather and access to fishing stocks was the national issue of a more industrialised and commercial approach to fishing. Progress in boat design and engineering brought the fishing fleets of Lowestoft to Western waters in 1896, specifically to Newlyn. As was their tradition in direct response to Methodist teachings, the fishermen of Mousehole and Newlyn did not land fish on Saturdays nor put to sea Sundays. The Lowestoft fishermen did both. Antagonism surfaced and resulted in industrial unrest which carried over into 1897. This was met with a show of considerable 'English' authoritarianism, feeding the nationalistic character of the Cornish:

The riots which ensued were put down by a contingent of the Berkshire regiment sent for by the authorities. Such authoritarianism from the English left a resentment which festered for many a year, resurfacing at the time of recruitment for men to fight World War I.²⁵

A further feature of the economic structure of west Cornwall were manufacturing businesses, large and small, whose existence depended on the prosperity of the major industries. They too faltered.²⁶ The major engineering

²⁴ *The Cornishman*, 16 May 1907.

²⁵ Francis Frith, *Cornish Coast* (Salisbury: Frith, 2000), p.66. See also: Philip Payton, *The Making of Modern Cornwall* (Redruth: Dyllansow Truran, 1992), pp.106-7. *Western Weekly News*, 6 February and 13 March 1897 record the incidents.

²⁶ Holmes, *Penzance and Newlyn*, p.135.

firm in the region, Holman and Sons, formed in 1834 and at its peak employing 3,000, had to adapt to change in order to survive.²⁷ Moreover, the Factory Workshop Act of 1872, coupled with greater mechanisation, brought about change in the gender balance of the workforce and in food processing and farming.²⁸ Thus, by the turn of the twentieth century, Cornwall not only had a male workforce much depleted in number from that of the mid-eighteen hundreds, but also found its wider social and economic structures coming under pressure and influence from forces outside its boundaries.²⁹

3.

We turn now to an examination of cultural practices which helped to give a distinct sense of place and identity to the Cornish. A broad understanding of 'differentness' was characteristic of many who found expression through the arts – writers, poets, artists, sculptors and musicians. There were countless instances whereby inspiration was drawn from the Cornish language,³⁰ the imagery of its majestic coastline, iconic mining stacks, engine houses and the beauty of sky-, sea- and landscapes.³¹ Adherents to the St Ives, Penzance and Newlyn Schools of

²⁷ Douglas Williams, *West Cornwall in the Old Days* (Bodmin, 1985), p.40.

²⁸ Ronald Perry, "'The Breadwinners": Gender, Locality and Diversity in Late Victorian and Edwardian Cornwall' in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 8* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000), p.123.

²⁹ Pamela Horn, *The Changing Countryside in Victorian and Edwardian England and Wales* (London: Athlone Press, 1984), pp.2-3.

³⁰ A .L. Rowse, *Poems of Cornwall and America* (London: Faber and Faber, 1967), pp.55-7. In 'The Road to Roche' the imagery is at its best from 'The pyramids rise pure in colour and line' through to 'Or two in a hollow cemetery', p.56.

³¹ Charles Causley, *Collected Poems* (London: Macmillan, 1992), p.221. In the second stanza of his poem 'My Young Man's a Cornishman', Causley uses the very geology and geography of Cornwall to create the imagery. The sixth stanza makes reference to traditional Cornish fare – scalded cream, starry-gazy pie, saffron cake and the pasty.

Art drew inspiration from the landscape, flora and fauna, legend and folklore. Accordingly, a geographic and socio-cultural spatial identity was defined through a myriad of cultural practices.

In looking at amateur music-making in west Cornwall, earlier studies on the correlation between music and regional identity by Dave Russell provide comparable contextual background. Russell refers to the 'cultural politics of regional identity'³² and the symbiotic relationship between music and society. His studies reveal music's 'popularity, capacity for emotional stimulation and power to evoke an almost tangible sense of time and place', and demonstrate how music constitutes 'a vital element in the construction of social identities of all types.'³³ Russell's words find an echo in the music culture in both town and country west of Truro, where music was an integral part of feast days and seasonal festivities. We see how public performances, formal and informal, instrumental and vocal, together with spontaneous everyday music-making, reflected the rhythm of the seasons, the working day and leisure time.

The New Year brought the tradition of guize dancing which involved lively music and dance.³⁴ Anonymity could be preserved through character disguise, masks and blacking-up. Although such frivolity and social

³² Dave Russell, 'Singing the North', in Dave Russell (ed.), *Looking North* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), p.209. See also Dave Russell, *Popular Music in England 1840-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987).

³³ Dave Russell, 'Music and northern identity, 1890-c.1965', in N. Kirk (ed.), *Northern Identities* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2000), p.23.

³⁴ Merv Davey, "'Guizing": Ancient Traditions and Modern Sensitivities', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 14* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2006), 229-44. Davey gives a detailed account of guizing alongside present day controversies.

mischievousness would have been regarded as undesirable according to Methodist tradition, many participants would have had a Methodist background.³⁵ Springtime saw villages and towns enjoying the Furry Dances, with May giving rise to celebration of the Flora Dance.³⁶ The pleasure fair which encamped at Tolcarne Bridge, Newlyn in the 1890s, was typical of the style of cabaret theatre of the time, an entertainment very popular with local inhabitants.³⁷ Journeying from fair to carnival from Feast Day to Gala, itinerant musicians entertained as they travelled, giving rise to adaptation of songs from other areas of the county and country, by a twist in the melody line or a change in the lyrics.³⁸

Some communities ushered May Day in with the blowing of horns and 'other similar euphonious instruments' played by children.³⁹ A popular traditional Maypole song of the time was *Come Lasses and Lads*. The lyrics exhort the young people to deny parental guidance, to dance and away, 'to a bower/And played for ale and cakes; And kisses, too'. In contrast and equally as popular was *The Old May-Day Carol* extolling 'the work of the Lord's hands'.⁴⁰ These examples, each of a different song genre, act as an illustration of secular and religious cultural celebrations co-existing, as was apparent in guize dancing. In June on

³⁵ *The Cornishman*, 5 January 1901.

³⁶ Mervyn Davey, 'As is the manner and the custom – Folk tradition and identity in Cornwall' (unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Exeter, 2011), pp.89-90.

³⁷ Holmes, *Penzance and Newlyn*, p.55.

³⁸ Jeremy Lake, Jo Cox and Eric Berry, *Diversity and Vitality: The Methodist and Nonconformist Chapels of Cornwall* (English Heritage, 2001), p.66.

³⁹ *Cornish Telegraph*, 9 May 1900.

⁴⁰ Ralph Dunstan, *The Cornish Songbook* (London: Reid Brothers, 1929), p.45.

midsummer's eve there was the celebratory lighting of bonfires⁴¹ and Goldsithney's Charter Fair stands as an example of the many festivities happening in villages and towns throughout the summer months. Virtually all events involved music-making in one form or another with the local brass band the focus for much of these celebrations. The existence of such bands provided a further illustration of the inter-connectivity of secular-religious cultural practices, for they arose from the brass and reed bands of chapels and churches, some with a lineage back to the 1860s.⁴²

As summer drew to a close, the season of the harvest festival heralded 'crying the neck'. This musical call and response which resounded across the fields when the last sheaf was held aloft was one of the many seasonal traditions celebrated in song. The opening two note melodic cry elicited a response sung as a rhythmic and tonal echo. In answer to this questioning reply, the opening songster would respond with a different two note repetition pitched within the tonality of the opening phrase (Figure C).⁴³ Instinctive pitching such as this meant that the youngest person present would learn the traditional call aurally and in

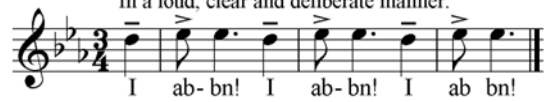
⁴¹ *The Cornish Midsummer Eve Bonfire Celebrations* – issued by The Federation of Old Cornwall Societies Warden, Marazion 1963. Recorded is the tradition of Midsummer bonfires which stemmed from the mining custom of 'shooting the Midsummer holes' a customary practice in mining areas like St Just, Towednack and elsewhere.

⁴² Harry Woodhouse, "'Face the Music!' – Church and Chapel Bands in Cornwall", in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 1* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1993), 46-61. See also: UK Brass Band Websites – 'Geographical List', www.harrogate.co.uk/harrogate-band/link01g.htm [accessed 2 February 2009].

⁴³ Dunstan, *The Cornish Songbook*, p.141. Dunstan's collection includes *A Cornish Ox-Drover's Song*, p.75, a further annotated example.


HOLDER OF THE NECK:

In a loud, clear and deliberate manner.



I ab-bn! I ab-bn! I ab bn!

REPLY: to the same sing-song: "Wot av-ee?
Wot av-ee? Wot av-ee?"



A neck! A neck! A neck!

ALL: Hurrah

Figure C Crying the Neck

turn carry on 'crying the neck' as they farmed and worked the land in later life.⁴⁴

At the close of harvest celebrations there would be the final croust and a hearty communal sing.⁴⁵

Just as singing was part of the rhythm of Cornish working life, an aural and oral tradition within the everyday was to be found at home too. In this regard Cornwall was no different from other regions of the country. Before the wireless became the dominant entertainment medium, families created their own music, gathering together around the piano or harmonium, accompanying singers and/or instrumentalists. There might have been a banjo player, fiddler, flautist, a player of the bones and even a whistler. Such childhood experiences of traditional music-making still live on in the memories of some present day

⁴⁴ *Cornish World*, Issue 54 2007, pp.14-15. The Old Cornwall Society continues to keep such traditional and ancient customs alive.

⁴⁵ Interview: *Mousehole Male Voice Choir*, 8 October 2007: 'sat around huge tables and sang harvest hymns ... the farmer's daughter would play the piano'.

octogenarian choir members.⁴⁶ A like memory recalled in *A Cornish Childhood*, the autobiography of A. L. Rowse, illustrates home amateur music-making as part of family traditions:

My father's instrument was a bass-viol ... he sold it and bought a harmonium, which was exchanged for a piano ... a nice example of change of taste and a degree of economic improvement. But he always had a concertina ... and there was a banjo and a tambourine, I remember, among other instruments stowed away in the cupboard and under the stairs.⁴⁷

The handing down of local customs and family traditions was a means of ensuring continuity of musical knowledge, lore and practice; a continuance of traditions which was symbolic of both a music and a social culture.

A natural extension of home amateur music-making was more formalized entertainment for the local community. Within such social settings, the individual as a performer held an identifiable position within his or her community and the community within the wider regional culture of west Cornwall.⁴⁸ This helped to shape local identities, themselves part of a wider, overarching Cornish cultural identity. It was not unknown for a place of employment to form its own works' music ensembles. The employees from the National Explosives Company in Hayle formed a small instrumental ensemble in 1905.⁴⁹ Often the village chapel schoolroom or chapel itself was the venue for both secular and sacred concerts, local artists sharing the stage with visiting

⁴⁶ Interview: *Mousehole*: 'the traditional Cornishman ... sang in harmony, brought up with it. When a child ... sang round the piano'.

⁴⁷ A. L. Rowse, *A Cornish Childhood* (Truro: Truran, 2003), p.32.

⁴⁸ *Cornish Telegraph*, 14 February, 25 April, 5 December 1900; *The Cornishman*, 28 March 1901.

⁴⁹ *The Cornishman*, 2 February, 18 May 1905.

performers.⁵⁰ In urban population centres, attending concerts was very much part of the social calendar by the Edwardian period. As well as bringing tourists to west Cornwall the railways brought notable artists down from London.⁵¹ Concert programmes became more diverse as the provincial concert-goer extended their repertoire knowledge through the programme selections of visiting performers.⁵²

An increased interest in formalised music performances amongst amateur musicians was realised in the establishment of orchestras and music societies, adding a new and different aspect to Cornish music culture.⁵³ These new enterprises alongside the traditional music-making outlined above, emphasise the vitality of musical life in the opening decade of the twentieth century. Of comparable strength, meaning and vibrancy was the sacred music associated with church and chapel choirs and congregational part-singing. In order to understand the dominant position of Methodism and its associated sacred choral music within the construction of Cornish identity, the development of Methodism in a national and regional context must first be examined in more detail than hitherto.

⁵⁰ *The Cornishman*, 27 September 1902; 3 February 1912.

⁵¹ *The Cornishman*, 19 January 1905 (Truro); 17 January 1907 (Penzance). See also an account of Clara Butt's debut festival appearance in 1893 in: R. Nettel, *Music in the Five Towns* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1944), p.40. Clearly she had lost none of her brilliance a decade later.

⁵² *Cornish Telegraph*, 20 March 1913; *The Cornishman*, 16 April 1914.

⁵³ Regional newspapers have recorded many of the nascent orchestras and choral societies: *Cornish Telegraph*, 25 April 1900; *Western Weekly News*, 24 March, 5 May, 20 October 1900; 3 May 1902.

4.

The manner in which the Cornish embraced Methodist philosophy and hymnody meant that numerically and spiritually the county was distinct from the rest of England. To gain insight as to the 'why' and 'how' this was so, we initially turn to the Religious Census of 1851 because it illustrates the geographical breakdown of the Established Church and Nonconformity in the British Isles. The 1851 Religious Census data indicates a degree of uniformity in the development of the three main strands of Nonconformity: Baptist, Congregationalist and Methodist. In his social history *Modern Britain*, Edward Royle notes of the Nonconformist denominations:

All experienced divisions and difficulties between traditionalists and modernizers as they evolved during the course of the nineteenth century from a sectarian 'chapel' outlook to a position in which they could regard themselves as churches equal and outwardly similar to the Established Church.⁵⁴

But to understand the position in the West Country, it is particularly helpful to consider *A History of the Church in Devon and Cornwall* by Bruce Coleman which analyses Cornwall's geographic positioning in relation to England and its religious distribution demographically.⁵⁵ Methodism was firmly established as the major mode of worship in Cornwall, part of the rural and industrial landscape through its myriad of chapels: 'Methodism itself had an uneven impact within Cornwall and it was most successful in those parts of west

⁵⁴ Edward Royle, *Modern Britain: A social History 1750-1985* (London: Edward Arnold, 1987), p.312.

⁵⁵ Bruce Coleman, 'The Nineteenth Century: Nonconformity', in Nicholas Orme (ed.), *A History of the Church in Devon and Cornwall* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1991), 129-55.

Cornwall where the growth of mining and of population was most rapid.⁵⁶ Coleman's statistical analysis and assessment of Cornwall's 1851 Census returns indicate the numerical strength of Methodism and Nonconformity in Cornwall in relation to other counties. Based on Coleman's tabulation, Cornwall's Church of England attendance percentage was 19.3 as against a national figure of 29.5. The greatest contrast is reflected in the Nonconformist percentage share of attendance. The national figure is 48.6% whereas for Cornwall it is 71.8%. Coleman notes that, 'Cornwall's condition was far enough from the norms of southern England to place it firmly in the "Celtic fringe" of religious practice'.⁵⁷ The strength of Nonconformity, and Methodism in particular, is further emphasised when viewed in conjunction with the 1851 Census numbers regarding places of worship: Church of England 265, Wesleyan Original Connexion 412, Bible Christians 182, Wesleyan Reformers 93, Baptists 39, Independents 37.⁵⁸

The Census also details the ministerial Methodist Circuits which covered Cornwall in 1851. The Wesleyan Methodists dominated the more heavily populated west Cornwall and had a presence throughout the county. In a similar manner the Bible Christians were also represented countywide but their strength lay in rural communities. The ministerial circuits of the Primitive Methodists had a strong presence west of Truro 'but did not establish themselves at all east or

⁵⁶ Coleman, 'The Nineteenth Century: Nonconformity', p.135.

⁵⁷ Coleman, 'The Nineteenth Century: Nonconformity', p.140. See Table, 6.3.

⁵⁸ Coleman, 'The Nineteenth Century: Nonconformity', p.138. See Table, 6.2.

north of Liskeard'.⁵⁹ The United Methodist Free Churches (a union of the Methodist Wesleyan Association with other reformers) had very small circuits countywide and their strength and prominence was in north Cornwall. The Methodist New Connexion circuits comprised St Ives, Penzance and Truro. From the 1851 Religious Census the body of evidence details parishes in the west of the county as strongly Methodist, with Wesleyanism being numerically superior in for example, the administrative district of Penwith. Ian Haile, writing in *Methodist Celebration* in 1988 specifically on the subject of the Wesleys and why the west of Cornwall was such fertile territory for their ministry, provides a very succinct summary: 'isolation, religious impoverishment, and social hardship'.⁶⁰

We gain further insight if we turn to the Tindall's Wesleyan Methodist Map of 1873 (Figure D) which offers a cartographic representation of the three regions of west, mid- and east Cornwall, emphasising the dominance of the Wesleyan strain of Methodism to the west of Truro.⁶¹ The colour coding indicates the organisation of chapels into circuits, the larger icon indicating the centre of ministry within that circuit. Coleman's analysis of places of worship informs us that, 'In Cornwall the Wesleyans alone had over 400 places'.⁶² Viewing the map

⁵⁹ Cornwall Record Office, *Sources for Cornish Family History* (Cornwall County Council, May 1991), p.11.

⁶⁰ Ian Haile, 'The Wesleys', in Sarah Foot (ed.), *Methodist Celebration A Cornish Contribution* (Redruth: Dyllansow Truran, 1988), pp.15-16.

⁶¹ Copy by courtesy of Dr Peter Forsaith, Wesley and Methodist Studies Centre, Westminster Institute of Education, Oxford Brookes University.

⁶² Coleman, 'The Nineteenth Century: Nonconformity', p.143.



Figure D Tindall's Wesleyan Methodist Atlas of 1873.

from top to bottom, we can see how as one goes west to east the number of Wesleyan circuits diminishes. A more detailed overview emerges when combined with the comprehensive statistical data in Appendix Three of *Diversity and Vitality*, which shows 'population and number of chapels and chapel sittings'.⁶³ To these figures can be added those of Sunday School attendance collated in the official report *Children's Employment Commission* of 1842. This also indicates greater numbers in the west of the county than in mid- or east Cornwall. Although the 1842 report does not constitute a comprehensive survey of parishes in Cornwall, it does give an indication as to levels of attendance mid-nineteenth century.⁶⁴ Wesleyanism was still the dominant strand of Methodism at the time of the Methodist union in 1907, although figures related to the number of chapels at that time show an increase in Bible Christian places of worship and a decrease in Wesleyan. Writing on the subject of chapel architecture, Roger Thorne records the following division of chapel numbers between the six Methodist denominations as: 'Wesleyan 380, Bible Christian 210, Free Methodist 105, Primitive 40, Wesleyan Reformers 10, New Connexion 7.'⁶⁵

Further evidence regarding the longer term cultural significance of Methodism is to be found in D. H. Luker's study 'Cornish Methodism,

⁶³ Lake, Cox and Berry, *Diversity and Vitality*, pp.125-28.

⁶⁴ *Children's Employment Commission* – Report by Charles Barham Esq., M.D., on the Employment of Children and Young Persons in the Mines of Cornwall and Devonshire, and on the State, Condition, and Treatment of such Children and Young Persons – 1842.

⁶⁵ Thorne, Roger F. S., 'Chapels in Cornwall' in Sarah Foot (ed.), *Methodist Celebration A Cornish Contribution* (Redruth: Dyllansow Truran, 1988), p.37.

revivalism, and popular belief, c.1780-1870'.⁶⁶ Luker shows that a distinctly indigenous form of Methodism emerged in west Cornwall and was at its strongest where population density was at its highest. Writing in 1997, Deacon goes so far as to say that Methodism was such a powerful influence, winning for itself a hegemonic position by the 1820s, that it gave the Cornish a structure of independence.⁶⁷ The aspect of Methodism which is of particular interest here is revivalism, which was a witnessing of episodic upsurges of religious fervour sweeping through communities with chapels remaining open for days. Research by John Rule informs us that revivalism exerted not only a spiritual hold on Methodists in Cornwall but also exercised a level of social control. One cannot underplay the significance of the emotional experience undergone by the participants in revivalist meetings, which frequently bordered on hysteria: 'Numerically revivals were periods of mass conversion. Phenomenologically they were manifested in mass displays of the conversion characteristics of sighs, groans, weepings and fits and, ultimately, joy uncontainable'.⁶⁸ Attention turns now to one aspect within revivalism of particular concern to this thesis – the integral role which choral hymn singing played in the ritualistic nature of revivalism.

⁶⁶ D. H. Luker, 'Cornish Methodism, revivalism, and popular belief, c.1780-1870' (unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Oxford, 1987).

⁶⁷ Deacon, 'Proto-Industrialization and Potatoes', p.72.

⁶⁸ Rule, *Cornish Cases*, p.141.

5.

From small chapels to large halls and at open air meetings, powerful oratory and intense emotional periods of hymn singing, often prolonged and of several hours duration, exhorted adherents to new levels of spirituality and expressions of faith. From across the county and numbering in the thousands, adherents of Methodism came together at Whitsuntide to Gwennap Pit, between Redruth and St Day, to bear witness to their faith in an open-air celebration. The first gathering took place in 1762 as part of John Wesley's ministry and Wesley had returned eighteen times by the close of 1789, reputedly in 1773 preaching to 30,000.⁶⁹ Massed communal part-singing of hymns and religious texts reflected Wesley's creed that Methodism was 'born in song'.⁷⁰ Re-established within the Methodist calendar in 1807, an annual Whitsuntide gathering at Gwennap Pit continues to form an integral part of Cornish Methodism and the wider Methodist church.⁷¹

The large Victorian Methodist chapels in west Cornwall are a reflection of Wesley's Chapel, London, built 1778, all with echoes of the natural amphitheatre of Gwennap Pit and 'successors to Christopher Wren's auditory churches'.⁷² Smaller chapels were known to place seats facing different directions.⁷³ The

⁶⁹ Methodist Recorder, www.methodistrecorder.co.uk/cornwall [accessed 31 January 2012].

⁷⁰ *Methodist Hymn Book*.

⁷¹ See Chapter Seven.

⁷² Shaw, *A History of Cornish Methodism*, p.68. See also: Church Architecture of England www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_architecture_of_England [accessed 5 June 2013].

⁷³ Thorne, 'Chapels in Cornwall', pp.39-40.



Figure 52 The interior of the 1,200 seat chapel at Camborne Wesley (1827), showing the City Hall arrangement with the box pews added in front of the communion after before re-opening of 1887.

Figure E Gwennap Pit c.1900 [Top photograph]

[Photographs of interiors, clockwise from top left] Chywoone Hill, Newlyn 1866, seating capacity 1,834; Penzance 1840; Porthleven 1881; Camborne 1827, seating capacity 1,200.]

images in Figure E⁷⁴ denote a central layout designed to ensure, just as at Gwennap Pit, the involvement of all participating members in a quality of performance enhanced in its overall sonority – congregational hymns and anthems resounding and reverberating within the confines of church and chapel filling the air with the rich vocal harmonies found in sacred choral music. Such places of worship were overt manifestations of Methodism exercising an inclusive theology. The preacher, the table with the crucifix and the choir were centrally positioned and each member of a Methodist congregation stood equal to his or her neighbour.

In contrast, church buildings within the established Anglican Church gave definition to hierarchy and ritual (Figure F).⁷⁵ Where Anglicans were concerned there was a separation of the congregation from the robed clergy via a rood screen, a separation from a high altar with its reredos and iconography. The choir stalls were positioned away from the main corps of worshippers and choristers were attired in a distinctly different mode of dress. The characteristics of ritual have been categorised as follows within the field of performance studies: 'First, ritual action is communal, involving people who gain social solidarity through participation. Second, the action is traditional and "understood as carrying on ways established in the past". Third, ritual is rooted in beliefs in divine beings.'⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Lake, Cox and Berry, *Diversity and Vitality*, p.2 [Gwennap Pit]; pp.79, 97, 93, 59. [Photographs of interiors, clockwise from top left].

⁷⁵ www.churchplansonline.org [accessed 3 March 2012].

⁷⁶ Elizabeth Bell, *Theories of Performance* (Sage Publications, Inc., 2008), p.128.

independence, egalitarianism, self-reliance and frugality, found a congenial home in the Methodist Church. Followers were exhorted to self-improvement, to care for the welfare of others, to involve themselves in charitable works.⁷⁸ The resultant cohesive and independent communities produced what Deacon and Payton describe as a 'confident, assertive identity ... tempered by a communal religion with a strong egalitarian strand ... where commonly-held values arose out of close-knit contacts at work, in the chapel and in the community itself'.⁷⁹ It was the tenets of Methodism which underpinned the philosophy of the emergent secular male choral movement.

The philosophical and spiritual hold that Methodism exerted within everyday life was exemplified by the manner in which the life-threatening dangers characteristic of all the main industries were accepted by the workforce. Such acceptance manifested in what John Rule termed a 'generalised concept of fatalism'. In *Cornish Cases* Rule's analysis of such risks emphasises this distinctive cultural position of Methodism.⁸⁰ The death rate was high in the mining communities, and everyday disasters befell those who worked in the clay pits, the stone quarries and at sea. All faced the same dangers.⁸¹ Where Cornwall was concerned, 'Village people living to a large extent outside the culture of literacy

⁷⁸ 'The Methodist Church in Britain', www.methodist.org.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=opentogod [accessed 28 February, 2012]. See also: Dr Tim Dowley (ed.), *The History of Christianity* (Oxford: Lion Publishing, 1990).

⁷⁹ Deacon and Payton, 'Re-inventing Cornwall', pp.64-5.

⁸⁰ Rule, *Cornish Cases*, pp.76-97.

⁸¹ Causley, *Collected Poems*, p.277. Upon discovering an old newspaper, the Cornish poet wrote of the death of his grandfather, Richard Bartlett, which was caused by a shaft of slate embedding itself in his skull. The final stanza evokes a picture of fervent religious out-pouring followed by the desperate family struggle to stay clear of the workhouse.

came to possess a background of beliefs, partly religious, partly magic, against which they sought to understand the realities of existence'.⁸² According to Rule the vast majority of Cornish people who found the spiritual answer in Methodism did so because of how Methodist and folk beliefs were entwined: 'Methodist superstition matched the indigenous superstition of the common people'.⁸³ Hence, Methodist hymns would be sung in the mines, at the quarry face, out to sea and on the land, as a tangible expression of the mix of faith and fatalism.

Also important was the arrival of the American evangelists Dwight Moody and Ira Sankey in 1873. Moody the preacher and Sankey the composer undertook two missions to Britain and proved to be as powerful an evangelical partnership as they were in America.⁸⁴ Their evangelism added to the religious fervour with an unprecedented effect which was brought about by the 'brilliance of Sankey's singing and tunes'.⁸⁵ With words carrying a clear message, a simplicity of both harmony and melody and with lively rhythms, all elements combined to bring about a musical and spiritual connection by the singers.⁸⁶ Such was the impact of Sankey's music that contemporary male voice choirs still retain copies of Sankey hymnals in their music libraries and present-day members have

⁸² John Rule, 'Methodism, Popular Beliefs and Village Culture in Cornwall, 1800-50' in Robert D. Storch (ed.), *Popular Culture and Custom in Nineteenth-Century England* (London: Croom Helm, 1982), p.62.

⁸³ Rule, 'Methodism, Popular Beliefs and Village Culture in Cornwall, 1800-50', p.67.

⁸⁴ 'Moody and Sankey, the Legacy', www.wolfkiller.net/MoodySankey/index2 [accessed 28 February 2012].

⁸⁵ K. Theodore Hoppen, *The New Oxford History of England The Mid-Victorian Generation 1846-1886* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p.458.

⁸⁶ Edward Lee, *Music of the People* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1970), p.114.

experience of singing their anthems.⁸⁷ Recounting the time when they joined in 1951 as fourteen year olds, three members of Polperro male voice choir recalled that the repertoire at that time was 'still all religious' as they mainly sang in chapels and churches, adding: 'Moody and Sankey ... were very much part of the Methodist culture. It was Wesleyan at that time, now Methodist ... still have Sankey evenings around locally now.'⁸⁸

The experience of communal, congregational part-singing of hymns played a key part in the origin of male voice choirs. One cannot undervalue the process, the creating of choral music, the very physicality of vocalising a faith from within. That is in essence the 'living' of the experience, the being part of the 'moment'. We need only to turn to research by the social anthropologist John Blacking in *How Musical is Man?* to fully understand the significance of this. Writing on the subject of the importance of music in society and its place in different cultures he says:

The chief function of music is to involve people in shared experiences within the framework of their cultural experience ... it is the process of music making, that is valued as much as, and sometimes more than, the finished product. The value of music is, I believe, to be found in terms of the human experiences involved in its creation.⁸⁹

The congregational singing of hymns and choral hymnody were integral in the construction of a Cornish Methodist identity; a collective identity partly created through musical experience.

⁸⁷ *St Stythians Male Voice Choir*, Music Library catalogued as S8.

⁸⁸ Interview: *Polperro Fisherman's Choir*, 15 October 2008.

⁸⁹ John Blacking, *How Musical is Man?* (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1983), pp.48-50.

A final indication of the importance of Methodism came as a result of the effects of emigration. This resulted in a prolonged loss in the numbers of young men from the chapels,⁹⁰ but the beneficiaries of the exodus were overseas communities to which the Cornish made their way in search of social conditions which would give them 'religious, civil and economic liberty'.⁹¹ The diaspora of newly founded Cornish population centres became identifiable by Methodism and male choral music. These immigrants formed distinct communities, identified by their devout Methodist beliefs and their love of singing. McKinney's study shows how the impetus for the Grass Valley Carol Choir, California, came from Methodism. Of the choir's inception and development McKinney says: 'Though the choir reflected the values of an entire community, it emphasized a Wesleyan strain'. In relation to a Christmas service in 1901 he writes: 'The service, that would have included scripture, prayer, perhaps a homily by a lay preacher (probably a choir member), gave primary place to music, including Cornish carols and an anthem'.⁹² Along with Methodist hymns, they sang the true Cornish carols and anthems of Thomas Merritt, a staunch Methodist whose musical contribution to Cornish choral repertoire is examined more fully in Chapter Two. The cultural aspects of identity determined by Methodism and its related musical

⁹⁰ Probert, *The Sociology of Cornish Methodism to the Present Day*, pp.60-4.

⁹¹ Payton, "'Reforming Thirties" and "Hungry Forties"', pp.107-27.

⁹² McKinney, *When Miners Sang*, p.69. Notable Cornish periodicals are a means whereby those who have recently emigrated or descendants of earlier immigrants keep in touch with the county of Cornwall. For example, within each bi-monthly publication, the *Cornish World Magazine* includes a section entitled 'All around the world' which details news, views and events in the lives of the Cornish diaspora.

markers allowed the Cornish, at home and in the diaspora, to pronounce their distinctiveness from the English, from England and from other immigrant communities. At home or abroad choral singing was an expression of faith.

6.

Cornish male voice choirs largely drew from the body of Methodist congregations, even though not all male singers were active participants in the Methodist Church. A number of choirs were formed through participation in choral singing class sessions and working men's evening classes. From these formalised groupings it is possible to subdivide choirs into two classifications: those choirs that formed to institute an annual series of concerts or those that formed to present concert performances on an ad hoc basis. Choirs in each of these categories can be set apart from singing groups which come together as forms of informal social entertainment. As Faulkner and Davidson observe: 'One of the ways in which formal vocal behaviour is perceived as distinctive from informal vocal activity is in its potential for reduction into discreet behaviours of learning, rehearsing and performance. In informal settings, these modes are integrated into a "learning by performing".'⁹³ The differentiation is important in understanding how a formalised tradition of male voice choirs became embedded within Cornish culture.

The data collated in Table 1 documents the earliest formalised male voice choirs to be found in Cornwall at the close of the Victorian and into the

⁹³ Robert Faulkner and Jane W. Davidson, 'Men in chorus; collaboration and competition in homo-social vocal behaviour', *Psychology of Music Vol.34 (2)*, (2006), p.224.

Edwardian period. Locations detailed in Table 1 correlate with Wesleyan ministerial circuit centres (see Figure D). Marazion, Penzance, Truro, St Agnes and Gunnislake established male voice choirs which existed for three or more years. Goldsithney and Mousehole, whose choirs also existed beyond three years, are in close proximity to the Methodist circuits of Marazion and Penzance respectively.

● Choirs established for three or more years			
Date	Choir	Date	Recorded
1902	St Agnes	18 October	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
1903	Goldsithney and District	24 September	<i>West Briton</i>
1904	Marazion	1 December	<i>The Cornishman</i>
1906	Truro People's Palace	24 December	<i>West Briton</i>
1909	Penzance YMCA	21 January	<i>The Cornishman</i>
	Mousehole	4 November	<i>Cornish Telegraph</i>
1911	Gunnislake	20 May	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
1913	Callington	30 September	<i>Cornish Times</i> [1927] +
○ Ad hoc and/or intermittent choirs			
1896	Looe	25 April	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
1903	Beacon and District	22 January	<i>West Briton</i>
	Mabe	30 May	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
	Camborne	25 July	<i>The Cornishman</i>
1908	Troon	24 December	<i>West Briton</i>
1909	Newlyn	1 May	<i>The Cornishman</i>
	Hayle	25 September	
	Ludgvan	23 December	
1911	Falmouth Adult Evening	27 July	<i>West Briton</i>
1912	Roseudian	19 September	<i>The Cornishman</i>
	West Kitty	10 October *	<i>The Cornishman</i> [1914]*
1913	St Day	17 April	<i>West Briton</i>
	Germoe		
	Cawsand and Kingsand	9 May	<i>Cornish Times</i>
	Helston	4 December	<i>Cornish Telegraph</i>
* The entry records the formation of the choir as being two years previous.			
+ The annual meeting recorded 30.09 1927, is that of the choir's 14 th season.			

Table 1 Male Voice Choirs 1896-1914

All these choirs are indicative of the first category, classified according to 'permanency' (Table 1 ●). The second category detailed is of male voice choirs

which reflected an ad hoc or intermittent existence (Table 1 o). These too can be linked with Wesleyan ministerial circuit centres (Figure D). From the tabulated place names, we are able to produce a cartographic representation of choir geography (Figure G). With the exception of the three male voice choirs to the far east of the county, if a line is drawn from north to south at the point of Truro it is apparent that the first male voice choirs were mainly formed in the west of

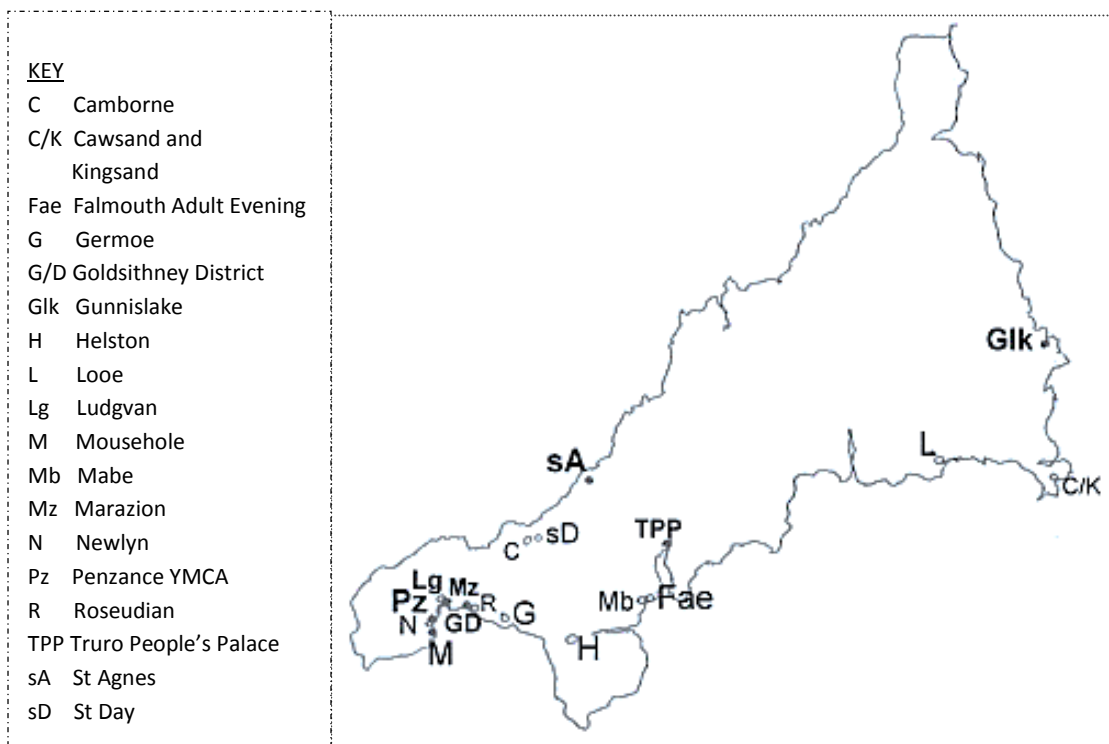


Figure G Male Voice Choirs 1896-1914

Cornwall. There is a distinct cluster around Mounts Bay, principally in the pre-2009 administrative district of Penwith (see Figure A). The annotated map provides a spatial perspective on choir location. When considered in conjunction with the 1873 Tindall Map (Figure D) there is evidence to justify an explicit

correlation between the Wesleyan Methodist choral tradition and the emergence of the genre of male voice choirs in the far west of the county.

We can also attempt a comparison between the founding of Cornish, Welsh and English male voice choirs. The timeline of the earliest Cornish male voice choirs recorded in Table 1 can be set against specific dates for Welsh choirs. National competitive performances in London in 1887, Liverpool 1900, along with international appearances in the USA 1888-9, the Chicago World Fair 1893 and Paris Exhibition 1900, all serve to illustrate that the Welsh male choral tradition was fully established by the 1880s.⁹⁴ The dating of English male voice choirs is less precise and thus comparison is more problematical. In his history of the British male voice choir, Christopher Wiltshire describes a gradual transition from glee clubs, eighteenth century male choral groups with a voice combination of ATBB, to the modern concept of male voice choirs, a voice combination of TTBB, from the 1880s onwards.⁹⁵ Wiltshire demonstrates that the latter terminology was the accepted nomenclature a decade later principally driven by the glee having given way to the partsong. The social make-up of Welsh, English and Cornish choirs was also different. Welsh choirs tended to be working-class and English ones were middle-class; whereas Cornish male voice choirs, though

⁹⁴ Gareth Williams, *Valleys of Song: Music and Society in Wales 1840-1914* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), pp. 13, 107, 123-4.

⁹⁵ Christopher Wiltshire, 'The British Male Voice Choir: A History and Contemporary Perspective' (unpublished Ph.D thesis, Goldsmith College, University of London, 1993), pp.75-9.

with more working- than middle-class members, reflected a Methodist 'egalitarianism'.

7.

This chapter has demonstrated the seminal position of Methodism in the emergence of Cornish male voice choirs. By comparing the development over time of Welsh and English choirs, we have seen that the derivation of Cornish male voice choirs differs not only relative to social and class origin, but also date. What has emerged here is how Methodism came to have a profound influence on the notion of Cornish spiritual and cultural identity. Methodism and its associated music was significant and central to the lives of the thousands in the fishing communities, those working in the quarries and in agriculture, as well as the thousands of miners.⁹⁶ John Blacking observed: 'Some music expresses the actual solidarity of groups when people come together and produce patterns of sound that are signs of their group allegiances.'⁹⁷ Cornish men and women who emigrated to Australia, North and South America and South Africa took with them their Methodist faith and its music.⁹⁸

Despite schisms within the Methodist Church early in the nineteenth century, by the close of the Victorian period the various strains of Methodism, that is Wesleyan, Bible Christians, Primitive, Free and New Connexion, had

⁹⁶ Shaw, *A history of Cornish Methodism* p.101.

⁹⁷ Blacking, *How Musical is Man?*, p.104.

⁹⁸ *Cornish World*. In the section 'All Around the World', the following issues include news regarding Methodist Churches and associated music of historical interest: Issue 50 February/March 2007, p.86; Issue 52 June/July 2007, p.86; Issue 61 December/January 2008/09, p.64.

achieved respectability. A distinction in the far west of Cornwall was the dominance of the Wesleyan strain of Methodism which melded isolated hamlets, villages and towns, binding together the differing social and occupational communities. The notions of egalitarianism, camaraderie and self-help espoused within the tenets of Methodism acted as the counter-balance to a social order under threat from persistent waves of emigration.

Methodist history, particularly Wesleyan Methodism, gives us the socio-cultural and religious contextual framework to determine the origin of male voice choirs. As a male choral movement emerged a formalised male voice choir tradition came to be invented. In the Introduction it was noted that identity is multi-layered (and more layers such as those of specific locality are to be explored in later chapters), but in the period in which choirs were formed the dominant form of identity was that associated with Methodism. The broader musicological influences which shaped this new tradition and had influence upon choir identity, are explored in the next chapter.

Chapter Two

Early Cornish male voice choirs: a musicological framework

Only by examining the musicological influences can we have a full picture of the emergence of Cornish male voice choirs by the onset of the Great War. The basis of this chapter is formed around the three differing modes of investigation as outlined in the Introduction – analysis of repertoire, the aesthetic and cultural impact of the music and the socio-cultural role of participants. The chapter opens by addressing the implementation, during the Victorian period, of the tonic sol-fa system for sight-singing and its significance relative to the mass choral movement and education. Through an examination of early Cornish choir repertoire we will see how three different strands of choral practices came together.

Consideration of early selected choir histories highlights two influential elements: the role of the conductor, which is shown to be pivotal relative to choirs becoming established or being of a transitory nature; and the key position of the County Music Festival in the development and establishment of male voice choirs. The early history of Marazion Apollo choir will serve to illustrate those musicological factors which effectively formed the framework for the establishment of a viable choral unit. Finally, in noting the positive musical and cultural effect on communities of touring Welsh choirs, it will be seen that by 1914 the Cornish male voice choir had formed a distinct choral identity which over time was to become nuanced in its socio-cultural meaning and identity.

1.

The significant and profound contribution of Methodism to the musical culture of Cornwall can be traced through congregational part-singing, church and chapel choirs, choral societies and choral singing classes. To appreciate fully how choral works of musical complexity could be learned by those for whom a structured education had ceased by the age of ten, a detailed look at the implementation of the tonic sol-fa system and its influence on mass choral singing in the Victorian age, needs firstly to be undertaken .

Mass participation in choral singing in the Victorian period has been interpreted in several ways. A nineteenth century choral phenomenon, it is variously described as an 1840s sight-singing mania,¹ termed by Christopher Wiltshire as a 'Sight-singing Revolution'² and regarded at the time by the bourgeoisie and civic authorities as a means of social control where the working-class were concerned.³ Teaching both pitch and rhythm with music material arranged in logical, small progressive steps, 'Tonic Sol-fa notation provided an easily mastered device enabling ordinary folk – whether children or adults – to develop in the mind the association between sound and symbol necessary to sing

¹ 'The start of music at CLS' www.jcc.org.uk/25th-Anniversary/From-the-Archives/ [accessed 28 February 2012].

² Christopher Wiltshire, 'The British Male Voice Choir: A History and Contemporary Perspective' (unpublished Ph.D thesis, Goldsmith College, University of London, 1993), pp.98-103.

³ Andy Croll, *Civilizing the Urban: Popular Culture and Public Space in Merthyr, c.1870-1914* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000). Of particular interest to the subject matter here is Chapter IV, pp.104-36. See also: www.jcc.org.uk/25th-Anniversary/From-the-Archives/ [accessed 28 February 2012].

from the page'.⁴ But what is of real significance is the fact that the primary aim of the originator of the tonic sol-fa system, the Nonconformist Reverend John Curwen, was to improve congregational hymn-singing. To do this he set out to devise a system providing a method intelligible to those who were non-musicians but charged with class teaching and/or instructing choral groups, whilst at the same time a method which was both accessible and understandable across ages.⁵ An illustration of the latter is detailed by T. R. Harris in *Methodism and the Cornish Miner* where he records an attendance of eight hundred children, regularly instructed by one hundred and forty teachers at Camborne Methodist Sunday School alone.⁶ The use of tonic sol-fa in Sunday Schools, churches and chapels preceded its implementation in state schools by several decades.

The influence of the sol-fa system in the sphere of choral music was such that it spread across the English border to the Nonconformist region of south Wales. There the implementation of the tonic sol-fa method had as dynamic an impact on choral singing as it had in Cornwall. Gareth Williams explains how in the second half of the nineteenth century, Curwen's sight-singing method was not only influential in educational institutions but also impacted on the choral interpretation of Welsh Nonconformist hymnody: 'It attached itself to the very

⁴ Bernarr Rainbow, *Music in Educational Thought and Practice* (Aberystwyth: Boethius Press, 1989), p.246.

⁵ John Curwen, *Singing for Schools and Congregations (1852 edition of 1843)*, (Boethius Press Ireland, 1985). Also refer to: Watkins Shaw, 'John Curwen', in K. Simpson (ed.), *Some Great Music Educators A Collection of Essays* (London: Novello, 1976), pp.30-42.

⁶ T. R. Harris, *Methodism and the Cornish Miner* (Cornish Methodist Historical Association Occasional Publication No.1), p.12.

texture of much social life, especially the life of the chapels where it was learned in ysgol gân (singing practice). It contributed greatly to the rise of the muscular four-part congregational singing.⁷ It resulted in the Welsh developing a more chordal concept of harmony, but as Williams says, the sol-fa system 'taught Wales to read religious music'.⁸

Prior to Curwen's method becoming the accepted system, a debate raged at the time between the differing values of alternative approaches. The harmonic flexibility within Curwen's system founded on the movable 'doh' proved to be the kernel of the musical argument.⁹ The intense public discussion which took place underscores how Victorian intellectual minds grasped the concept that the ability to read music notation was the key to opening a hitherto closed culture. Musical literacy would mean mass participation in choral music was a possibility. The sight-singing movement provided the impetus for serious consideration to be given to the inclusion of singing in the Revised Code of 1862 when the subject of Elementary Education came before Parliament. Though not included until 1873, at the close of the century singing was a recognised subject in the Revised Code of 'payment by results', with a differential in payment in

⁷ Gareth Williams, *Valleys of Song: Music and Society in Wales 1840-1914* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), p.34.

⁸ Williams, *Valleys of Song*, p. 29.

⁹ Reginald Pearsall, *Victorian Popular Music* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1973), pp.111-22. See also, Bernarr Rainbow, *The Land Without Music* (London: Novello, 1967), where the progress of the Sight-Singing Movement is chronicled in detail.

relation to singing from tonic sol-fa or by ear.¹⁰ Across society the demand for music with printed tonic sol-fa notation became commercially highly profitable.

The Musical Times was, as its full title indicated, the primary organ of the adult singing-class movement. A whole range of educational primers, the fruits of the teaching methods pioneered by Sarah Glover (1786-1867), the Revd John Curwen (1816-80) and John Hullah (1812-84), came into existence, aimed initially at children only but having the long-term effect of fostering the movement as a whole. Large quantities of music were printed in tonic-solfa notation, with or without staff-notation in addition. Meanwhile the supplements of simple part-songs and anthems issued with *The Musical Times* came to occupy a major position in the operations of Novello, its publisher.¹¹

Use of the tonic sol-fa method by choral societies, singing classes and institutes resulted in a manifold increase in the number of adults and children who acquired the ability to sight-sing. Building on the tradition of Methodist and Nonconformist mixed choirs gathering together to perform sacred choral music,¹² the formation of choral societies was a natural extension. By way of illustration we turn to St Ives Music Society which gave its first concert in 1905. The society's membership consisted primarily of members from the choirs of the Methodist New Connexion and Zion Congregational Churches.¹³ The extent of the choral

¹⁰ Michael Lynch, 'Towards the abolition of "payment by results": the end of school music or an opportunity for further development as reported in School Music Review 1892-1901?', *British Journal of Music Education*, 18:2 (2001), 187-93.

¹¹ John Caldwell, *The Oxford History of English Music Vol.2 c.1715 to the Present Day* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp.243-4.

¹² *Western Weekly News*, 18 July 1896. Hayle Choral Festival. This was the 9th Anniversary festival of the East Penwith Union of Church Choirs numbering some 130 voices; *The Cornishman*, 10 January 1901. Choir Concert, Penzance anniversary concert at St Paul's to a crowded hall; *West Briton*, 12 April 1906. Falmouth Wesley Church performance of a sacred cantata with 300 voices; *Cornish Times*, 21 June 1907. Bodmin Choral Festival with massed church choirs numbering over 300 voices. *Cornish Times*, 21 June 1907. Bodmin Choral Festival held at Bodmin Parish Church involving churches from Bodmin Deanery with a joint choir of over 300 voices.

¹³ *The Cornishman*, 14 January 1905.

abilities of these amateur singers can be assessed in general terms by the canon of works which comprised the accepted, regular repertoire. By way of illustration selected performances are listed in Table 2. Launceston, Camborne, St Austell,

Date	Choir/Choral Society	Musical Work	Date	Recorded
1896	St Mary Magdelene, Launceston	<i>St Paul</i> – Mendelssohn	19 December	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
1897	Gunnislake Choral Society	<i>St Cecilia's Day</i> – van Bree	6 March	
1900	Helston Choral Society	<i>Hymn of Praise</i> – Mendelssohn	27 January	
	St Tudy Choral Class	<i>Christ and His Soldiers</i> – Farmer	17 February	
1901	St Germans Choral Class	<i>Creation</i> – Haydn	20 April	<i>Cornish Times</i>
1903	Camborne Wesley Chapel	<i>Messiah</i> – Handel	7 February	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
	St Austell Philharmonic Society	<i>Judas Maccabeus</i> – Handel	28 February	
1907	Lostwithiel Choral Class	<i>Loveley</i> – Mendelssohn	8 February	<i>Cornish Times</i>
1908	Liskeard Choral Society	<i>Seasons</i> – Haydn	16 October	
1910	Callington Choral Society	<i>Bride of Dunkerron</i> – Smart	1 April	
1911	Looe Choral Society	<i>The Banner of St George</i> – Elgar	26 February	
	Looe Parish Church	<i>Crucifixion</i> – Stainer	9 April	
1914	Pelynt United Choirs	<i>The Captive Maid of Israel</i> – Guest	1 May	

Table 2 Regular Choral Repertoire

Liskeard, Helston and St Ives were the ministerial centres for that district's Wesleyan circuit (see Chapter One, Figure D), which meant those choral unions and choral societies had the largest district church and/or chapel choirs and congregations from which to draw their membership. Along with established singing classes, these societies ensured the development of choral singing affording opportunities for the more able vocalists to sing new and challenging works. The selected cantata and oratorio reflect a high standard of amateur vocal performance indicative of a significant amount of time devoted to choral activity and an appreciable degree of music literacy.

Table 2 also informs us of the wide geographic spread illustrating the underlying strength of Methodism and choral music performance across the county. The geographical framework highlights the idea of group identity having multiple readings, seen through the diversity of location, population size and primary occupation.¹⁴ The recorded choirs in Table 2 extend from the small fishing village of Looe in the east, St Austell in mid-Cornwall's clay country and to the far west of Cornwall the mining town of Camborne. Despite differences within these identities, the thread which bound the amateur choirs as one was a history of congregational part-singing and communal hymnody, the core of Methodist and Nonconformist choral music.

2.

The following evaluation of selected works will illustrate how choralists were able to perform works from the secular and sacred genres based on knowledge of compositional techniques acquired through an aural/oral tradition and/or a taught sight-singing system. Analysis will show how a traditional round and the *St Day Carol* are indicative of a purely oral tradition, whereas the choral writing of the Cornish composer Thomas Merritt will illustrate a hybrid, idiomatic style. The inclusion of the secular concert piece by Danby, the glee *Awake, Aeolian Lyre*, reflects the educated Georgian choral tradition of which it is an early repertoire example. The contention is that through an analysis of selected works and by placing them into a socio-cultural context, it brings into sharp relief

¹⁴ See Ordnance Survey maps: *Landranger Series* 190, 200, 201, 203, 204.

how choralists were able to progress and undertake complex musical performances.

Certain choral pieces would have been commonly known and learned orally. For men to join together in song within the place of employment not only provided social camaraderie but was often necessitated by the mode of work practices. In certain spheres of manual labour the metre and rhythm of secular songs would assist in synchronicity of action, essential in the execution of the men's work. For example, in quarrying the swinging of hammers could be synchronised by the lead-man, who solos with the spoken word or sung phrase, followed by the others in response.¹⁵ The structure of a worksong in this form follows the historical format of the genre. At sea, the singing of worksongs set the tempo and rhythm for hauling in the nets. Classified as a distinct genre and known as sea shanties, they have retained an important position in Cornish music culture.¹⁶

A worksong or sea shanty which achieved unanimity of rhythm, tempo and action was not necessarily formed from a call and response structure though.

¹⁵ An example of the physical movements of quarrymen when breaking stone being synchronised to the spoken word and song can be found in the television 1999 Carlton documentary *Century – A Moving tribute that charts the changing face of the West Country during the 1900s*. The section 'A century at work' opens with quarrymen at the Portland Stone Quarry c1963. Although not an example from a Cornish quarry, it does stand as a 'live' primary source illustrative of the genre.

¹⁶ *West Briton*, 12 May 1927. The importance of sea shanties in regard to a seaman's mode of work was the subject of an International Paper presented by Lady Mary Trefusis, at the Royal Institute of Cornwall. The presentation was illustrated by a small choir of male voices. See also, BBC 4 Documentary – 'Shanties and Sea Songs', Malone, Gareth, 7 May 2010. The documentary places the genre historically within British culture.

The simple repetition of a single melody with delayed entries achieved the same purpose. To illustrate this, the first music analysis concerns a well-known 'catch'. Within a secular populist song culture built on an oral tradition, quite complex music structures could be chorally constructed through reliance on a singer's aural acuity. The term catch basically refers to the musical form known from childhood as the round. Culturally, the catch became an English favourite song form within the male population during the eighteenth century. Historically, because of the predominantly indecent, often crude, texts of the catch, the performance arenas were mainly inns and catch clubs.¹⁷ However, the primary musical technique was that of creating imitative entries which gave the form its musical structure. This can be illustrated by its antecedent the round, a recognised example being *Sumer is icumen in*, known also as the 'Summer Canon' (Figure H).¹⁸

Based on an oral tradition of unaccompanied singing, the ear of the singer would be trained to a high degree at the same time developing a memory for holding a musical phrase and maintaining pitch. Depending on the number of performers, the possibility for an intricate polyphonic texture to be created could arise, the resultant harmony being as simple or as complex as desired (Figures Ha and Hb). Figure Hc represents two examples of ostinatos, repeated phrases

¹⁷ Wiltshire, 'The British Male Voice Choir', pp.13-38.

¹⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sumer_Is_Icumen_In [accessed 26 November 2012]. See also, R. Nettel, *Music in the Five Towns*, p.21. A concert programme Victoria Hall, Hanley 1890, by the Hanley Glee and Madrigal Society has the canon 'Summer is a-coming in' as the opening concert number.

underpinning or grounding the main choral structure. From this analysis we can see how a song form based on imitative entries, established a set tempo and rhythm and when sung in the work environment would assist manual labour in the same manner as worksongs.



a. Melody



b. Round



c. Ostinato

Figure H *Sumer is Icumen in*

The questions raised in the musical analysis of *Sumer is Icumen* will show that compositional techniques found in secular works were evident in the sacred repertoire. In moving to Figure I we see how early male voice choir repertoire also drew from its knowledge of musical practices which prevailed in known hymnody. In short pieces, congregations gained an understanding of the musicality of a piece and its structure by worded and musical repetition. It was not uncommon during the nineteenth-century for congregational singing to be unaccompanied. Where this occurred the precentor pitched the first note or a member of the congregation would step forward and do so. 'Pitching the tune' was regarded as demonstrating a high measure of musical ability and was deemed an honour.¹⁹ When hymnals were not available and for the benefit of those unable to read, learning new carols and hymns was by call and response, termed 'lining out'.²⁰ A. L. Rowse recalls how learning was facilitated by the precentor who 'gave out each verse, told them the tune and they would sing after.'²¹ Note the affinity of structure to worksongs and shanties. An analysis of the harmonic and melodic structure of the Cornish carol *Now the Holly Bears a Berry* (Figure I),²² illustrates the point. Also known as the *St Day Carol* and arguably the most famous of all Cornish carols, its very simplicity is achieved through repetition of melody, harmony and words. The four part homophony is structured around two phrases: (anacrusis) b.1-4² and b.8³-12². The opening

¹⁹ A. L. Rowse, *A Cornish Childhood* (Truro: Truran, 2003), p.24.

²⁰ Thomas Shaw, *A History of Cornish Methodism* (Truro: Oscar Blackford Ltd., 1967), p.45.

²¹ Rowse, *A Cornish Childhood*, p.24.

²² Ralph Dunstan, *The Cornish Songbook* (London: Reid Brothers, 1929), p.123.

phrase is rendered three more times, b.4³-8², b.12³-16² and b.18³-22² thus completing the 22 bar structure.

The image shows a musical score for 'The St Day Carol' in 3/2 time. It consists of five systems of music, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first system (bars 1-4) includes the lyrics: 'Now the Hol - ly bears a ber - ry As white as the milk, And'. The second system (bars 5-8) includes: 'Ma - ry bore. Je - sus Who was wrapt up in silk; And Ma - ry bore'. The word 'Refrain' is written above the second system. The third system (bars 9-12) includes: 'Je - sus Christ Our Sa - viour for to be; And the first tree of the'. The fourth system (bars 13-16) includes: 'green - wood It was the Hol - ly, Hol - ly, Hol - ly, And the'. The fifth system (bars 17-20) includes: 'first tree of the green - wood It was the Hol -'. The score ends with a double bar line.

Figure I *The St Day Carol*

In his autobiography *A Cornish Childhood*, the social historian A. L. Rowse remembers the singing of hymns and sacred songs 'being rendered in the street at night, an accompaniment to his going to sleep'.²³ This readiness to sing music

²³ Rowse, *A Cornish Childhood*, p.13.

from the sacred choral genre in secular contexts demonstrates the deep, pervading influence of Methodist hymnody. The concept of fatalism discussed in the previous chapter was rooted in the inherent dangers present in quarrying, fishing and mining. The singing of hymns helped allay these fears, as did the rendering of the sacred choral music of the Cornish composer Thomas Merritt (1863-1908). It is appropriate therefore to turn our attention now to the music of Thomas Merritt, a staunch Methodist, whose sacred compositions form a significant contribution within this genre.²⁴

The son of an Illogan miner who was born into poverty, Merritt's frailty and poor health meant that by the age of twenty he had given up mining and was making a small income teaching music, enhancing his music reputation through being a chapel organist. Largely a self-taught composer, his lasting contribution to Cornish music is to be found in his canon of sacred choral music for which he is celebrated in Cornwall. The cultural importance of Merritt's sacred music is reflected by the retention of his works within contemporary Methodist mixed choral repertoire and that of male voice choirs.²⁵ In the introduction to the collection *Twelve Cornish Carols of Thomas Merritt*, Leonard Truran writes:

²⁴ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/cornwall/content/articles> [accessed 20 May 2008]. See also <http://www.cambornechurch.org.uk/2008-christmas/Thomas-merritt> [accessed 5 December 2012].

²⁵ *Merritt Remembered* <http://www.bbc.co.uk/Cornwall/History/Features> [accessed 29 April, 2012]. Four Lanes MVC, with Mabe Ladies Choir, Camborne Circuit Choir and Redruth Methodist Church Choir recorded a CD in 2008 *A Cornish Christmas with Merritt*. Further listening is to be found on 'In Christmas Mood' – including Merritt's Carols by Stithian Ladies Choir and Nankersey Male Choir 1997.

Soon in the mines, on the surface and underground, his vigorous and joyful music swelled the dark, dingy world of the under-ground levels, the warm consoling atmosphere of the inns, and the fervent, religious air of the chapels, rang and resounded with his stirring compositions.²⁶

It is said that it was the genuine love for Merritt's music which ensured that Cornish migrants continued the tradition of singing his carols at Christmas within their new-found communities.²⁷

In Merritt's sacred canon the harmonies and rhythms which brought the language to life were distinctly Cornish in origin. Through his use of choral techniques, widely known and used in an oral music culture, his anthems, oratorios, hymns and carols illustrate a hybrid, idiomatic style which nevertheless was readily accessible to church and chapel congregations. Although more demanding than a square metred homophonic hymn in the manner of the *St Day Carol*, Merritt's part writing and harmonic structure has a simplicity allowing for varied performance interpretations, achievable through a combination of soloists, choir with congregation and employment of organ or chapel band instrumentalists.²⁸ The following examination of two of Merritt's carols will illustrate the musical characteristics indicative of his idiomatic style.

²⁶ Leonard H. Truran, *Twelve Cornish Carols* (The Cornish Music Company).

²⁷ A précis of Thomas Merritt's life, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/cornwall/content/articles> [accessed 20 May 2008]. A five minute audio file attachment contains remarks from a member of the Carmel Priory, Cumbria in which he states how the Cornish miners moving to Cumbria to work at the Hogbarrow Mine in the 1870s brought with them their love of singing Merritt's carols. See also: Gage McKinney, *When Miners Sang – The Grass Valley Carol Choir* (California: Comstock Bonanza Press, 2001), pp.69-72 and *The Illustrated Western Morning News*, 24 January 1914, pp.8-9.

²⁸ Harry Woodhouse, "Face the Music!" – Church and Chapel Bands in Cornwall', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 1* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1993), 46-61.

a. Complete score

b. Extract

Figure J *Awake, Awake the Lofty Song*

Merritt's part-writing reflects features of imitative counterpoint combining with metre and rhythm found in the secular choral tradition of the catch and glee.²⁹ For example in the verse structure of the carol *Awake, Awake the Lofty Song* (Figure Ja),³⁰ the four part homophony of the opening twelve bars is balanced by a four bar passage for the upper two voices before a return to full four part homophonic passage. The flowing movement of the ascending bass entry, b.20⁴ 'In strains sublime' (Figure Jb) leads in the imitative entries of the other three voices. The bass and alto pair off melodically leaving the soprano and tenor with a contrasting, descending melodic phrase in canon with each other. Thus an apparent four-part canonic counterpoint is achieved whereas there are only two short, but distinct melodies. A further example of this compositional technique is to be found in the carol *Hark the Glad Sound! The Saviour Comes* (Figure Ka).³¹ The pairing of bass-alto and soprano-tenor melodic phrases are, as in *Awake, Awake*, but here the voices enter in SATB sequence with 'and ev'ry voice a song' (Figure Kb).

²⁹ *The New Oxford Companion to Music* (ed.) Denis Arnold (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).

³⁰ Truran, *Twelve Cornish Carols*, p.5.

³¹ Truran, *Twelve Cornish Carols*, p.7.

a. Complete score

b. Extract

Figure K *Hark the Glad Sound! The Saviour Comes*

Although these two and other examples are scored for the vocal range of SATB, the male choral combination of TTBB was equally at ease in performance. It was not unknown for a male alto to take the upper part. Short polyphonic passages, also evident in carols 1, 9 and 12 from *The Twelve*,³² are characteristic of Merritt's style adding textural contrast to the more hymnal sections. The rhythms and harmonies found in Merritt's sacred music expressed a vigour which was to be found in so much of the secular music.³³ In his foreword to *Carols of Cornwall*, Kenneth Pelmeare remarks how a 'florid air, frequently worded repetition and a large flowing bass line were the chief characteristics of this form of carol'.³⁴

Along with the hymns of the Wesleys and Moody and Sankey, Merritt's music was established as part of the Cornish Methodist canon by the time of his death. However, Merritt's music gained recognition only within a small geographic area, which could be interpreted as an indicator of Cornish social and cultural insularity bound within the distinct strain of Cornish Methodism. Comparison with Welsh contemporaries lends credence to this interpretation. As early as the 1860s Welsh music periodicals were publishing music by Welsh composers and standard choral repertoire, some works in both sol-fa and traditional notation.³⁵ The history of Welsh composers in the second half of the

³² Truran, *Twelve Cornish Carols*.

³³ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/cornwall/content/articles> [accessed 5 May 2008]. A five minute audio file attachment contains comments from an Australian (Victoria State) Cornish descendant male voice choir member who regards Merritt's music as 'thrilling, glorious music – bright, lively and can be sung with gusto'. For a contemporary Cornish opinion commenting in the same vein see: Douglas Williams, 'Enthusiasm for carol singing grows at Feast of St Thomas A' Merritt', *Western Morning News*, 18 December 2011.

³⁴ Kenneth Pelmeare, *Carols of Cornwall* (Redruth: Dyllansow Truran, 1982), p.v.

³⁵ Williams, *Valleys of Song*, p.29.

Victorian period and the Edwardian decade chronicles several who gained a reputation beyond their country's borders, none more so than Joseph Parry.³⁶ For example, Parry's *Myfanwy* and the hymn tune *Aberystwyth* are choral compositions of international renown.³⁷ An alternative view to consider is that Merritt's limited recognition merely reflects one of a myriad of examples of regional differences in choral repertoire. In writing on the subject of choral societies, Dave Russell comments on the regional differences in repertoire often being 'a result of local taste and habit, and loyalty to local composers'.³⁸

The final musical analysis concerns the glee *Awake Æolian Lyre*,³⁹ a prize winning composition of 1783 by Danby (1757-1798), a noted composer of catches, glees and partsongs. *Awake Æolian Lyre* became one of the most popular glees of the Georgian-Victorian period and was a regular concert piece in the male choir repertoire through to 1914. The conventional structure of the glee is 'for three or more voices (usually one to a part, and unaccompanied), which is constructed in at least two sections often with different time signatures and contrasted in mood'.⁴⁰ The detailed excerpts illustrated in Figure L show Danby's use of the

³⁶ Stanley Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (London: Macmillan, 1995) – Joseph Parry 1841-1903, David Evans 1843-1913, David Jenkins 1848-1915, David John de Lloyd 1883-1948.

³⁷ A detailed portrait of Parry is to be found in: Williams, *Valleys of Song*, pp.70-80.

³⁸ Dave Russell, *Popular Music in England 1840-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), p.262.

³⁹ Published in *The Musical Times* No.78 and subsequently by Novello (London).

⁴⁰ Paul Hillier, *300 Years of English Partsongs – selected and edited* (London: Faber, 1983), p.v.

all thy trembling strings. From He-li-con's har

all thy trembling strings. From Heli-con's harmo nious- springs, - har

all thy trembling strings. From He-li-con's har mo - nious springs,

all thy trembling strings. From Helicon's harmo - nious

a. b.10-12

Spiritoso

And Ceres' golden reign, - Now, now

And Ceres' golden reign, - Now, now

Thro' ver - dant vales, Now rolling down the steep a - main

Thro' ver - dant vales, Now rolling down the steep a - main,

b. b.32⁴ -38

cresc. *f*

to the roar,

to the roar,

c. b.46³ - 50³

ff

re - bel - low to the roar, to the roar, top the roar.

re - bel - low to the roar, to the roar, to the roar.

re - bel - low to the roar, to the roar, to the roar.

re - bel - low to the roar, to the roar, to the roar.

d. b.50⁴ -54

Figure L *Awake, Æolian Lyre*

compositional conventions of his time. From a four-part extended cadential opening, *Largo e sostenuto*, the *Andante* homophony changes texturally into a contrapuntal passage through scored imitative entries (Figure La). This is followed by an 8-bar homophonic *Largo* episode which precedes an abrupt change in mood and tempo. The colour and mood of the second section is uplifted not only by the tempo *Spiritoso* ♩=152, but also texturally (Figure Lb). Commencing with only the two lower voices, the upper two parts then follow with an inverted sequence of the opening bass phrase. The word painting which follows on 'Now rolling down the steep' is wonderful word imagery giving rise to a fluidity in the upper and lower bass lines in a unison 'roar' (Figure Lc). This and the resounding *fortissimo* final four bars (Figure Ld) would no doubt have been eagerly anticipated by singers and audiences alike.

The above analyses show that within each genre the same musical devices are employed, but stylistically and texturally compositional differences are evident as in the counterpoint of Danby compared with the contrapuntal writing in Merritt's choral compositions. Moreover, technical terms to describe compositional techniques also differ between genres. The repeated bass pattern underpinning *Sumer is icumen in* can be termed as an ostinato, in a classical work the reference is to a ground bass and in twentieth century popular music parlance, a 'riff'. Thus the chosen descriptive vocabulary could be said to inform us in general terms of the music genre, its place and the culture in which it is situated. The commonality of musical devices meant that singers from an oral

tradition, aided by a knowledge of tonic sol-fa and practised in sight-singing, were able to perform works from the classical genre. As we shall see in what follows, the male voice choral unit emerging as it did from the Methodist choral tradition was not only the vehicle which bridged the divide between the secular and the sacred genres, but brought fully in to Cornish music culture the glee, the partsong and operatic choruses, genres fully established within the wider male choral repertoire by 1900.

3.

In order to examine the interplay between various socio-cultural, religious and musicological forces behind male voice choir in practise, we next turn to an investigation of the early history of selected choirs, as previously outlined in Chapter One, Table 1. Initially focus is on the villages of St Agnes on the north coast and Goldsithney and District in Mount's Bay, on the south coast. Both choirs are positioned within the first classification, that of choirs existing for three or more years.

Within the environs of St Agnes where mining was the dominant industry, a male choir was established in October 1902 under the musical directorship of the Wesleyan chapel choirmaster, Mr J. Angwin. Its formation drew mainly from the already defined groups of church, chapel and congregational choirs and was a separate venture from the choral class which ran concurrently.⁴¹ An 'excellent' concert by the male voice choir at St Agnes was recorded by the *Western Weekly*

⁴¹ *Western Weekly News*, 18 October 1902.

News in the December,⁴² with two concerts the following January at Perranporth Drill Hall⁴³ and Truro Workhouse.⁴⁴ There is no reported evidence of choir concerts during 1904 but concert series were undertaken during 1905⁴⁵ and '06⁴⁶ under the continued musical directorship of Mr Angwin. Despite having established a recognised choral reputation within four years, the 1906-7 season of concerts appears to have been the choir's last.⁴⁷ A departure from the choir in 1906 was that of the accompanist, which could have adversely affected the survival of the choir.⁴⁸ Mr Angwin remained in situ as chapel choirmaster for in 1911 he instigated a local contest between parishes to improve choral singing.⁴⁹ At the close of 1913, the *West Briton* records Mr Angwin as the conductor of West Kitty male voice choir⁵⁰ (Wheal Kitty being in the mining complex of the St Agnes area).⁵¹ A concert report in October 1914 records the formation of West Kitty choir as two years previously,⁵² though a photograph of West Kitty Male Voice Choir taken in 1914 does not feature Mr Angwin as conductor.⁵³ Based on the evidence one could conclude that change and/or loss of conductor and/or accompanist

⁴² *Western Weekly News*, 20 December 1902.

⁴³ *Western Weekly News*, 24 January 1903.

⁴⁴ *Western Weekly News*, 31 January 1903.

⁴⁵ *West Briton*, 2 February, 6 April, 3 August, 7 December 1905; *Western Weekly News*, 18 March 1905.

⁴⁶ *West Briton*, 11 January, 1 March, 22 and 29 March, 22 November, 6 December 1906; *Western Weekly News*, 10 March 1906.

⁴⁷ *Western Weekly News*, 9 March 1907.

⁴⁸ *West Briton*, 26 April 1906.

⁴⁹ *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 31 August 1911.

⁵⁰ *West Briton*, 1 and 25 December 1913.

⁵¹ <http://www.cornwall-calling.co.uk/mines/st-agnes/wheal-kitty> [accessed 26 November 2009].

⁵² *The Cornishman*, 10 October 1914.

⁵³ Clive Benny, *The Archive Photograph Series: Around St Agnes* (Stroud: Chalford, 1996), p.88. The caption below the published 1914 photograph lists a Capt Prisk, seated in the front row, as the conductor. The title 'Captain' indicates that Mr Prisk was in a managerial position at the mine.

affected not only the survival of St Agnes male voice choir as a discrete choral group but also the choral grouping of West Kitty choir.

In a comparable situation was the choir of Goldsithney and District on the south coast. Established in the early 1900s under the musical directorship of a Mr Rees (a Welshman), within a couple of years the choir had gained for itself a creditable choral reputation in the Mounts Bay area.⁵⁴ During 1905 a series of sixteen concerts raised a total of £30 for local community causes, a considerable sum at the time.⁵⁵ Although the choir's reputation grew during 1906 under the baton of Mr Rees,⁵⁶ 1907 and '08 appear to indicate that the choir lapsed. Confirmation can be found in the local newspaper *West Briton*: 'Goldsithney and District Male Voice Choir has been re-organised by Mr J. Rees who is again conducting.'⁵⁷ Again we see that an influential factor in choir success and continuity is the issue of musical directorship.

Turning now to the second classification as defined in Chapter One, Table 1 (choirs of an ad hoc or transient nature), the following selected choirs illustrate groups formed from detailed choral sessions. The male voice choirs of Looe, Truro People's Palace and Penzance YMCA illustrate the importance of establishing a relationship between choir and community. To the far east of

⁵⁴ *West Briton*, 24 September 1903.

⁵⁵ *Western Weekly News*, 18 February, 18 March, 29 April 1905; *Cornish Telegraph*, 16 February, 20 and 27 April, 25 May 1905. £30 equates with just over £3,000 at 2013 rates: Historic inflation calculator, www.thisismoney.co.uk [accessed 18 May 2013].

⁵⁶ *Cornish Telegraph*, 12, 19 and 26 April, 29 November 1906; *The Cornishman*, 26 April 1906; *West Briton*, 7 May 1906.

⁵⁷ *West Briton*, 7 December 1908.

Cornwall in the fishing village of Looe, a joint concert by Looe Glee and Male Voice choirs formed the climax to the winter session of the choral class of 1896. A concert review in the *Western Weekly News* records not only items from the programme but also the civic pride engendered by the concert.⁵⁸ By the close of the nineteenth century a clearly defined musical identity was evident, indicating a positive and reciprocal relationship between choir and community in this small fishing village.

To the west of the county lies the urban centre of Truro, granted city status in 1877. Truro People's Palace combined a working men's club with leisure activities⁵⁹ and the choir associated with Truro People's Palace first appeared Christmas 1906, carol singing around the city streets.⁶⁰ During its first year the choir's concerts reflected a wider repertoire selection and more advanced choral standards than that of Looe's male voice choir programme of 1896.⁶¹ 1908 opened with a major sacred concert in Truro which included carols by Merritt⁶² and that year's concert itinerary took the choir beyond Truro's boundaries,⁶³ at the same time making a continued commitment to the people of Truro.⁶⁴ By 1909 the reciprocal relationship built up between choir and community was instrumental

⁵⁸ *Western Weekly News*, 25 April 1896. Programme details are listed.

⁵⁹ Christine Parnell, *The Book of Truro – Cornwall's City and Its People* (Wellington: Halsgrove, 2004), p.72.

⁶⁰ *West Briton*, 24 December 1906.

⁶¹ *West Briton*, 7, 21 and 25 February, 5 August 1907. Programme details are recorded in some newspaper entries.

⁶² *West Briton*, 9 January 1908. The named carols by Merritt were No.1 *Angelic Hosts* (Hark! What mean) and No. 11 'Awake with joy' from *The Twelve*.

⁶³ *West Briton*, 23 January (Newlyn East); 12 March (Grampound); 2 April (Penryn); 16 April (Falmouth); 7 May (Ladock Wesley Chapel) 1908.

⁶⁴ *West Briton*, 31 August, 10 September 1908.

in influencing the outcome when the continued existence of the People's Palace as a leisure and educational institution was called into question. In the autumn of 1909 local politicians questioned its social and cultural worth, but this was at odds with the views of the citizens of Truro. Reviewing a major concert organised by Truro People's Palace Male Voice Choir, the *West Briton* argued that the People's Palace had justified its existence. To Truronians, the male voice choir symbolised 'a valuable piece of social work' whilst musically and culturally it raised the artistic status of Truro within the county:

the formation of such a choir must certainly be regarded as a most valuable piece of social work. Their annual concert grows to be one of the most important musical events of the year in Truro, and justly so ... and if asked for the popularity of the Male Voice Choir, attribute it firstly to the enthusiasm of the conductor and members; secondly, to the attractive nature of the programme arranged, and thirdly, to the excellent quality of singing.⁶⁵

The tone and language of the report was unequivocal in that firstly, the reader recognised the position in the debate taken by the reporter and secondly, there was imbued in the language a confidence that the reporter's views represented those of the majority of Truronians. From this evidence it is appropriate to conclude that a positive and mutually beneficial relationship had formed not only between the male voice choir and the community but also that the community shared the socio-cultural and educational values that the People's Palace represented. Despite such positive indicators and continued choir successes,⁶⁶ Truro People's Palace Male Voice Choir faced the same issue proven

⁶⁵ *West Briton*, 21 October 1909.

⁶⁶ *West Briton*, 2 January, 16 March, 16 November 1911; *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 26 January 1911; *West Briton*, 26 January, 26 February, 6 May 1912.

to be the prime concern of choirs – retention of the conductor. The enforced curtailment of time given and commitment to the choir by their conductor, Mr Wallace Smith, precipitated the cessation of choral activities in 1913.⁶⁷

In this classification the final choir examined is one which brings together the issues of retention and continuity of conductor and the two way relationship in forming a choir-community identity. By the time of its third annual concert in 1911, Penzance YMCA male voice choir had built up a following, such that their performance at St John's Hall, Penzance was to a large, enthusiastic and appreciative audience, a concert highly praised when reviewed in the local newspaper.⁶⁸ The expressed hope of the town was that the choir would be entered in the Cornwall County Music competition as their hard work under the directorship of Mr Thomas merited such. If Penzance YMCA male choir did enter in 1911 the choir did not achieve a top three ranking.⁶⁹ Following the successful annual concert in 1912,⁷⁰ within twelve months there was a change in conductor⁷¹ and with no further record in the public domain the probability is that the choir lapsed.

Whilst acknowledging the dearth of evidence in some cases, these early choir histories taken collectively indicate that a prime factor in choir stability and subsequent choral success was the role of the conductor (an issue explained in

⁶⁷ *West Briton*, 8 May 1913.

⁶⁸ *Cornish Telegraph*, 2 February 1911.

⁶⁹ *Cornish Telegraph*, 25 May 1911.

⁷⁰ *West Briton*, 1 February 1912.

⁷¹ *West Briton*, 10 October 1912.

more detail in Chapters Four and Five). Also clear by then was the existence of common ownership in an identity founded on a reciprocal relationship between choir and community. These socio-cultural elements within the musicological framework gained emphasis when choirs competed in the County Music Festival. Following its inauguration in 1910, the County Music Festival proved to be seminal in both the evolution and choral development of male voice choirs and expansion of the choral repertoire. To place the festival within the wider Cornish context the focus now turns to charting its early years.

4.

The amateur festival movement which came to its peak in the late 1880s,⁷² established competitive festivals within metropolitan and provincial music calendars.⁷³ As noted in the Introduction, the historian Eric Hobsbawm has posited two definitions of invented traditions. The evolution of the secular Cornish male choral movement exemplifies an invented tradition which emerges 'in a less easily traceable manner within a brief and dateable period', whereas the competitive festival illustrates an invented tradition 'constructed and formally instituted'.⁷⁴ Hobsbawm notes that in both definitions: "'Invented tradition" is taken to mean a set of practices.'⁷⁵

⁷² Richard Adams, *A Book of British Music Festivals* (London: Royce, 1986), p.21. See also E. D. Mackerness, *A Social History of English Music* (London: Routledge and Keegan, 1966), pp.203-06.

⁷³ *The Times*, 14 October 1912, p.10.

⁷⁴ Eric Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions', in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p.1.

⁷⁵ Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions', p.1.

The concept of a competitive music festival was first mooted in 1903 by Canon Thornton of Roche and was to be called the Cornwall County Choral Contest.⁷⁶ The proposed choral categories were for 'difficult and easy' glees, male quartets and SATB groupings, the latter being able to have the soprano part sung by tenor or boy soprano. The rules and regulations were drawn-up, the date was fixed for September and Truro was to be the venue. However, the proposition was not favourably received for several reasons and the event did not take place. The date, limit on number of voices, issues concerning conducting and awards being monetary rather than medals or trophies, were all regarded by members of the executive committee as misjudgements. It was decided to 'to revise rules and regulations governing the contest with a view to its being held in the spring of next year'.⁷⁷ There is no evidence to support a festival having taken place. The chronology and geography outlined earlier (Chapter One, Table 1 and Figure G) raises the possibility that the notion of a choral competition in 1903 was premature. A conductor's prime concern would have been to establish the choir within its community. Also it is possible that as early male choirs evolved from and were identified with Methodism and the 1903 venture was under the auspices of the Church of England, albeit open to all denominations, adherents within the two did not routinely associate with each other.

The County Music Festival as instituted in 1910 helped embed and develop the nascent male choral movement. The Festival was founded by Lady

⁷⁶ *Western Weekly News*, 17 January 1903.

⁷⁷ *Western Weekly News*, 19 September 1903.

Mary Trefusis an archetypal, benevolent Victorian upper-class lady. The festival experience which Lady Trefusis brought to the County Festival enterprise came from her association with Mary Wakefield (who had spearheaded the choral festival movement in the Industrial North in the 1870s).⁷⁸ Both women were founding members of the national Association of Competition Festivals in 1904;⁷⁹ thus Lady Trefusis ensured that the structure and organisation of Cornwall's music festival was based on national guidelines and national standards of musical competition.

Within two years the festival ethos had changed the cultural music dynamic within the county. It was pivotal to the development of the male choral movement in several respects. Firstly, from the outset a sight-singing test piece was included in the choral classes, the aggregated mark of sight-reading and test pieces determining the placings. The importance of sight-reading can be elicited from the comments expressed by the festival adjudicator in 1913: 'there were few parts in England where sight-reading was good and if Cornwall so desired they could make themselves the best sight-reading county in England without much trouble.'⁸⁰ Secondly, the competitive element raised overall performance standards, national standards being applied to selected test pieces from the national competition repertoire. And thirdly, there was the informed critique

⁷⁸ *The Times*, 10 April 1914, p.8.

⁷⁹ The British and International Federation of Festivals, <http://www.federationoffestivals.org.uk>. [accessed 14 May 2012]. For a succinct summary of the social context see Russell, *Popular Music in England 1840-1914*, p.49. Also see Mackerness, *A Social History of English Music*, p.206.

⁸⁰ *West Briton*, 17 April 1913.

given publicly by the adjudicator, an experienced professional musician.⁸¹ As an example we turn to the following adjudication by Dr Allen. After complimenting the festival committee on the degree of difficulty of the test piece, he framed his critique in language that would contribute to future choral development:

Falmouth choir showed capabilities which would increase with continuing practice. The enunciation of Camborne choir was very fair, the attack good, and the spirit of the choir a jolly one ... Marazion were more successful in overcoming the actual difficulties, the tone was fine, blend good, but they got rather sharp. The pace was excellent, interpretation good, and the power of recovery obvious. Truro choir were an excellent combination of singers with a very good tone, and were most successful in realising the difficulties which he had referred to.⁸²

There was the additional pride which came from hosting the festival.⁸³ The rotation of venue and competition was in the words of Lady Trefusis, 'to stimulate the love of music in the greatest number of people'.⁸⁴ From 1911 to 1914, multiple regional centres were chosen across the county,⁸⁵ but a successful outcome was not necessarily assured. The choice of Bodmin in 1911 raised two unforeseen issues: transport difficulties faced by participants due to poor infrastructure, and also the venue being in a sparsely populated region. Bodmin as a centre 'did not produce many entries for the contests'.⁸⁶ On the other hand, different venues resulted in the formation of male voice choirs specifically for

⁸¹ *Cornwall Music Festival, Seventy Years of Music Making, 1910-1980, Souvenir Brochure*, p.32.

⁸² *West Briton*, 6 May 1912.

⁸³ *Cornish Telegraph*, 7 April 1913.

⁸⁴ *Cornish Times*, 5 November 1911.

⁸⁵ *Cornwall Music Festival Seventy Years of Music Making*, p.32.

⁸⁶ *Western Weekly News*, 20 May 1911.

their regional competition,⁸⁷ several of which continued post 1918.⁸⁸ The honours which accrued from festival successes raised the profile of individual choirs, none more so than Marazion Apollo Male Voice Choir.⁸⁹ We will next see that Marazion Apollo succinctly illustrated those musicological elements which needed to be in evidence to determine a choir's success and survival.

5.

The position of the conductor was important in two ways. Beyond taking responsibility for repertoire and choral standards, the conductor gave a choir social and cultural leadership, instituting the ethos and identity of that choir. Marazion Apollo had an individual who possessed the appropriate qualities in the person of J. H. Trudgeon. The choir was first formed in November 1904 under joint music directorship and with a prominent local music teacher as accompanist.⁹⁰ The positive outcome of the first concert appeared to indicate a successful future.

The recently formed male choir, under the leadership of Mr T. Harris, gave their first concert before a large audience at the Drill Hall on Friday evening. The full choir, numbering twenty-six voices, acquitted themselves well and rendered in a very creditable manner the selections *Ye Mariners of England*, *A Franklyn's Dogge*, *Soldiers' Chorus* and *We'd run them in*.⁹¹

⁸⁷ *Western Weekly News*, 20 May 1911 – St Mary Magdalene, Launceston; *West Briton*, 6 May 1912 – Falmouth Adult Education, Camborne Orpheus Glee; *West Briton*, 17 April 1913 – Land's End Choral Society.

⁸⁸ *Western Weekly News*, 20 May 1911 – Gunnislake, Probus; *West Briton*, 3 April 1913 – Bodmin; *West Briton*, 17 April 1913 – St Day, Germoe.

⁸⁹ The only choir to rival them was Truro People's Palace: *Western Weekly News*, 27 May 1911; *West Briton*, 6 May 1912.

⁹⁰ *The Cornishman*, 1 December 1904.

⁹¹ *Marazion Apollo Choir Centenary 1904-2004 Brochure*.

The position of conductor proved problematical for as newspaper reports indicate a new male voice choir was inaugurated in September 1906,⁹² its first concert taking place the following February.⁹³ The newly appointed conductor was Mr Trudgeon, one of the original basses and the choirmaster of the Methodist Chapel. A concert by the male voice choir from nearby Goldsithney appears to have been influential in Marazion Apollo being re-started, as evidenced by the review of Marazion Apollo's opening concert reported in the *Cornish Telegraph*. The same report also states what was expected of choir members:

If success is to be attained and then maintained the choir members are reminded that they have a most enthusiastic and capable conductor, willing to give time and talent and it is only fair and just that all should attend practice regularly and punctually.⁹⁴

The article noted vacant seats and gives an insight into the 'expected' response from the townspeople, acting as a reminder to the town that a choir-town relationship to be successful it needed to be based on communal effort and support.

Mr Trudgeon recognised that a reshaping and re-prioritising of the use of choir members' time concerning regular learning, rehearsing and performing were the 'set of practices' essential for success.⁹⁵ Recent research by Faulkner and Davidson into men's choral music asserts that the implementation and realisation

⁹² *Cornish Telegraph*, 13 September 1906.

⁹³ *The Cornishman*, 7 February 1907.

⁹⁴ *Cornish Telegraph*, 7 February 1907.

⁹⁵ Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions', p.1. Instituting a 'set of practices' is regarded as characteristic of an invented tradition.

of such a set of practices is central to establishing a cultural identity.⁹⁶ Through engagement in these practices self-identification with the group would bring about the formation of a cohesive social unit. The egalitarianism present in choral singing manifests in the strength of both its social function and its music function and the phrase 'part of my life' is one still frequently voiced by today's choir members.⁹⁷

The impact which Mr Trudgeon's leadership had on the musical culture of the town, its environs and the early male choral movement in Cornwall cannot be underestimated. Methodist values of self-help and independence were expressed through the many concerts in the choir's first year and by raising money for good causes.⁹⁸ The highlight of the summer concert series was an open air concert at the Castle of St Michael's Mount before Lord and Lady St Levan and guests.⁹⁹ Within the next two years and with a growing reputation, concert itineraries were established, charitable causes assisted¹⁰⁰ and the choir's repertoire developed to consist of a selection of glees, partsongs and choruses from the traditional male choral repertoire. Popular concert items were *Awake Aeolian Lyre*, *Away to the West*, *Soldier's Chorus*, *Comrades Song of Hope*, *Hail Smiling*

⁹⁶ Robert Faulkner and Jane.W. Davidson, 'Men in chorus; collaboration and competition in homo-social vocal behaviour', *Psychology of Music Vol.34 (2) (2006)*, p.224.

⁹⁷ See Chapter 8.

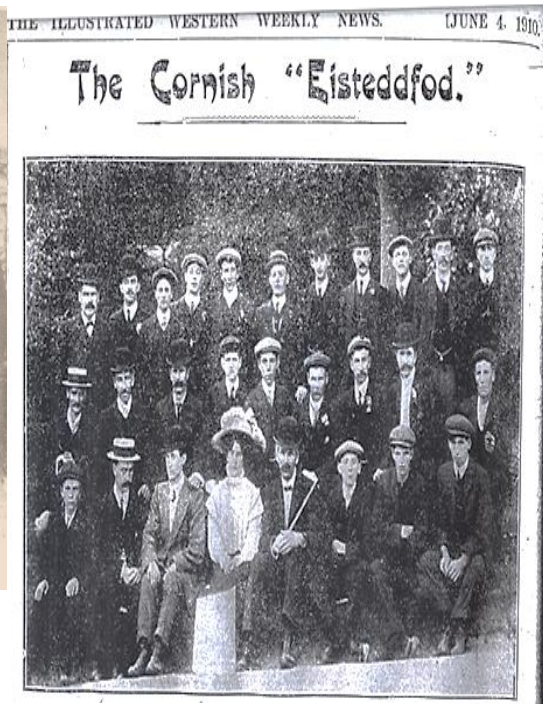
⁹⁸ *The Cornishman*, 21 March, 28 March, 4 April, 18 July, 29 August, 14 December 1907; *Cornish Telegraph*, 18 April, 4 July 1907.

⁹⁹ *The Cornishman*, 17 August 1907.

¹⁰⁰ *The Cornishman*, 20 February 1908; *West Briton*, 30 April 1908; *The Cornishman*, 11 February 1909.



1904



1910



1911

Figure M Marazion Apollo Choir

[Photographs: 1904 – *Marazion Apollo Choir Centenary 1904-2004* booklet; 1910 – *The Illustrated Western Weekly News*, 4 June 1910; 1911 – *Western Weekly News*, 27 May 1911.]

Morn, The Little Church, Soldier's Farewell.¹⁰¹ By the summer of 1909 the choir's annual outing was an established event.¹⁰² Choral and community status which came with festival success is evidenced by Marazion Apollo's achievements of 1910-13.¹⁰³ The three photographs shown in Figure M illustrate how within the space of seven years Marazion Apollo choir grew to a choir of over thirty members. We see how the choir image changed to one much more formalised and formal by 1911. Banjos had ceased to be the accompanying instrument and Miss Andrewartha the original accompanist, appears to have vacated that position. The formality of the 1911 image goes beyond merely indicating the style of photography of the day. To compare the 1904 photograph with that of 1911 is to recognise a confidence and composure of posture and countenance. The 1911 photograph acts as a record of civic pride in winning for the town of Marazion the first prize in the County Music Festival for the second year in succession. All three images inform us of the age range of the choir membership. The question of the age composition of choirs is raised in subsequent chapters.

Table 3 indicates regularly performed concert works in Marazion's repertoire. To these were added test pieces from the County Music Festivals 1910-1913. Elgar's *Feasting I Watch*, Sullivan's *The Beleaguered* and Brahms' *Come sons of the free* all featured prominently in the ensuing decades.¹⁰⁴ One further test

¹⁰¹ *The Cornishman*, 1909 records many Marazion Apollo male voice choir concerts from which the listed repertoire is taken.

¹⁰² *The Cornishman*, 2 July 1909.

¹⁰³ Marazion Apollo were placed 1st in 1910, joint first in 1911, 2nd in 1912 and 1st in 1913.

¹⁰⁴ *Cornish Telegraph*, 30 June 1910; *The Cornishman*, 17 November 1910; *West Briton*, 29 May 1911; *Cornish Telegraph*, 6 June 1912.

piece requires detailing because it pertains to the Open competition for male voice choirs at the national festival held at The Queen’s Hall, London, 20 November 1912. The decision to compete on the national stage was significant in

Title	Composer
<i>The Soldiers Chorus [Faust]</i>	Gounod
<i>Comrades Song of Hope</i>	Adam
<i>Strike the Lyre</i>	Cooke
<i>Comrades in Arms</i>	Adam
<i>Destruction of Gaza</i>	De Rille
<i>Absence</i>	Hatton
<i>Awake, Awake Aeolian Lyre</i>	Darby
<i>The Crusaders</i>	Protheroe
<i>Hail, smiling morn</i>	Spofforth

Table 3 Regular repertoire of Marazion Apollo Choir.

relation to the choir’s and Cornwall’s male choral identity. Financial¹⁰⁵ and choir assistance¹⁰⁶ came from the townspeople and those wider afield. Civic pride extended across the county as the enterprise became one of Cornish pride. By way of illustration the *Cornish Times*, the local newspaper in east Cornwall reported: ‘11 o’clock Marazion came onto the platform and were the only choir daring enough to tackle the wonderful test piece *Hebrew Captives* without accompaniment. Their performance was wonderfully good’.¹⁰⁷ November 1912

¹⁰⁵ *Cornish Telegraph*, 21 November; *The Cornishman*, 30 November 1912.

¹⁰⁶ *The Cornishman*, 7 September 1912.

¹⁰⁷ *Cornish Times*, 22 November 1912. *Cornish Telegraph*, 18 December 1913. *The Hebrew Captives* had entered into Marazion’s concert repertoire.

can be regarded as the date when a statement of intent was manifest. Mr Trudgeon had demonstrated to the people of Cornwall that Cornish choirs could compete on the national stage. Moreover, Cornish participation in a national competition in the capital city informed England and Wales that a male choral movement had been firmly established in Cornwall.

The competitive festival was fundamental to the development of the male choral movement in Cornwall and the pivotal role within this of the conductor was publicly acknowledged at the inaugural County festival by the adjudicator, Dr Allen. He was 'impressed most of all in the competition by the excellence of the conductors upon whom all the success of the choirs depended.'¹⁰⁸ Four years later, the secretary's report at Marazion Apollo choir's Annual General Meeting, whilst reflecting the year's achievements, gave insight into how the choir members thought of themselves, where they felt their standing was in the community and what their aspirations were for the near future:

The class of music used and the tone, a very high tone, of the concerts they had given recently had been greatly appreciated. The quality had risen fully 50 per cent, raising the standard of the choir to a level with other choirs in the county. In the county contest they did well, but they must not forget that other choirs had also improved. Therefore the competition they met was all the keener ... The object of their entering into competition was to educate the choir.¹⁰⁹

At the same meeting, Mr Trudgeon's address reflected his musical integrity and the manner in which he sought to shape not only the musical but also the cultural and social identity of the choir. He stated that the aggregate marks for each of

¹⁰⁸ *The Cornishman*, 4 June 1910.

¹⁰⁹ *Cornish Telegraph*, 4 June 1914.

their contest performances 1912-1914, demonstrated 'something like 20 points in improving their position'. He concluded that 'the one essential in a choir like theirs was the keeping of its good name and the retention of the old standing feeling of brotherhood. He hoped the choir would forever continue.' The formation and development of Marazion Apollo stands as an exemplar of early male voice choirs. It demonstrates the crucial aspect of musical directorship, the instituting of a set of practices, the creation of a choir identity derived from Methodist choralism and based on the tenets of Methodism and the need for a reciprocal relationship between choir and community.

6.

To complete the framework within which the early Cornish choir histories are set, the final focus of this chapter centres on Welsh choirs which toured the county in the opening decade of the twentieth century. With an already extant choral history and traditions in both secular and sacred choral music and renowned festival reputations, it would be a credible supposition that visits by Welsh choirs had an influential bearing on communities which had within their midst the nucleus of a male voice choir. Along with the industrial connection through mining, Wales like Cornwall was a stronghold of Nonconformity with a consequent choral tradition: 'The moral imperatives and social networks of Nonconformity and temperance were the seedbeds of the choral tradition.'¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ Williams, *Valleys of Song*, p.14. See also Andy Croll, *Civilizing the Urban: Popular Culture and Public Space in Merthyr, c.1870-1914* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000), Chapter IV.

Local newspapers confirm a Welsh choir touring in 1902, reporting the concert at Camborne as a 'second visit'.¹¹¹ There is no means of knowing whether the touring choir of 1903 comprised the same membership¹¹² but the 1903 itinerary included St Agnes where the Welsh choir's performance was 'greatly appreciated'.¹¹³ St Agnes male voice choir was in its infancy in 1903 and the Welsh choir's visit could have factored into revitalising their choir. The Bethseda Welsh Male Voice Choir undertook a Western tour in 1904¹¹⁴ and at the close of the decade the Rhondda Valley Prize Male Voice Choir toured west Cornwall.¹¹⁵ Marazion was part of Rhondda's itinerary in 1910. It is open to conjecture whether this visit coupled with Marazion Apollo's own festival successes initiated the choir's ambition to compete in London. Marazion was part of a Welsh choir's 1913 itinerary but whether it was the same Welsh choir cannot be determined although the same tenor soloist is named.¹¹⁶ The degree of impact that Welsh choirs had on Cornish male voice choir culture cannot be quantified. However, lack of direct evidence should not discount the possibility that the Welsh touring choirs added impetus to and interest in the emerging local male choral movement in Cornwall.

¹¹¹ *Western Weekly News*, 1 September 1902.

¹¹² *The Cornishman*, 29 August 1903.

¹¹³ *Western Weekly News*, 5 September 1903.

¹¹⁴ *Western Weekly News*, 16 April 1904. A concert at Bodmin is recorded as part of their Western tour.

¹¹⁵ *The Cornishman*, 20 August 1910.

¹¹⁶ *Cornish Telegraph*, 14 August 1913.

One newly formed choir of which it could be said was influenced was that of Mousehole Male Voice Choir. It hosted a Welsh choir concert in 1910, its own choir having only formed at the close of 1909.¹¹⁷ Mousehole choir grew out of the already established tradition of an ad hoc choral grouping gathering to entertain and give charitable assistance through the performance of seasonal music.¹¹⁸ The central tenets of Methodism were embraced by the original founding choir members, 'all chapel people' with the 'highest standards in both singing and behaviour expected'.¹¹⁹ In the manner of other choirs, Mousehole choir undertook a charitable role and by 1911 the choir was well established in the area and performing to large audiences: 'The choir have given several very successful concerts in the district since the year commenced, the proceeds of each being devoted to charitable objects.'¹²⁰

7.

The focus of this chapter has been to examine the different musical elements which were influential in shaping Cornish choirs and their identity. In *Shaping Identity Through Choral Activity*, a study of Nordic male voice choirs, Colin Durrant concluded: 'Singing preserves a consciousness of what it is to be Swedish or Finnish and shapes people's self-perceptions. Singing can actually

¹¹⁷ *Cornish Telegraph*, 4 November 1909.

¹¹⁸ <http://www.mouseholemalevoicechoir.co.uk> [accessed 14 December 2006].

¹¹⁹ Douglas Williams, *A Century of Song – The Story of Mousehole and its famed Male Voice Choir* (Penzance: Headland Printers Ltd., 2008), p.76.

¹²⁰ *Cornish Telegraph*, 30 March 1911.

define a cultural identity'.¹²¹ From a set of practices arises an identity and an invented tradition. Substitute 'Cornish' for the Nordic countries and the conclusion of Durrant's study is applicable to the male choral movement in Cornwall.

Here we have seen how the Cornish traditional male voice choir was founded on the nineteenth century male voice choir structure of TTBB established in England and Wales. Drawing from the traditional choral repertoire of the late Victorian-Edwardian period – the glee, partsong and chorus – a secular male choral movement evolved and became embedded in Cornish culture in the opening decades of the twentieth century. Familiarity with Curwen's sight-reading method, allied to a high degree of aural ability, assisted in transferring knowledge of musical techniques and devices from one music genre to another. Understanding these musicological influences fully required attention to analysis of selected works and assessment of the role of the county music festival. 'Methodist identity', as established in Chapter One, operated alongside musicological influences and Marazion Apollo, the foremost choir of this pre-war period, demonstrated that the notion of identity is fluid and multi-faceted; musicological factors coming to the fore to shape a parochial, community identity overlain with a regional identity.

In August 1914 World War I plunged the country into a period of huge uncertainty. Writing on the ramifications of a 'total war' upon British society, the

¹²¹ Colin Durrant, 'Shaping Identity Through Choral Activity: Singers' and Conductors' Perceptions', *Research Studies in Music Education*, No.24 (2005), p.96.

social historian John Stevenson said: 'As a conflict fought between major industrial powers able to call upon all the political, economic, social and cultural resources of modern nation states, the Great War had a much more profound influence upon society than the more limited conflicts of previous centuries.'¹²² A study by Stuart Dalley into the effects of the outbreak of war on Cornwall reflects a precipitousness and immediacy regarding societal and industrial changed outcomes: 'The war had an immediate and devastating effect on three of the county's main industries and caused much unemployment'.¹²³ As more call-up papers were issued, the male voice choral movement receded into the background for the duration of World War I.

But the foundations had been laid, and despite the onset of the Great War both Marazion¹²⁴ and Mousehole¹²⁵ managed to keep a male choir together into 1915. Other male choirs contributed to keeping the nascent choral movement alive; Mabe¹²⁶ and Germoe¹²⁷ gave concerts in 1915 to raise funds for war relief, and Trelawney Male Voice Choir, Redruth undertook concerts in 1916.¹²⁸ Par and

¹²² John Stevenson, *British Society 1914-1945* (London: Penguin, 1990), p.46.

¹²³ Stuart Dalley, 'The Response in Cornwall to the Outbreak of the First World War' in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 11* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2003), p.93. Adverse effects on the staple industries of china clay, fishing and mining were already in evidence that August, *West Briton*, 17 August 1914. Mousehole's pilchard fleet was decimated with call up to the Royal Navy Reserve, *The Cornishman*, 6 August 1914.

¹²⁴ *Western Weekly News*, 29 May 1915.

¹²⁵ *Western Weekly News*, 24 April 1915.

¹²⁶ *Western Weekly News*, 9 January, 25 December 1915.

¹²⁷ *Western Weekly News*, 6 February 1915.

¹²⁸ *Western Weekly News*, 15 and 22 April 1916.

District Brotherhood Choir,¹²⁹ Falmouth Orpheus,¹³⁰ St Just¹³¹ and Pendeen¹³² male choirs also contributed to society's needs. Several fledgling choirs of these pre-war days would not restart after the war, but many continued, centres of support and security, ensuring that these symbols of cultural identity remained. Although World War I was to cast a long shadow over Cornwall, as we shall see in the next chapter, Cornish male voice choirs had come to stay.

¹²⁹ *Western Weekly News*, 10 March 1917.

¹³⁰ *Western Weekly News*, 24 November 1917.

¹³¹ *Western Weekly News*, 24 November 1917.

¹³² *Western Weekly News*, 16 March 1918.

Chapter Three

The interwar years: a shifting social, economic and cultural framework

This chapter examines the interwar years, illustrating how it was a period of major economic and social change which brought both adversity and prosperity to Cornwall. It was also a period which saw a marked growth in choir numbers throughout the county. In outlining the economic and social backgrounds from both national and regional standpoints, it will be seen how Cornwall's over-reliance on its core metalliferous mining industries adversely affected the county's economic structure and employment opportunities. The social and material effects of a post-war economic world are shown to have reinforced the Cornish Methodist concept of fatalism. The experiences of social and economic deprivation were formative in the growth of choir numbers, whose main role was to raise funds to assist the unemployed and their families. The histories of the Tinner's choir and that from Holman Engineering Works focus attention on the adverse socio-economic situation and define the distinctive social, economic and cultural context of the 1920s.

Consideration is next given to new technologies which became part of the established routines and habits in everyday living, leisure and entertainment. By detailing elements of modernisation and innovation which altered the face of society, we will see how Cornwall mirrored the national prosperity of the 1930s through socio-cultural changes. The many facets of change are complemented by

those traditions which gave communities confidence through the steadfastness of continuity. As Michael Pickering asserts: 'A leading consideration in cultural analysis is the interplay between continuity and change, both actually, at the level of social relationships, and symbolically, through the representation of those relationships in works of art.'¹

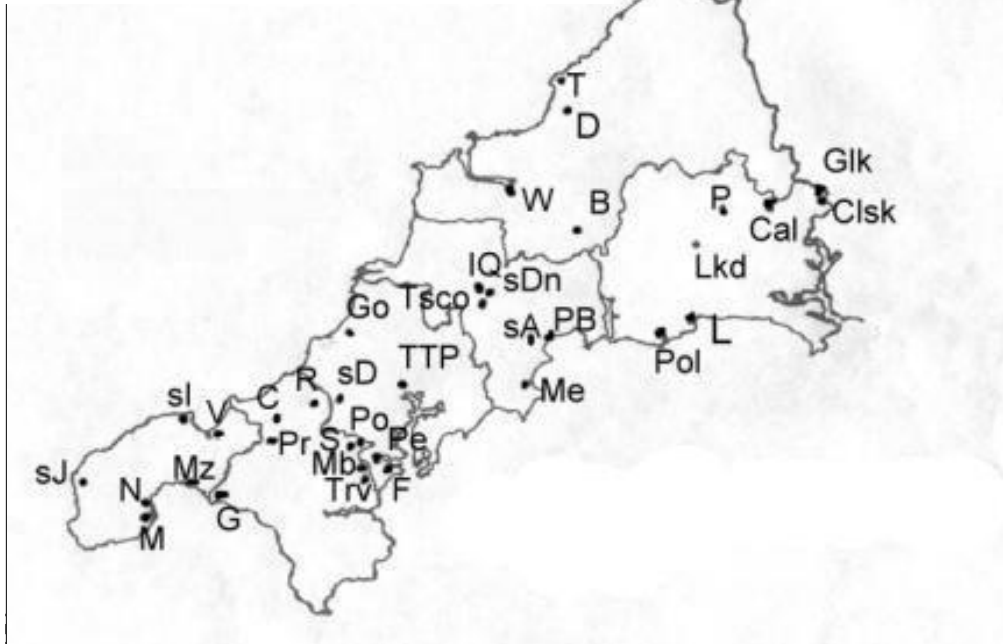
1.

From a fledgling male choral movement pre-World War I, the increase in choir numbers was rapid and countywide. In comparing a map of the leading choirs in the interwar years (Figure N) with a map illustrating the leading choirs pre-World War I (Figure Na),² the geographical spread can be seen to now encompass east, north and mid-Cornwall. Within each region, of the early newly formed choirs, the leading ones were: Polperro Fishermen's choir in the east, formed in 1923; to the north Wadebridge, formed 1920, and St Dennis in mid-Cornwall, formed in 1920, with a membership solely of clay workers. The greatest number of choirs was still to the west of Truro within the pre-2009 administrative districts of Penwith, Kerrier and Carrick. The Tinnens' choir, composed of unemployed miners from this western district, is not indicated on

¹ Michael Pickering, 'The Past as a Source of Aspiration: Popular Song and Social Change', in Michael Pickering and Tony Green (eds.), *Everyday Culture Popular Song and the Vernacular Milieu* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1987), p.39.

² Figure Na here is Figure G in Chapter One.

Figure N Male Voice Choirs 1919-1939



B Bodmin, **C** Camborne[Holman], **Cal** Callington, **Clsk** Calstock, **D** Delabole, **F** Falmouth, **G** Germoe, **Glk** Gunnislake, **Go** Goonhavern, **IQ** Indian Queens, **L** Looe, **Lkd** Liskeard, **M** Mousehole, **Mb** Mabe, **Me** Mevagissey, **Mz** Marazion, **N** Newlyn, **P** Pensilva, **Pe** Penryn, **Po** Ponsanooth, **Pol** Polperro, **Pr** Praze, **PB** Par Brotherhood, **R** Redruth[Trelawney], **S** Stithians, **T** Tintagel, **TPP** Truro People's Palace, **Trv** Treverva, **Tsco** Trevisco, **V** Ventonleague, **W** Wadebridge, **sA** St Austell, **sD** St Day, **sDn** St Dennis, **sl** St Ives, **sJ** St Just

KEY

- C Camborne
- C/K Cawsand and Kingsand
- Fae Falmouth Adult Evening
- G Germoe
- G/D Goldsithney District
- Glk Gunnislake
- H Helston
- L Looe
- Lg Ludgvan
- M Mousehole
- Mb Mabe
- Mz Marazion
- N Newlyn
- Pz Penzance YMCA
- R Roseudian
- TPP Truro People's Palace
- sA St Agnes
- sD St Day

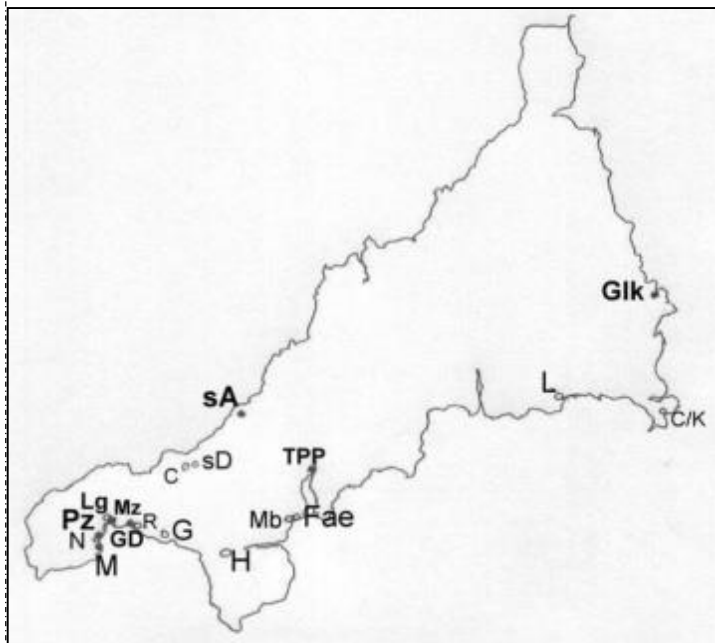


Figure Na Male Voice Choirs 1896-1914

the map but drew its membership mainly from the Redruth, Pool, Camborne and Carn Brea mining complex.³

The evidence in Chapter Two detailed how the formation and existence of choirs was dependent on the presence of an enduring core membership and/or retention of a conductor. Choir reputation could now be regarded as an additional reason. The choirs of Ludgvan, Roseudian and Goldsithney and District in the Mounts Bay area did not re-establish themselves. The consequences of war, coupled with the growing reputation and success of the neighbouring choirs from Marazion and Germoe, resulted in a changed membership. The geographic proximity of the successful Goonhavern choir to the lapsed St Agnes choir, and the nearness of Mousehole and Newlyn to Penzance, raises the same questions of causality. A comparison of Figures N and Na not only informs us of the establishment of new choirs but also choirs which continued post-1918 and those which did not reform after the First World War.

2.

In the immediate aftermath of the First World War an initial onrush of industrial prosperity masked the degree of the uncertainty which became evident within the economic and social structure of Britain. Marwick notes: 'The post-war boom reached its peak in the Spring of 1920 with a lunatic burst of speculation. The subsequent crash heralded the long cycle of depression which lasted until the Second World War.'⁴ Writing on the theme 'The Onset of Depression', Dudley

³ Ordnance Survey Map Landranger 203.

⁴ Arthur Marwick, *The Explosion of British Society, 1914-1970* (London: Macmillan, 1971), p.33.

Baines observes that some areas weathered the economic depression better than others. These he defined as 'inner Britain', that is Greater London and the East and West Midlands, as distinct from 'outer Britain', the industrial regions of the North and West: 'The most important simple characteristic of a depressed area was that it was dependent on a narrow range of industries.'⁵

Cornwall belonged to 'outer Britain'. Its mining industry buckled and the county's surrender to external economic pressures is recorded by Bernard Deacon in *Cornwall A Concise History*. Deacon states that following on from the lengthy lockout in 1918 at Levant mine: 'In the first three months of 1919 alone there were strikes by Penzance dockers, South Crofty miners, workers at Harveys coal and timber merchants at Camborne and Truro building workers. Strikes and demands for wage increases continued unabated through the year.'⁶ Moreover, he cites a Workers' Union spokesman speaking of a 'state of semi-starvation'.⁷ Reflecting the rise in membership of organised unions nationally post-1918, the number of union cardholders in Cornwall's male workforce rose to approximately fifteen per cent. In 1926, employees from both the railways and the docks joined forces with other industrial workers across the country in the General Strike. Deacon documents how Cornish strike numbers were augmented by manual workers from other industries: 'Builders, stonemasons and quarrymen in west Cornwall and carpenters at Camborne-Redruth joined them and the government thought it

⁵ Dudley Baines, 'The Onset of Depression' in Paul Johnson (ed.), *Twentieth Century Britain, Economic, Social and Cultural Change* (London: Longman, 1994), p.175.

⁶ Bernard Deacon, *Cornwall A Concise History* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), p.193.

⁷ Deacon, *Cornwall A Concise History*, p.193.

prudent to send HMS *Valhalla*, with 120 men, to Falmouth to “protect public and property”.⁸ This was the same strategy employed by the government when the riots of 1919 at Liverpool broke out.⁹ For Cornwall, deployment of a section of the Armed Forces was an action echoing the manner in which the government of the day handled the Newlyn fishing riots of 1896 and the clay pit strike of 1913. Such displays of English authoritarianism fermented anti-English, anti-establishment sentiment as well as furthering thoughts of Cornish independence.

In national politics, a pivotal moment was the formation of the first Labour Government in 1924, but perhaps even more important was the result of the 1929 election, because in its second term of office the Labour Government constituted the largest single party. The 1929 election also resulted in the Liberal Party ceasing to be a national political force.¹⁰ At variance with national trends, the inter-relationship between Nonconformity and Liberal politics in Cornwall continued to set it apart from the rest of the country throughout the interwar period. Philip Payton’s analysis of Cornish Liberal representation concluded:

They [the Liberals] had also perpetuated the concerns of the traditional Cornish Liberal Nonconformity such as the local option, Prayer Book Reform, and the disestablishment of the Church of England. In the Parliamentary career of Isaac Foot, this traditional Cornish Liberalism had a powerful voice ... instinctively drawing a connection between Cornishness, Liberalism and Methodism.¹¹

⁸ Deacon, *Cornwall A Concise History*, p.195.

⁹ Marwick, *Britain in Our Century* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1984), p.68.

¹⁰ Asa Briggs, *They Saw It Happen* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962), pp.397-401.

¹¹ Philip Payton, *Cornwall A History* (Fowey: Cornwall Editions Ltd., 2004), pp.249-50.

Despite a marked fall in the Liberal vote subsequently in the 1931 and '35 elections, in the absence of a strong Labour presence Cornish politics became based around the dual positions of Liberalism and Conservatism.¹²

In contrast to much of the national picture, the post-1918 Cornish political context in which male voice choirs were situated was one in which the resilience of Methodism and Liberalism provided another facet of a distinct Cornish identity. Although the Methodist Union in 1932 recorded a fall in membership relative to 1921 figures,¹³ there remained a significant number of circuits and chapels.¹⁴ In west Cornwall, for example, during the 1920s, within three miles of Penzance town centre, there were 'no fewer than twenty-three Methodist churches'.¹⁵ Therefore, despite an overall fall in numbers, with Methodism also holding fast in rural North Cornwall and the Bodmin area, Methodist resilience and its traditional links with Liberalism, noted by Garry Tregidga in 'Socialism and the Old Life: The Labour Party in Cornwall During the Inter-war Period', underscores the distinctiveness of Cornish Methodism.¹⁶

¹² Philip Payton, 'Labour Failure and Liberal Tenacity: Radical Politics and Cornish Political Culture, 1880-1939', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 2* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1994), 83-95. See also: Garry Tregidga, 'Turning of the Tide? A Case Study of the Liberal Party in Provincial Britain in the Late 1930s', *Journal of The Historical Association-History*, Vol.92, Issue 307 (2007), 347-66.

¹³ Michael Winter, 'The Twentieth Century Part I: Cornwall', in Nicholas Orme (ed.), *Unity and Variety: A History of the Church in Devon and Cornwall* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1991), p.161.

¹⁴ Shaw, Thomas, *A History of Cornish Methodism* (Truro: Oscar Blackford Ltd., 1967), p.133. There were 622 chapels in Cornwall in 1932: 338 Wesleyan, 287 United Methodist and 37 Primitive Methodist.

¹⁵ G. Pawley White, *A Half-century of Cornish Methodism 1925-75* (Redruth: CHMA and Institute of Cornish Studies, 1975), p.5.

¹⁶ Garry Tregidga, 'Socialism and the Old Life: The Labour Party in Cornwall During the Inter-war Period', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 7* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999), p.83.

Old industries went into decline as new industries and technologies sought to establish relative commercial stability. The new industrial base which was slowly emerging in Britain did not accommodate a wholesale re-shaping of the workforce.¹⁷ However, the many positive developments which materialised significantly changed the economic, social and cultural landscape of the country. Urban planning, housing, electricity, plumbing, access to private and commercial transport were some of the new aspects of everyday living. Added to this was a new consumerism which created the onset of the mass market. Upon closer analysis, taking account of motoring and car ownership, household goods and appliances and the leisure industry, a clear relationship between class, income and region becomes apparent. A study by Sue Bowden argues that: 'The skewed distribution of income also explains the contrast in regional patterns of ownership of consumer durables in the interwar years.'¹⁸ Also emerging was a dynamic shift in how the population began to fill its increased leisure time.¹⁹ The focus of daily life turned more to the home. Here radio broadcasting became the lead 'entertainer', supplemented by an expanding and musically influential record industry.²⁰

¹⁷ Julian Greaves, 'The First World War and its aftermath', in Francesca Carnevali and Julie-Marie Strange (eds.), *Twentieth Century Britain, Economic, Cultural and Social Change* (Harlow: Pearson, 2007), p.141.

¹⁸ Sue Bowden, 'The New Consumerism' in Paul Johnson (ed.), *Twentieth Century Britain, Economic, Social and Cultural Change* (London: Longman, 1994), p.256.

¹⁹ Julie-Marie Strange, 'Leisure' in Francesca Carnevali and Julie-Marie Strange (eds.), *Twentieth Century Britain, Economic, Cultural and Social Change* (Harlow: Pearson, 2007), pp.193-213.

²⁰ E. D. Mackerness, *A Social History of English Music* (London: Routledge and Keegan, 1966), pp.251-53.

In relation to a mass entertainment market it was the cinema that had the greatest influence and capacity for escapist fantasy.²¹ It was mooted by some commentators that cinema, American films in particular, had the power to foster social disaffection, the argument being that cinema created a world so contrasting with the everyday that it constituted a danger to social cohesion. Negative opinions on the influence of the cinema were expressed publicly in Cornwall. For a provincial county as Cornwall only slowly realising the potential of the benefits of modernisation, the cinema was not regarded as wholly positive. Under the arresting heading 'The Cinema and Unrest – A Danger to be Avoided', a newspaper article of 1920 argued that the juxtaposing of two lifestyles, that is a rich society in film with the poverty of reality, would have far-reaching effects on the lives and social structure of differing communities.²² For those suffering from the dominating negative effects of the economic downturn it could be said that cinema was seen simply as a form of escapism.

Within the newly drawn national landscape Cornwall remained on the periphery, identifiable by its own intractable socio-economic problems. In seeking to understand the meaning of the phrase 'poverty of reality', in what follows the focus is placed on the declining core industrial base and economic collapse particular to Cornwall.

²¹ Andrew Davies, 'Cinema and Broadcasting', in Paul Johnson (ed.), *Twentieth Century Britain, Economic, Social and Cultural Change* (London: Longman, 1994), pp.263-80.

²² *Cornish Guardian*, 18 June 1920. A national picture is chronicled in the social history documentary concerning the 1920s-1930s: BBC 4 Documentary, *A Tale of Two Britains*, 25 October 2009.

3.

Philip Payton has characterised the interwar period as the latter years of 'The Great Paralysis': 'The period that stretches from the closing decades of the nineteenth century until after the Second World War.'²³ Affecting both Cornish society and economy, Payton notes that 'lethargy and inertia' was set against a backdrop of international upheaval: 'And yet, despite this shared international experience, Cornwall's socio-economic condition remained highly distinctive.'²⁴ The everyday reality of poverty in Cornwall fed what John Rule calls a 'concept of fatalism'.²⁵ In Chapter One it was shown how this fatalistic outlook on life was bound-up with the distinctive cultural position of Methodism. For those returning from the Great War the intrinsic principles valued within Methodist teachings were re-found, exemplified through male bonding, camaraderie, self-help and independence of spirit, important human qualities which held communities together during the Depression years. The philosophical and spiritual hold that Methodism had exercised in the lives of their forebears had not diminished for the post-war generation.

A fatalistic outlook could become intensified if events and circumstances appeared to conspire against the individual.²⁶ This was the case in the fishing industry. Post-1918 the fishing fleets were soon able to increase the numbers of

²³ Payton, *Cornwall A History*, p.237.

²⁴ Payton, *Cornwall A History*, p.237.

²⁵ John Rule, *Cornish Cases: Essays in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Social History* (Southampton: Clio Publishing, 2006), pp.76-97.

²⁶ Deacon, *Cornwall A Concise History*, pp.196-9.

boats putting to sea as wartime restrictions were lifted.²⁷ Despite this positive move, post-war prices remained low and Cornish fishermen met with Government officials to express their grievances and seek economic assistance.²⁸ Evidence from local newspapers highlights the fluctuating features of the fishing industry. From there being plentiful fish one week²⁹ fishermen could be without income another.³⁰ Unexpected instances of prosperity³¹ could act as a counter-balance to the decline in seine fishing which affected the prosperity of many villages.³² The positive and the negative sometimes occurred simultaneously. An instance in 1933 at Looe illustrates this. So large was one catch of pilchards that small boats had to jettison a vast quantity of the haul. It is recorded that all boats lost nets but one lugger lost twelve of its sixteen as it sank.³³ Both the herring and mackerel seasons failed in 1935 and a depressed market brought further hardship to fishing communities with men having to sell their boats.³⁴ An incident from 1939 highlights how this industry comprised a daily existence with variable elements beyond any control that an individual might wish to exercise. Seven lifeboat men drowned off Cape Cornwall in January, all married men, all fishermen from St Ives. The men were interrelated and left twenty-one dependents.³⁵ When tragedy acted in concert with a general industrial collapse

²⁷ *West Briton*, 14 April 1919.

²⁸ *Western Weekly News*, 24 May 1919.

²⁹ *Western Weekly News*, 11 December 1920; *West Briton*, 11 August 1921.

³⁰ *Cornish Guardian*, 24 February 1922.

³¹ *Western Weekly News*, 7 July 1923.

³² *Cornish Guardian*, 11 January 1924.

³³ *Cornish Times*, 15 September 1933.

³⁴ *West Briton*, 21 March 1935; *Western Weekly News*, 15 June 1935.

³⁵ *Western Weekly News*, 28 January 1939.

then the effects upon society were compounded – points of stability disappeared and feelings of fatalism multiplied.

As far as land-based industries were concerned, in the immediate post-war period hundreds of redundancies materialised due to a lack of workplace and haulage transportation. Newlyn stone quarry stands as an example where lack of transport was the direct cause for the cessation of work.³⁶ Other quarries suffered from a fall in demand for granite, the cause of redundancies at Constantine in 1921.³⁷ But in effect it was the downturn in the economic markets of 1929-32 which resulted in most quarry closures. The stone quarries at Penlee worked for over half a century, dismissed over two hundred men in 1932.³⁸ Notwithstanding the economic pressures faced by the workforce, there continued to be the ever present risk of serious injury or fatality.³⁹ The china clay industry did not fare much better. There was an initial post-1918 optimism of pits re-opening⁴⁰ along with the gradual improvement in the industry's trade figures.⁴¹ Yet this upturn proved unsustainable through the economic depression of the 1920s and early '30s and the clay industry carried its own risk of fatal injury too.⁴²

³⁶ *Western Weekly News*, 11 October 1919.

³⁷ *Western Weekly News*, 19 November 1921.

³⁸ *Western Weekly News*, 6 February 1932.

³⁹ *Western Weekly News*, 11 December 1920, 6 July 1929, 6 February 1932; *Cornish Guardian*, 29 September 1927. Examples of local newspapers recording quarry fatalities in detail.

⁴⁰ *Cornish Guardian*, 31 January 1919.

⁴¹ *Western Weekly News*, 15 April 1922; *Cornish Guardian*, 23 January 1925.

⁴² *Cornish Guardian*, 11 February 1921; 21 March 1929.

It was those communities that relied on the tin mining industry, particularly west of Truro, which experienced the most extensive levels of social deprivation. In 1919 miners became part of the unemployment statistics of Marazion district as operations ceased at the Tregembo mine.⁴³ Mine closures and instances of men suddenly out of work were chronicled in the local newspapers with regularity and closures continued at an accelerated pace into the 1920s. On the north coast at St Agnes mining ceased at the Wheal Kitty mine.⁴⁴ At Tincroft and Carn Brea mining complex between two and three thousand men were dismissed.⁴⁵ Dolcoath, the deepest and largest mine until it was surpassed in 1917 by East Pool Mine, closed in 1920.⁴⁶ At Geevor and Levant mines in the St Just district dismissals affected seven hundred men.⁴⁷ In October 1930 internationally low tin prices brought about the closure of mines in the St Ives area at Lelant.⁴⁸ During the same month East Pool mine made two-thirds of its miners redundant.⁴⁹ Also in October, South Crofty mine stopped operations, adding a further four hundred men to the unemployed statistics of Camborne district.⁵⁰

John Rule's notion of a generalised concept of fatalism, which he links with Methodism,⁵¹ can be augmented by drawing from personal testimony.⁵² To

⁴³ *Western Weekly News*, 22 February 1919.

⁴⁴ *Western Weekly News*, 15 May 1920.

⁴⁵ *Western Weekly News*, 8 January 1921.

⁴⁶ *Mineral and locality database*, www.mindat.org/loc-975.html [accessed 18 May 2013].

⁴⁷ *Western Weekly News*, 8 January 1921.

⁴⁸ *Western Weekly News*, 11 October 1930.

⁴⁹ *Western Weekly News*, 18 October 1930.

⁵⁰ *Western Weekly News*, 25 October 1930. South Crofty had taken on 400 miners eight years earlier: *Western Weekly News*, 2 December 1922.

⁵¹ Rule, *Cornish Cases*, p.85.

⁵² Rule, *Cornish Cases*, pp.76-97.

illustrate the prevalence of a fatalistic outlook during the early post-war years, personal testimony from two eyewitness accounts of the Levant mining disaster in 1919 provides important psychological and emotional evidence.⁵³ In Chapter One reference was made to the manner in which confidence and a feeling of security came from the choral singing of hymns and sacred music at work. Singing was the way the men had of masking personal fears, of coping with the inherent dangers in mining. The first testimony bears witness to this:

One thing that always struck me is that when the engine broke away everybody was singing one of the most wonderful hymns, I can hear it almost now, *Lead Kindly Light!* I don't know if you have had the privilege of standing over a shaft and hearing the miners coming up singing, but it is out of this world.⁵⁴

Raymond Harry, fifteen years of age, reached the surface within a minute of the engine breaking: 'The disaster at Levant put paid to St Just as my generation knew it. It will never be the same because hundreds of young people in my generation left there went to America, South Africa, Australia, Canada. Really my generation is gone from there.'⁵⁵ Raymond Harry emigrated in 1921. Both accounts express a reluctant acceptance of tragedy inherent within their way of life.

⁵³ The Levant mining disaster occurred October 1919 with a loss of thirty-one lives. King George V sent a message of sympathy. As the tragic events unfolded they were reported in the regional press. *Western Morning News*, 21-23 October 1919.

⁵⁴ Douglas Williams, *West Cornwall in the Old Days* (Bodmin: Bossiney Books, 1985), p.81. Personal testimony by Mr Bill Lawry, the youngest miner rescued alive, interviewed by Douglas Williams.

⁵⁵ Williams, *West Cornwall*, p.81. Personal testimony by Mr Raymond Harry, interviewed by Douglas Williams.

The tragic effects on the community of St Just compounded the social deprivations which were the result the Great War and the economic depression. Moreover, the social and emotional deprivation and an abject desolation intensified through an exodus of a young generation.⁵⁶ With the local press reporting the lack of 'State Aid for Cornish Miners' in 1920,⁵⁷ the historical solution of emigration continued to be the answer for many men.⁵⁸ Some left on their own initiative; others after hearing of opportunities abroad through formal lectures.⁵⁹ Aside from adult emigration, poverty determined the exodus of many children. Some parents had to accept that they could not provide for all of their offspring. Children placed in the Group Migration Scheme travelled to Western Australia as child emigrants.⁶⁰ By the late 1920s unemployment and a low wage economy were together crippling Cornwall: 'Male unemployment rates over the period 1929-38 averaged almost 18 per cent, compared with an English rate just under 15 per cent. At its worst in 1932 one in four men was out of work; at its best, in 1937, unemployment still ran at 13 per cent.'⁶¹

⁵⁶ *St Just Decline of a Mining Town, 1930s*, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/nationonfilm/topics/tin-mining> [accessed 22 January 2012].

⁵⁷ *Western Weekly News*, 24 July 1920.

⁵⁸ *Western Weekly News*, 25 September 1920.

⁵⁹ *Cornish Guardian*, 16 February 1923.

⁶⁰ *Western Weekly News*, 9 February, 8 March 1924.

⁶¹ Deacon, *Cornwall A Concise History*, p.197. For a detailed analysis of national unemployment statistics see: W. R. Garside, *British Unemployment A study in public policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); M. E. F. Jones, 'The economic history of the regional problem in Britain, 1920-38', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 10, 4 (1984) 385-95. No clear picture reference Cornwall can be determined from the national statistics as the county's figures are calculated as part of the South West regional statistics. Payton provides unemployment figures for Cornwall, town specific, in *Cornwall A History*, p.238.

Cornwall's social cohesion was thus under great threat in the 1920s and '30s as its economic infrastructure fragmented. Yet one could say that there was a base level below which the people of Cornwall would not allow a fatalistic outlook to override all else; the unemployed men who stayed found a way to petition for government action to alleviate the profound poverty. Supported by the Member of Parliament for Penryn and Falmouth, Sir Edward Nicholl,⁶² the miners literally began to 'sing for their supper'. The male voice choir, the 'newly invented' tradition, was the vehicle through which the people of Cornwall chose to express themselves most forcibly at the time of greatest social need. The Tinnners' Choir, from the central mining area of west Cornwall, Redruth, Camborne, Pool and Carn Brea, became the conduit through which the voice of the Cornish people was heard.

4.

Beyond the overt symbolism of the Tinnners' Choir, its formation gave back to this group of men a framework for fellowship, emotional support and self-help. It also demonstrated how a tradition centred within a community when based on a particular social grouping could stand as a social, economic and cultural public statement. The following account illustrates how the modern world of the charabanc and the railways took the Tinnners' Choir to parts of the country hitherto inaccessible as the political case was made.

⁶² Sir Edward Nicholl was elected in 1918. He was born in Pool, between Redruth and Camborne, at the heart of the mining area, thus he knew well the area and its people.

The Tinnners' Choir was formed in 1921 under the baton of Mr J. C. Uren. During 1919-20 Mr Uren had been conductor of the Tincroft Mine male voice choir.⁶³ Tincroft, Carn Brea mine was closed in 1921 suggesting the probability that the original core group of singers which formed the Tinnners' Choir came from the Tincroft male voice choir⁶⁴ though there is no evidence to confirm this. During August-September 1921 the Tinnners' Choir toured Cornwall raising monies for the Unemployed Relief Fund. At the start of the Depression the fund had been set up by the Cornish Institute of Engineers who played 'a supportive role, making generous donations to the Mining Division Unemployment Fund'.⁶⁵ A sequence of concerts in west Cornwall comprised visits to Penzance, Marazion, Helston, St Ives and Hayle.⁶⁶ The *West Briton* reports that £80 (£3,476 calculated at 2013 rates)⁶⁷ was raised through these concerts, a considerable sum especially given the low wage economy and the high rate of unemployment generally.⁶⁸ In September a concert at Truro raised £45 and realised over £6 from a street collection.⁶⁹ Further concerts that month at Perranporth, Liskeard and Grampound added much needed money to the Unemployed Relief Fund.⁷⁰ There can be little doubt that at one level the series of concerts and short tours around

⁶³ *West Briton*, 23 January 1919, 5 January 1920; *Western Weekly News*, 13 March 1920.

⁶⁴ *Western Weekly News*, 8 January 1921. Between 2,000-3,000 men were affected.

⁶⁵ *Cornish Institute of Engineers* <http://www.emps.exeter.ac.uk> [accessed 12 October 2012]. The Cornish Institute of Engineers, Mining Division, made a contribution to the 'Relief Fund' to support those involved with the Levant Mining Disaster, 1919.

⁶⁶ *Western Weekly News*, 20 August 1921.

⁶⁷ *Historic inflation calculator*, www.thisismoney.co.uk [accessed 18 May 2013].

⁶⁸ *West Briton*, 25 August 1921.

⁶⁹ *West Briton*, 1 September 1921.

⁷⁰ *Western Weekly News*, 3, 10 and 24 September 1921.

the county were important factors in securing financial support. Cornwall showed a benevolence, a charity and a giving of some magnitude as it endeavoured to provide for its own.⁷¹ But at another level the publicity gained through the local and regional newspapers was equally significant and the role of the print media became important to subsequent campaigning.

The lead taken by editors of the regional press was crucial in bringing the plight of the miners' cause to a wider audience. A report in the *Cornish Guardian* of a concert given at Bodmin in 1921 is striking in its tone and language.

The men are quite literally 'singing beggars', the performance has a touch of pathos about the experience, but they are singers first and foremost ... A fine rendition, well-balanced and tuneful ... Before leaving they had supper and food parcels were provided for each man. In Bodmin they collected approximately £170 ... food and clothing to be dispatched to distressed areas.⁷²

Here the report overtly appeals to the readers' emotions in its description of the men, yet at the same time it manages to reflect and convey a sense of pride in the way the men carried themselves. The choir's identity was not one of beggars but of male choralists, proud Cornishmen. Language aimed at eliciting an emotive response to humanitarian need at the same time fostering a sense of Cornish nationalism was a reporting method used effectively as time progressed. The editorial of the *Cornish Guardian* continued to highlight the distressing conditions of the miners, a situation which '... continues to cause widespread sympathy and

⁷¹ Interview: *Stithians*, 27 February 2008. The charitable giving of the Cornish was emphasised by the interviewees: 'Cornwall is known in the country as the most generous county ... not the most well-off ... one of the poorest.' The charitable causes historically supported by all choirs was also proudly noted.

⁷² *Cornish Guardian*, 16 September 1921.

the press is doing all it can to highlight their cause'.⁷³ October and November 1921 saw the Tinnerns' Choir give concerts in Penryn and at Gerrans on the Roseland Peninsula. What is of interest here is how each community gave according to its ability. Penryn's concert and street collection raised over £101, whereas the small population of Gerrans realised £4 but supplemented its contribution with parcels of food and clothing.⁷⁴ Further monies and donations of food and clothing came through concerts at Lelant, Sithney, Queens and Mawgan.⁷⁵

As miners struggled to raise their profile, a turning-point came with a concert at the Palace Theatre, Plymouth in December 1921. This was part of the choir's four weeks concert tour of the West to raise £1,500 for the Unemployed Distress Fund. The Roman Catholic Bishop of Plymouth made an appeal on behalf of the Cornish miners and their families, his words reaching a wider audience through the report in the *West Briton*: '... distress in Camborne was a unique thing ... a specialised distress, with the whole district in absolute and vital danger'. The reportage concluded with what might be regarded as the then generally held popular opinion that the 'Government has turned a deaf ear to all appeals, and the present situation is a direct result of the war. The owners would keep the mines running if the Government gave them the dole money, but they would sooner keep miners on the dole and idle.'⁷⁶ The language suggests an undercurrent of anti-establishment sentiment.

⁷³ *Cornish Guardian*, 9 December 1921.

⁷⁴ *West Briton*, 20 and 27 October 1921.

⁷⁵ *Western Weekly News*, 15 and 29 October, 5 and 19 November 1921.

⁷⁶ *West Briton*, 8 December 1921.

To gain political leverage it was important that vocal support had to come from the local Member of Parliament. In January 1922 with the backing of their MP and the London Cornish Association, the Tinnners' Choir journeyed to London. The region's newspapers gave prominence to the positive aspects of the visit with articles recording how the Cornish cause was being recognised nationally and internationally. Under the heading 'Miners Choir in London' the *West Briton* reported:

Westminster Congregational Church – there are 3,000 tin miners out of work representing 16,000 dependents ... Response to the appeal has been wonderful, monies from Adelaide, Vancouver, Transvaal, from the poor, middle class and millionaires. The Police had subscribed £2000. The choir concluded the week's visit to London with a concert at Littleton Park, Shepperton. The choir's selection included *Comrades Song, To Arms* and *One and All*.⁷⁷

From this extract and a sympathetic article in the national newspaper *The Times* we gain insight into the level of support from the worldwide Cornish diaspora.⁷⁸ In a similar vein the *Western Weekly News* reported on the positive impact of the choir's concert at the Queen's Hall, London. Under the heading, 'Helping Tin Miners', the following appeared in the *Western Weekly News*:

⁷⁷ *West Briton*, 19 January 1922. Additional evidence regarding international support given to the Unemployed Relief Fund had already been reported in the *Cornish Times* 23 December 1921: '1000 guineas from the Transvaal Cornish Association ... handed to the Lieutenant of the County which will enable 6,420 children to be catered for, and in the Camborne and Redruth area the number is 2,410. A meal to the value of 2s 6d per head, headteachers and staff to arrange in their own schools.'

⁷⁸ *The Times*, 2 February 1922, p.7. Under the heading 'Injustice To Cornish Mining', a short article notes the strength of opinion voiced by the international diaspora advocating social and economic Government assistance. <http://www.infotrac.galegroup.com/itw/infomark/910/764> [accessed 12 July 2012].

Successful Effort at London Association – Queens Hall Concert, London on Saturday. The programme was overloaded with artistes anxious to give their services for a good cause. Opening the programme was the band of the Coldstream Guards ... [*London Press* under the heading 'In Working Dress'] The Redruth Tin Miners' Choir made an early appearance and had a very warm welcome. The choir consists of 31 vocalists in addition to the conductor Mr J. C. Uren and the accompanist Mr C. C. Oxland. They are all garbed in their quaint working dress and curious trench-like tin hats surmounted by miners' candles. The voices are well modulated and balanced, and the choir was an immediate success. *Comrades in arms* was greeted with irresistible demand for more and the men responded with *The Newquay Fishermen's Song*.⁷⁹

Although a patronising undertone can be construed in the phrasing and language of this report, the support of the Cornish press had forced the unemployment issue onto the wider socio-political agenda. Upon its return to Cornwall the Tinnners' choir continued with fund-raising concert performances throughout the year.⁸⁰ Necessitated by the low level of financial resources in the Unemployment Relief Fund, in July 1922 the Choir embarked on yet another tour. Without financial support from this source miners and their families would have had to resort to Poor Law relief.⁸¹ For the next two years 1923⁸²-24⁸³ concerts continued but by mid-1925⁸⁴ the Tinnners' Choir no longer existed. At the close of

⁷⁹ *Western Weekly News*, 4 February 1922.

⁸⁰ Several accounts of concerts are to be found in: *Western Weekly News*, 25 February, 29 April 1922; *West Briton*, 14 September 1922; *Cornish Guardian*, 15 September 1922.

⁸¹ *Western Weekly News*, 1 July 1922. It is recorded that 3,000 miners were out of work with 12,000 dependents.

⁸² Some examples of concerts by the Tinnners' Choir in the local press: *West Briton*, 29 March, 10 May, 29 November 1923; *Western Weekly News*, 17 February, 15 September 1923; *Cornish Guardian*, 23 February 1923.

⁸³ Some examples of concerts by the Tinnners' Choir in the local press: *West Briton*, 31 January, 25 September, 13 November 1924; *Western Weekly News*, 9 February, 15 November 1924.

⁸⁴ Recorded concerts for the early part of the year, *West Briton*, 12 February, 19 March 1925.

the year Mr J. C. Uren had become the conductor of the newly formed male voice choir at St Day.⁸⁵

The history of the Tinnners' choir lends credence to the popular view that miners originated the Cornish male voice choirs. Since the 1880s the national press had been reporting on performances of Welsh miners' male choirs at Welsh festivals and their festival appearances at the London National Eisteddfod.⁸⁶ National newspaper coverage conflated the notion of mining and male voice choirs, thus national publicity generated during the short existence of the Tinnners' choir created a 'mining' badge of identity, giving rise to the public perception that Cornish male voice choirs 'come from mining'. However, within the county boundary, in Cornish associations and the Cornish diaspora, it was known that the formation of the Tinnners' choir was for the sole purpose of fund-raising for the unemployed and destitute in west Cornwall; the mouthpiece for bringing the socio-economic plight of the miners to those in national government.

However, unemployment in Cornwall was not confined to the mining communities in the west of the county. Across the region there was a need for financial and welfare support. Many male voice choirs assisted in charitable causes. To raise funds for the official Relief Fund previous choirs re-formed and new choirs came into being some of an ad hoc nature.⁸⁷ Local newspapers

⁸⁵ *Western Weekly News*, 19 December 1925.

⁸⁶ Gareth Williams, *Valleys of Song: Music and Society in Wales 1840-1914* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), p.123.

⁸⁷ Examples of male voice choirs specifically giving concerts to raise funds in 1921: Stithians: *Western Weekly News*, 12 March, *West Briton*, 8 December; Marazion: *Western Weekly News*, 24 September; Trelawney: *Western Weekly News*, 3 December.

reported the activities of many but innumerable others went unrecorded. There was one other choir however as prominent as the Tinnars and that was linked to the engineering plant of Holman in Camborne.

The Holman Male Voice Choir of 1921 consisted of men who were 'all unemployed with the exception of two'.⁸⁸ Under the leadership of Mr W. E. Eustace, the choir set out specifically to raise funds for the unemployed. In September 1921 the choir travelled to Wadebridge in north Cornwall. Although the primary purpose of the concert was in aid of the tin miners it was hoped that Holman's choir would generate interest in Wadebridge's own male voice choir:

... two concerts in the Town Hall, Wadebridge on Wednesday which was packed ... Singing was supplied by Holman's Foundry Male Voice Choir which was of a very high order and will go far to stimulate interest in the local male voice choir, who will shortly be giving a concert in aid of the same deserving cause. £139 4s 6d was collected at Wadebridge in one day, a creditable amount for a small community.⁸⁹

The newspaper account of the concert indicates the strengthening tradition of the male choral movement. On the one hand it informs us that Holman choir was meeting the immediate socio-economic needs of the community. On the other hand, it was providing a wider male choral experience for the inhabitants of Wadebridge with an expectation of increased interest in the town's recently formed male voice choir.

A detailed account in the *Cornish Times* of Holman's choir weekend visit to Polperro, a small fishing village in the east of the county, reveals how

⁸⁸ *West Briton*, 28 July 1921.

⁸⁹ *Cornish Guardian*, 30 September 1921. £139 4s 6d equates as £5,237 in 2013.

communities across Cornwall united in supporting the miners' cause.⁹⁰ Within the week the village of Ladock near Truro hosted the choir and although the funds collected were small, large quantities of provisions and clothing were donated.⁹¹ In April 1922 Holman's choir undertook its third tour specifically to fundraise for the unemployed. The schedule placed the opening concert at Newport, Wales and the last at Plymouth, Devon, in the first week of May.⁹² Upon their return the choir continued with fund-raising concerts across the county.⁹³ Although Holman's choir was formed concurrent to the Tinnens' choir, rooted in the same social and economic conditions, a new conductor in 1924 prompted a widening of the choir's charitable causes. The choir's intent was to continue as officially representative of Holman Engineering Works. Their changed identity was no doubt prompted by other choirs forming primarily to assist in fund-raising for the unemployed.

5.

The intense deprivation which enveloped the county in the early 1920s softened later in the interwar period. Nationally, the mid-late 1930s especially witnessed improvements and advancements in public amenities, transport, housing and leisure activities, bringing benefits for the individual as well as the population as a whole. There grew a new-found confidence in the future and in a similar manner to the rest of the country Cornwall slowly absorbed these changes.

⁹⁰ *Cornish Times*, 7 October 1921.

⁹¹ *West Briton*, 13 October 1921.

⁹² *Western Weekly News*, 15 April 1922.

⁹³ Examples of reported concerts specifically to raise funds in 1922: *Cornish Guardian*, 8 September; *West Briton*, 8 June, 5 and 19 October; *Cornish Times*, 8 September.

Better provision and upgrading of public amenities and housing had the effect of raising living standards for those in work. From 1920 electricity began to reach across Cornwall from Newlyn to Bodmin, from Liskeard to Looe,⁹⁴ yet there appears to have been little uniformity in the implementation of supply. Despite geographic proximity Callington had to wait two years after Liskeard for its street lighting.⁹⁵ Local outbreaks of diphtheria and typhoid reflected a poor level of public health,⁹⁶ and the piping of clean water into homes became a priority.⁹⁷ New housing developments sprung up, but were not always seen in a positive light.⁹⁸ Some of those who recognised the need for modernisation still regarded the preservation of the Cornish countryside as paramount. During the negotiations of land purchase for building at Pentire Head, Padstow, the *West Briton* launched an 'Appeal to save Cornish Headland'.⁹⁹ From a different perspective the identifying features of the Cornish landscape were at the forefront of A. K. Hamilton Jenkin's mind when he gave a talk to St Ives Chamber of Commerce in 1936. A recognised Cornish historian and writer, Hamilton Jenkin made a plea to retain that which was distinctly Cornish. The natural beauty of the county seen in its geography and topography, in its picturesque

⁹⁴ Newlyn: *The Cornishman*, 3 March 1920; Bodmin: *Cornish Guardian*, 17 September 1920; Liskeard: *Western Weekly News*, 7 June 1924; Looe: *Western Weekly News*, 25 October 1924.

⁹⁵ *Western Weekly News*, 25 September 1926.

⁹⁶ Diphtheria: *Western Weekly News*, 23 August 1919; 28 January 1928; Typhoid: *Cornish Times*, 11 October 1929; *Western Weekly News*, 28 December 1929.

⁹⁷ *West Briton*, 14 April 1927; 5 July 1928.

⁹⁸ *West Briton*, 4 October 1934.

⁹⁹ *West Briton*, 26 September 1935.

towns and villages and 'old time customs', were all regarded by Hamilton Jenkin as 'essential to the well-being of the County'.¹⁰⁰

Two prime elements that contributed to lifestyle changes were new forms of transport and home entertainment. Improved means of transportation and the upgrading of the county's infrastructure brought immediate benefits to Cornwall's tourist industry.¹⁰¹ The charabanc and the arrival of the private automobile opened up extended travel opportunities for day-trippers, widening the choice of holiday destinations. Tourism, well established as the 'new' Cornish industry by 1914, expanded further as a result of Cornwall's railway system being upgraded in part from single track to double.¹⁰² One consequence of re-structured national work practices was the creation of a new tradition, the annual family holiday. Motoring, car ownership, an improved railway system all helped bring hitherto distant destinations within reach. It only took a few years for Cornwall's tourist industry to expand from a reliance on day-trippers¹⁰³ to becoming the holiday place of choice for thousands from southern England and reportedly as far afield as the east coast.¹⁰⁴

The most popular and cheapest mode of transport for male voice choirs was the charabanc. Choirs benefited by being able to undertake short and/or extended tours encompassing a wider geographic area, thereby bringing them

¹⁰⁰ *Western Weekly News*, 25 January 1936.

¹⁰¹ *Cornish Guardian*, 15 December 1922.

¹⁰² *Western Weekly News*, 17 February 1923.

¹⁰³ *Western Weekly News*, 9 August 1919.

¹⁰⁴ *West Briton*, 6 August 1925.

into contact with a broader audience base. No doubt audiences during the summer months included tourists, out of county visitors for whom it might have been their first concert experience of the Cornish male choral tradition. By way of illustration we turn to the choir from Marazion. A day trip recorded in September 1926 took the choir east to Truro via Helston and Falmouth before turning west, journeying home via Redruth and Camborne. During the day's outing the choir gave four concerts.¹⁰⁵ In 1928 the choir undertook a successful tour along the south Devon coast with concert performances at Torquay Pavilion, Paignton and Devonport.¹⁰⁶ The following year a Marazion choir trip included a journey along the north Cornish coast to Padstow aboard 'two motor coaches', visiting various places en route.¹⁰⁷

Worthy of mention is the first trip to London by Mousehole male voice choir because it identifies a confidence and ambition in the rapidly establishing Cornish male voice choir tradition. A London tour which involved concerts, festival competition and sight-seeing necessitated an 8pm coach departure from Mousehole journeying to 'the capital via Exeter, Yeovil and Salisbury, arriving at 7am'.¹⁰⁸ Within the county an improved infrastructure enabled choirs to travel west to east and from coast to coast to fulfil concert engagements¹⁰⁹ and

¹⁰⁵ *West Briton*, 9 September 1926.

¹⁰⁶ *Marazion Apollo Choir Centenary 1904-2004* booklet.

¹⁰⁷ *Western Weekly News*, 17 August 1929.

¹⁰⁸ Douglas Williams (ed.), *A Century of Song The Story of Mousehole and its famed Male Voice Choir* (Penzance: Headlands Printers Ltd., 2008), p.12.

¹⁰⁹ *Western Weekly News*, 29 November 1930.

participate in the increasing number of competitive music festivals.¹¹⁰ The impact on all choirs of increased competition and concert opportunities was a raising of choral performance standards, issues discussed in detail in Chapters Four and Five. As more villages and towns experienced concerts by the visits of established choirs like Marazion and Mousehole, more communities formed male voice choirs.

The second element which influenced life-style changes was the home entertainment business. In Cornwall accessibility to new media technologies soon meant that an increasing number of homes had a radio and record player. 'Wireless for the Masses' was the leader for an article in an issue of the *West Briton* in 1927. The report expressed the hopes that crystal sets, (that is early radio receivers), would be readily available in the Redruth area by 1929.¹¹¹ The wireless offered male voice choirs opportunity to broadcast concert performances and from the mid-1930s choir concerts became a regular feature of West Region BBC programming. A detailed consideration of the impact of radio broadcasts is undertaken in Chapter Five.

Interest in the radio often extended beyond it being merely a vehicle of in-house family entertainment. Both the radio and the record player became the focal point of engagement for small social gatherings. A Wireless Club existed in St Austell in 1924, the local press noting a lecture being given on the

¹¹⁰ *West Briton*, 10 November 1932.

¹¹¹ *West Briton*, 10 March 1927.

'Development of Wireless Telegraphy and Telephony'.¹¹² Gramophone ownership introduced a Cornish audience to a wider repertoire of music through the purchase of records, sales generated through advertisements of new record releases – jazz, foxtrot, one-step and waltz music.¹¹³ Local newspapers printed lists of the monthly releases by leading record labels. For instance, America's Columbia record label's February 1925 new releases list comprised repertoire from the classical, dance and light entertainment genres.¹¹⁴ As knowledge of different music genres expanded, the acquisition of a gramophone and record collection fostered gramophone contests for those with an interest in the sound reproduction of the differing models and the mechanisation of each.¹¹⁵ Gramophone concerts on the other hand were not competitive but social and community events comprising like-minded people interested in music of different genres willing to listen, discuss and share their interests.¹¹⁶

Introduction to different music styles meant new music was assimilated into the Cornish entertainment scene. The fresh modern styles of music created a burgeoning popular dance scene.¹¹⁷ Jazz bands were formed, often providing opportunities for live music.¹¹⁸ Although the changed music culture which

¹¹² *Cornish Guardian*, 5 December 1924.

¹¹³ *Western Weekly News*, 13 December 1919.

¹¹⁴ *Cornish Guardian*, 27 February and 26 June 1925. See Russell Miller and Roger Boar, *The Incredible Music Machine* (London: Quartet Books, 1982), pp.135-45.

¹¹⁵ *Cornish Guardian*, 28 June 1928; *Cornish Times*, 1 February 1929; *Western Weekly News*, 23 November 1929; *Cornish Guardian*, 23 January 1930; *Western Weekly News*, 3 May, 15 November 1930; *West Briton*, 9 August, 12 November 1931.

¹¹⁶ *Cornish Guardian*, 24 May 1928; *West Briton* 11 May, 12 September 1931, 19 October 1933; *Western Weekly News*, 13 February 1932.

¹¹⁷ *Cornish Guardian*, 19 January 1923; *West Briton*, 24 February 1927.

¹¹⁸ *Western Weekly News*, 2 October 1926, 12 May 1928.

materialised during the 1920s and '30s drew heavily from American popular culture there was no apparent stifling of traditional music activities. Through American influences, the popular music culture in Cornwall as elsewhere in the country, became richer and more diverse, a pattern which would be repeated during and post-World War II.¹¹⁹

6.

The widening of social and cultural horizons between the wars did not diminish the strength of long practised traditions; these continued to act as distinctive markers in the identity of the Cornish and Cornwall. There is evidence of a revivalistic approach to some long established social and cultural traditions. Much of the impetus in this direction came from the establishment in 1920 of the Old Cornwall Society at St Ives. In its manifesto 'What We Stand For' it espoused a coming together 'to strengthen one another in our devotion to all those ancient things that make the spirit of Cornwall – its traditions, its old words and ways, and what remains to it of its Celtic language and nationality.'¹²⁰ By the end of the decade the Society had re-instituted the tradition of unifying the county through the lighting of a chain of midsummer beacons.¹²¹ The Old Cornwall Society awakened interest in ensuring the survival of the Celtic language. Songs and hymns in Cornish appeared in the local press¹²² and in 1936 considerable debate

¹¹⁹ See Chapter Six.

¹²⁰ Old Cornwall Society <http://www.oldcornwall.org> [accessed December 2009].

¹²¹ *West Briton*, 2 May and 27 June 1929, 23 June 1932; *Cornish Times*, 7 June 1929, 20 June 1930; *Western Weekly News*, 27 June 1931.

¹²² *Western Weekly News*, 15 June 1929, 15 March and 29 May 1930.

arose as a result of the first ever Sunday church service at Truro Cathedral spoken entirely in the Cornish tongue.¹²³

Music was one of those areas of cultural life that fitted well into the fresh concern with 'tradition'. The renowned Cornish music academic Dr Ralph Dunstan not only lectured on the subject of Cornish music in 1925¹²⁴ but also researched, collated and had published a book of Cornish songs.¹²⁵ The revivalism of music cultures became the concern of those in positions of authority. This can be seen in the actions of Cornwall's Board of Education. In 1925 it implemented courses for music teachers in an effort to revive and embrace the art of folk dance and folk song in both secondary and elementary schools.¹²⁶ In other parts of the country it was possible to speak of a community singing movement in the 1920s.¹²⁷ Where some regions were concerned there was an evident affiliation of community singing and sport.¹²⁸ However, it was a different kind of community singing in Cornwall embedding a different kind of regional culture. As this thesis illustrates throughout, the cultural significance of Methodism and its choral music distinguished community singing in Cornwall by its being habitually centred around church and chapel,¹²⁹ embedded in hymn

¹²³ *Western Weekly News*, 22 August 1936.

¹²⁴ *Cornish Times*, 23 January 1925.

¹²⁵ Ralph Dunstan, *The Cornish Songbook* (London: Reid Bros Ltd., 1929). In the second half of the 1900s Cornish music was grateful to the work of Kenneth Pelmeare. His two collections *Carols of Cornwall* (Redruth: Dyllansow Truran, 1982) and *Songs of Cornwall* (Redruth: Dyllansow Truran, 1985) add to the canon on Cornish music.

¹²⁶ *Western Weekly News*, 22 August 1925.

¹²⁷ Mackerness, *A Social History of English Music*, pp.259-260.

¹²⁸ Dave Russell, 'Abiding memories: the community singing movement and English social life in the 1920s', *Popular Music* Vol.27:1 (2008), 117-33.

¹²⁹ See Chapter Seven.

singing and carolares. Bell-ringing contests which covered a wide geographical area within the county were enthusiastically renewed in the 1920s.¹³⁰ So too were brass bands. Upon resumption post-1918 old rivalries were quickly renewed as noted bands contested at Bugle.¹³¹ Music-making had become once more a focus for towns and villages as they sought to reassert the identities and statuses of their communities. Thus it was in this diverse post-1918 music cultural scene that male voice choirs were situated.

One of the strengths of music traditions within popular culture is an expectation that differing local communities would be involved. The good name of the town or village was important for it fostered a civic pride, a community identity, thus being part of a tradition had individual and collective meaning. Where the tradition of male voice choirs was concerned it had the added social benefit of a male support network espousing camaraderie. Male voice choirs did not flourish in the interwar period merely because they could now travel, broadcast and perform to wider audiences. Choir numbers increased because the strength of Cornwall's new or invented tradition was its ability to absorb important aspects of socio-cultural change and to evolve accordingly. Male voice choirs found the balance between the secular and sacred repertoire, between community and regional identity.

¹³⁰ St Breward: *Western Weekly News*, 28 February 1920, 2 May 1925; Saltash: *Cornish Times*, 21 May 1920; St Wenn: *Western Weekly News*, 8 July 1922; St Columb: *Cornish Guardian*, 11 August 1927; Pelynt: *Cornish Guardian*, 12 April 1928; Lanlivery: *Cornish Guardian*, 11 October 1928; Camborne: *Western Weekly News*, 1 June 1935.

¹³¹ *Cornish Guardian*, 12 September 1919, 31 August 1923.

7.

This chapter has identified Cornwall as remaining a peripheral region of England distinct from other regions in how its historical core industrial base and geographic remoteness were instrumental in determining its economic prospects. It is this remoteness which is recognised as a formative factor in Cornwall's differentness, incorporated in to its culture and character. Choirs reflected the continuing strength of Cornish Methodism, so despite profound social and economic change, Wesleyan Methodism provided the solid foundation which enabled choirs to grow. As customs and rituals were welcomed afresh out of the shadows of war, new technologies moved Cornish society forward. Male voice choirs prospered as the outlook for the county and its population became more positive in the 1930s. The socio-cultural positioning of the traditional male voice choir ensured cultural continuity at the same time as accommodating change; and choir identities reflected these changes.

Writing on the subject of the 'cultural construction of place', Philip Crang discusses the imaginings of a regional, cultural identity: 'The noun "culture", grounded in other nouns like "region", "place" or "area", masks verbs and adjectives of "cultural processes"'. Moreover, a chain of associations is set up from culture, to place, to atemporality, and so to tradition.'¹³² Crang argues that for some individuals the imagination interprets culture literally as the land, whilst

¹³² Philip Crang, 'Regional Imaginations: an afterword', in Ella Westland (ed.), *The Cultural Construction of Place* (Penzance: Patten Press, 1997), p.156.

for others it is the rituals and customs or expression and illustration through the arts. In understanding the socio-economic and cultural contexts in which choirs were situated we begin to understand the close tripartite relationship of music, place and culture. This exploration is furthered by a change of perspective in Chapter Four, in which we again turn to musicological factors associated with the development of male voice choirs between the wars.

Chapter Four

Musicological factors in the expansion of the male choral movement

The evolution of male choral activity which the interwar years witnessed was not the product of social and economic factors alone. In seeking a fuller explanation for the expansion of choir numbers and choir membership we turn to an examination of the musicological context. Research into the history of the British male voice choir by Christopher Wiltshire drew him to the conclusion that 'the 1920s and 30s emerge as the golden era of British male voice choral work in musical terms, in audience popularity and in general public awareness'.¹ Wiltshire's male choral demographic has a distinct regional structure and focus. The industrial North, the Midlands and London, with secondary references pertaining to southern England and Wales, all feature in his assessment. This chapter will argue that Cornwall was unique among counties in how, during the period in question, it bore witness to an explosion in the numbers of male voice choirs with a consequent post-war re-vitalisation of cultural life and cultural identity.

Set forth in the chapter will be the prime musical influences which coalesced and characterised these years, demonstrating that male voice choir identity adjusted from a hitherto primarily Methodist one to a more multi-

¹ Christopher Wiltshire, 'The British Male Voice Choir: A History and Contemporary Perspective' (unpublished Ph.D thesis, Goldsmith College, University of London, 1993), p.125.

faceted, multi-layered choral identity. The musicological approach employed is threefold: an investigation into the growth of festivals, the significance of repertoire and the role of the conductor. It will be shown that these three elements formed the connective threads which shaped the male choral movement into a cohesive, cultural unit.

1.

The competitive music festival was not only an influential musical enterprise but it had wider significance; it engendered a sense of belonging and civic pride. In cultural and social terms a festival marked out and identified certain communities as being distinct from others. The nucleus of the performances was constructed around talent within the area, for intrinsic to amateur festivals was the music-making from the local and/or regional communities. With the male voice choral movement evolving from Methodism and Methodist choralism, beyond a choir's music identity was a wider socio-cultural identity. Writing on the significance of local music-making, the social historian Ruth Finnegan observes that variety in local music activities produces group interaction, 'providing one means by which individuals and sections within society are bound together'.²

As the number of music festivals grew in the 1920s the significance and influence of these regional and local music events came to be seen as twofold. Firstly, participation and the results achieved impacted on a choir's identity and

² Ruth Finnegan, *The Hidden Musicians* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2007), p.330.

its reputation. The regional press came to reflect a choir's standing within its community. Secondly, the set works for competition classes assisted in the establishment and expansion of a core repertoire. The County Music Festival adhered to the philosophy that 'competition was to stimulate the love of music in the greatest number of people'.³ As an annual event it served as the premier testing ground for male voice choirs from across the county. Truro was the festival's most frequent venue during the 1920s but at the subscribers' 1929 Annual General Meeting (AGM) concerns were expressed at the lack of support shown by the people of Truro.⁴ The decision of the committee was to employ a comprehensive rotation around the county in the 1930s. One can see from Table 4 that a countywide venue policy was implemented. By taking the premier festival on the road music-making in a competitive arena was brought to a wider public.

TOWN	YEAR
Truro	1919-20, 1926-29, 1931, 1935
Camborne	1921, 1925
Falmouth	1922, 1933, 1938
Liskeard	1923
Penzance	1924, 1930, 1936
St Austell	1932, 1937
Bodmin	1934, 1939

Table 4 County Music Festival Venues
1919-1939

³ *Cornish Times*, 5 November 1911.

⁴ *West Briton*, 26 September 1929.

Lady Mary Trefusis played a vital role where the County Music Festival was concerned, beyond that of being one of its founder members (see Chapter Two). In the immediate post-war years, as Christopher Wiltshire has noted, festivals tended 'to operate independently and thus standards and even methods of assessment varied which caused problems as adjudicators moved from festival to festival'.⁵ As an officer in the national body of the Association of Musical Competition Festivals (here again she was a founder member), Lady Trefusis was instrumental in establishing co-operation and standardisation between small rural and large urban, metropolitan festivals. Adjudicators who officiated around the festival circuit were noted musicians within their own field of expertise. Their attitude and the approach taken set the tone for a festival (see Chapter Two). Lady Trefusis brought her knowledge, experience and organisational skills to the County Festival.

There were two classes for male voice choirs determined by choir numbers. The prestigious awards were the Bolitho Shield, awarded to the numerically small choirs, and the Buller Howell Shield, awarded to the winners in the Advanced Class, the larger choirs. With national standardised adjudication in practice, either or both shields could be withheld if no choir achieved the First Class standard. This occurred in 1921 regarding the Bolitho Shield. A report of the adjudicator's critique in the *West Briton* noted that one choir omitted to do the compulsory sight-singing whilst another performed a version of a set piece not

⁵ Wiltshire, 'The British Male Voice Choir', pp.167-8.

listed in the syllabus. In commenting on the poor sight-reading of the choirs in the Advanced Class the adjudicator remarked, 'How choirs can give magnificent performances on learnt things and yet timid, groping efforts on sight-singing I do not understand.'⁶

Sight-singing was compulsory, the legacy of the implementation of Curwen's sol-fa system and the teaching of singing in Elementary schools and Methodist Sunday Schools.⁷ It was part of the educational philosophy upon which the county festival was based and applied across all choral classes even to pupils of primary school age.⁸ Even though the sight-singing component was an accepted constituent part of the competitive festival it was gradually accepted that sight-singing need not form part of the aggregate mark. In their memoir *Musical Adventures in Cornwall*, the Radford sisters give insight into the approach and attitude of both the organisers and participants to the sight-singing category for choral classes. They recall the pressure experienced by choir members regarding the sight-singing test:

In the early days of the Festival there was a compulsory sight-singing test for choirs, a fine gesture on the part of the Committee which did perhaps serve to set a higher standard of musicianship and to call attention to its importance, but which was withdrawn later as inducing too great a state of nervous tension to make for a happy Festival.⁹

⁶ *West Briton*, 2 June 1921.

⁷ See Chapter Two for a detailed explanation and implementation of the sol-fa system, pp.70-3

⁸ *Western Weekly News*, 28 May 1921.

⁹ Maisie and Evelyn Radford, *Musical Adventures in Cornwall* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1965), p.61. To place the Radford sisters in context regarding the County Music Festival and their contribution to the life of the festival, see the tribute by William Pearson, B. Mus., Hon FLCM, of Manchester and former County Music Adviser in *Seventy Years of Music Making 1910-1980*, p.7.

According to the celebratory publication *Festival's Golden Jubilee*, sight-singing 'was dropped after the second world war, as it was felt that it involved too much strain on the Competitors and was more suited to an examination than to the spirit of the Festival'.¹⁰ There is no evidence to say at which specific committee meeting the decision was taken to alter the rules. Despite having its detractors, compulsory sight-singing was a major influence on overall choral standards and impacted on the future development of the male choral movement and school choral music. The latter was borne out by two boys' school choirs, Trewirgie and Roskear, who each became a noted concert choral ensemble in their own right in west Cornwall.¹¹ Arguably, therein lay the foundation for the future membership of adult male voice choirs.

Positive adjudications and remarks were not unknown: 'Sight-singing was on the whole remarkably good' and 'Sight-reading triumph – great strides have been made in the education and advancement of music in the County through its influence'.¹² Whichever position was taken regarding the value of sight-singing the accumulated evidence drew acknowledgement from both sides that sight-reading was an influential factor in raising festival choral standards across the generations. The position taken by adjudicators, professional musicians such as Lady Trefusis and those concerned with music education at all ages and social

¹⁰ See *Golden Jubilee Booklet, Cornwall Music Competition Festival, Sight-singing section*, p.5.

¹¹ Evidence of concerts by Trewirgie and Roskear Boys' Choirs during the interwar period can be retrieved from issues of the *Western Morning News* and the *West Briton* newspapers. The Conclusion details specific dates.

¹² *West Briton*, 2 May 1923 and 23 May 1935.

levels, ensured that the retention of a sight-singing category in a competitive festival choral class remained a 'live' debate during this period. In the numerous other Cornish music festivals which were established at this time a sight-singing category was not included, perhaps a response to the 'live' debate and/or an empathetic response to the views of participating choirs.

2.

The remoteness of Cornwall from other mainland music centres was viewed by one adjudicator of the County Music Festival in a positive manner, because it '... generates far more music-making in the county than in other places'.¹³ An increasing number of festivals became established during the 1920s adding substance to the adjudicator's view. Although the prestige gained from success at the County Festival was regarded as the acme of a choir's year, three other music festivals built reputations which were to be lasting. The festivals in question arose in different regions of the county as evidenced in Tables 5-9.

Indian Queens Music Festival became the leading festival in the clay country. The festival was sometimes reported as 'Queens Festival' depending on the local newspaper; verification that they were one and the same can be found in editions of the *Cornish Guardian* and *Western Weekly News* 1925. Although the former refers to 'Queens Festival' and the latter 'Indian Queens' the evidence is provided by the reporting of the same festival results.¹⁴ Furthermore, this

¹³ *Seventy Years of Music Making 1910-1980*, p.6. Contribution by Richard Hickox.

¹⁴ *Cornish Guardian*, 31 July 1925; *Western Weekly News*, 1 August 1925.

alternative naming also applied to the male voice choir of Indian Queens.¹⁵ Table 5 records evidence of festival dates during the 1920s and '30s. It is not until 1930 that the festival's calendar date becomes established as the month of October.

YEAR	DATE	RECORDED
1922	8 December	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
1924	1 August	
1925	1 August	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
1926	24 December	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
1927	1 December	
1930	23 October	
1931	24 October	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
1932	22 October	
1933	19 October	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
1934	25 October	
1935	31 October	<i>West Briton</i>
1936	29 October	
1937	28 October	
1938	27 October	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>

Table 5 Indian Queens Music Festival

YEAR	DATE	RECORDED
1926	5 November	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
1927	3 November	<i>West Briton</i>
1928	8 November	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
1929	7 November	
1930	6 November	
1932	10 November	<i>West Briton</i>
1933	9 November	
1935	14 November	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
1936	12 November	<i>West Briton</i>
1937	11 November	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
1938	10 November	
1939	13 April *	

* Reportage indicates inaugural festival 1924

Table 6 Wadebridge Music Festival

YEAR	DATE	RECORDED
1929	3 August	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
1932	20 August	
1934	4 August	
1936	23 July	<i>West Briton</i>
1937	28 July	
1938	30 July	<i>Western Weekly News</i>

Table 7 Camborne Music Festival

In the north of the county the town of Wadebridge established the main festival in the region. Table 6 finds the *Cornish Guardian* placing the first date as

¹⁵ *Cornish Guardian*, 24 June 1927, refers to the 'Indian Queens' choir; *Western Weekly News*, 28 June 1930 refers to the choir as 'Queens'.

1926, though later records indicate that the inaugural festival was two years previous. In 1939 consideration was given to enlarging the Festival Syllabus and changing the date, at the same time announcing that there would be no festival that year: 'Next Festival February 14th-15th 1940. Ever since its inception fifteen years ago, the Festival in the first week of November adds to the grouping of festivals in Cornwall in the autumn, therefore the date has been moved.'¹⁶

The leading festival in the mining region west of Truro was that held at Camborne (Table 7). Camborne has a direct correlation with the Wesleyan choral tradition. From its first staging in the 1920s through to the late 1930s, it was known as the Camborne Festival but in 1937 it became the Camborne Wesley Eisteddfod.¹⁷ This change in name and structure of the festival could afford an explanation regarding the sub-heading in the *West Briton* that year: 'Premier Festival – Camborne's Lead to the County.'¹⁸ Considerable column inches were given over to a comprehensive tabulation of all results as well as the listing of test pieces for each class.

During the 1920s the festival movement in the county gathered pace. Tables 8 and 9 record evidence for the most notable two, Mabe and Stenalees. The 1926 entry for Mabe records the festival as their third, thus placing the inaugural festival in 1923. The history of Stenalees appears to be more extended than the evidence initially indicates. Noting a record festival entry in 1923, the *Cornish*

¹⁶ *Cornish Guardian*, 13 April 1939.

¹⁷ *Seventy Years of Music Making 1910-1980*, p.47.

¹⁸ *West Briton*, 28 July 1937.

Guardian viewed this as evidence of the 'great hold music has on the people of Stenalees by the enormous interest in the 14th annual singing festival held in the Wesley Schoolroom'.¹⁹ This evidence leads to placing the inaugural festival in 1909 continuing through to 1923 with an unbroken calendar, though there is no verification to this being so.

YEAR	DATE	RECORDED
1923	June	<i>Buccas' Song!</i> ²⁰
1926	3 July	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
1927	25 June	
1930	28 June	
1931	11 July	
1932	June	<i>Century of Song</i> ²¹

Table 8 Mabe Music Festival

1923	23 November	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
1924	14 November	
1925	27 November	
1926	3 December	
1928	19 January	
1929	28 November	

Table 9 Stenalees Music Festival

Tabulated in Table 10 are various other music festivals which became annual events in a community's calendar. Festivals at St Dennis, Roche, Bugle and Fraddon, along with Stenalees, are geographically in the clay country. All have within their programme a class for male voice choirs. Based on newspaper

¹⁹ *Cornish Guardian*, 23 November 1923.

²⁰ Ivan Balls, *Buccas' Song! a short history of Newlyn Male Voice Choir*, p.8.

²¹ Douglas Williams, *A Century of Song The Story of Mousehole and its famed Male Voice Choir* (Penzance: Headlands Printers Ltd., 2008), p.52.

YEAR	PLACE	DATE	RECORDED
1922	Gweek	26 August	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
1925	Roche	13 February	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
1928	Roche	12 January	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
	Bugle	9 February	
	Gweek	6 October	
	Bethel	20 December	
1930	Roche	22 February	<i>Western Morning News</i>
	St Dennis	11 December	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
1931	Perranwell	26 September	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
1932	St Dennis	15 December	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
1933	St Dennis	14 December	
1934	Fraddon	27 October	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
	St Dennis	29 November	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
1936	Delabole	12 March	<i>West Briton</i>
	Perranwell	15 October	
	St Dennis	10 December	
1937	Delabole	11 March	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
		17 June*	
	St Dennis	9 December	
1938	Launceston	7 May	<i>Western Weekly News</i>

*Announcement of no festival in 1938 due to lack of support.

Table 10 Music Festivals – Various

reports the entries in Table 10 indicate evidence of earlier beginnings, in this instance Fraddon²² and Perranwell.²³ We know from the evidence presented in Chapter Two that choirs formed for specific events; festival participation would have been one such occasion. Festivals listed in Tables 8, 9 and 10 could be categorised as minor festivals in the festival calendar but importantly the same standard of performance and choice of test piece as exhibited in the major festivals was expected by all concerned. *The Hunting Song* was Mabe's test piece

²² *Western Weekly News*, 27 October 1934, records this as the 15th annual festival.

²³ *West Briton*, 15 October 1936, records this as the 6th annual festival.

in 1927²⁴ and St Dennis set *Feasting I Watch* in 1932²⁵ and *The Minstrel Boy* for 1933.²⁶ All three pieces had been previously set as test pieces for the County Music Festival. The adjudicators' comments too were no less pertinent. Choirs were admonished for 'faulty pronunciation and expression' at Stenalees festival in 1924²⁷ and praised as 'inspiring and charming' at Mabe 1926.²⁸

The final festival to be discussed here is Delabole in the north of the county. This slate quarry community affords another illustration of a festival having an earlier beginning than verifiable through a specific piece of evidence. In 1937 the *Cornish Guardian* recorded the Delabole Festival as having 'started six years ago'.²⁹ It is the entry in the *Cornish Guardian* two years later which gives recognition to a factor not yet considered in the staging of a festival, that of financial cost to a community. The financial outlay incurred staging an event had to have an acceptable level as its minimum return. The cessation of Delabole's festival stemmed directly from a financial shortfall in 1937 due to lack of support. Having incurred considerable financial loss Delabole was forced to abandon its festival for 1938.³⁰

Debates ensued periodically about the impact of festivals, many claiming that the competitive element raised performance standards. Sydney J. Bowden,

²⁴ *Western Weekly News*, 25 June 1927.

²⁵ *Cornish Guardian*, 15 December 1932.

²⁶ *Cornish Guardian*, 14 December 1933.

²⁷ *Cornish Guardian*, 14 November 1924.

²⁸ *Western Weekly News*, 3 July 1926.

²⁹ *Cornish Guardian*, 7 March 1935.

³⁰ *Cornish Guardian*, 17 June 1937.

conductor of Stithians Male Voice and Ladies Choirs, was a proponent of this view. Speaking of the County Music Festival in 1980 he said: 'What a really wonderful contribution it has made to the musical life of the County and what a magnificent part it has played in raising the standard to the high level that exists to-day.'³¹ The contrary opinion stemmed from the perspective that competition deflected the focus from the true objective of festivals – the performing of music for its own sake. Despite these contrary views, by the close of the 1930s the festival had become a recognised music and cultural dynamic within Cornish society, fully absorbed into the wider Cornish culture:

there is an increased interest in music in the Duchy and this should be having an effect of advancing the popularity of the premier festival this year at Bodmin. At Stithians on Saturday there were so many entries that it was midnight before it ended. There is another competition at Perranwell this week and the Threeburrows event has grown to such an extent that it has been necessary to extend it to two days to Easter Monday and Tuesday.³²

The later arrival of the festival movement in Cornwall meant that unlike other regions of England and Wales, no overt festival rivalry built up. With the County Music festival established in May/June, subsequent festivals were accommodated within the music calendar evolving into an accepted pattern, representative of the different regions of the county. Cornwall's geographic isolation also meant that historical rivalries between large towns and provincial festivals beyond the River Tamar were of no concern to Cornish choirs; a situation which changed however post-1945. Any inter-choir rivalries within the

³¹ *Seventy Years of Music Making 1910-1980*, p.10.

³² *Western Weekly News*, 1 April 1939.

Cornish festival circuit were on the whole 'intensely' friendly and without political interference.

Of course not all festival activities received newspaper coverage, but the accumulated evidence of a high number of festivals with a male voice quartet and/or a male choir category testified to the rapid expansion of the male choral movement. The fact that in every respect the same performance standards and choral interpretations were expected in the minor festivals, allied to national musicians presenting as adjudicators, showed that culturally amateur music-making was significant. It mattered to the communities staging the festival, it mattered to the participants and audiences alike. There can be little doubt that the music festival was an integral and prominent factor in the developing male choral movement, a socially inclusive event embedded within the cultural life of many communities. Across the county festival participation raised male choral standards as choirs performed selected works from the established male choral canon and its repertoire, the second key musicological factor in the development of the male choral movement to which we now focus our attention.

3.

The following analysis will reflect how festival test pieces, technically demanding and complex, became part of an expanding traditional Cornish repertoire. Consideration and choice of repertoire is important whatever period of history is under examination. In the following investigation Cornish repertoire will be placed within the wider British male choral context. In the interwar years

expansion in the printed sheet music sector of the music industry meant greater access to and availability of, music from the traditional male choral repertoire.

Table 11 lists the canon of male choral music which was common to both Welsh and Cornish choirs in the interwar years. It indicates that Cornish choirs

TITLE	COMPOSER
<i>Babylon's Wave</i>	Gounod
<i>Comrades in Arms</i> * ^	Adolphe Adam
<i>Destruction of Gaza</i>	Laurent de Rille
<i>Feasting I Watch</i> +	Elgar
<i>Lullaby</i>	Brahms
<i>Martyrs of the Arena</i> * ^ +	Laurent de Rille
<i>Soldiers Chorus (Faust)</i> ^	Gounod
<i>The Beleaguered</i> +	Sullivan
<i>The Long Day Closes</i> * +	Sullivan
<i>The Tyrol</i>	Ambroise Thomas
<i>The Wanderer</i> +	Elgar
<i>Comrades Song of Hope</i> ^	Adolphe Adam
<i>Strike the Lyre</i>	T. Cooke
* Pieces in Bebside male voice choir catalogue in 1890s	
^ Most popular large scale works – martial-like, dynamic.	
+ Test Pieces which had transferred into choir repertoire	

Table 11 Repertoire common to Welsh [pre-WWI] and Cornish [1919-1939] Male Voice Choirs

embraced works from the pre-1914 established choral repertoire of Welsh choirs.³³ However, in his study of the British male voice choir, Christopher Wiltshire catalogues the seven titles first purchased by the English

³³ Gareth Williams, *Valleys of Song: Music and Society in Wales 1840-1914* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003). Examples of Welsh male voice choral repertoire are mentioned throughout.

choir, Bebside, in 1921, indicating that these seven pieces formed 'the core repertoire of all male choirs from the 1890s onwards'.³⁴ Three of the seven are to be found in Table 11 (indicated by *). A further two, *In Absence* and *Soldier's Farewell*, are listed in Table 12. From his examination of Welsh festival repertoire of the same period, Gareth Williams notes that 'English choirs had long sung a repertoire unrecognizable to a contemporary Welsh chorister'.³⁵ Upon close analysis we will find that works listed in Table 11 fall into two categories. Firstly, there are the large scale chorus style numbers, militaristic, full-bodied and dynamic, which the Welsh 'choirs and audiences savoured to the full'³⁶ (indicated by ^). And secondly, Table 11 lists those lighter-weight, unaccompanied glees and partsongs, the staple repertoire of English choirs: *The Wanderer* and *Feasting I Watch* by Elgar, *Cooke's Strike the Lyre* and Brahms's *Lullaby*. The one partsong familiar to the Welsh choirs was *The Long Day Closes* by Sullivan. Williams points out that it was not until the last years of the opening decade in the twentieth-century that Welsh choirs chorally accepted unaccompanied partsongs as part of their regular repertoire.³⁷ From this analysis we see that Table 11 is in fact a hybrid of Welsh and English pre-1914 preferred repertoire, and therefore Cornish choirs were actually drawing from the wider established choral repertoire.

In addition to Table 11, Table 12 indicates a broader selection of pieces which were regularly performed by Cornish choirs for which there is evidence.

³⁴ Wiltshire, 'The British Male Voice Choir', p.127.

³⁵ Williams, *Valleys of Song*, p.188.

³⁶ Williams, *Valleys of Song*, p.183.

³⁷ Williams, *Valleys of Song*, p.189.

By the close of the 1930s a distinct core repertoire had emerged which was a factor in the shaping of a Cornish male voice choral identity, further differentiating Cornish choirs from the Welsh. The large scale choruses, with their strong tenor lines, so liked by the Welsh choirs, were superseded by partsongs and music with

TITLE	COMPOSER
<i>Down in yon summer vale</i> +	Wood
<i>The Farmer's Boy</i> +	Vaughan Williams
<i>How sweet the answer echo makes</i>	Shaw
<i>Hymn of the Homeland</i>	Sullivan
<i>In Absence</i> *	Buck
<i>The Lincolnshire Poacher</i> +	Bantock
<i>My Love is like a red, red rose</i> +	Bantock
<i>Softly Falls the Shades of Evening</i>	Shaw
<i>Drakes Drum</i> +	Stanford
<i>The Tide Rises and the Tide Falls</i> +	Carse
<i>The long Day Closes</i> +	Sullivan
<i>An Evening's Pastorale</i>	Shaw
<i>The Song of the Jolly Roger</i>	Chudleigh Candish
<i>The Newquay Fisherman's Song</i> +	Mackenzie
<i>The Soldier's Farewell</i> * ^	Kinkel
* Pieces in Bebside male voice choir catalogue in 1890s	
^ Most popular large scale works – martial-like, dynamic.	
+ Test Pieces which had transferred into choir repertoire	

Table 12 Regularly performed repertoire [1919-1939]
by Cornish Male Voice Choirs

a regional connotation. A few choruses did retain a concert place, but the lyrical more pastoral partsongs from the English male choir tradition came to be the basis of the Cornish repertoire.

4.

In order to gain an understanding of the rapid development of choral standards in Cornwall, we turn to an analysis of selected pieces from the canon of works. A measure of a choir's standing is its ability to perform the core repertoire within that musical genre. The same choral techniques which facilitated the learning of Merritt's sacred music and earliest choir secular works are in evidence in the now extended repertoire. Compositional features discussed in Chapter Two such as worded repetition, repeated musical phrases, passages built around ascending and descending scale figures, imitative entries, textural and dynamic contrasts are music techniques detailed in the following extracts. For the Cornish choralist it was a question of transferring knowledge and skill from one genre to another. The musical analysis that follows places emphasis on a composer's intentions where choral technique and interpretation are concerned because that is what the adjudicators sought from the choirs at festivals, whilst conductors sought it at each performance.

We commence with an examination of a glee as that song structure formed the bedrock of a choir's repertoire before it was supplanted by the partsong. Cooke's glee *Strike the Lyre*,³⁸ composed in 1831, was one of the most successful glees of its period later listed in the catalogue the *Glee Hive*, a 1893 collection of English Glees.³⁹ More demanding than Danby's *Awake, Awake Aeolian Lyre*

³⁸ T. Cooke, *Strike the Lyre* (London: Bayley and Ferguson Choral Album, No.863).

³⁹ Wiltshire, 'The British Male Voice Choir', pp.52, 68. *Strike the Lyre* retained its place within the traditional male voice choir repertoire for several more decades. It is included in a concert programme by Mousehole Male Voice Choir, 1 August 1971.

analysed in Chapter Two, it is structured in five contrasting sections in relation to mood, tempo and texture. The vocal composition opens with an immediate dynamic contrast *f* to *p* (Figure Oa) quickly followed by a *crescendo* to the *f* close of the opening short section. Worded repetition extends the second section, which like the first is predominantly homophonic in texture, closing with *pp* fermata. A sudden contrast, *f Risoluto* to the words 'I love the sweep' opens the third section, within four bars falling to *pp*. Word painting on the repeated two bar quaver figure of the lower basses on 'swellings' (Figure Ob) leads to a change in tonality after an ascending scale passage. The section closes *diminuendo ritardando* with an ornamental, unison quaver figure in the top tenors and over a held tonic pedal. The texture and change in mood are softened further with a pause on the last rest of the bar, creating a complete break in preparation for the 3/4 Andante section.

Allegro moderato e spiritoso ♩ = 108

Tenor 1
Strike, strike the lyre, let mu - sic tell, The blessings spring shall scatter round,

Tenor 2
Strike, strike the lyre, let mu - sic tell, The blessings spring shall scatter round,

Baritone
Strike, strike the lyre, let mu - sic tell, The blessings spring shall scatter round,

Bass
Strike, strike the lyre, let mu - sic tell, The blessings spring shall scatter round,

a. b1-4

25 **Risoluto**

I love the sweep Of harp and trumpet's har mo ny, Like swell - ings

I love the sweep Of harp and trumpet's har mo ny, Like swell - ings

I love the sweep Of harp and trumpet's har mo ny, Like swell - ings

I love the proud and so lemn sweep Of harp and trumpet's har mo ny, Like swell -

31

of the mid - night deep, like

of the mid - night deep, like

of the mid - night deep, like

ings, swell - ings

b. b25⁴-33

Figures Oa-Ob *Strike The Lyre*

The final 3/4 *Allegro* section is the longest. It opens in unison for six bars, followed by an immediate repeat of a two-bar phrase and a triple repeat of a one bar figure. The dynamic contrast of *ff* - *pp* sets the scene for the gradual build-up to the final bars. A four bar descending quaver scale passage in parallel thirds on the word 'flies' (Figure Oc) is followed by a contrast in texture with a four-bar chordal passage, all eight bars being repeated. As the composition draws to a close musical tension is created by the basses as they pick up a rolling, running quaver figure whilst the upper parts declaim a sequential static 'discord flies' (Figure Od). The final cadential four bars are reached with a *f allargando* and pause culminating on a held final chord at *f* dynamic (Figure Oe). Centred on known techniques, such vocal writing would have drawn in the singers to experience choral music-making at a performance level which enabled them to demonstrate vocal prowess and musicianship.

68

flies, dis - cord flies at

flies, flies, dis - cord flies at

flies, dis - cord flies at

flies, and dis - cord flies at

c. b68-73

91

turn, and dis - cord flies, dis - cord flies,

turn, and dis - cord flies, dis - cord flies

turns, and dis - cord flies, dis - cord flies

turn, flies, dis - cord flies,

d. b91-95

102

f allargando her re - turn, dis - cord flies at her re - turn.

f allargando her re - turn, dis - cord flies at her re - turn.

f allargando her re - turn, dis - cord flies at her re - turn.

f allargando her re - turn, dis - cord flies at her

e. b102-108

Figures Oc-Od-Oe *Strike The Lyre*

Partsongs asked more musical questions of choirs than those posed by glees. If we look at the partsong *An Evening's Pastorale* by Shaw⁴⁰ we see the need for an increased degree of attention to detail. The subtleties of dynamics, the colour and texture of the harmonic writing demands from choirs a level of performance sensitive and nuanced in interpretation. Composed in 1914, Shaw's short choral piece has retained its position within the core repertoire to this day.⁴¹ Pastoral in subject, a capella in performance, its harmonic simplicity and lyricism evoke an innocence akin to the St Day Carol discussed in Chapter Two. Homophonic in its composition with a basic repeat in its two verse structure, it opens *Adagio* at a dynamic of *pp*. The first tenors commence in their upper register where they remain for most of the piece and reach a top B^b as early as b.3 (Figure Pa). Section B pulls back the tempo further (Figure Pb) with the opening underpinned by a tonic hummed pedal point from the second basses on bottom F. This eight bar section closes on a *fermata* before Tempo I is re-introduced at the repetition of the opening. At the close of this section subtlety of texture is achieved by breaking from the hitherto unbroken homophonic nature of the piece to a thinning of vocal lines, from one to two then back to one, at the words 'all is still', before the four voices come to rest on 'still' at the cadential point. This

⁴⁰ Wilfrid Shaw, *An Evening's Pastorale* (London: J. Curwen and Sons, Curwen Edition 50549).

⁴¹ Innumerable concert references can be found in newspapers during this period regarding *An Evening's Pastorale*. A review of concert programmes shows that it remains a regular concert item: Mased Cornish Choirs in Concert, 25 September 1983, Chacewater and District, 8 November 1987, Polperro Fishermen's Choir, 6 November 1993, Newlyn Male Voice Choir, 6 December 2009. It was part of St Stythians and Treverva choirs programme concert folders for 2008. It has also been recorded as a track on CDs by Nankersey Male Voice Choir, Cornish Male Voice Choirs In Concert and A Festival of Cornish Male Voice Choirs.

Adagio ♩ = 72

Slow-ly steal-ing o'er the plain, Eve-ning's sha-dows

Slow-ly steal-ing o'er the plain, Eve-ning's sha-dows

Slow-ly steal-ing o'er the plain, Eve-ning's sha-dows

Slow-ly steal-ing o'er the plain, Eve-ning's sha-dows

a. b1-3

14 **Meno mosso**

Lit-tle song-sters cease their trill, Na-ture

Lit-tle song-sters cease their trill, Na-ture

Hm (with closed lips) Na-ture

Hm (with closed lips) Na-ture

b. b14-18

32 **Poco rall.** *pp* **rall.** *p* **Meno mosso**

Na-turesleeps and all is still. Soft-ly rip-pling sounds the

Na-turesleeps and all is still. Soft-ly rip-pling sounds the

Na-turesleeps and all is still, is still. Hm (with closed lips)

Na-turesleeps and all is still. Hm (with closed lips)

c. b32-39

Figures Pa-Pb-Pc *An Evening's Pastorale*

one textural change at *pp* dynamic (Figure Pc) seeks out not only a high level of musical understanding and choral ability from the singers but also skilled musicianship from the conductor. The *fermata* on this occasion is on the rest thus enabling the conductor to interpret the silence before musically shaping the *Meno mosso* section on its returns (Figure Pc). This unaccompanied partsong, arguably a secular hymn, has resonated with choirs and audiences across the generations.⁴²

The common music compositional devices discussed in relation to the glee and partsong are in evidence in the large scale choruses. However, to analyse in detail the structure of a selected example would not yield material knowledge beyond that already revealed by the above song form analysis. Tables 11 and 12 include the most popular choruses (indicated by ^) within the male choral movement. The atmospheric, full-bodied choruses asked of choirs differences in interpretation and performance than that sought by partsongs. Adolphe Adam's *Comrades in Arms* was an established concert item by the late 1860s.⁴³ With frequent changes in tempi and dynamics, martial in its rhythmic concept with the full harmonic texture broken by antiphonal passages, it is no surprise that Cornish choirs soon recognised the reasons for its popularity. Regularly performed throughout the interwar years it too became established as a

⁴² *An Evening Pastoral* copyright 1914, published by Curwen Edition 50549. See also Chapter Eight, Table 31 and Newlyn Male Voice Choir Christmas Concert, 6 December 2009.

⁴³ Williams, *Valleys of Song*, p.179.

traditional concert piece.⁴⁴ The same applied to another chorus by Adam, *The Comrades Song of Hope*, in which similar stylistic features are evident. Here though, Adam creates musical and atmospheric tension by employing an extended build up to the climax. From the *pp animato* after the double bar 4/4 *ff Allegro marziale*, Adam uses an eight bar dominant pedal, a common compositional technique (the lower bass in Figures Pb and Pc stand as examples), which gives way to a repeated, short martial bass rhythm rising stepwise by a semitone. The change from a static bass line to one ascending incrementally creates the tension, further heightened by a crescendo rising to a point of climax. Familiarity would lead to an anticipated expectation for the return of the passage eight bars after its initial resolution.

A chorus having the same impact was the Welsh favourite de Rille's *Martyrs of the Arena*.⁴⁵ The technique employed here by de Rille to create musical tension was that of alternating soli-tutti passages followed by imitative entries between upper and lower voices as the chorus builds to a climatic final eight bars. A final chorus to mention is the *Soldiers' Chorus* from Gounod's opera *Faust*. It is technically more demanding, a point illustrated eight bars in by three two bar sequences executing abrupt key changes. Encompassing the complete dynamic range, tenors at a top B^b and with an independent accompaniment, this chorus

⁴⁴ A review of concert programmes of Hayle Male Voice Choir archived at the Courtney Library, Royal Cornwall Museum shows that during the 1980s and 1990s it was regularly included in their concerts. It has been recorded by St Stythians Male Voice Choir on CD *Cornish Heart* and it was part of their programme concert folder for 2008. Nankersey Male Voice Choir have recorded it twice, on CDs – *50 Golden Years* and *50th Anniversary Concert*.

⁴⁵ Williams, *Valleys of Song*, p.179.

constitutes a most testing piece for amateur choirs. It is a truly dynamic, operatic chorus. Wadebridge Male Voice Choir included the chorus in their annual concert of 1925, and must have acquitted themselves well as it was reported as a ‘remarkably good programme ... one of the finest by them’.⁴⁶

YEAR	FESTIVAL	TITLE	COMPOSER
1921	County	<i>Down in yon summer vale</i> +	Wood
		<i>It's Oh to be a wild thing</i>	Elgar
		<i>Down Among the Dead Men</i>	Bantock
1922	County	<i>My Love is like a red, red rose</i> +	Bantock
1923	County	<i>King's Messenger</i>	Bantock
1924	County	<i>Fond Love</i>	Bantock
1925	Indian Queens	<i>Hymn of the Homeland</i>	Sullivan
	Wadebridge	<i>Martyrs of the Arena</i> +	de Rille
1927	County	<i>The Farmer's Boy</i> +	Vaughan Williams
		<i>The Lincolnshire Poacher</i> +	Bantock
	Mabe	<i>Hunting Song</i>	Bantock
	Wadebridge	<i>Feasting I Watch</i> +	Elgar
1928	County	<i>The Farmer's Boy</i>	Vaughan Williams
	Wadebridge	<i>My Love is like a red, red rose</i>	Bantock
		<i>The Farmer's Boy</i>	Vaughan Williams
1929	Camborne	<i>The Farmer's Boy</i>	Vaughan Williams
		<i>The Beleaguered</i> +	Sullivan
	Wadebridge	<i>Linden Lea</i>	Vaughan Williams
		<i>Down Among the Dead Men</i>	Bantock
+ Test Pieces which had transferred into choir repertoire			

Table 13 Music Festival Test Pieces 1920s – Various

The full impact of the English male choral repertoire on Cornish choirs can be seen from the sample list of music festival test pieces in Tables 13 and 14. The festival movement not only influenced repertoire but also choral performance standards. Comparing Tables 13 and 14 with Tables 11 and 12, we note that there

⁴⁶ *Cornish Guardian*, 13 March 1925.

are numerous festival test pieces which transferred into concert programmes (indicated by a +). The detailed repertoire in Tables 13 and 14 indicates how the smaller festivals such as Mabe, Perranwell and Delabole sought to emulate the larger festivals by selecting established test pieces. One interpretation for so

YEAR	FESTIVAL	TITLE	COMPOSER
1930	Mabe	<i>Drake's Drum</i> +	Standford
	Wadebridge	<i>It's Oh to be a wild thing</i>	Elgar
1931	County	<i>Farmer's Boy, The</i>	Vaughan Williams
		<i>The Tide Rises, the Tide Falls</i> +	Carse
	Perranwell	<i>Through Bushes and Briars</i>	Vaughan Williams
1932	Indian Queens	<i>The Tide Rises, the Tide Falls</i>	Carse
	County	<i>Fain Would I Change that Note</i>	Vaughan Williams
		<i>Drake's Drum</i>	Standford
		<i>The Herald</i>	Elgar
St Dennis	<i>Feasting I Watch</i>	Elgar	
1933	County	<i>The Wanderer</i> +	Elgar
1934	County	<i>Hymn of the Homeland</i>	Sullivan
1935	County	<i>Down in yon summer vale</i>	Wood
		<i>Yea Cast Me from the Heights</i>	Elgar
	Indian Queens	<i>Hope the Hornblower</i>	Bantock
		<i>The Wanderer</i>	Elgar
		<i>How Sleep the Brave</i>	Bantock
1936	Perranwell	<i>Newquay Fisherman's Song</i> +	Mackenzie
	Indian Queens	<i>As Torrents in Summer</i>	Elgar
		<i>The Long Day Closes</i> +	Sullivan
	Wadebridge	<i>How Sweet the answer echo makes</i> +	Shaw
Delabole	<i>Hope the Hornblower</i>	Bantock	
1937	County	<i>Seek Him that maketh the Seven Stars</i>	Elgar
	Delabole	<i>My Love is like a red, red rose</i>	Bantock
		<i>The Lincolnshire Poacher</i>	Bantock
	Indian Queens	<i>Down in yon summer vale</i>	Wood
	Camborne	<i>Feasting I Watch</i>	Elgar
		<i>The Wanderer</i>	Elgar
<i>An Evening's Pastorale</i>		Shaw	
1938	Indian Queens	<i>After Many a Dusty Mile</i>	Elgar
+ Test Pieces which had transferred into choir repertoire			

Table 14 Music Festival Test Pieces 1930s – Various

doing could be that this assured choir entrants. However, a more likely view is that expressed previously in relation to achieving parity of festival status and standard of choral performance. Notable English composers, such as Vaughan Williams, Bantock and Elgar, wrote specifically for mixed and male voice choirs and were instrumental in the ascendancy of the partsong. One need look no further than the songs of Elgar. Frequently selected as test pieces and subsequently becoming standard repertoire works, *As Torrents in Summer*, *Feasting I Watch* and *The Wanderer* exemplify Elgar's wide ranging and subtle dynamic scoring, nuanced tempi changes and technical markings. The homophony of *As Torrents in Summer*, the *p legato* imitative entries of *Feasting I Watch* and the demanding vocal techniques and dynamics for example in *The Wanderer* b.5-8, all serve to illustrate the advance in Cornish choir performance standards since the opening decade of the century. The musical knowledge which the men applied to choral pieces learned in the early years applied to these more advanced works, with expectations as high.

5.

Finally attention is turned to the importance of the individual who held the position of conductor. Not only does a choir's repertoire reflect the level of choral musicianship, it also reflects the level of musicianship of its conductor. Without certain key individuals, male voice choirs and the competitive festival movement in Cornwall would not have been established so rapidly and with such enthusiasm. The synergetic relationship of conductor and choir is

paramount to a choir's success and the conductor's length of tenure is a prime factor in achieving a mutually beneficial relationship. Tangible outcomes of the conductor-choir relationship can be objectively assessed using such criteria as success of concert seasons and festival triumphs. A civic profile is further engendered through a choir's contribution to religious and charitable causes. The individual who took up the baton was making a personal commitment to his peers, to the community and to cultural traditions so the relationship between conductor and choir extended beyond the objective.

Before the choir contributes in performance, the interpretation of the composer's intent is conceptualised in the mind of the conductor. It is the conductor who initiates the process of bringing into existence the meaning of the music on the page. To this extent the conductor performs in the present but thinks in the future. A synergetic relationship needs to exist between an individual who is the leader and the corps of choralists if such an outcome is to be achieved:

The conductor-choir bond relies on the chameleon effect both at the cognitive level of response to gesture and at the emotional level of empathy and group dynamic ... Social norms, power relationships and personality all inflect the degree to which people experience both behavioural and emotional synchrony.⁴⁷

Table 15 lists those individuals whose name became synonymous with the choirs of which they were the conductor, many of whom are still revered today. Paucity of written evidence means that it is only through personal testimonies that we are provided with the means by which they are remembered. A senior

⁴⁷ Liz Garnett, *Choral Conducting and the Construction of Meaning* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp.180-1.

Wadebridge choir member recalled being told by his uncle of his years singing in the choir under the baton of Dr Wilson Gunn. He recollected the pride and respect with which his uncle spoke of Dr Wilson Gunn.⁴⁸ With the same degree of respect and pride was the recounting of the memory expressed by the choir

CONDUCTOR	DATES	CHOIR
J. H. Trudgeon	1906 →	<i>Marazion</i>
J. H. Bowden	1913? 1919-1922 and 1923-1929	<i>Stithians/Ponsonooth</i>
Mr Pryor	1913-1932	<i>Germoe</i>
J. Jenkin	1913 →	<i>Callington</i>
Dr Wilson Gunn	1920 →	<i>Wadebridge</i>
Reverend Daly Atkinson	1920-1929 and 1933 →	<i>Mabe</i>
Mr Leverton; C. B. Millman	1920-1924/25; 1932?-1938	<i>Gunnislake</i>
Cecil Atkinson; Leonard Collins	1921-1929; 1930-1940	<i>Mousehole</i>
J. C. Uren	1921-1925 and 1926-1927	<i>Tinners/St Day</i>
J. Irving Thomas	1921-1922 and 1926-1934	<i>Newlyn</i>
W. E. Eustace; A. Tredrea	1921-1925, 1929-1931; 1925-1929	<i>Holmans</i>
Eva Cloke	1923 →	<i>Polperro Fishermen</i>
R. J. Honey	1923?-1935	<i>Liskeard</i>
Mr Lightbown	1924-1931 and 1936 →	<i>Truro People's Palace</i>
Harold Mutton	1926 →	<i>Looe</i>
Cyril E. Williams	1928 →	<i>Ventonleague</i>
Jack Thomas	1929 →	<i>Tintagel</i>
Mr J. Williams; Mrs Hearn	1919-1930; 1932 →	<i>Bodmin</i>

Table 15 Length of Tenure of Choir Conductors → 1939

member who had known and seen the Reverend Daly Atkinson⁴⁹ conduct. Their first choir rehearsal under the musical directorship of Eva Cloke was recalled by

⁴⁸ Interview: *Wadebridge*, 9 December 2008. The uncle was in his early nineties at the time of this interview.

⁴⁹ Interview: *Treverva*, 4 December 2008. See also *Golden Jubilee Booklet, Cornwall Music Competition Festival* where it is recorded that the Reverend was one of the original County Music Festival Committee members 'who brought with him his experience in the North as a choral conductor'.

several Polperro choir members.⁵⁰ Upon each recollection there followed moments of silent reflection as the personal memory and associated musical experiences were re-lived.

The choral histories by Williams, Wiltshire and Nettel all draw from historical records in tracing the character of the most noted male conductors. They present evidence of music personalities acclaimed by their peers who received public recognition through their expressed individualism in musical directorship of choral groups. Some individuals were known for their bravura performances.⁵¹ It was through festival participation that these conductors gained their reputations, knowledge of which extended beyond their specific region of England and/or Wales. The majority of conductors named in Table 15 were either the choirmaster or the organist of the Methodist and Nonconformist churches and chapels and there is no record of a cult of personality. The Methodist origin of Cornwall's male voice choirs and the strongly espoused egalitarianism found in Methodism, meant the status of the conductor was not placed above that of choir members. As in mixed Methodist choirs so too in male voice choirs – mutual respect but no 'personalities'.

6.

The expansion of the male choral movement during this period is at least partly due to the fact that the influence of Methodism had been, by the end of the

⁵⁰ Interview: *Polperro Fisherman's Choir*, 15 October 2008.

⁵¹ See: Williams, *Valleys of Song*, renowned conductors recorded in Chapters 3-5; Wiltshire, 'The British Male Voice Choir', pp.131-140; R. Nettel, *Music in the Five Towns 1840-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1944), pp.30-5.

1930s, supplemented by other musicological influences. With choirs performing pieces more advanced technically, interpretatively and demanding a higher level of musicianship to a degree not seen before, the years between the wars saw an augmentation of the musicological factors evident pre-1914. Moreover, increased festival participation and conductor experience were progressively important elements in the growth of choir numbers. Beyond the mechanics of conducting and an individual's musical acumen, it was the conductor who conceptualised the music and initiated a choral interpretation. On the subject of choir identity and choir-conductor relationship a noted study by Colin Durrant concluded:

(i) that the musical and interpersonal skills of the conductor are vital in the motivation of the singers, (ii) that singers identify themselves socially as well as musically with a group, (iii) that choral activity enhanced these singers' sense of national and cultural identity through the use of folk traditions and a creative approach to musical practice.⁵²

The three elements of festival, repertoire and conductor present themselves in a symbiotic manner, each nurturing the development of the other, but it is the pivotal role of the conductor which was paramount. In examining the musicological context one can perceive how the dimensions and implications of choir identity now extended beyond the immediate village, town or parish boundaries.

⁵² Colin Durrant, 'Shaping Identity Through Choral Activity: Singers' and Conductors' Perceptions', *Research Studies in Music Education*, No.24 (2005), p.88.

Chapter Five

Impact of place: shaping local choir identities between the wars

Historians such as Jon Lawrence have written much in recent years about the 'politics of place', stressing that politics can only be understood with full acknowledgement of local and regional factors at play.¹ In similar vein full understanding of male voice choirs requires discussion of the importance of place; those localised elements at work that impose themselves upon county-wide factors discussed in the previous two chapters. As mentioned in the Introduction, each choir might have an individual identity be it centred on festival success, conductor or community. It is not possible to track every Cornish choir individually,² but instead useful inferences can be drawn about the role of localism by dividing Cornwall into four sub-areas.

1.

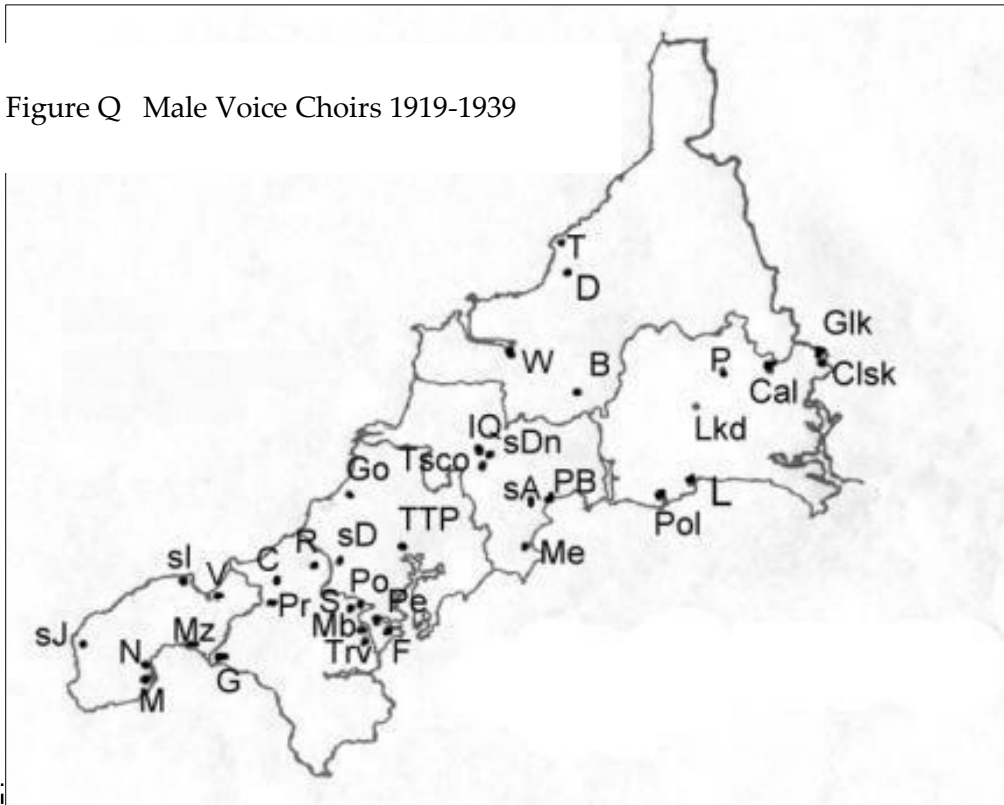
We open the discussion with an analysis of the location and geography of choirs in east Cornwall formerly the district of Caradon (Figure Qa).³ A perceived sense of isolation and disconnection from the rest of the county through distance, was compounded by the physical barriers of Bodmin moor and the white clay-

¹ Jon Lawrence, *Speaking for the People, Party, Language and Popular Politics in England 1867-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

² There were many ad hoc choirs or those of a transient nature for which references are to be found in the pages of the regional newspapers. The following can be traced: Pendeen – 1920, 1926-29, 1936; Flushing – 1923, 1926-28, 1933; Heamoor – 1924-25, 1928-29; Bethel – 1924, 1926-27, 1936; Stenalees – 1925-28; Wall – 1930-34; Roche – 1929, 1930, 1932, 1934; Twelveheads – 1931-34.

³ Figure A in Chapter One.

Figure Q Male Voice Choirs 1919-1939



B Bodmin, **C** Camborne[Holmans], **Cal** Callington, **Clsk** Calstock, **D** Delabole, **F** Falmouth, **G** Germoe, **Glk** Gunnislake, **Go** Goonhavern, **IQ** Indian Queens, **L** Looe, **Lkd** Liskeard, **M** Mousehole, **Mb** Mabe, **Me** Mevagissey, **Mz** Marazion, **N** Newlyn, **P** Pensilva, **Pe** Penryn, **Po** Ponsanooth, **Pol** Polperro, **Pr** Praze, **PB** Par Brotherhood, **R** Redruth [Trelawney], **S** Stithian, **T** Tintagel, **TPP** Truro People's Palace, **Trv** Treverva, **Tsco** Trevisco, **V** Ventonleague, **W** Wadebridge, **sA** St Austell, **sD** St Day, **sDn** St Dennis, **sl** St Ives, **sJ** St Just

Figure Qa Administrative Districts

Pre-April 2009



waste mountains which dominated the sky-line in mid-Cornwall. This physical location led to a specific attitude and approach to concert performance and festival participation. Choirs in this area share proximity to the Cornwall-Devon border, and Figure Q indicates a cluster of five inland choirs and two coastal ones, Looe and Polperro. The five inland choirs of Liskeard, Callington, Gunnislake, Calstock and Pensilva comprise a sub-section by virtue of the geology of the district. Rich in minerals and ores, east Cornwall developed an industrial base of quarrying⁴ and metalliferous mining in the Tamar Valley.⁵

In the east of the county Wesleyanism did not have the same degree of presence as in the far west. The Bible Christians, United Methodist Free Church had a comparable strength in circuit numbers, with the Primitive Methodist's one circuit centred at Liskeard.⁶ The years of division were set aside in 1932 with the reunion of the denominations.⁷ In her recent research into Methodism in the Tamar Valley area, Kayleigh Milden notes that:

Methodism in Cornwall has continued to be a multi-layered movement and is often divided on both 'horizontal' and 'vertical' lines ... in addition there exist divisions between locality and denominational ancestry, and it is often divided on religious, geographical and psychological terms.⁸

⁴ W. G. V. Balchin, *The Cornish Landscape* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1983), p.169.

⁵ The Cornish Records Office, Truro, holds detailed plans of the mines of the area which demonstrate the extensive mining operations, with dates, in the Tamar Valley.

⁶ Cornwall Record Office, *Sources for Cornish Family History* (Cornwall County Council, May 1991), pp.19-20.

⁷ Thomas Shaw, *A History of Cornish Methodism* (Truro: Oscar Blackford Ltd., 1967), pp.132-4.

⁸ Kayleigh Milden, 'Are You Church or Chapel?' in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 12* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2004), p.148.

As Methodist Circuits evolved Cornish and Devon chapels were to be found within the same circuit: 'In 1851 there were Cornish Wesleyan Chapels still in the Holsworthy Circuit, in the Tavistock Circuit ... and the chapels of Torpoint – Rame area were in the Devonport Circuit.'⁹ These associations had diminished the 'psychological' boundary and left east and northeast Cornwall with stronger ties to west Devon than west Cornwall.¹⁰ The geographical location of choirs was also instrumental in forging an almost insular relationship between the villages and towns of the eastern area. A significant regional cross border relationship was the one with Plymouth on the Devon side of the Tamar. Before assessing the impact of the larger regional choirs we turn to a village choir situated within the inland cluster.

Located approximately four miles north-east of Liskeard and north-west of Callington, the choir of Pensilva serves to illustrate how a village community sought to emulate the choral achievements of its more urban neighbours. With a commercially viable mining industry played out by the close of World War I and granite quarrying ceased by the mid-1930s, Pensilva's population had diminished since the high numbers of the 1890s. The village's choral foundations lay within Methodist culture:

⁹ Church History, www.genuki.org.uk/big/e/g/Cornwall/ChurchHistory [accessed 10 May 2013].

¹⁰ Kayleigh Mildren, 'Kinship and Borders: Identity in the Tamar Valley', in Garry Tregidga (ed.), *Narratives of the Family* (Redruth: Cornwall Centre/Kresenn Kernow, 2009), pp.39-51. The four case studies recorded illustrate how families have inter-married in the Tamar Valley creating kinship ties on both sides of the border. Mildren observes how in terms of 'psychological borders' the mapping of Cornwall's territory has, during different periods, 'created both unity and divorce from neighbouring Devon'. p.40.

The three chapels reflected the large part Nonconformity played in the lives of the miners, a practice very much encouraged by mine owners due to the emphasis placed on the importance of work, thrift and temperance, a fatalistic acceptance of one's lot in life and the erosion of traditional holidays and festivals which in the past had led to a loss of productivity.¹¹

To the north and west of Pensilva was open land up onto Bodmin moor, contrasting with the topography to the south and east of wooded valleys and sloping agricultural land. Thus the location of Pensilva placed limits on possible concert venues. Formed in 1925, the choir prospered for at least four years. Pensilva realised performances from the established traditional male choral repertoire and it prevailed where civic pride and aspiration were concerned. Local newspaper coverage in 1926 stated that 'The choir ... has made rapid strides ... the concert showed what can be attained in villages as well as towns by sheer hard work.'¹² The concert included *Martyrs of the Arena*, *Sweet and Low*, *In Absence*, *Hallelujah Chorus*, *Pilgrim's Chorus* and *The Little Church*. A varied programme such as this illustrated competent leadership and choral performance skills.

Newspaper reportage was not always supportive. For a close-knit village community public comment could well be interpreted at a personal as well as a group level. The *Cornish Times* printed an apology for a reporting error on its part at the same time informing the villagers why the male voice choir had not attended the Bible Society: 'Pensilva Male Voice Choir did not sing at the Bible

¹¹ Cornwall Industrial Settlements Initiative (CISI) Report No.2004R093, p14.
<http://www.historic-cornwall.org.uk/CISI/Pensilva> [accessed 31 January 2013].

¹² *Cornish Times*, 9 April 1926.

Society meeting as stated in our last issue owing to the inability of several members to attend practices.¹³ This is public admonishment meted out to the choir which might well have hastened its demise. Arguably it would have reflected negatively on particular choir members and much would have rested on their response. With the *Cornish Times* being the primary newspaper in the district, the likelihood was that the wider choir fraternity would also have read the negative comments.

Within a village choral enterprise if a number of choir members were unable to sustain the necessary level of commitment regarding attendance at practices and the learning of repertoire, the chances of remaining viable were much reduced. In practice both a high level of personal commitment and musical directorship needed to function in partnership if a sustained and successful outcome was to be achieved. The nearby choir from Callington bears witness to this need for a relationship to express mutuality.

Callington had an advantage over Pensilva in that it was located at a major crossroads on the main road through the region. With easier access to a greater number of concert venues an annual series of concerts could be mapped out. Callington male choir served its community well regarding social¹⁴ and charitable purposes. Evidence from Callington choir's Annual General Meetings (AGM) routinely reviewed the year's concert programmes, as in 1927: 'Interest in the choir has been well maintained and a successful season is anticipated. The

¹³ *Cornish Times*, 19 October 1928.

¹⁴ *Cornish Times*, 13 February 1925.

choir has been the means of raising considerable amounts in the district for religious and charitable objects.¹⁵ The subject of the choir continuing was discussed at each AGM, members acknowledging that in order to do so for another season full support was needed.¹⁶ The length of tenure of the conductor¹⁷ and the conductor-choir relationship ensured a transparency in the decision-making. The ethos of Callington choir and its enduring success also provided an example of the important role of the conductor in moulding the choir into one identified with its community.

Two choirs to the east of Callington were Calstock and Gunnislake. Located on the Cornwall-Devon border, with main road access to west Devon and access to Plymouth via the Tamar Valley rail branch line, the two choirs undertook concert engagements both sides of the Tamar Valley.¹⁸ The focus is placed on Gunnislake Male Voice Choir because from newspaper accounts of two particular concerts in 1920 we are able to identify concerns regarding the perceived socio-cultural status of male voice choirs in east and north Cornwall.

Bodmin male voice choir, in north Cornwall, had given its first concert in December 1919¹⁹ and invited Gunnislake to perform at a grand concert in March

¹⁵ *Cornish Times*, 30 September 1927.

¹⁶ *Cornish Times*, 26 September 1924 and 28 September 1928.

¹⁷ See Chapter Four Table 15 for details of the conductor.

¹⁸ Examples from Calstock choir's itinerary: *Western Weekly News*, 2 November (Callington) 1929; *Cornish Times*, 19 October (Tavistock), 2 November (Linhay and Launceston) and 23 November (Pensilva) 1934; *Cornish Times*, 13 September (East Looe) 1935; *Cornish Times*, 9 April (Plymouth) 1937.

¹⁹ *Cornish Guardian*, 26 December 1919.

1920. The following extract formed part of the concert review in the *Cornish Guardian*, the district's main newspaper:

Cornish folk are always attracted by mass singing ... Time was when Cornwall was more noted than it is today for such choirs (male voice) as the one at Gunnislake which is helping to keep Cornish singing to the front ... used to be the Delabole singers and used to be choirs from further west. Pity many no longer exist ...²⁰

A return visit at the end of the year prompted a similar negative opinion on the general state of male voice choirs, again part of the concert review and similarly reported in the *Cornish Guardian*:

... pity the choirs like Gunnislake are not numerous within the Duchy. Many which were in existence a good number of years ago are long ceased – inhabitants are giving their energies to the formation of bands Commendable but detrimental if they superseded vocal combinations in villages ... If more towns and villages held festivals for choirs, Cornish choirs would regain their rightful place in the life of the community.²¹

It is not known whether one person was responsible for both accounts, but they were an expression of a point of view which decried the perceived loss of status that male voice choirs had experienced. On the other hand, as an east-north county perspective it could be said that the viewpoint was parochial in outlook; Gunnislake's concert itinerary was localised to east and north Cornwall.²² But strength in choir numbers and the number of music festivals²³ lay west of Truro (Figure Q), thus placing east Cornwall choirs at a disadvantage, isolated from festival participation and the mainstream male choral movement. Moreover, the

²⁰ *Cornish Guardian*, 6 March 1920.

²¹ *Cornish Guardian*, 10 December 1920.

²² Examples from Gunnislake choir's itinerary: *Western Weekly News*, 3 April 1920 (Callington); *Cornish Times*, 12 March (Liskeard), 22 October (Gunnislake), 12 November (Liskeard), 1922; *Western Weekly News*, 25 February 1922 (Delabole); 7 July (Gunnislake), 8 December (Luckett) 1923; 5 April 1924 (Luckett).

²³ See Chapter Four, Tables 5-9.

above comments were expressed prior to the recognised establishment of many festivals, therefore from the standpoint of opinion expressed in 1920, it could be that there was justification for such views.

The major urban population centre of east Cornwall was Liskeard. From its days as a stannary town Liskeard developed into the administrative centre of pre-April 2009 Caradon District Authority (Figure Qa). Despite an advantaged location on the west-east main road and rail systems (with a branch line to the fishing village of Looe), Liskeard choir, as we have seen with the other inland choirs, came to centre its concerts and festival participation to the east of the county and across the border. In the early 1920s Liskeard Male Voice Choir entered three festivals within the county acquitting themselves with credit,²⁴ but outright success came at the Plymouth Festival in 1925 when the choir achieved first place.²⁵ However, under the sub-heading 'Competition Work Dropped', the choir's 1926 AGM report referred to: 'keen discussion on the management and work of the choir, and it was decided for present that the choir should not enter for any music competitions but concentrate more particularly on town engagements. Mr Honey was enthusiastically re-elected honorary conductor.'²⁶ The reasons for such a decision were not given but by inference several could be deduced. Not meeting with regular competition success, the stress of competing, travelling distance and travel costs or too much time devoted to learning the test

²⁴ *West Briton*, 2 May 1923; *Cornish Times*, 11 July 1924 and 24 July 1925.

²⁵ *Cornish Times*, 4 December 1925.

²⁶ *Cornish Times*, 10 December 1926.

pieces, were all possible explanations. Whatever were the underlying factors the conductor's input in the discussion would have been critical. From 1929 through to the close of 1931 the choir evidently folded for in 1932 a concert report in the *Cornish Times* confirmed the re-forming of the choir under Mr Honey: 'About twenty six in the choir and those present, although not so many as expected, showed their appreciation of a successful "come-back" in no uncertain fashion.'²⁷

The choir's AGM of that year noted:

since the choir reformed twelve months ago it had assisted at several good causes, their services being well received and several pounds were raised for various objects. Their desire was that during the coming winter months useful services will be rendered in the town and district.²⁸

Over time Mr Honey's name became synonymous with the Liskeard choir and he was the choir's sole musical director. It is clear that the very essence of the choir centred around Mr Honey and his sudden death early 1935 had a profound effect. Despite the choir's stated intention to carry on in the hope that 'some interested person will come forward as leader',²⁹ in the following February the Liskeard Male Voice Choir was dissolved. A meeting of concerned members was convened:

meeting on Monday evening in the Wesley Reform Church, the members resolved that owing to a successor not being found to succeed the late Mr J. Honey the choir will close down. Funds in hand of £4 3s 3d to be divided amongst the Richard Honey Memorial Fund £3, Chapel £1, caretaker 3s 3d.³⁰

²⁷ *Cornish Times*, 8 January 1932.

²⁸ *Cornish Times*, 2 September 1932.

²⁹ *Cornish Times*, 8 February 1935.

³⁰ *Cornish Times*, 21 February 1936.

What is striking here is the immediacy of the choir's dissolution and the matter of fact way in which the administrative matters were concluded and thence reported. The dissolution of the choir following the unexpected loss of Mr Honey indicated that the breaking of the conductor-choir bond could in some cases constitute an irretrievable situation. The example of Liskeard choir once more underlines the centrality of the conductor's position. The location of Liskeard and the musical directorship of Mr Honey shaped the choir's musical identity; one principally associated with the town and its environs.

2.

The district of east Cornwall has a southern coastline which meets the Devon border at the mouth of the River Tamar. Along this coast the two fishing ports of Looe and Polperro each supported a male voice choir. Unlike choirs situated in the hinterland, choirs which formed within seafaring communities were naturally faced with periods of erratic attendance. The impact on rehearsal attendance and concert engagements would therefore have been problematical. In common with inland east Cornwall choirs, Looe forged links across the Tamar with Devonport³¹ and Plymouth.³² A main point of difference, however, was the manner in which Looe male voice choir embraced radio broadcast opportunities.

³¹ *Western Weekly News*, 21 March 1931.

³² *Cornish Guardian*, 1 September 1938; *Cornish Guardian*, 2 March 1939. Both Plymouth concerts were in aid of charitable needs. 1938, Prince of Wales Hospital, Plymouth and 1939, St Ives Lifeboat Distress Fund at a concert at the Palace Theatre, Plymouth. As it had done with the Tinnars Choir Appeal for the destitute, the main regional newspaper, *Western Morning Newspaper*, spearheaded the appeal for dependents of the St Ives Lifeboat disaster.

The preview of a 1935 broadcast gives an outline of the choir's routine, reinforcing the difference in nature of seafaring choirs. The broadcast was to be from the 'Shade', not the usual concert platform: '... the "Shade" at Looe which is a little shelter on the sea front. This is the unofficial rehearsal room of the choir for the nature of their calling makes it impossible for the men to meet at regular times for practices.'³³ The popularity of this broadcast was reflected in an item some months later with reference to a second broadcast from the 'Shade'.³⁴ The BBC West Region broadcast from Land's End to Bristol and Cardiff. During the 1930s there was increased recognition of the importance of radio broadcasting for several reasons. Firstly, it became a strategy for promoting male choral music; secondly, it was an influence in the evolution of male voice choirs, and thirdly, it assisted in the establishment of new choirs. Subsequent to their successful broadcasts the fishermen of Looe were invited to perform in Truro and London. Both major concert engagements took place in 1936 and it is open to conjecture whether such opportunities would have arisen if not for the BBC broadcasts.

We look firstly at the Truro concert because opinion expressed reflected a western county outlook regarding the peripheral eastern county's socio-cultural standing and male choral music tradition. Similar in tone and language to the London review of the Tinnners' Choir concert in 1922, the *West Briton* reported the audience's response as appreciative of a 'fine performance', a 'pleasurable surprise' that a small fishing village from the east of the county should acquit

³³ *Western Weekly News*, 25 May 1935.

³⁴ *Cornish Times*, 20 September 1935.

themselves so well. Of a two hour programme it was noted: 'Items were mainly encored, the attractiveness of the performance had an innate simplicity and natural tonal quality, and tone and balance were never in fault.' The review makes mention of the choir members as 'most ordinary fishermen who know little of music'.³⁵ On the surface the response was complimentary but it could be said to carry patronising undertones. One could deduce that the language indicates an audience with a sense of being more sophisticated, better educated, more cultured with its own established male voice choir, Truro People's Palace.³⁶

The second concert of interest took place in the autumn of 1936. It illustrated the reciprocal nature of a relationship between a choir and the community from which it drew its membership. Looe male voice choir travelled to London to sing at Central Hall, Westminster, as guests of the Devon and Cornwall Festival Committee. The financial outlay needed a community effort in meeting the costs to ease the financial burden placed on individuals: 'Expenses of such a trip are heavy and as the choir is meeting a major portion themselves they are holding concerts in the Pavilion, West Looe.'³⁷ Such a level of commitment to the choir by its members and the community of Looe brought civic pride and honour to the fishing village.

A short distance westward along the coast lies the neighbouring fishing village of Polperro. From the time of its formation and throughout the interwar

³⁵ *West Briton*, 24 February 1936.

³⁶ See Chapter One, Table G.

³⁷ *Cornish Times*, 21 August 1936.

years Polperro's choir identity was overtly linked to Methodism and sacred choral music. Known as The Fishermen's Choir since its formation in 1923, it was unique in two respects. Firstly, the choir was not only formed by a woman but was the first to have a female conductor. The significance here is that hitherto a woman's direct involvement would only have been as the accompanist. The wife of a Polperro fisherman, Eva Cloke was aware that the decline in the fishing industry and a smaller fishing fleet meant the gradual loss of cultural traditions. She realised the value of preserving the traditional, religious style sea-songs and hymns from the fishermen's repertoire. As with many choral conductors of the time Eva Cloke came from a Methodist background, being the chapel organist in Polperro. She moulded the fishermen into a choral ensemble which built a reputation based on a repertoire predominantly of hymns, sacred songs and anthems.³⁸

The second distinctive aspect of the Fishermen's Choir was its association with a lay preacher who became known as the Fishermen's Bishop. Thomas Mark had been a fisherman before turning to lay preaching. His gift for oratory meant his sermons drew crowds in the hundreds to services and sacred concerts. Eva Cloke and Thomas Mark each in their own way had a seminal influence on the opening decades of the choir's history. Moreover, they had an impact on Methodist congregations both sides of the Tamar. The Fishermen's Choir performed mainly in churches and chapels within mid- and east Cornwall, and

³⁸ <http://www.polperrofishermenschoir.org.uk> [accessed 15 December 2006].

Devonport and Plymouth across the Tamar. The dominant sacred content of the choir's repertoire set it apart not only from other choirs in east Cornwall but apart from choirs in the rest of the county.

Table 16 provides a sample of sacred services and concerts given by The Fishermen's Choir with Thomas Mark preaching. The publicity for the 1929 visit at St Austell detailed in the *Cornish Guardian* noted recent performances at

YEAR	PLACE	DATE	RECORDED
1928	Devonport	15 September	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
1929	Mevagissey	1 March	<i>Cornish Times</i>
	Plymouth	28 September	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
	St Austell	31 October	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
1930	Bodmin	23 January	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
	Polbathic	7 February	<i>Cornish Times</i>
	Upton Cross	14 February	
	Callington	28 February	
	Par	10 April	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
	St Austell	13 November	
1931	Liskeard	30 January	<i>Cornish Times</i>
	Port Isaac	14 February	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
	Saltash	28 February	
1932	Gunnislake	29 January	<i>Cornish Times</i>
	Landrake	26 February	
	Mevagissey	11 March	
	St Neot	4 November	
	Falmouth	9 December	

Table 16 The Fishermen's Choir – Various Concerts/Services

Devonport and Plymouth. Reportedly the Central Hall, Devonport had a congregation of about 1,500 with hundreds failing to gain entry.³⁹ The programme performed at Callington in 1930 provides an example of the choir's usual sacred orientated programme, *Child in the Wild Wood*, *Storm of Life*, *Jesus of*

³⁹ *Cornish Guardian*, 31 October 1929.

Nazareth, Peace be Still, Praise the Lord, By the Rivers of Babylon, and Abide with me.

The two sacred concerts in 1932 at Gunnislake are recorded as having constituted the largest congregations for approximately thirty years. The evidence shows that it was not unknown for major performances to be attended by well over one thousand people. The inclusion of boy trebles further defined this choir as different from its contemporaries.

What we have seen in the east region of the county is that the physical geography linked east Cornwall to Devon. The River Tamar was not seen as a barrier to the 'other' England. Beyond employment needs, across the Tamar lay opportunities for concerts and competitive festivals. It was easier to journey to Plymouth, Stonehouse, Devonport and even Exeter than to travel to the far west of the county; the clay mountains of mid-Cornwall forming a physical barrier to all but a rare journey westward. Choirs in the east region of Cornwall looked east rather than turning westward.

3.

Geographically the pre-2009 defined local authority district of north Cornwall was an area covering approximately one-third of the county, but it was also the least populated region. A sense of an east-west divide (the line drawn north to south at Truro), and a feeling of isolation by choir members is still felt today.⁴⁰ Figures Q and Qa give an indication of the size and remoteness of north Cornwall. Location of the four northern choirs indicates the main population

⁴⁰ Interview: *Tintagel Orpheus Choir*, 20 January 2009.

centres and a north-south district divide. We will see that the remoteness of the two most northern choirs imposed a greater sense of isolation on them than the larger urban centres of Bodmin and Wadebridge. Of the four the focus is firstly placed on Bodmin Male Voice Choir (Figure Q).

Bodmin male choir can be classed as a festival choir for it was through its festival successes that it shaped its individual choir identity and brought wider recognition to Bodmin. Formed in 1919, it was not until the 1930s that considerable festival success was attained. Its more southerly location, with greater access to road and rail transport, meant Bodmin looked west and became a noted choir in the male choral movement. The choir participated in the Wadebridge Festival in 1932-3, the latter only a month after competing in Queens Music Festival.⁴¹ In consecutive years 1934-5, the choir attained first place at the County Music Festival, winning the Bolitho Shield.⁴² The success of 1934 would have been felt throughout the town as the County Music Festival was held in Bodmin that year. In 1936 the choir which at this point in time had a membership of thirty, entered the Advanced Class in the County Festival, coming second to Newlyn.⁴³ Further success came within the year at the Wadebridge Festival where in a class of seven choirs, one of which was Newlyn, Bodmin attained first place.

⁴¹ Wadebridge Festival – *Cornish Guardian*, 10 November 1932; *West Briton*, 9 November 1933. Queens Festival – *Cornish Guardian*, 19 October 1933.

⁴² *West Briton*, 17 May 1934; 23 May 1935.

⁴³ *Cornish Guardian*, 21 May 1936.

The choir's AGM of 1936 noted these successes as constituting the most successful year since the choir's formation.⁴⁴

Following from the festival successes, Bodmin choir journeyed to London in 1937 at the invitation of the Cornish Exiles where they gave a concert in Central Hall, much as the male voice choir from Looe had done in 1936.⁴⁵ The decade closed with the choir attaining third place behind the choirs of Treviscoe and Treverva at the County Music Festival.⁴⁶ Beyond being recognised as a festival choir, the choir's community commitments remained undiminished. Concerts for charitable purposes had been regularly undertaken from 1919.⁴⁷ Sacred concerts were performed on behalf of the United Methodists⁴⁸ and the annual town concert was a major occasion, a fund-raiser for the poor and needy of the town and district.⁴⁹

Festival successes made Bodmin choir's reputation, but it was notable during this period as one of only two choirs to have a woman conductor. Mrs Hearn directed the choir from 1932 through to the advent of World War II. She epitomised an individual at the heart of the community, central to amateur music-making within the town. Not only the conductor of the male voice choir, Mrs Adelaide Hearn conducted Bodmin Methodist Centenary Choir, Bodmin Music

⁴⁴ *Cornish Guardian*, 19 November 1936.

⁴⁵ *Cornish Guardian*, 18 November 1937.

⁴⁶ *Cornish Guardian*, 25 May 1939.

⁴⁷ *Cornish Guardian*, 20 August 1920; 22 April 1921; 24 January 1929; 6 April 1933; 26 March 1936; 11 March 1937. *West Briton*, 31 March 1938.

⁴⁸ *Cornish Guardian*, 25 August 1922. *Western Weekly News*, 28 July 1928.

⁴⁹ *Cornish Guardian*, 31 December 1920; 21 December 1923; 19 December 1924; 25 December 1925; 24 December 1926; 20 December 1928; 19 December 1929, and in to the 1930s with the same annual commitment.

Makers Guild and Padstow Choral Society.⁵⁰ In 1938 due recognition came when Mrs Hearn was honoured by the town at a civic presentation by the Mayor of Bodmin: 'Twenty years ago nearly, a handful of men decided to form a male voice choir. The town is richer for having a person like Mrs Hearn. The remarkable achievement of 1937 will always be in their minds.' What we see here is the multiple layering of identities, how the notion of choir identity manifests as a group identity bound up with role identity of the conductor. In the manner of Mr Honey, conductor of Liskeard choir, Mrs Hearn gave something intangible to Bodmin male voice choir and she too turned out to be irreplaceable.

Northwest of Bodmin straddling the River Camel lies the town of Wadebridge. Its location placed the town's choir in a seemingly ideal position to develop into a regional choir; that is, relatively close to coastal settlements, not too distant from Bodmin and yet surrounded by rural settlements. Where the male voice choir paralleled Bodmin choir was in its emergence and development. First references for Wadebridge's choir in the media occurred when it performed at St Breward in 1920.⁵¹ Local charities benefited from income generated during each year's concert series.⁵² The choir's AGM of 1935 recorded that, 'Since the autumn of 1930 the choir had given no fewer than 48 concerts for various causes', thus indicating the level of concert commitment.⁵³ Concert venues extended

⁵⁰ *Cornish Guardian*, 17 May 1934.

⁵¹ *Cornish Guardian*, 29 October 1920.

⁵² *Cornish Guardian*, 24 February and 25 August 1922; 13 March 1925; 18 September 1930; 19 November 1931; 2 December 1937. *Western Weekly News*, 28 March 1931.

⁵³ *Cornish Guardian*, 12 September 1935.

across north Cornwall with an occasional concert to the south.⁵⁴ Sacred concerts and services fell within the choir's annual programme.⁵⁵ By 1928 the choir's reputation had grown such that the annual concert was recorded as 'the finest concert for the season given in the Town Hall which was filled to capacity'.⁵⁶ The choir's success owed much to the leadership of Dr Wilson Gunn⁵⁷ and the expected level of commitment from the membership: 'Only by perfectly regular attendance of each member can the Choir hope to carry on with credit to itself. Why handicap your neighbour by your slackness.'⁵⁸ At every AGM Dr Wilson Gunn was re-elected unanimously, an indication of the esteem in which he was held. Along with community commitments, festival entries were factored into the music calendar. The choir took equal first place in the Male Voice Choir Class and first in the Sight-Singing Class in the County Music Festival of 1922.⁵⁹ In 1935 Wadebridge choir came second to Bodmin in the County Music Festival⁶⁰ and later that year also met with success at the Plymouth Festival.⁶¹ Because of his length of tenure, Dr Wilson Gunn was able to nurture this small choir, numbering less than thirty, into an excellent choral unit committed to raising money for

⁵⁴ *Cornish Guardian*, 24 February (Port Isaac), 25 August (Rock and Polzeath) 1922; 29 January (St Tudy), 5 March (Tintagel), 19 April (Lostwithiel) 1926; *West Briton*, 16 November (St Columb) 1933.

⁵⁵ *Cornish Guardian*, 12 May 1922; 15 May 1930. *Western Weekly News*, 17 April 1926; 28 March 1931.

⁵⁶ *Cornish Guardian*, 8 March 1928. Further records: *Cornish Guardian*, 13 March 1925; 26 March 1926; 14 March 1929; 19 March 1931.

⁵⁷ See reference in Chapter Four.

⁵⁸ A note to all choir members in the Wadebridge Register 1922. Underlining in the quotation is as the original.

⁵⁹ *Cornish Guardian*, 26 May 1922.

⁶⁰ *West Briton*, 23 May 1935.

⁶¹ *Cornish Guardian*, 19 December 1935. Wadebridge male voice choir competed in the Plymouth Festival, 18 November 1936, travelling to Plymouth by train.

charitable causes, a choir integral to the culture of the town and the male choral movement in the area.

The two most geographically remote choirs in the north, Delabole and Tintagel were, like Pensilva in the east, both limited to a small regional sphere of concert venues by their location and poor infra-structure. Delabole, long associated with slate industry, was a tight-knit social unit, exhibiting a strong adherence to Methodism and Liberalism.⁶² Table 17 shows the choir to be in existence in 1920. It also shows the choir's commitment to communities in north and east Cornwall and several on the Devon side of the border. Methodist Circuits of north Cornwall, predominantly Bible Christians and Wesleyan, had a

YEAR	PLACE	DATE	RECORDED
1920	Coads Green	14 May	<i>Cornish Times</i>
1921	Holsworthy +	3 December	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
1922	Tavistock +	13 May	
1924	Luckett	26 January	
	Delabole	30 August	
1925	Delabole	25 July	
	Yelverton +	8 August	
	Petrockstowe +	5 September	
	Callington	19 September	
1928	Holsworthy	11 February	
1929	Liskeard	24 January	
	Bude	16 March	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
	Par	30 March	
1930	Rilla Mill	7 March	<i>Cornish Times</i>
1932	St Kew Highway	5 March	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
+ Places in the county of Devon			

Table 17 Delabole Male Voice Choir

⁶² Catherine Lorigan, *The History of the Slate Quarry and the Making of its Village Community* (Reading: Pengelly Press, 2007). A regional perspective on North Cornwall can be gained from *Connections: Aspects of the History of North Cornwall* (Reading: Pengelly Press, 2009) by the same author.

long association with northwest Devon, several circuits over the years being a cross-border mixture of Cornish and Devon Methodist chapels. In 1935 the conductor and choir name changed, signifying that the identity of the choir altered from a community concert orientated choir to a festival one from the mid-1930s. The choir entered the County Music Festival in 1935 as Delabole Co-op under the baton of Mr J. S. Elford.⁶³ This was followed with entries into their own Delabole music festival⁶⁴ and Queens Festival in 1936.⁶⁵ The implication of undertaking festival appearances under another name is that it is an ad hoc choir created solely for this endeavour. The Delabole festival was started and organised by the male voice choir which (as discussed in Chapter Four) ceased in 1937 due to financial issues.

Of the north Cornwall choirs it is apparent that Bodmin male voice choir was better able to involve itself in the wider music festival life of the county by virtue of its location and ease of access to both rail and road transportation. In contrast, where the most northerly choirs of Delabole and Tintagel were concerned their very remoteness placed them in the same situation as the inland, east county choirs; limited to venues in east and north Cornwall, and to places in west and northwest Devon.

4.

The boundaries denoting mid-Cornwall, formerly the administrative district of Restormel (Figure Qa), have within them a cluster of inland choirs and

⁶³ *West Briton*, 23 May 1935.

⁶⁴ *Cornish Guardian*, 12 March 1936.

⁶⁵ *West Briton*, 29 October 1936.

two adjacent to the coast, all five identified by their affiliation to the china clay industry. Geographically divorced from the rest of the region is a sixth choir from the fishing port of Mevagissey.⁶⁶ It is because mid-Cornwall is spoken of as the Clay Country that attention will focus on the associated clay industry choirs. From the quarries to the ports, communities were shaped by the clay industry through the various avenues of employment and housing.⁶⁷ In the manner that the white mountains of clay were a barrier to east Cornwall, similarly they formed a barrier to the west. Interviewed in 1999, Sue Hill, who grew up in the Redruth area, recalls how as children they stood on Carn Brea and looked east: 'The clay was like another country. We never went there. Foreign land.'⁶⁸ Four clay country choirs emerged during this period. Of these, three choirs were formed in the 1920s and one in the '30s.

Par's geography, history and economy tied it firmly to the clay industry but the choir which emerged did so as an association of male singers from church and chapel members in Par, hence it was known as Par and District Brotherhood Choir. Because of its specific religious membership it did not take the nomenclature 'male voice' choir. (Two later male choirs, Launceston and Burraton, were also identified as being wholly of a Methodist membership. Once

⁶⁶ *West Briton*, 16 December 1937 records choir's existence as eleven years previous. *Western Weekly News*, during 1927 records several concerts that year, April 2nd stating the choir numbered 50. *West Briton*, 3 November 1927, records the choir as third at Wadebridge Music Festival. Throughout this period only one conductor is recorded, Mr S. Rowe: *Western Weekly News*, 1 February 1930; *West Briton*, 17 March 1938.

⁶⁷ Mike Turner, *Clay Country Voices* (Stroud: Tempus Publishing Ltd., 2000), p.70-2. The clay industry's manipulation of housing comes through in the account of Karslake village.

⁶⁸ Turner, *Clay Country Voices*, p.77. Sue Hill was involved in a theatre project at Foxhole (in the heart of the Clay Country) in 1999.

they changed to 'open' secular membership both choirs became known as Male Voice Choirs.)⁶⁹ Although performances were less frequent than other choirs, Par Brotherhood was in existence in 1914 at the outbreak of the Great War.⁷⁰ Festival participation was not unknown and reference is made to only one conductor.⁷¹

The previous chapter introduced the music festival at Indian Queens, and Indian Queens Male Voice Choir should be considered mainly as a festival choir. Not only did the male voice choir participate in its own festival, but regularly entered other festivals during the year (see Table 18). Funds raised through choir concerts were for the benefit of the inhabitants of Indian Queens and local charitable causes.⁷²

YEAR	FESTIVAL	DATE	RECORDED
1922	Queens	8 December	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
1924	Queens	1 August	
1925	Queens	1 August	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
	Wadebridge	6 November	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
1927	Mabe	25 June	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
1929	Wadebridge	7 November	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
1930	Mabe	28 June	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
	St Dennis	11 December	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
1932	Queens	22 October	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
	Wadebridge	10 November	<i>West Briton</i>
1935	Queens	31 October	
1936	Delabole	12 March	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
	Queens	29 October	<i>West Briton</i>
	Wadebridge	12 November	
1938	Queens	27 October	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>

Table 18 Indian Queens Festival Participation

⁶⁹ <http://www.fed-cornishchoirs.org.uk/Launceston/index> [accessed 14 December 2006].

Interviews: *Burraton*, 7 December 2009; *Launceston*, 27 July 2011. Verification in relation to changing to an 'open' membership.

⁷⁰ *Cornish Guardian*, 4 July 1919.

⁷¹ Festivals: *Cornish Guardian*, 1 August 1924; *Western Weekly News*, 1 August 1925; *Western Weekly News*, 3 July 1926; *West Briton*, 28 October 1937. Conductor acknowledgement: *Western Weekly News*, 15 January 1927, *West Briton*, 28 October 1937.

⁷² *West Briton*, 14 February 1924, 24 December 1925, 26 January 1928, 15 December 1932.

The neighbouring choir from the clay village of St Dennis was also created in the 1920s. The early role of the choir was as a support to its community and charitable causes.⁷³ Nonetheless, a change of conductor mid-1930s altered the choir's profile to one more identified by its festival successes.⁷⁴

The trio of choirs formed in the 1920s is completed by a review of St Austell Male Voice Choir. After an uncertain start, in 1932 St Austell male choir connected with an individual who was able to nurture and inculcate a level of music performance rewarded by festival successes and public praise. Re-formed under Mr Brennand Smith, the choir built on the second place at the 1932 County Music Festival to become a choir of high public acclaim.⁷⁵ Table 19 indicates

YEAR	FESTIVAL	DATE	RECORDED
1932	County	2 June	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
1933	County	25 May	<i>West Briton</i>
1934	County	17 May	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
	Camborne	4 August	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
1935	County	23 May	<i>West Briton</i>
	Queens	31 October	
1936	County	21 May	<i>West Briton</i>
	Camborne	23 July	
1937	County	13 May	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
	Camborne	28 July	<i>West Briton</i>
	Queens	28 October	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
	Wadebridge	11 November	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
1938	County	19 May	<i>West Briton</i>
1939	County	25 May	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>

Table 19 St Austell Festival Participation

⁷³ *West Briton*, 27 July (St Dennis) 1922; *Cornish Guardian*, 16 April (Rock) 1926; *Cornish Guardian*, 15 March (Treviscoe), 29 November (Stephen-in-Brannel) 1928; *Cornish Times*, 22 February (St Pinnock) 1929. *Western Weekly News*, 16 March (St Dennis), 27 July (Indian Queens), 17 August (Hendra Downs), 24 August (Stenalees) 1929; *Western Weekly News*, 5 March (Carne Hill) 1932; *Cornish Guardian*, 26 December (Par) 1935; *Cornish Guardian*, 4 March (Carne Hill) 1937.

⁷⁴ *West Briton*, 31 October 1935, Queens Festival 1ST; *Cornish Guardian*, 12 March 1936, Delabole Festival, 1ST; *Cornish Guardian*, 29 October 1936, Queens Festival 1ST; *West Briton*, 10 December 1936, St Dennis Festival 1ST.

⁷⁵ *Cornish Guardian*, 24 November 1932.

festival entries under Mr Smith who also furthered the choir's reputation through BBC regional broadcasts.⁷⁶ Within five years of re-forming the question of civic pride for St Austell was firmly bound up in the success of the male voice choir. Jointly with the ladies choir, St Austell Cecilia, also under the musical directorship of Brennan Smith, the Gorsedd Shield for services to music was awarded to St Austell in 1937 (see Chapter Four).

Finally, the Treviscoe Male Voice Choir provides further evidence of secular male choralism arising out of Methodist choral music. Trethosa and Treviscoe were neighbouring clay settlements. Men from the small Trethosa Chapel performed as a choir in the early 1920s⁷⁷ and although there is a dearth of evidence what there is points to the choir performing on an ad hoc basis. A Treviscoe choir is recorded as competing in the St Dennis Festival in 1934.⁷⁸ In 1936 men from both Trethosa and Treviscoe chapel choirs, mainly clay workers, came together and formed a choir.⁷⁹ Within three years Treviscoe Male Voice Choir under the unobtrusive yet charismatic leadership of Russell Kessell, Methodist choirmaster at Treviscoe chapel, had made such an impact on the competitive festival circuit within the county that by the close of the decade they had raised the standard of competition performance.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ *Cornish Guardian*, 3 June 1937. The choir's third broadcast.

⁷⁷ *Western Weekly News*, 6 May 1922; *Cornish Guardian*, 13 April 1923; *Cornish Guardian*, 9 May 1924.

⁷⁸ *Cornish Guardian*, 29 November 1934.

⁷⁹ Yvonne Puttick, *Cornish Gold: A History of Treviscoe Male Voice Choir 1936-1993*, p.1.

⁸⁰ *Cornish Guardian*, 13 May 1937, County Festival, 4TH; *West Briton*, 19 May 1938, County Festival, 1ST; *Cornish Guardian*, 27 October 1938, Queens Festival, 2ND; *Cornish Guardian*, 25 May 1939, County Festival, 1ST.

With its white mountains of china clay waste striking the skyline and dominating mid-Cornwall, the membership of clay country male voice choirs drew almost wholly from the clay industry workforce. They tended to work and play in a confined locality. The evidence indicates that if concerts were undertaken beyond the Restormel district boundary they were usually confined to north Cornwall, with only rare trips westward.

5.

The final sub-region to which attention is turned is that of Truro and the western reaches of the county. Already with an established traditional male voice choir base pre-1918, the greatest number of choirs were in west Cornwall and hence the number of festivals. A characteristic of the west region, as distinct from the rest of Cornwall, was the higher than average number of temporary choirs and those which had an intermittent existence yet still remained relatively successful. As one interviewee remarked: 'Every village had a male voice choir or a brass band.'⁸¹ The temporary nature of a choir's existence does not lessen the historical or cultural standing of that choir within its community. The common cause for choirs lapsing usually centred on the position of conductor.

The male voice choirs of the neighbouring villages of Stithians and Ponsonooth had the same conductor, J. H. Bowden. Despite a high profile in the immediate post-war period,⁸² Mr Bowden's departure from Stithians in 1922 was

⁸¹ Interview: *Mousehole*, 8 October 2007.

⁸² *Western Weekly News*, 31 January, 14 August 1920; 12 March 1921.

followed by several difficult years for the choir before it ceased in 1926.⁸³ The choir at Ponsonooth was formed in 1923 with J. H. Bowden as conductor and its reputation was built on successful concert programmes which spanned the 1920s.⁸⁴ As had been the case in Stithians, the departure of Mr Bowden from Ponsonooth precipitated the choir's demise during the 1930s. Another choir experiencing difficulty in retaining its conductor was St Day. With four different conductors in 1922,⁸⁵ St Day choir did not establish a firm community base until 1926 with the appointment of Mr Uren, previously conductor of the Tinnors' Choir.⁸⁶ He promoted the choir through a series of concerts but his resignation the following year resulted in the choir folding.⁸⁷ Re-formed in 1931⁸⁸ it progressed successfully through the decade surviving as a choral unit into the late 1930s.⁸⁹ Trewlawney, a Redruth choir, exemplifies a choir struggling to survive after the departure of a long serving conductor.⁹⁰ There is evidence confirming the continued existence of the choir in 1935.⁹¹ Lapsing after the Levant mining disaster, evidence places a re-forming of a male voice choir at St Just in

⁸³ S. J. Stephens, *St Stythians Male Voice Choir: A Brief History* (Camborne: College Print, 2008), p.9.

⁸⁴ *West Briton*, 19 April 1923. Concert reports in the regional press: *West Briton*, 21 February, 13 March 1924; 25 February, 29 April 1926; 18 April, 2 May 1929. *Western Weekly News*, 10 March 1928; 21 November 1931.

⁸⁵ In 1922 four different conductors were noted: *Western Weekly News*, 11 March, 1 July, 2 September, 11 November 1922.

⁸⁶ *Western Weekly News*, 6 February 1926.

⁸⁷ *West Briton*, 17 February 1927.

⁸⁸ *West Briton*, 12 November 1931.

⁸⁹ Concert reports: *West Briton*, 14 February, 14 March, 18 April, 12 December, 1935; *West Briton*, 21 and 28 May, 11 June, 3 and 24 December, 1936; *West Briton*, 21 January, 4 February, 18 October, 23 December, 1937; *West Briton*, 21 July, 4 August, 1938.

⁹⁰ Indication of performances are detailed in the *West Briton* and *Western Weekly News* for the years 1926-1930.

⁹¹ *West Briton*, 24 January 1935.

1925, under the baton of the Wesley choirmaster.⁹² After an apparent further lapse in the 1930s the choir participated in the Camborne Music Festival of 1938.⁹³

The intermittent mode of choir existence was particularly characteristic of the west reaches of Cornwall. In the other sub-regions of the county choirs which formed on a temporary basis did so for specific events or dates. The difference in the west region was not only the numbers of choirs which existed long enough to establish a concert programme beyond a year before lapsing, but the frequency of choirs re-forming. Choir stability established through length of tenure of the conductor ensured continuity, or at least a sound basis for survival and/or revival. A second point to consider is that certain west Cornwall choirs built their reputation as festival choirs and thereby gained in musical acumen and choir membership strength. The implication here is that a successful festival reputation gave these choirs greater choir stability over and above other choirs.

Table 20 (pp.212-4) helps us to understand the festival strength of male voice choirs from the west of Cornwall. The tabulation of festival results illustrates how the top placings in competitive festivals throughout this period were dominated by a few, high profile choirs. Moreover, Table 20 illustrates which choirs identified the County festival as their premier event. However, despite having outstanding conductors and established reputations there were exceptions to the pattern whereby continuity equated with stability; some

⁹² *Western Weekly News*, 2 May 1925.

⁹³ *Western Weekly News*, 30 July 1938.

established choirs did fold for unusual reasons. Three choirs in particular serve as examples of 'exceptions'.

To achieve a first placing and then to retain that position the following year or regain it subsequently brought considerable pride to a town and this was the position of the male voice choir from Falmouth. The choir's first county festival success in 1920 engendered such a level of civic pride that it processed through the town accompanied by the mayor. As the local newspaper noted: 'The Choir had done a creditable thing and all lovers of music were fully appreciative of the honour.'⁹⁴ Congratulations were accorded to the conductor Mr E. E. Howard and the choir sang the test pieces *Drakes Drum* and *Rouse ye Comrades*. Table 20 indicates continued festival participation through to 1937. But loss of its conductor and the proximity of other successful choirs such as Mabe and subsequently Treverva, seem the most likely reasons for the Falmouth choir lapsing by 1939. As it drew its membership largely from the dockyard workforce, preparations for war evident in Cornwall mid-1939 may also have been a factor.

A second exceptional case was the choir from Mabe, which consisted mainly of quarrymen. Conducted by the Reverend Daly Atkinson it restarted after the Great War in January 1920.⁹⁵ Early concert repertoire included such contrasting numbers as *A wet sheet and a flowing sea*, *In the hour of softened splendour*, *We rock away* and *The Beleaguered*.⁹⁶ A report in the *Western Weekly News*

⁹⁴ *Western Weekly News*, 29 May 1920.

⁹⁵ *Western Weekly News*, 17 January 1920.

⁹⁶ *Western Weekly News*, 21 February 1920.

of 1924 pointed to Mabe choir embracing new technology by recording on gramophone a selection of their pieces. It also alluded to the personal philosophy of choir conductor Reverend Atkinson: 'Choir was not only for the choir, but was out to help other choirs and they were in a way missionaries.'⁹⁷ Such an enlightened view was to prove influential some ten years later when a choir was formed at Treverva. The Reverend Atkinson remained as Mabe's conductor throughout the 1920s. Changes materialised at the commencement of the next decade as Mabe Glee Singers under Mr E. Spargo competed at the Mabe Festival of 1930.⁹⁸ They retained the Glee Singers name for their 1931 County Music Festival entry when they came a lowly fifth.⁹⁹ Proof that the choir lapsed is to be found in the *West Briton*, March 1933: 'Mabe Male Voice Choir has been re-formed under the baton of Reverend Daly Atkinson.'¹⁰⁰ Immediately, the reputation of the choir was re-established (see Table 20).

One can say with some confidence that the formation of nearby Treverva choir, instigated by Reverend Daly Atkinson, brought about the eventual demise of Mabe. The Methodist choirmaster at Treverva, a leading male Quartet singer and the male voice choir's first conductor at its formation in 1936 was Edgar Kessell. Reverend Atkinson encouraged the quartet in its musical endeavours and

⁹⁷ *Western Weekly News*, 28 June 1924.

⁹⁸ *Western Weekly News*, 28 June 1930.

⁹⁹ *West Briton*, 11 May 1931.

¹⁰⁰ *West Briton*, 2 March 1933.

CHOIR	FESTIVAL	PLACE	YEAR	DATE	RECORDED
Falmouth	County	1 ST	1920	29 May	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
	County	1 ST	1921	2 June	<i>West Briton</i>
	County	1 ST	1922	18 May	
	County	2 ND	1923	2 May	
	County	1 ST	1924	29 May	
	Mabe	2 ND	1930	28 June	
	County	3 RD	1935	23 May	<i>West Briton</i>
	Queens	4 TH		31 October	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
	County	2 ND	1936	21 May	<i>West Briton</i>
	Camborne	3 RD	1937	28 July	
Holman	County	2 ND	1921	2 June	<i>West Briton</i>
	Mabe	3 RD	1926	3 July	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
	Wadebridge	1 ST		6 November	
	Mabe	4 TH	1927	25 June	
	Camborne	1 ST	1929	3 August	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
	Wadebridge	1 ST		7 November	
	Wadebridge	2 ND	1930	6 November	
	Mabe	3 RD	1931	11 July	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
	Queens	1 ST	1932	22 October	
	Queens	2 ND	1933	19 October	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
Mabe	County	3 RD	1921	2 June	<i>West Briton</i>
	County	2 ND	1922	18 May	
	Gweek	1 ST			26 August
	County	1 ST	1923	2 May	<i>West Briton</i>
	Queens	1 ST	1925	1 August	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
	County	3 RD	1927	12 May	<i>West Briton</i>
	County	3 RD	1928	10 May	
	County	3 RD	1929	16 May	
	Wadebridge	1 ST	1933	9 November	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
	County	3 RD	1934	17 May	<i>West Briton</i>
	Camborne	4 TH		4 August	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
	County	2 ND	1935	23 May	<i>West Briton</i>
	County	3 RD	1936	23 May	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
	Wadebridge	6 TH		12 November	<i>West Briton</i>
	Marazion	Mabe	3 RD	1926	3 July
County		1 ST	1927	12 May	<i>West Briton</i>
Mabe		1 ST		25 June	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
County		4 TH	1928	10 May	<i>West Briton</i>
Camborne		3 RD	1929	3 August	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
Mabe		1 ST	1930	28 June	
Mabe		2 ND	1931	11 July	
Wadebridge		2 ND	1932	10 November	<i>West Briton</i>
Wadebridge		2 ND	1933	9 November	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
County		1 ST	1934	17 May	<i>West Briton</i>
County		3 RD	1935	23 May	
Wadebridge		4 TH			14 November
Wadebridge		5 TH	1936	12 November	<i>West Briton</i>

Table 20 Festival Participation by leading choirs in west Cornwall

CHOIR	FESTIVAL	PLACE	YEAR	DATE	RECORDED
Mousehole	County	3 RD	1922	18 May	<i>West Briton</i>
	County	2 ND	1923	2 May	
	County	2 ND	1924	29 May	
	County	1 ST	1930	May	<i>Century of Song</i> ¹⁰¹
	Mabe	5 TH		28 June	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
	County	1 ST	1931	11 May	<i>West Briton</i>
	Mabe	1 ST	1931	June	<i>Century of Song</i>
	County	1 ST	1932	2 June	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
	Mabe	1 ST		June	<i>Century of Song</i>
	Camborne	1 ST	1934	4 August	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
Camborne	2 ND	1936	23 July	<i>West Briton</i>	
Newlyn ¹⁰²	County	2 ND	1922	18 May	<i>West Briton</i>
	County	1 ST		2 May	
	Mabe	1 ST		June	<i>Buccas' Song!</i> ¹⁰³
	County	1 ST	1924	29 May	<i>West Briton</i>
	County	1 ST	1927	12 May	
	County	1 ST	1928	10 May	
	County	2 ND	1929	16 May	
	Wadebridge	2 ND		7 November	
	Wadebridge	1 ST	1930	6 November	
	County	2 ND	1931	11 May	
	County	1 ST	1932	2 June	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
	Camborne	1 ST		20 August	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
	Wadebridge	1 ST		10 November	<i>West Briton</i>
	County	1 ST	1933	25 May	<i>West Briton</i>
	County	2 ND	1934	17 May	
	County	1 ST	1935	23 May	
	County	1 ST	1936	23 May	
County	1 ST	1937	13 May	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>	
Penryn	Mabe	3 RD	1930	28 June	
	County	3 RD	1931	11 May	<i>West Briton</i>
	County	2 ND	1932	2 June	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
	County	1 ST	1933	25 May	<i>West Briton</i>
	Camborne	1 ST	1934	4 August	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
	Camborne	5 TH	1937	28 July	<i>West Briton</i>

Table 20 contd. Festival Participation by leading choirs in west Cornwall

¹⁰¹ Douglas Williams, *A Century of Song The Story of Mousehole and its famed Male Voice Choir* (Penzance: Headlands Printers Ltd., 2008), p.52.

¹⁰² Ivan Balls, *Buccas' Song! a short history of Newlyn Male Voice Choir*. Frequent choir festival entries are recorded in the newspapers as Newlyn West. Dates and named conductors cross-referenced in the choir's own publication are evidence that Newlyn and Newlyn West are one and the same.

¹⁰³ Balls, *Buccas' Song!*, p.8.

CHOIR	FESTIVAL	PLACE	YEAR	DATE	RECORDED
Truro People's Palace	County	2 ND	1924	26 May	<i>West Briton</i>
	County	4 TH	1927	14 May	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
	Wadebridge	2 ND		12 November	
	County	2 ND	1928	10 May	<i>West Briton</i>
	County	1 ST	1929	16 May	
	County	1 ST	1931	11 May	
	Camborne	2 ND	1937	28 July	
	County	1 ST	1938	21 May	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
Ventonleague	Camborne	1 ST	1932	20 August	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
	Queens	1 ST	1933	19 October	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
	Camborne	3 RD	1934	4 August	<i>Western Weekly News</i>
	Queens	1 ST		25 October	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
	St Dennis	1 ST		29 November	
	County	5 TH	1936	21 May	<i>West Briton</i>
	Camborne	1 ST		23 July	
	Wadebridge	3 RD		12 November	
	County	3 RD	1937	13 May	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
	Camborne	1 ST		28 July	<i>West Briton</i>
	Queens	2 ND		28 October	

Table 20 contd. Festival Participation by leading choirs in west Cornwall

further encouraged Kessell to form a male voice choir at Treverva.¹⁰⁴ The core of the Treverva male voice choir was the Quartet and Treverva chapel choir members. In the same manner as the clay country choir Treviscoe, Treverva Male Voice Choir made an immediate impact on the music festival scene in Cornwall.¹⁰⁵ A dominant and formative influence post-1945, Treverva's history places it as vying for contest honours alongside Treviscoe.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Interview: *Treverva*, 4 December 2008. Confirmation of the link between the Reverend Daly Atkinson, Edgar Kessell and the origins of Treverva Male Voice Choir.

¹⁰⁵ *West Briton*, 29 October 1936, Queens Festival, 2ND; *Cornish Guardian*, 13 May 1937, County Festival, 1ST; *West Briton*, 28 July 1937, Camborne Festival, 1ST; *Cornish Guardian*, 19 May 1938, County Festival, 2ND; *Cornish Guardian*, 10 November 1938, Wadebridge Festival, 1ST; *Cornish Guardian*, 25 May 1939, County Festival, 2ND.

¹⁰⁶ See Chapter Seven.

The male voice choir at Truro People's Palace (introduced in Chapter Two) forms the third 'exceptional' choir, in this sub-grouping. Re-forming in the 1920s,¹⁰⁷ it did not become fully re-established in the Institution's programme until Mr Lightbown took up the position of conductor.¹⁰⁸ Under his musical direction the stature and reputation of the choir grew during the next ten years, its place within the community enhanced by festival successes (see Table 20). Mr Lightbown came to personify the choir of Truro People's Palace but for some reason in 1932 the choir lapsed. This could have been related to the Institution itself, a lack of numbers in the evening class, lack of interest or irregular attendance, or it could be simply that Mr Lightbown was unable to commit to continued leadership. Circumstances changed again and in February 1936 the choir re-formed with Mr Lightbown once more as conductor and with the choir numbers at twenty-six.¹⁰⁹

Unlike other regions of Cornwall, the number of established choirs and their geographic proximity fostered an early inter-choir rivalry which was not confined to the festival arena. This was another feature which set west Cornwall apart from the other sub-regions. Friendly rivalries between choirs and towns were on occasion to cause local controversy, spilling over into the political arena. In 1935, for example, tension was generated by choirs from neighbouring towns coming to St Ives to raise monies for their charitable purposes. Newspaper reports

¹⁰⁷ *Western Weekly News*, 1 May 1920; 26 May 1923.

¹⁰⁸ *West Briton*, 26 May 1924.

¹⁰⁹ *West Briton*, 17 February 1936.

of the St Ives town council meeting details discussion of a request by Holman Prize Male Voice Choir to give an open-air performance in the locality. The general view of the Council was that 'they ought not to allow so much money to go out of St Ives during the summer season. Their own people could do with it.'¹¹⁰ In the end the request of the Holman Choir was turned down. St Ives male voice choir had itself been refused permission to give concerts at Newquay and Truro around the same period. One can interpret the response in St Ives as one primarily based on economic grounds, though compounded by a perceived threat to civic pride and reputation.

6.

Emergence of different choir identities, both individually and collectively, within the four distinctive regions of the county, were part determined through an amalgam of physical geography, location and population distribution. Concert venues, concert itineraries and festival participation, were aspects of a choir's identity shaped by those same factors which constructed and identified the distinctiveness of 'place'.

Choirs in east Cornwall were located on the periphery of the county and were distinctive by a clear division into fishermen's choirs and those inland. Forced into a closer association with Plymouth and west Devon by location and the region's physical geography, east regional choirs were unable to, or chose not to, participate fully in the developing festival movement in west Cornwall. They

¹¹⁰ *Western Weekly News*, 27 July 1935.

turned eastward. For choirs in north Cornwall, distance from each other and from the rest of the county's population affected Bodmin and Wadebridge less than the two most northerly choirs. With a heightened degree of isolation, Delabole and Tintagel, as eastern choirs had done, turned east to northwest and west Devon. In mid-Cornwall choirs came from communities shaped by Methodism and association with the clay industry – they were all Clay Country choirs. From Mike Turner's oral history, *Clay Country Voices*, we gain an understanding of a sense of social cohesion and unified identity found within the clay settlements:

Back long, the chapel was the centre – to us – we had nothing else, never went nowhere else more than chapel and choir practice. Nothing else up there doing. When I joined the choir, when I was about fourteen or fifteen, I loved it. Loved it.¹¹¹

Lastly, we saw how west Cornwall had the 'numbers' in all respects: population, chapels and churches hence choirmasters, established male voice choirs and festivals. Leonard Collins and Mousehole choir became the lead choir in the interwar period through festival performances and BBC broadcasts.¹¹² Choral reputations were made in these two performance arenas and choirs from west Cornwall dominated. Nor did western choirs have to travel outside their region to fulfil concert commitments. Unwittingly the seeds of future choir identity discontent, an east-west divide within the male choral movement, were sown

¹¹¹ Turner, *Clay Country Voices*, p.74.

¹¹² Williams, *A Century of Song*, pp.11-2, 52. The choir competed in Plymouth Festival, 1931-2, and the London Music Festival of 1933. Between 1935-9 the BBC broadcast 25 concerts by Mousehole under the baton of Leonard Collins.

during this period. In later chapters we will see that choirs in the east of the county came to be regarded as Plymouth choirs, whilst those in the far west would regard themselves as representing the real Cornish male voice choir.¹¹³

In the world of international politics the year 1939 was to close as 1919 had opened – in the shadows of war. During the intervening years male voice choirs had become integral to Cornish culture and society. The Second World War was to challenge Cornwall's social and cultural insularity and once more Cornwall was to lose many of its male population, through enlistment and call-up to the three armed services and the wider demands of the war effort. Would a new generation come forth to fill the positions vacated by those lost? How would Cornwall's male choral identity be reconfigured? Would the network of choirs fracture? Had the male voice choral tradition such social and cultural strength that it could be sustained during six years of war? Indeed, would it emerge in 1946 in sound voice? Answers to these questions will form the focus of the next chapter.

¹¹³ Milden, 'Kinship and Borders', p.42. Milden expands on the East-West divide in relation to socio-economic terms discussing how it factors into a sense of Cornish identity.

Chapter Six

The world at war: Cornish male voice choirs, 1940-1945

A generation on from World War I global conflict was again the catalyst for change. The maintenance of pre-existing social and cultural traditions was instrumental in ensuring a degree of social stability and cohesion in Cornish society during the Second World War. At the same time the implementation of national war-time policies meant that Cornwall conformed to and mirrored the requirements of the nation.¹ A demographic shift in Cornwall resulted in an imbalance between the indigenous population and 'incomers'. Two cohorts of the latter were of particular significance: child evacuees and American service personnel. The counterbalance to this in-migration was an outward movement of the county's men prompted by enlistment, conscription and the dictates of wartime employment.

Against this backdrop, Cornish male voice choir numbers fell below the pre-1939 number. Movement within the male sector of the population through deployment of service personnel and the re-configuration in civilian employment had an impact on choir numbers and membership. A choir which retained a sufficient core membership could continue to function. Beyond choirs which stopped at the outset or within the opening years of the war, there were those

¹ John Stevenson, *British Society 1914–1945* (London: Penguin, 1990), Chapter 16 – 'Into Battle'.

which, rather than fold completely, survived as the male section within a mixed choir. Choralists without a choir formed new choirs. During a period of national emergency, the need for expediency regarding solutions for male voice choirs continuing were largely of a temporary nature. The fluidity of the male workforce within and out of county during wartime meant the size and composition of choirs fluctuated. In the process, choir identities were reshaped and re-defined.

1.

In socio-economic terms 1939 was to herald in a period of such intense global upheaval that historically it could be said to have impacted on civilian life in a manner hitherto unimagined.² Unlike the Great War, the Second World War was one which was fully mechanised. With Cornwall subsumed into the nation's war effort the defence of the county as it was across the country, became the responsibility of the Home Guard.³ The implementation of wartime food policies affected the day-to-day standard of living.⁴ The social historian Marwick records how Government agricultural policies were underpinned by large farm subsidies:

The food shortage was met by direction and encouragement of farmers, through subsidies – for ploughing in particular ... British agriculture now for the first time became thoroughly mechanized; the number of tractors in use, for instance, leapt from 60,000 to 190,000.⁵

² Alan S. Milward, *War, Economy and Society 1939-1945* (London: Penguin, 1987), Chapter 7 – 'War, Population and Labour'.

³ Richard Weight, *Patriots: National Identity in Britain 1940-2000* (London: Macmillan, 2002), pp.76-7. See also: John Parkin, 'Farmers in the Cornish Home Guard', *WW2 People's War*, BBC Archive List, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/96/a4365696> [accessed 25 January 2011].

⁴ Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain- Rationing, Controls and Consumption 1939-1955* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). The author deals comprehensively with the radical changes regarding social reforms and domestic daily-living.

⁵ Arthur Marwick, *The Explosion of British Society, 1914-1970* (London: Macmillan, 1971), p.106.

An agreement in 1941 between Britain and America ensured a supply of tractors to British farmers. A memoir entitled 'St Dennis and Goss Moor – Lend-Lease Tractors' illustrates how those farmers in Cornwall in possession of a tractor hired it out to farmers of neighbouring smallholdings.⁶ Enlistment resulted in a shortage of manpower throughout the main Cornish industries of farming, fishing and mining. Farm labouring became the purview of the women's 'land army'.⁷ Smaller in number but no less important was another group of incomers drafted in to meet the demands for manual labour in the mining industry. This diverse group is officially recorded as comprising: 'Canadian sappers, Polish miners, Italian prisoners under certain restrictions, and the often troublesome "optants": men opting for mining rather than military service.'⁸ These examples serve to illustrate how war necessitated an internal restructuring of traditional industries. With the civilian demographic affected by the resultant re-configuration of the workforce, the indigenous Cornish population came into contact with new identities and cultures, thereby opening-up Cornish society to cosmopolitan influences.

⁶ Cornwall CSV, 'St Dennis and Goss Moor – Lend-Lease Tractors', WW2 People's War, BBC Archive List, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/24/a7357124> [accessed 25 January 2011].

⁷ Paul Addison, 'The Impact of the Second World War', in Paul Addison and Harriet Jones (eds.), *A Companion to Contemporary Britain 1939-2000* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), pp.3-22. A personal perspective on the role of the Women's Land Army in Cornwall is to be found in the memoir: Pat Peters, *Land Girls Gang Up* (Ipswich: Old Pond Publishing, 2009).

⁸ Terry Chapman, 'Nationalized Cornwall', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies Fourteen* (Exeter: University Press, 2006), pp.204-28. Chapman cites the reference X 161 *Cornwall Record Office* for his statistics. Additionally he quotes from D. B. Barton *A History of Tin Mining and Smelting in Cornwall* (Exeter, 1989), p.179, from which the quotation cited is taken.

In her introduction to *Identity and Difference*, Kathryn Woodward notes how 'identity gives us a location in the world and presents the link between us and the society in which we live'.⁹ This notion of identity is given credence by the experiences of the two groups of incomers who became active members of Cornwall's wartime society, American service personnel and child evacuees. In recording how different constituencies impacted on society during the Second World War, the view of the social historian John Stevenson in *British Society* was that 'The Americans were the most significant group, bringing with them their own styles of language, music and attitudes'.¹⁰ Neither the Americans nor the child evacuees formed part of the workforce in Cornwall but the presence of both impacted significantly on Cornish society.

Personal testimonies of wartime experiences recorded and archived by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) as *WW2 People's War*, give accounts of American service personnel, black and white, stationed in Cornwall. In Chapter Three it was noted how the power of the Hollywood cinema afforded opportunities for escapism. One personal testimony noted: 'Because of Hollywood films ... we loved the Yanks before they got here, when they arrived they were idolised.'¹¹ In writing of his time as a child evacuee Terence Frisby

⁹ Kathryn Woodward, 'Introduction', in Kathryn Woodward (ed.), *Identity and Difference* (London: Sage, 1997), pp.1-6 (p.1).

¹⁰ Stevenson, *British Society 1914-1945*, p.459.

¹¹ Cornwall CSV, 'D-Day – 60th Anniversary, Part 1 (The Yanks in Truro)', *WW2 People's War*, BBC Archive List, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/21/a4158821> [accessed 25 January 2011].

recalls how the black American troops stationed at Doublebois in the east of the county in 1943 were 'loved' by the children: 'The village wasn't prejudiced – it was astounded.'¹² American camps were spread far and wide around St Agnes, Truro, Falmouth, St Austell and east Cornwall making their presence felt on the different communities. A negative side of American culture was that of black-white segregation, most overtly demonstrated in separate camps for African-Americans and Caucasian US Army Units. Differences in the treatment of service personnel came to be observed: 'Segregation was a new word for us. Off-duty they did not mix. When the Negroes were in town, the whites were kept in camp.'¹³ Even so, inter-racial fighting between American soldiers was not unknown.¹⁴

The new social mix engendered a further extension of vocabulary with the arrival of 'vackies', evacuees from metropolitan England. The government policy of evacuation was an enormous undertaking, carrying with it great uncertainties and raising social questions.¹⁵ On the surface, the national picture was one of both the family unit and family life fracturing with resultant demographic changes

¹² Terence Frisby, *Kisses on a Postcard* (London: Bloomsbury, 2009), p.174.

¹³ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/21/a4158821> [accessed 25 January 2011].

¹⁴ Cornwall CSV, 'Memories of when the Yanks came to Truro Part 2', WW2 People's War, BBC Archive List, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/21/a41090024> [accessed 25 January 2011]. See also the documentary, 'G I Britain', BBC Radio 4, 28-29 March 2013, which gives a national picture of the impact in the United Kingdom of the 1.5 million American service personnel based there from 1942.

¹⁵ Angus Calder, *The People's War Britain 1939-45* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1969). Chapter 2 deals specifically with the question of evacuation.

effecting life-changing experiences.¹⁶ Cornwall took in three per cent of the total numbers evacuated. The county's remote rural hamlets and villages were not excluded even though they were lacking in amenities found in urban population centres, a fact not considered relevant by the civil authorities. The village of St Breward, North Cornwall provides an appropriate illustration. There was no street lighting, no sanitation (the lavatory was a bucket at the top of the garden) and 'only one cold water-tap outside the back door'.¹⁷

Despite the privations encountered by children from metropolitan England in Cornwall, for some the experiences helped shape their adult lives. The evacuee Josie Brightman, not wishing to return to London at the end of the war as 'her heart was in Cornwall', holidayed in the county in subsequent years, eventually moving to Cornwall. She came to identify herself as Cornish through association and a sense of belonging.¹⁸ The evacuee Terence Frisby recalls how he happily identified with being a Doublebois child when in that environment, but his self-identification as a 'vacky' over-rode that identity if the context changed: 'We twelve Doublebois children would walk to school together quite happily but, when we got to the village, we separated, without conscious effort, into vackies and village kids.'¹⁹ These experiences suggest that the notion of identity can

¹⁶ Harold L. Smith, *Britain in the Second World War, A Social History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), pp.15-6. See also, John McNicol, 'The evacuation of schoolchildren', in Harold L. Smith (ed.), *War and Social Change* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), pp.3-31.

¹⁷ Cornwall CSV, 'Memories of the Evacuees', WW2 People's War, BBC Archive List, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/20/a4060720> [accessed 25 January 2011].

¹⁸ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/20/a4060720>.

¹⁹ Frisby, *Kisses on a Postcard*, p.61.

change and reshape itself through a lifetime, influenced and in part determined by the passing of time, context and the place.

Notwithstanding the arrival of 'incomers', there was much in wartime Cornwall that remained unaltered. Stability and established traditions found prime expression through continued adherence to Methodism and Nonconformity. Marked by the routine of Sunday church and chapel attendance, this weekly ritual brought to the fore an awareness of what it meant to belong to a long-established group. Here the 'occasion' acted as a vehicle for social integration by 'reminding people of the basic values which the group rests upon'.²⁰ The experience for many evacuees meant attendance at the two Sunday services often with Sunday school in the afternoon. Where certain evacuees were concerned it appears it was compulsory despite their upbringing,²¹ whilst for some it was embraced unquestioningly.²² This socio-religious dynamic initiated a transferring of religious cultural practices from the indigenous population to the in-comers.

During these war years new elements were factoring in to traditional activities and occasions. Two contrasting examples, harvest and music festival, are illustrative of activities changed in their own identity by world events but

²⁰ Robert Boccock, *Ritual in Industrial Society* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1974), p.61. Chapter 3 Ritual: Civic and Religious.

²¹ Devon CSV, 'Evacuation to Trethosa', WW2 People's War, BBC Archive List, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/20/a4096136> [accessed 25 January 2011].

²² John Pavis, 'Evacuation 1940: Life as a Farm Boy in Cornwall – Chapel, Oil Lamps and Signs of War', WW2 People's War, BBC Archive List, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/19/a1992819> [accessed 25 January 2011].

each acting as a point of stability within the calendar year. The ritual of harvest, 'crying the neck', followed by the croust was celebrated across the county in the last weeks of summer. The involvement of evacuees with the locals is recalled in *Kisses on a Postcard* and archived wartime memories.²³ The occasion of the County Music Festival, an established date within the calendar by 1939, continued but with a restructured programme necessitated by a 'lack of men and transport restrictions'.²⁴ The introduction of a class for Community Singing in 1940 was an early effort to maintain social cohesion²⁵ with further programme modifications the following year concentrating on classes for women and juveniles.²⁶ The one other music festival that continued also on a restricted scale was Indian Queens in the clay country: '... this year all competitions are for juveniles.'²⁷ Religious observance, harvest and music festival participation provide illustrations whereby we are able to observe how continuity and demographic change were managed by the population of Cornwall.

The altered socio-economic context of the war years deeply affected the male choral tradition in Cornwall. In cases where a high proportion of the workforce were in reserved occupations or too old to enlist, then a choir's contribution to society and the war effort could be maintained. If on the other

²³ Frisby, *Kisses on a Postcard*, pp.88-9. See also:
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/36/a4096136>;
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/36/a1992819> [accessed 25 January 2011].

²⁴ *Seventy Years of Music-Making 1910-1980*, Cornwall Music Festival Souvenir Brochure, p.40. See excerpt from Minutes: 27 January 1940.

²⁵ *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 3 July 1940.

²⁶ *Cornish Guardian*, 17 July 1941.

²⁷ *Cornish Guardian*, 17 October 1940.

hand wartime postings or civil defence responsibilities took their toll, hitherto established choirs would not remain viable. Thus, as a direct consequence of the war, three main categories of male voice choir developed. Firstly, those pre-1939 choirs which continued through the war years; secondly, choirs which were formed from new wartime social units consisting of men in uniform; and thirdly, those civilian male voice choirs which came into being directly as a result of the war. Examination of selected choirs from each category will show how the sacred and secular integrity of the male choral tradition was sustained during the war years.

2.

Initial attention is centred on the choir from the fishing village of Looe, as this provides a good illustration of continuity. Instrumental in the choir's continued wartime existence were its traditional roots; the early history of Looe fishermen's choir has been detailed in Chapter Five. A formally posed photograph (Figure R) published by the *Cornish Guardian* to coincide with a BBC radio broadcast provides evidence confirming both the age of choir members and the importance of reserved occupation status, the specific wartime reasons for the choir's continuance.²⁸ A press report of a 1942 BBC broadcast detailed choir numbers as twenty-two.²⁹ Although a loss of over one third of membership relative to pre-1939, this was sufficient for the choir to remain a cohesive choral

²⁸ *Cornish Guardian*, 14 March 1940.

²⁹ *Cornish Times*, 2 May 1941.

unit, able to sustain its social and cultural position in the community.

Geographically Looe was close to the American service camp at Doublebois



Figure R Looe Choir Members 1940

(directly linked by the Liskeard-Looe branch rail line); thus its location brought the choir into direct contact with both American soldiers and wartime evacuees.

The Fishermen's Choir approached and embraced the new cultural dynamic of the American service personnel with openness. The choir accepted new musical innovations, while at the same time remaining true to its choral traditions.

From the personal testimony of the wartime evacuee Terence Frisby we can determine the interplay in the cultural dynamics between tradition and modernity, between continuity and change. As a young vacky with no experience

as to the power of music, Terence Frisby was deeply affected by the impact of a range of musical styles that he encountered:

Camp concerts were huge events. Entertainment was at a premium in our backwater ... Professional entertainers and the Looe Fishermen's Choir performed in the long Nissen hut ... After the choir a sing-song, 'You Are My Sunshine'. Rows of soldiers sang ... With a sudden, rolling, bellowing roar and swayed as they sang. The force and enthusiasm of all those open male throats gave that song an emotional power the composer could only have dreamed of ... It was my childhood but it was their youth ...³⁰

A concert in 1943 brought an altogether different emotional experience. Frisby recounts a camp concert event of that year 'with the ubiquitous Looe Fishermen's Choir performing and us kids singing traditional and patriotic songs for our guests. Then their own jazz band played for us. It was sensational; the whole room was soon rocking. I had never heard music like it'.³¹ What this 1943 concert illustrates is as the musicologist Martin Stokes asserts: 'music symbolises social boundaries', whereby 'people recognise identities and places, and boundaries which separate them'.³²

The experiencing of music from contemporary American culture through participation in joint concerts did not divert Looe male choir from its traditional concerns. The choir continued as a cohesive socio-musical unit throughout the war; it observed traditional activities such as contributing to charitable causes and it remained a central point in the community through secular and sacred concert

³⁰ Frisby, *Kisses on a Postcard*, pp.141-2.

³¹ Frisby, *Kisses on a Postcard*, p.175.

³² Martin Stokes, 'Chapter 1 Introduction: Ethnicity, Identity', in Martin Stokes (ed.), *Ethnicity, Identity and Music – The Musical Construction of Place* (Oxford: Berg, 1997), pp.4-5.

performances. In Chapter Five it was noted how radio broadcasts by male voice choirs became part of regular BBC programming. The importance of regional broadcasts to the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) cannot be underestimated. Regional programming enabled those serving to make a personal as well as a collective connection to home.³³ The value accorded to such music programmes can be gauged by the following excerpt taken from a letter printed in an issue of the *Cornish Times* in 1940. The tone however indicated a degree of exasperation with those who schedule programmes:

... the Fishermen's Choir would be doing a broadcast to the B.E.F. in March. I was delighted until I heard that the time was 3pm. That is of course pretty useless as very few have wireless sets and cafes open from 6pm to 9pm. Also we have a little work to do! (Letter dated February 23rd 1940).³⁴

Broadcast from Plymouth, the response from listeners to Looe choir's rendition of traditional male choral music resulted in a prompt second concert performance. To broadcast again in such a short space of time was reportedly 'rather exceptional for amateurs'.³⁵ Hence through the medium of radio there was forged a reciprocal notion of identity between listener and performer, between listener and place.

A further illustration of Looe's commitment to traditional repertoire came with a concert programme in the summer of 1945. Staged in the cinema at Looe

³³ Asa Briggs, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom Vol. II 'The Golden Age of Wireless'* (London: London University Press, 1965), p.323. See also: Asa Briggs, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom Vol. III 'The War of Words'* (London: London University Press, 1970), pp.568, 589-90.

³⁴ *Cornish Times*, 1 March 1940.

³⁵ *Cornish Times*, 15 March 1940.

in aid of Welcome Home and War Memorial Funds, choral numbers included: *Sailors' Chorus*, *Timbuktu*, *Calm is the Sea*, *Fierce Raged the Tempest* and *Comrades Song of Hope*.³⁶ Subsequent to a radio broadcast in 1945 the concert report headline was 'One of the best loved choirs in the West Country'. The account of the concert performance underscores this very analysis: "'Natural" musicians frequently score over their more polished counterparts because they sing with their feelings and not a consciousness of technique.'³⁷

An examination of Looe male voice choir stands as an exemplar of music being central to social and cultural stability during the war years. It demonstrates how singing was an expression of a cultural tradition. Its inclusivity meant that during the war years out-siders became in-siders. As Terence Frisby himself said: 'Singing became part of my life in Cornwall.'³⁸ The impact of the 'naturalness' in performance and interpretation by the Looe fishermen's choir of male choral music bound together the different generations.

3.

We turn now to an examination of other leading pre-1939 choirs that continued in some form by reasons of retention of sufficient choir numbers and/or availability of a conductor. Chapter Three mapped out the formation and early history of the choir from the engineering works Holman of Camborne. Retention

³⁶ *Cornish Times*, 30 August 1945. A recording of the choir's performance of *Calm is the Sea* was broadcast a few weeks later; see *Cornish Guardian*, 13 September 1945.

³⁷ *Cornish Times*, 19 October 1945.

³⁸ Frisby, *Kisses on a Postcard*, p.186. At the start of Chapter Sixteen Terence Frisby recalls the extent to which singing was part of his everyday life. It encompassed daily school life, games in the playground and village, singsong chanting between the vackies and village children as they hurled insults at each other. In addition were the Sunday Church services and singing along with programmes on the radio, seemingly the Light Programme being most popular.

of workforce numbers would no doubt have been due to the material demands of war and the engineering firm's specific contribution to the war effort. The conductor from 1925-9 (see Chapter Four, Table 15), Mr A. S. Tredrea, is noted as the conductor from 1943 onwards. The question of his and choir members availability would have factored into concert arrangements. The evidence which does exist informs us that shortened concert series in both 1943³⁹ and '44⁴⁰ were undertaken with performances mainly in the Redruth-Camborne district. Local Methodist churches acted as venues for both sacred and secular performances and monies raised were primarily for specific church and community needs.

The maintaining of a concert series format by any choir would have contributed to sustaining the morale of the populace and acted as a point of social steadiness in a time of social upheaval. A concert by Holman's choir in June 1944 is an example of how the role of a choir satisfied societal needs. Firstly, the sum of £38 was raised for 'Salute the Soldier' funds at that concert. Secondly, the programme content is listed as *Martyrs of the Arena*, *The Lost Chord*, *Mate O'Mine*, *The Crusaders*, *Where e'er you Walk*, *Eventide* and *Goodnight Beloved*.⁴¹ As we saw in repertoire choices of Looe Fishermen's choir, the selection is taken from the recognised canon of traditional male choral music. But of particular interest is the

³⁹ *West Briton*, 1 April, North Parade Methodist Church, Camborne; 22 April, St John's Methodist Church, Troon.

⁴⁰ *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 2 August, Camborne; *West Briton*, 31 August, two sacred concerts at St John's Methodist Church, Troon; 23 November, two sacred concerts in Plain-an-Gwarry Methodist Church, Redruth; 28 December, Tehidy Sanatorium.

⁴¹ *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 28 June 1944.

inclusion of the negro spiritual *I'se Weary of Waitin*, an indicator of cross cultural influence.

Tens of thousands of American service personnel were stationed in and around the port of Falmouth and its hinterland in preparation for D-Day, 1944.⁴² Evidence of American vocal music tastes and styles was present in concert performances in the Falmouth area earlier that March. A concert at Penryn included a number of solos by an American sailor Seaman T. H. Reed of the US Navy, 'a coloured man' who received a great ovation, his 'beautiful baritone was greatly appreciated and encored'.⁴³ A week later the villagers of Flushing were the recipients of 'an excellent concert by The Black Coons Concert Party'.⁴⁴ Although the locals in west Cornwall were known to black-up for the tradition of guize dancing (see Chapter One), there is no way of knowing whether this was the case here or whether the performers were black Americans. An American presence in English ports was maintained into 1945 for Holman's male voice choir entertained members of the United States Navy in the April. Together with an earlier one in February, this concert provides evidence that as men were returning from the war Holman choir numbers were seemingly stabilizing at 'about forty-six' and 'about fifty voices', respectively.⁴⁵ Other recorded performances of

⁴² Falmouth area – harbour, inshore waters and coastline were awash with American service personnel preparing for D-Day, 1944. Videos of American servicemen in the Falmouth area are to be found at www.criticalpast.com/products/location_history/Falmouth_England/1940/1944 [accessed 22 February 2013].

⁴³ *Cornish Echo*, 10 March 1944.

⁴⁴ *Cornish Echo*, 17 March 1944.

⁴⁵ *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 11 April 1945; *West Briton*, 15 February 1945. *West Briton*, 24 December 1931, records the choir membership as 38.

Holman's choir during 1945 indicate that their prime purpose was to meet immediate charitable needs.⁴⁶ They responded in the manner accepted by all male voice choirs in extending assistance to their neighbours, illustrated by the choir's efforts at Chacewater for their 'Welcome Home Fund'.⁴⁷

On the south coast at Mount's Bay the two well-established choirs of Mousehole and Marazion both retained sufficient numbers to continue. Concerts by Mousehole male choir in 1940⁴⁸ were under the baton of Leonard Collins. His departure upon receiving a wartime posting⁴⁹ did not prove to be an insurmountable problem for the choir. Reserved occupation status was the probable reason for enabling the choir to continue throughout the War years even though 'more than half the choir saw Active Service during the 1939-45 war'.⁵⁰ Marazion male voice choir was fortunate enough to retain J. H. Trudgeon as its conductor, no doubt due to his age. Chapter Two, Figure M, indicates that in 1911 Mr Trudgeon appears to be in his forties, so by the Second World War he would have been sixty years plus. With agriculture and fishing being the mainstay of Marazion's wider economy, both categorised as reserved occupations, concerts were undertaken when and where possible.⁵¹ Notwithstanding that the issues of reserved occupation and age were as relevant

⁴⁶ *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 7 March 1945; *West Briton*, 3 May 1945.

⁴⁷ *West Briton*, 13 December 1945.

⁴⁸ *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 21 February 1940; *West Briton*, 18 April 1940.

⁴⁹ *West Briton*, 22 May 1941.

⁵⁰ Douglas Williams, *A Century of Song, The Story of Mousehole and its famed Male Voice Choir* (Penzance: Headlands Printers Ltd., 2008), p.12.

⁵¹ *West Briton*, 29 February, 15 August 1940; *West Briton*, 4 December 1941 (also recorded in the following issues – *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 3 December, *Cornish Echo*, 5 December 1941); *West Briton*, 4 June 1942.

to the fishing fleet of Newlyn as other ports, unlike the choirs of Mousehole and Marazion the choir of Newlyn 'suspended activities for the duration of the war'.⁵² The probable reason is hinted at in personal testimony of wartime experiences in Newlyn: 'During the war, motorised Newlyn fishing vessels were commandeered for service with the Royal Navy. Their captains and crews were encouraged to stay with the boats.'⁵³

In the port town of Falmouth, two choirs existed pre-1939 and during the opening period of the Second World War male choral music performances continued in two different guises, a town choir and a Christmas season Docks choir. 1940 began with a joint concert by Falmouth male voice choir and Truro Orchestra at Falmouth Drill Hall.⁵⁴ However by January 1943 the demands of war had resulted in only the Falmouth Docks choir existing. No doubt augmented by singers from the original town male choir, the Docks choir continued the traditional carol singing around the town at Christmas. A report in the *Cornish Echo* indicated that the Docks choir had been reduced, in the words of its conductor, to a 'one day choir'. Under the heading, 'War versus Choir', the conductor commented that 'War difficulties stand in the way of a permanent choir ... many singers are scattered in the county district, along with other duties in the Home Guard, Civil Defence and fire watching ... are all obstacles to

⁵² Ivan Balls, *Buccas' Song! a short history of Newlyn Male Choir*, p.13.

⁵³ John F. Tonkin, 'The Comandeered Fisherman', in *My Cornwall Vol.2 Issue 4*, February/March 2011, p.24.

⁵⁴ *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 10 January 1940.

practising'.⁵⁵ The re-forming of the Falmouth Town male choir at the close of hostilities was instigated by the specific need to raise monies for Falmouth Tribute Fund.⁵⁶

The drop in the numbers of men employed in the china clay industry was significant in accounting for the cessation of two choirs in mid-Cornwall.⁵⁷ St Dennis choir was disbanded at the outbreak of war⁵⁸ and Treviscoe disbanded in 1939 due to call-up and war work.⁵⁹ Of the the pre-1939 choirs only St Austell maintained a male choral presence by continuing in the form of the tenor and bass sections of a mixed choir. Again we have a choir fortunate to have retained its conductor, Mr Brennand Smith, who worked with both the male voice choir and St Cecilia ladies' choir (see Chapter Five). It appears that January and April 1940⁶⁰ were dates for two major community performances with evidence also pointing to a concert at the close of the year.⁶¹ In reporting a concert performance of Mendelssohn's oratorio *Elijah*, April 1942, the local reporter commented on the contrast in numbers between the women's Cecilia Choir and the men in the male voice choir. The women were 'almost at full strength' whereas the male choir membership was 'seriously depleted by the absence of men on War Service'.⁶² A

⁵⁵ *Cornish Echo*, 15 January 1943.

⁵⁶ *Cornish Echo*, 10 August 1945.

⁵⁷ *Board of Trade Working Party Reports – China-Clay* HMSO 1948, Appendix IX, p.67. Pre-war statistics place 1937 peaking at over 3,400 people, falling to 774 in 1943, with a recognisable increase to 1,204 by 1945.

⁵⁸ St Dennis Male Voice Choir, <http://www.fed-cornishchoirs.org.uk/> [accessed 15 December 2006].

⁵⁹ Yvonne Puttick, *Cornish Gold: A History of Treviscoe Male Voice Choir 1936-1993*, p.3.

⁶⁰ *Cornish Guardian*, 4 January and 11 April 1940.

⁶¹ *Cornish Guardian*, 2 January 1941.

⁶² *Cornish Guardian*, 30 April 1942.

similar comment appeared in print regarding a concert in March the following year. The male voice choir sang a small selection of music separate from the ladies. Performing contrasting lyrical pieces as *Hush Sweet Lute* and *Sleeping* with the more boisterous *The Jolly Roger*, the men showed that 'they'd lost none of their choral excellence even if the numbers were depleted'.⁶³ The funds raised at this concert were for the prisoners of war work by the Red Cross and St John's Ambulance Joint War Organisation.

Despite wartime employment circumstances frequently affecting choir membership, the evidence from across the county shows that if a pre-1939 choir retained sufficient numbers a degree of stability and continuity was evident within those choirs. Retention of a choir's pre-war conductor was also a vital factor and several choirs were fortunate to be in that position. An article published in the *Cornish and Devon Post* in 1956, looking back at wartime experience of the Tintagel male choir in North Cornwall, records: 'During the 1939-45 War the choir did not disband, but continued to give concerts on a small scale. At the end of hostilities the choir re-formed.'⁶⁴ Presumably 're-formed' means a return to pre-1939 numbers and concert commitments. Prior to the onset of war the sacred and secular concerts by the male voice choir at Probus, a village to the east of Truro, were directed towards local charitable concerns,⁶⁵ but from 1940 the evidence reflects a focus on national fund-raising efforts. In April a

⁶³ *Cornish Guardian*, 11 March 1943.

⁶⁴ *Cornish and Devon Post*, 28 April 1956.

⁶⁵ *West Briton*, 17 March, two recorded concerts, 11 August, 29 September, 17 October 1938. All concerts under the baton of Mr J. B. Warne.

concert raised funds for the War Fund⁶⁶ and a subsequent August concert was staged for the wounded soldiers.⁶⁷ Community commitments were upheld exemplified by the continuance of the traditional village carol singing.⁶⁸ At the choir's Annual General Meeting January 1946, it was 'decided to continue now more singers were available'.⁶⁹ Choir continuity and social commitment were evident in the Hayle area. Ventonleague, a noted pre-1939 choir (see Chapter Five) retained a sufficient choir membership and its conductor, Mr C. E. Williams (see Chapter Four, Table 15), to maintain a series of concerts each year. In 1942 the choir managed eleven local performances⁷⁰ whilst two years on it had grown to a series of nineteen concerts.⁷¹ The main pre-1939 choirs are mapped in Chapter Three (Figure N). Of these approximately twenty-five per cent retained a nucleus of singers sufficient to sustain concert programmes throughout the war period.

4.

Attention now turns to choirs in the second category, placing the focus on those male choral groupings specifically identified by a uniform, military or 'official' civilian, full-time or part-time. These choirs met the need for male bonding, camaraderie and well-being as well as the need for the men to continue to express themselves through song. If war and national circumstances for some took away a previously active socio-cultural unit, then from newly constructed

⁶⁶ *West Briton*, 11 April 1940.

⁶⁷ *Cornish Guardian*, 1 August 1940.

⁶⁸ *West Briton*, 2 January 1941; *West Briton*, 31 January 1942.

⁶⁹ *West Briton*, 31 January 1946.

⁷⁰ *West Briton*, 14 January 1943.

⁷¹ *West Briton*, 11 January 1945.

wartime social units men reconstructed a male choral identity. From the following we will see that the notion of identity enables an individual to re-locate themselves and have a sense of belonging within wider society: '... people derive their identity or sense of self largely from the social categories to which they belong'.⁷²

An auxiliary Fire Services Brigade was established in the Redruth-Camborne area in 1940. The formation of a male choir from this cohort appears to have been at the instigation of Leonard Collins, the conductor of Mousehole Male Voice Choir. Concerts undertaken during 1940 and '41 show that he conducted both choirs.⁷³ A further example of a male voice choir deriving from a wartime civil unit was to be found in the Falmouth area. The Reverend Daly Atkinson (see Chapter Four, Table 15) formed a choir from the Civil Defence Corps at Falmouth.⁷⁴ Rehearsals were scheduled to take place in the local Methodist church with music borrowed from Penwerris male choir.⁷⁵

In the west of Cornwall two male voice choirs formed by men from Home Guard Platoons can be identified as centred on Truro and Lanner.⁷⁶ Where Truro was concerned a choir numbering in the mid-twenties formed within the Home

⁷² Jan E. Stets and Peter K. Burke, 'Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory', *Social Psychology Quarterly* Vol.63, No.3 (Sep., 2000), p.225.

⁷³ *West Briton*, 22 February, 18 April, 19 December 1940; *West Briton*, 6 February and 22 May 1941.

⁷⁴ *West Briton*, 1 April 1943.

⁷⁵ *Cornish Echo*, 12 March 1943.

⁷⁶ *My Cornwall Vol.2 Issue 4*, February/March 2011, pp.23-5. Personal war memories are recorded on these pages which relate to the formation of the Home Guard, its membership and employment.

Guard of the 11th and 13th Platoons, 10th Cornwall (Truro) Battalion.⁷⁷ A sacred concert at Carnon Downs Methodist Church given in January 1943, implies that the choir had been formed at least by the close of 1942.⁷⁸ Raising funds for the Royal Cornwall Hospital and the choir's own needs the programme included works by Elgar, Sullivan, Handel and Walford Davies. A fund-raising concert a few months later in Kea Parish formed part of the Wings for Victory Week festivities.⁷⁹ Performing to a capacity crowd in All Hallows Church, the sacred programme drew from the established Cornish repertoire and included *Hymn Before the Battle*, *O Peaceful Night*, *The Lost Chord* and *Onward Christian Soldiers*. West of Truro evidence supports the existence of a choir formed by the Lanner Home Guard. Accounts of two concerts can be found in issues of the *West Briton* in 1945.⁸⁰ It appears that the choir was formed in 1941 as a short article in a December issue of the *West Briton* records the choir's deep sorrow upon the death of their 'esteemed conductor' who had been their musical director for four years.⁸¹ This public record of 'sad reflection' provides further evidence of the importance of reciprocity regarding the conductor-choir relationship.

What the above examples demonstrate is the layering of identities, one derived from a cultural tradition, the other from newly re-configured homogenous social groupings. An example away from the county underscores

⁷⁷ *West Briton*, 3 May 1943.

⁷⁸ *Cornish Echo*, 29 January 1943.

⁷⁹ *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 31 March 1943.

⁸⁰ *West Briton*, 3 May and 11 October 1945.

⁸¹ *West Briton*, 13 December 1945.

how a single group can have multiple identities. A group of Cornish servicemen serving in the same Royal Engineers unit stationed in the North of England formed their own choir in 1944. In this instance the choir's individual identity was overlain with the group identity of the traditional Cornish male voice choir.⁸² In forming a male voice choir the Cornish servicemen demonstrated the connections between ethnicity, music and identity of which Martin Stokes speaks: 'Music does not then simply provide a marker in a prestructured social space, but the means by which this space can be transformed.'⁸³ Whether in uniform in a civilian capacity or on active service, the evidence reinforces a notion of identity reconciliation.

5.

The third choir classification is based on two criteria. First, a choir forming to meet social needs consequent to actions of war and secondly, being a viable choral group post-1945. The foremost choir in this category is Climax Orpheus Male Voice Choir. The choir formed as a direct result of the bombing of Plymouth in 1940:

In 1940, at the Climax Rock Drill and Engineering Works, at Pool, between Camborne and Redruth, Cornwall, two men working on the works roof saw the glow of the fires in Plymouth caused by the bombing by the Luftwaffe. To alleviate distress among the blitz victims they formed a small choir to raise funds.⁸⁴

The impact of the bombing raids on the populations bridging the Devon-Cornwall border was profound. First hand accounts of the devastating damage

⁸² *West Briton*, 20 April 1944.

⁸³ Stokes, 'Chapter 1 Introduction: Ethnicity, Identity', p.4.

⁸⁴ <http://www.HolmanClimaxMaleVoiceChoir.co.uk> [accessed 14 December 2006].

from the German air raids of 1940 and '41 reinforce the emotional as well as the material effects upon individuals and extended communities.⁸⁵ Such was the magnitude of the raids that the burning of Plymouth was visible even to those living south of Redruth.⁸⁶ It is clear that the employees at the Climax Works identified immediately with the population of Plymouth. Sociologically and culturally what is most interesting is that their immediate recourse was to form a choir as the means of fund-raising. As we saw with the Tinnners' Choir in Chapter Three, expression through song was one response found in Cornwall to adversity.

As for the criteria of viability post-1945, the Climax Orpheus Choir eventually established itself as a leading choir within the county's male choral movement. In '41 the choir strength was thirty eight in number and raising funds for the war effort was the choir's prime objective:

... during the last winter and spring assisted at concerts, socials and musical services, resulting over £300 being donated to various local and national charities, including the Lord Mayor's Plymouth Air Raid Disaster Fund, Red Cross and St John's Ambulance, the Miners and General Hospital. Also the choir has given vocal aid to musical services on behalf of Churches and Chapels in the Camborne-Redruth District.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Michael Palmer, 'The War in the West – A Child's Perspective', WW2 People's War, BBC Archive List, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/75/a3253475> [accessed 25 January 2011]; John Salisbury, 'A Schoolboy's view of World War 2', WW2 People's War, BBC Archive List, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/72/a3278072> [accessed 25 January 2011]. See also: David Thoms, 'The Blitz, Civilian Morale and Regionalism, 1940-1942', in Pat Kirkham and David Thoms (eds.), *War Culture: Social Change and Changing Experience in World War Two* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1995), p.6.

⁸⁶ Interview: *Holman Climax* 28 February 2008. A present day member of Holman-Climax Choir recalled when as a boy, he stood in a field in the village of Stithians and watched the glow of the fires as Plymouth burned.

⁸⁷ *West Briton*, 31 July 1941.

An earlier concert that year at Pool Wesley Church raised funds specifically for the Plymouth Air Raid Fund. In addition to monies raised, two lorries laden with clothing had 'already been sent'.⁸⁸ By facilitating a coming together in support of local charitable purposes and the war effort through sacred and secular concerts, Climax Orpheus choir was a conduit for the extended helping hand of the community.⁸⁹ By 1942 the choir's reputation was well established.

Table 21 records evidence of concerts by Climax Orpheus. Venues marked with an asterisk indicate non-church or chapel. Although the number of concerts tabulated forms only a sample, it is evident that the choir was a focal point within the community. Emphasis has been placed on the role of the conductor as the examination of choirs has progressed. The point is reiterated here as Climax Orpheus choir's conductor was E. Kessell, pre-1939 conductor of Treverva male voice choir (see Chapter Four). An announcement regarding a broadcast by Climax Choir was detailed in the *West Briton*: 'Tomorrow, Friday, 3.30pm-3.50pm. Climax Orpheus Male Voice Choir. Home Service Programme. The conductor E. Kessell of Treverva, particularly popular in Falmouth where Mabe Male Voice Choir has given many concerts for charities under his musical directorship.'⁹⁰ As conductor of Treverva Male Voice Choir Edgar Kessell had access to the canon of work traditional to male choirs. Accordingly, Climax

⁸⁸ *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 9 April 1941.

⁸⁹ *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 8 April 1942.

⁹⁰ *West Briton*, 13 August 1942.

YEAR	PLACE	DATE	RECORDED
1941	Tuckingmill	29 May	<i>West Briton</i>
	Paynters Lane End	19 June	
	Bridge	18 September	
	Redruth Forestreet	3 December	<i>Royal Cornwall Gazette</i>
1942	Illogan Highway	26 February	<i>West Briton</i>
	Redruth Drill Hall *	11 March	<i>Royal Cornwall Gazette</i>
	Camborne *	23 April	<i>West Briton</i>
	Camborne Centenary	21 May	
	Troon	4 June	
	Beacon	2 July	
1943	Lanner	21 January	<i>West Briton</i>
	Redruth Drill Hall	17 February	<i>Royal Cornwall Gazette</i>
	Redruth Drill Hall	17 March	
	Brea	25 March	<i>West Briton</i>
	Redruth	1 April	
	Falmouth *	16 April	<i>Cornish Echo</i>
	Camborne *	17 June	<i>West Briton</i>
	Redruth Forestreet	15 July	
	Truro *	28 July	<i>Royal Cornwall Gazette</i>
	Newquay	19 August	<i>West Briton</i>
	Camborne *	16 December	
1944	Camborne,Trelowarren	26 January	<i>Royal Cornwall Gazette</i>
	Hayle	16 March	<i>West Briton</i>
	Redruth *	3 May	<i>Royal Cornwall Gazette</i>
	Redruth Drill Hall	31 August	<i>West Briton</i>
	Pool	21 September	
	Redruth *	12 October	
	Treverva	24 November	<i>Cornish Echo</i>
1945	US Forces port *	28 February	<i>Royal Cornwall Gazette</i>
	Camborne *	28 June	<i>West Briton</i>
	Illogan Highway	13 September	
	St Day	10 October	<i>Royal Cornwall Gazette</i>
	Probus	25 October	<i>West Briton</i>
	Truro	17 December	
* Non-church/chapel			

Table 21 Climax Orpheus Choir Concerts

Orpheus concerts reflected the distinctively Cornish nature of the traditional repertoire – *Hymn Before Action*, *The Little Admiral*, *Comrades in Arms*, *Creation's Hymn*, *The Lost Chord*, *Songs of the Sou'wester*, *The Pilgrim's Song*, *The Beleaguered*, *Silent Worship*, *The Morning Dew* and *Abide With Me*.⁹¹ Their reputation spread beyond the county boundary as broadcast opportunities continued. By 1945 the choir was regarded as one of the foremost choirs in the County. Corroborative evidence is to be found in an August issue of the *Cornish Echo*. Attending a BBC Conference of Cornish newspaper editors was Frank Gillard, well-known BBC War Correspondent. He regarded Climax Choir as a 'star turn on the air'.⁹² Later that year the choir led the community hymn singing in the scheduled broadcasts from Truro Cathedral.⁹³

The evidence concerning Climax exemplifies the Cornish association with self-help, self-reliance and charitable giving, which many in Cornwall identify as the socio-cultural traits of the Cornish character.⁹⁴ By mid-1944 the choir had raised an astonishing £3,500 for various causes, a feat acknowledged by the Council.⁹⁵ Recipients of the choir's fund raising related to local and national causes – Red Cross Prisoners' War Fund, Camborne and Redruth Nursing, an extension to Camborne-Redruth Hospital and the Air Borne Troop Security Fund.

⁹¹ *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 17 February and 17 March 1943.

⁹² *Cornish Echo*, 10 August 1945.

⁹³ *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 31 October 1945.

⁹⁴ Robert Dickinson, 'Meanings of Cornishness: A study of contemporary Cornish identity', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 18* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 2010), p.88.

⁹⁵ *West Briton*, 6 July 1944. The fund-raising would have exceeded £130,000 at 2013 rates, www.thisismoney.co.uk [accessed 18 May 2013].

Hence within a short period of time the choir moved from a direct association with the Plymouth air raids to assuming a wider, community identity and in the process also constructed a 'Works' identity.

Reference to two choirs which were formed in the latter period of the war demonstrate the constant drive within communities to raise funds for those returning from war-torn Europe. The choirs of St Keverne and Four Lanes both originated in the latter half of 1944. St Keverne's initial focus was raising money for the 'Forces Welcome Home Fund'.⁹⁶ Its first public performance in November 1944⁹⁷ was followed by a series of concerts during 1945.⁹⁸ A concert reputation was soon established and within the choir's first full year it reputedly raised £500 for charitable causes.⁹⁹ Four Lanes village, in the heart of the mining country immediately west of Redruth, started with a choir of sixteen men. Formed to 'entertain villagers locally and at the same time raise money for the servicemen returning from the Second World War',¹⁰⁰ it was established in the community by the end of the war.¹⁰¹ In the manner of Climax, having started out in response to wartime events, by early 1945 both St Keverne and Four Lanes were fully integrated in the wider Cornish male choral movement.

⁹⁶ <http://www.stkevernemalevoicechoir.co.uk> [accessed 15 December 2006].

⁹⁷ *West Briton*, 30 November 1944.

⁹⁸ *West Briton*, 11 January, 15 February, 1 March, 2 August, 25 October, 6 December 1945.

⁹⁹ *Cornish Echo*, 7 September 1945.

¹⁰⁰ <http://www.fourlanesmalechoir.co.uk> [accessed 14 December 2006].

¹⁰¹ *West Briton*, 1 November 1945.

6.

Choirs from all three categories could be located across the county along with innumerable ad hoc male choral ensembles. Beyond ensuring the continuing presence of male voice choirs within a community and hence the choral movement's survival, the primary aim of the choirs at this time was to meet the immediate socio-cultural needs of communities. To gain a comprehensive overview of the male choral movement during the war years, choirs which were locally well known but had an intermittent existence are recorded. In what follows reference is made to those choirs which did not continue as established choirs post-1945.

The pre-1939 choirs from Helston and St Day have already been shown to exhibit an on-off existence (see Chapters Two and Three). Where Helston male voice choir is concerned Table 22 indicates concerts for 1940 but after that there is no record in the public domain of further concerts nor is any reason indicated for the cessation of the choir. The male voice choir at St Day from the mid-1930s was associated with Mr T. Beard (see Chapter Five). Under his musical direction St Day male voice choir was revived in 1943.¹⁰² A concert report from 1944 affords insight into how local controversy can arise in relation to concert venue and programme content. The St Day Methodist minister would not compromise on the integrity of the core Methodist belief system in relation to music performance in the chapel. The minister preferred items from the sacred repertoire, the result

¹⁰² *West Briton*, 30 December 1943.

being the male voice choir's concert was 'relegated to the schoolroom of West End Church instead of the church itself ... The decision was taken as "items of a purely secular nature" in the programme were not to the minister's liking'.¹⁰³ It is open to conjecture as to whether this controversy affected the running of the choir

YEAR	CHOIR	DATE	RECORDED
1940	Clarion	3 April	<i>Royal Cornwall Gazette</i>
		11 April	<i>West Briton</i>
	Penwithick	28 February	<i>Royal Cornwall Gazette</i>
	Calstock	16 March	<i>Cornish and Devon Post</i>
	St Ives	29 February	<i>West Briton</i>
	Whitemoor	11 January	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
		8 February	
		29 February	
	Helston	17 April	<i>Royal Cornwall Gazette</i>
		1 May	<i>West Briton</i>
		2 May	
		9 May	
		27 June	<i>Royal Cornwall Gazette</i>
		17 July	
	7 November	<i>West Briton</i>	
1941	Penwithick	2 January	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
	Whitemoor	16 January	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
		25 June	<i>Royal Cornwall Gazette</i>
		27 November	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
	Liskeard	28 February	<i>Cornish Times</i>
	Polruan and Troy	28 August	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
	Troy	27 November	<i>West Briton</i>
Lockett	7 March	<i>Cornish Times</i>	
1942	Flushing	8 January	<i>West Briton</i>
1944	Godolphin	16 November	<i>West Briton</i>
		23 November	
	Flushing	29 December	<i>Cornish Echo</i>
1945	Godolphin	1 November	<i>West Briton</i>
	Ashton	6 December	<i>West Briton</i>

Table 22 Male Voice Choirs – Miscellaneous 1940-1945

¹⁰³ *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 15 March 1944.

but a concert date in November the following year records the choir as St Day Glee Choir.¹⁰⁴ It would be erroneous to marginalise the importance of the numerous choirs which exhibited a temporary existence as they constitute a vital part of Cornwall's choral heritage. Table 22 records examples of choirs which continued for only a few months after the onset of war and those which had purely wartime but an ad hoc existence. To these can be added the male singers from Methodist mixed choirs and congregations who assisted in ensuring the presence of male voice choirs and the performance of sacred choral music.¹⁰⁵

7.

On the question of a national identity which resulted in wartime the social historian Richard Weight notes that the conflict 'reminded the British that their similarities were greater than their differences'.¹⁰⁶ The threat of invasion united the country but the scale of demographic changes brought some instability. The balance between Cornwall's indigenous population and incomers shifted, the influx of incomers extending beyond evacuees and American service personnel to include British service men and women. Official population statistics show an increase in numbers to a reputedly 371,000 in 1941.¹⁰⁷

Despite various pressures, the network of choirs established across the county by 1939 did not fracture. There was a determination to sustain the male

¹⁰⁴ *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 7 November 1945.

¹⁰⁵ *Cornish Guardian*, 21 March 1940. Bugle Methodist Men's Concert. *Cornish Guardian*, 15 April 1945. Polperro Methodist Central Chapel Men's Concert.

¹⁰⁶ Weight, *Patriots: National Identity in Britain 1940-2000*, p.15.

¹⁰⁷ Pete Mitchell, 'The Demographic Revolution', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornwall Since the War* (Redruth: Dyllansow Truran, 1993), p.137.

voice choirs, not least because secular and sacred concerts ensured a semblance of social and cultural stability. One of the main features to emerge was the manner in which the men adapted to their changed circumstances. The most visible sign was the categorisation of male voice choirs into new wartime civilian and uniformed national social groupings. The need to conceptualise identity during a period of crisis manifested in this re-construction of male groupings; a reinforcement of male camaraderie and male-bonding. The formation of new choirs wherever a group of Cornish men were gathered together gives a reality to Rob Burton's phrase 'a passion to exist'. Writing on the subject of Cornish identity, Burton argues that the popular Cornish conception of identity has 'its own vigour and its own spontaneous life'.¹⁰⁸

And yet at the same time Cornish society retained the threads of its pre-existing values. The music festival calendar had been dislocated but community music continued to be celebrated through the County Music Festival and the festival at Indian Queens. A counterbalance to the loss of live choral music came from concert performances on the radio. The significance of the role which the wireless continued to play during the Second World War cannot be underestimated. Tim O'Sullivan speaks of the wireless as having a 'mediating power', capable of contributing to the cultural, social, emotional and psychological well-being of the population. It mediated the news from the frontline 'to the inner, private and situated cultures of wartime home, locality and

¹⁰⁸ Rob Burton, 'A Passion to Exist: Cultural Hegemony and the Roots of Cornish Identity', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies Five* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1997), pp.151-63.

workplace'. It acted as 'an accompaniment to the dislocations and uncertainties of everyday life.'¹⁰⁹

We have seen here the evolving nature of identity as wartime developments were superimposed on the deep seated values in place by 1939, necessitating the construction of new male groupings. Identities attached to people and places were reshaped and reworked. In having to create and structure a mosaic of temporary choirs, the pre-1939 strength of the male choral tradition ensured that it emerged from the shadows of war intact. As the war in Europe came to an end in 1945, questions would be asked of the Cornish male voice choirs. Returning servicemen and civilian personnel would question how Cornish 'differentness' could be re-asserted in the new post-war world. Unaware of the forthcoming advances in media technology which would radically alter popular culture and undermine the male choral tradition, Cornish men reassembled in their choirs to give voice to the traditional Cornish male choral sound. No doubt the writer Alan Sillitoe voiced the thoughts of many when he recalled in a personal testimony: 'The end of the war would mark a new beginning in everyone's lives, though none of us could imagine the kind of world it would be.'¹¹⁰ How would Cornwall's male choral identity be re-configured post-1945?

¹⁰⁹ Tim O'Sullivan, 'Listening Through: The Wireless and World War Two', in Pat Kirkham and David Thoms (eds.), *War Culture: Social Change and Changing Experience in World War Two* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1995), p.173.

¹¹⁰ Alan Sillitoe, 'End and Beginning: 1945', in Pat Kirkham and David Thoms (eds.), *War Culture: Social Change and Changing Experience in World War Two* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1995), p.242.

Chapter Seven

Encroaching secularisation: re-affirmation of a Cornish male choral identity, 1946-1968

The austerity of the war years continued into the 1950s, preceding a transitional decade before an eruption of radical social, cultural and political changes which came to define the 1960s. This chapter examines how, as if immune from such radicalism through its geographic isolation, Cornwall's male voice choirs re-positioned themselves through a burst of creativity beyond that exhibited in the years between the two World Wars. By first examining the economic factors which impacted on Cornwall's industrial base after 1945, it will become apparent that the county came to rely heavily on its image as a tourist and/or retirement destination.¹

As the focus of the chapter moves to the cultural-religious context, we will see that a key factor in the resurgence in the secular male choral movement was the continued strength of the sacred choral tradition of Methodism. Emphasis is placed on the enduring ritual of Sunday chapel observance by the pre-War generation which masked the encroaching impact of secularisation. The narrative then moves to an analysis of the geographic distribution of choirs across the county. Choir numbers re-established at almost pre-1939 level, but we will see that choirs of this post-war period were a mix of pre-1939 and newly formed

¹ Ronald Perry, 'Cornwall Circa 1950' in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornwall Since the War* (Redruth: Dyllansow Truran, 1993), pp.39-41.

choirs, maintaining the traditional association with their village or town through commitment to varied community causes. With concerns raised relating to the politics of choir culture, the focus centres on choirs which became major participants in the competitive festival movement not only in Cornwall but in national and international arenas. An international profile achieved by several choirs presents as a novel additional layer of identity in this period, supplementary to the traditional Methodist identity and other forms of identity. Taking regard of broadcasts and repertoire consideration of the evidence in this wider field illuminates how choir identities were forged and mapped through musical directorship. In the final analysis it will be shown that choral performance and choir reputation surpassed that of the interwar period; the traditional male voice choir reasserted and reaffirmed itself as a fundamental dynamic within Cornish society and culture.

1.

During the immediate post-war years and into the early-1950s daily hardships prevailed for families as they coped with continued rationing² but as the 1950s dawned British society was changing politically and materially. The national picture was one of society moving from austerity to affluence, from wanting to having.³ In the process new generational divides opened up. In the

² David Kynaston, *Austerity Britain 1945-51* (London: Bloomsbury, 2008), pp.510, and 579. The rationing of sweets and sugar stopped in 1953 and meat in 1954.

www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rationing_in_the_United_Kingdom [accessed 27 March 2013].

³ See two volumes by Dominic Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good* (London: Abacus, 2005) and *White Heat* (London: Abacus, 2006).

social history *Britain since 1960*, Brian Spittles notes that by 1960

a generation born just before or during the Second World War was beginning to reach economic, political and cultural maturity. Those people knew nothing of life and attitudes before the war, and yet all the people in positions of power and authority seemed to be of pre-war generations, with values that seemed out of date. The younger generation of around 1960 in general had quite different concerns from those of its elders, and challenged traditional views perhaps more seriously than had any previous generation.⁴

By 1968 the gap between the youth and adult generations had transcended work, leisure and popular culture.⁵

In contrast to the national picture, Cornwall remained for the most part 'historically, culturally, politically and economically – something of a tight little island' with a 'local culture intact'.⁶ However, the aspirations of the younger generation in Cornwall were no different from those elsewhere. The search for better paid jobs, stability of employment and economic security resulted in an out-migration of Cornwall's young people, a move considered as a 'rite of passage'.⁷ Peter Mitchell's statistical analysis in *The Demographic Revolution* demonstrates that the difference from the national trend where Cornwall was concerned was the sheer numbers disproportionate when categorised by age.⁸ The ramifications of such a loss were hidden by the in-migration numbers which

⁴ Brian Spittles, *Britain since 1960 An Introduction* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1995), p.2. See also pp.12-28.

⁵ Bill Osgerby, 'From the Roaring Twenties to the Swinging Sixties: continuity and change in British youth culture, 1929-59', in Brian Brivati and Harriet Jones (eds.), *What Difference Did the War Make?* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1993), pp.80-95.

⁶ Ronald Perry, 'Cornwall Circa 1950', p.44.

⁷ Bernard Deacon, *Cornwall A Concise History* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), p.199.

⁸ Peter Mitchell, 'The Demographic Revolution', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornwall Since the War* (Redruth: Dyllansow Truran, 1993), pp.139-42. See also Ronald Perry, 'Economic Change and "Opposition" Economics' in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornwall Since the War* (Redruth: Dyllansow Truran, 1993), p.51.

generally comprised those of more mature years and retirees. Therefore despite an exodus of the young generation the overall population total in Cornwall was relatively static during the 1950s. By the 1960s though such a generational loss of the young had become the concern of County Planners: 'Municipal boroughs and urban districts have increased population by some 3,000 but the rural areas total has lost 6,000. One of the causes was the migration of the younger age groups. Some went by choice, others were forced to go because of lack of opportunities.'⁹

In the immediate post-war years Cornwall's industrial and manufacturing output matched increased post-war global demands.¹⁰ An economic downturn came however, when the traditional Cornish industries of fishing and farming found their wartime subsidies removed post-1950. Where the fishing industry was concerned the market collapsed, necessitating the need for wholesale economic restructuring. The fishing fleet of St Ives provides an appropriate illustration. No longer identified exclusively as a fishing port, by 1960 the prosperity of St Ives depended on the rapidly expanding tourist industry and economy associated with the arts.¹¹ Writing on the subject of Cornwall's post-war economy Ronald Perry notes how the economics of the fishing industry when aligned with the factor of age created a dynamic which proved to be a double edged sword: 'Over half of the men were 50 years old and youngsters fought shy

⁹ *Cornish Guardian*, 10 October 1963.

¹⁰ Ronald Perry, 'The Making of Modern Cornwall, 1800-2000: A Geo-Economic Perspective', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 10* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2002), p.178; Peter Wills, 'Cornish Regional Development: Evaluation, Europe and Evolution' in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 6* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1998), p.147.

¹¹ *West Briton*, 1 September 1960.

of an occupation that offered meagre rewards for a tough and dangerous life when there was plenty ashore.¹² This inter-connectivity of age and a non-acceptance of inherent workplace dangers was to impact heavily on the fishing fleets in small ports. Moreover, it was also a critical social dynamic concerning the survival of certain male voice choirs. Age and a diminishing fishing fleet were the cause of the demise of St Ives male voice choir and on the south coast, in the fishing village of Looe, the male voice choir ceased in the early-1960s.

A revealing perspective on unemployment data in Cornwall is to be found in a political study by Garry Tregidga. His analysis of Cornish politics in the 1950s-'60s compares Cornwall's position with the national picture: '4.9 per cent of the Duchy's workforce were unemployed at the time of the 1959 election compared to just 1.9 per cent for Great Britain as a whole. The figures were even higher in certain areas, such as 6.8 per cent at Penzance and 14.4 per cent at Gunnislake in south-east Cornwall.'¹³ The contraction in the numbers of those working the land illustrated that agriculture by the mid-1960s was faring no better than the fishing industry.¹⁴ The gradual reduction in farming subsidies re-ignited the anti-establishment, anti-Government dissent shown in earlier periods of Cornwall's history.¹⁵

¹² Perry, 'Cornwall Circa 1950', p.34.

¹³ Garry Tregidga, "'Bodmin Man' – Peter Bessell and Cornish Politics in the 1950s and 1960s', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies* 8 (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000), p.170.

¹⁴ *Cornish Guardian*, 19 May 1966.

¹⁵ Tregidga, 'Bodmin Man', p.169.

With the exception of the china clay industry the industrial fabric of the county reduced in size and then output. The consequence was the creation of long-term economic problems specific to Cornwall, the two constant factors being 'comparatively low pay and relatively high unemployment'.¹⁶ 1964 opened with the *West Briton* headline, 'Empty Shipyard was a grim spectre for Christmas'. Falmouth dockers were facing the bleak prospect of possible mass unemployment as the shipyard remained empty.¹⁷ In the spring of 1964 concerns of County Council leaders were such that crisis talks were held with Government ministers. The *West Briton* reported the 'Midnight Talks on Cornish Economic Problems – Minister Meets County Leaders'.¹⁸ With no clear-cut strategies in sight to resolve the county's economic problems, some firms sought their own solution. In 1968 the heavy engineering firm of Holman, Camborne merged with a competitor in order to ensure its survival.¹⁹ The overall economic climate and prevailing political feeling in the county at this time rested on the belief that central Government was giving scant assistance to the economy of Cornwall:

The creation of the South West Economic Planning Council (SWEPC) based at Bristol and covering an area that stretched from Land's End to Gloucester, was yet another feature of the late 1960s. Its support for large scale 'in-migration' (or 'Overspill') combined with the reputation for secret economic planning meetings, further alienated public opinions.²⁰

It is not certain whether the anti-establishment mood in Cornwall resulted in the Cornish withdrawing in on themselves. Yet from the standpoint of the male

¹⁶ Perry, 'Economic Change and "Opposition" Economics', p.62.

¹⁷ *West Briton*, 2 January 1964.

¹⁸ *West Briton*, 19 March 1964.

¹⁹ *West Briton*, 9 May 1968.

²⁰ Tregidga, 'Bodmin Man', p.170.

choral movement it is hard not to be drawn to such a possibility. The national economic and political landscape of this period provided a backcloth where the choral reputations of Cornish male voice choirs were in the ascendancy and arguably reaching their peak. A key factor in explaining why this was so rested in the enduring relevance of Methodism. The kernel of secularisation had been sown but critically it lay dormant, wrapped up and hidden behind the continuing strength of Methodist choral music's place within Cornish society. An adverse impact on male voice choirs of secularisation and liberalisation would not become apparent for another generation. To demonstrate how this was so we need to elaborate on the continuing strength of sacred choral music within Cornish Methodism.

2.

Chapters One and Two demonstrated how Methodism came to be an intrinsic part of Cornwall's heritage. Commenting on the cultural-religious make-up of Cornwall in the aftermath of the Second World War, Perry states that 'both Methodists and Anglicans showed comparatively high levels of religious allegiance in Cornwall, compared to Britain as a whole'.²¹ This acted as a buffer to the rise of secularisation elsewhere in Britain. In *The Death of Christian Britain*, Callum Brown asserts that 1963 was the 'secularisation' year. He argues that the country moved from a post-war expansion in church membership to a rapid

²¹ Perry, 'Cornwall Circa 1950', p.26.

decline in numbers: 'All indicators show 1956-73 witnessed unprecedented rapidity in the fall of Christian religiosity amongst the British people.'²²

Brown's approach overlooks the enculturation of Methodism in Cornwall musically as well as theologically. Cornwall was not entirely impervious to secular influences, but the evidence demonstrates that secularisation moved at a different pace. For a detailed regional consideration we turn to a study by Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain since 1945*. Here the 'differentness' of Cornwall is underscored.²³ To illustrate how secularisation manifested at a slower pace in Cornwall the evidence is set out in a sequence of Tables. The data tabulated in Tables 23-25 relates to sample dates when music from the sacred canon historically associated with Methodism was presented publicly. The newspaper reports cover the years of 1946-68.

We focus firstly on examples of community hymn singing collated in Table 23. Congregations embraced the fundamental participatory nature in hymn singing. Not simply a choral expression of faith, congregational hymn singing formed a collective response fostering social cohesion and community identity. All instances recorded in Table 23 were organised and/or led by Methodist churches and chapels with choirs of each leading the proceedings. Those detailed

²² Callum G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain* (London: Routledge, 2001), p.188.

²³ Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain since 1945 – Believing without belonging* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), pp.100-106.

YEAR	PLACE/NAME of Methodist Chapel/Church	DATE	RECORDED
1947	Callington	27 February	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
1948	Gyllyngvase Beach	13 August	<i>Cornish Echo</i>
1949	Truro	12 October	<i>Royal Cornwall Gazette</i>
	Penmennor, Stithians	8 April	<i>Cornish Echo</i>
	Gyllyngvase Beach	26 August	
1950	South Downs	14 September	<i>West Briton</i>
1952	Perran-ar-Worthal	3 January	<i>West Briton</i>
	South Downs	16 October	
1953	St Ives	22 August	<i>Western Echo</i>
1954	St Day	1 April	<i>West Briton</i>
	Flushing	22 April	
1956	Penmennor, Stithians	25 May	<i>Falmouth Packet</i>
1957	Torpoint	21 February	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
1960	Portreath	18 August	<i>West Briton</i>
	Liskeard	22 September	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
	Enniscaren	13 October	<i>West Briton</i>
	Menheniot	21 October	<i>Cornish Times</i>
1961	Mawnan	17 March	<i>Falmouth Packet</i>
	Looe	21 April	<i>Cornish Times</i>
	Portreath [beach]	6 July	<i>West Briton</i>
1962	Portreath [beach]	14 June, 26 July, 23 August	<i>West Briton</i>
	Torpoint	7 December	<i>Cornish Times</i>
	St Germans	14 December	
1963	Callington	22 March	<i>Cornish Times</i>
	Trewint Altarnum	22 August	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
1964	St Day	5 March	<i>West Briton</i>
	Mithian	9 April	
	Tuckingmill	7 May	
1965	Fowey	31 December	<i>Cornish Times</i>
1966	Frogwell, Callington	28 July	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
1967	Port Isaac	9 February	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
	Upton Cross	30 March	
	Redruth	26 October	<i>West Briton</i>
	Menheniot	21 December	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
1968	Veryan	21 March	<i>West Briton</i>
	Mithian	2 May	
	Mevagissey	11 July	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
	Fowey	30 August	<i>Cornish Times</i>

Table 23 Community Hymn Singing 1947-68

as taking place at Gyllyngvase Beach and Portreath are dates which formed part of a series of summer open-air community hymn singing sessions. The latter were

led by 'members of the Young Peoples Section of Redruth Methodist Circuit'.²⁴ It was not unknown for congregations from different Methodist chapels in the same town to come together after services to sing hymns for a further period of time, nor was it uncommon for choirs within a Methodist circuit to meet for an evening of hymn singing.²⁵ On occasions a male voice choir would be invited to lead a session of choral hymn singing after they had performed a sacred concert within a church or chapel.²⁶ Analysis of Table 23 locations denotes a countywide spread from Torpoint on the Cornwall-Devon border to Redruth in the far west, from Mevagissey on the south coast to St Ives on the north and innumerable places inland. Taking selected examples from 1947-68 the data confirms the strength of Methodist choral hymnody.

To underline the different rate of secularisation in Cornwall to that nationally we find supporting evidence detailed in Tables 24 and 25. To the regular hymn singing sessions can be added Sankey Evenings. The importance of Moody and Sankey's evangelical style of hymns within the Methodist canon and congregational repertoire has been recorded in Chapter One. Analysis of the data in Table 24, drawn from new evidence, reiterates the strength of religious observance countywide. By noting year and calendar dates a continuous strength

²⁴ *West Briton*, 18 August 1960.

²⁵ *West Briton*, 3 January 1952; *Cornish Times*, 22 March 1963.

²⁶ *Cornish Echo*, 13 October 1950; *Falmouth Packet*, 17 March 1961.

YEAR	PLACE/NAME of Methodist Chapel/Church	DATE	RECORDED
1954	Pool	18 March	<i>West Briton</i>
	Four Lanes	29 October	
	Frogpool	5 November	
1955	Tregony	20 October	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
1956	Downderry	2 February	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
	Broadoak	30 March	<i>Cornish Times</i>
	Edgcumb	19 October	<i>Falmouth Packet</i>
	Perranwell	7 December	
1957	Providence	7 March	<i>West Briton</i>
1958	Truro	6 February	<i>West Briton</i>
	Crafthole	27 March	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
1959	Liskeard	27 March	<i>Cornish Times</i>
1960	St Cleer	22 January	<i>Cornish Times</i>
	Constantine	18 February	<i>West Briton</i>
	Baldhu	24 March	
	Landrake	27 October	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
	Landrake	28 October	<i>Cornish Times</i>
	Constantine	17 November	<i>West Briton</i>
1961	St Agnes	16 March	<i>West Briton</i>
	Torpoint	30 March	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
	Baldhu	13 April	<i>West Briton</i>
	Trenoweth	12 October	
1962	Mount	1 March	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
	Baldhu	29 March	<i>West Briton</i>
	Crows Nest	7 November	<i>Cornish Times</i>
	Constantine	15 November	<i>West Briton</i>
1963	Tuckingmill	12, 19 and 26 December	<i>West Briton</i>
	Kehelland	26 December	
1964	Mitchell	26 March	<i>West Briton</i>
	Four Lanes	29 October	
	Frogpool	6 November	<i>Falmouth Packet</i>
	Trenoweth	13 November	
1966	St Dennis	10 March	<i>West Briton</i>
	Summercourt	17 March	
	Mylor	18 March	<i>Falmouth Packet</i>
	Carne Bray	12 May	<i>West Briton</i>
	Frogpool	27 October	
	Frogpool	28 October	<i>Falmouth Packet</i>
	St Agnes	24 November	<i>West Briton</i>
1967	St Mellion	9 February	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
	Tresillian	2 March	<i>West Briton</i>
	Carnon Downs	9 March	
	Baldhu	16 March	
	Pool	21 September	
	St Pinnock	30 November	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
	Frogpool	30 November	<i>West Briton</i>
1968	Bolventor	8 March	<i>Cornish Times</i>
	Frogpool	28 November	<i>West Briton</i>

Table 24 Sankey Evenings 1954-68

in congregational choral singing is demonstrated. Further supporting evidence is detailed in Table 25. Highlighted here are examples of participatory concerts devoted to the seasonal sacred music of Thomas Merritt, a detailed analysis of which is given in Chapter Two. The body of evidence in Tables 23-25 appears to underline an undiminished strength in choral music, suggesting the possibility of an untroubled long-term future. What is not apparent however from the raw data is the age or generation of participants.

YEAR	PLACE/NAME of Methodist Chapel/Church	DATE	RECORDED
1946	Liskeard	28 November	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
1948	Illogan Highway	22 December	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
1955	Newlyn East	22 December	<i>West Briton</i>
1959	Illogan Highway	1 January	<i>West Briton</i>
	Lanner	24 December	
1960	Falmouth [Higher Market Street]	29 December	<i>West Briton</i>
1961	Chacewater	21 December	<i>West Briton</i>
	Mabe	28 December	
1963	Tuckingmill	26 December	<i>West Briton</i>
	Kehelland	26 December	
	Carharrack	26 December	
1964	St. Pauls, Chacewater	17 December	<i>West Briton</i>
1966	Plain-an-Gwarry, Redruth	20 October [18 December]	<i>West Briton</i>
	Perranwill	15 December	
	Camborne	15 December	
	Trewennack	22 December	

Table 25 Merritt's Carols and Anthems 1946-66

In order to explore the related issue of the age composition of choirs one has to turn to the Methodist Synod itself. A report delivered to the Methodist Synod in May 1959, entitled 'Cornish Methodism and the New Age', indicates that secularisation was beginning to influence Cornish society. The report acknowledges the changed social patterns post-1945 which were 'paralleled by

substantial change in the religious thinking and “atmosphere” of the county’. Citing a fall in chapel and Sunday School attendance figures, the closing statement in the report gives the first clear indication as to the root cause of the male choral movement’s future atrophy: ‘Large proportion of those within churches were over 65 years of age and large numbers of young people received into membership found it necessary to leave the county to secure employment.’²⁷ The social historian Edward Royle reached a similar conclusion about religious practices based on national statistics. Where the subject of the onset of secularisation is concerned the important point to take from Royle’s analysis of the decades 1960 to 1980 is that it indicates the greatest loss among the young: ‘By the 1980s the liberal Protestant Churches could look back on the 1960s as the decade of a missing generation. This boded ill for the future as the reserves of support built up in the 1920s passed into old age and died.’²⁸

In practice, the sale and closure of chapels, churches and Sunday school buildings began to occur with increasing frequency in Cornwall during the 1960s.²⁹ And yet only a decade earlier over 4,000 church and chapel worshippers had congregated at St Ives for an open air broadcast of community hymn singing,³⁰ and there was an estimated 3,000 at Gwennap Pit in a Methodist

²⁷ *West Briton*, 7 May 1959.

²⁸ Edward Royle, *Modern Britain A Social History 1750-1985* (London: Edward Arnold, 1987), p.338.

²⁹ *Cornish Guardian*, 3 September 1964 (2 churches in Bodmin); *Cornish Guardian*, 16 June 1966 (2 chapels in Looe); *Cornish Guardian*, 7 December 1967 (Sunday School building at Gunnislake); *Cornish Times*, 9 April 1968 (chapel in Trenavin, Callington).

³⁰ *Western Echo*, 22 August 1953.

celebration of community hymn singing 1959.³¹ What is evident is that within a decade the loss of congregation numbers, coupled with the closures and sale of buildings, presented signs that by the mid-1960s there was a growing and overt difference between age groups and social aspirations.

In spite of worrying trends including a downturn in Sunday school attendance, nationally Cornwall continued to hold a unique position throughout the decade where Methodism was concerned.³² In 1964 the strength of Methodism within the county was recognised by the Methodist Church. Under the heading 'Cornwall District has an "awful" responsibility', members of the Synod were informed that 'In Cornwall the percentage of members of the Methodist Church in comparison with the population was 7.02 – more than fifty per cent greater than anywhere else in the country'.³³ Paradoxically therefore, despite the apparent cultural and musical divergence of the generations, despite a decrease in Sunday school attendance, Cornish Methodism continued to maintain its position in society. An integral part of that Cornish Methodism was the tradition of male voice choirs performing sacred concerts in churches and chapels. The cultural positioning of sacred male choral music and the related social space can be ascertained by an assessment of the data in Tables 26-28.

³¹ *West Briton*, 21 May 1959.

³² *Cornish Guardian*, 9 June 1960; *Cornish Times*, 3 February 1961.

³³ *West Briton*, 17 September 1964.

YEAR	PLACE/NAME of Methodist Chapel/Church	DATES	RECORDED
1950	Chacewater	1 January	<i>West Briton</i>
	Truro	16 February	
	Tresillian	20 April	
	Illogan	27 April	
	Falmouth	18 May	
	Praze	15 June	
	St Allen and St Erme	7 September	
	Ventonleague	14 September	
	Hayle	30 November	
1952	Mabe	31 January	<i>West Briton</i>
	Gweek	6 March	
	Praze	10 April	
	Gweek	24 April	
	Praze	12 June	
	Truro	31 July	
1953	Penzance	12 February	<i>West Briton</i>
	St Mawes	19 February	
	Illogan Highway	19 March	
	Tregony	9 April	
	Penmarth	21 May	
	Brea	28 May	
	Penmarth	8 July	
	Ladock	26 November	
1954	Crowan	11 February	<i>West Briton</i>
	Perranwell	4 March	
	St Day	1 April	
	Penpol and Flushing	22 April	
	St Ewe	20 May	
	Treskillard	1 October	

Table 26 Male Voice Choir Sacred Concerts 1950-4

The importance accorded the position of sacred concerts in the male voice choir calendar can be evaluated by the frequency of reporting in a society with a gathering momentum of secularisation. Tables 26-28 constitute a small, selected sample of sacred concerts. One can detect hardly any variation in number during the 1950s, Tables 26 and 27. On the other hand, Table 28 appears to indicate that

YEAR	PLACE/NAME of Methodist Chapel/Church	DATES	RECORDED
1955	Deveral	13 January	<i>West Briton</i>
	Perranwell	17 March	
	Townshend and Penpol	14 April	
	Praze and Crowan	16 June	
	Highway Forestreet	17 November	
	Chacewater	1 December	
	Polperro	10 February	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
	Landrake	27 October	
1956	Ventonleague	13 September	<i>West Briton</i>
	Tregony	25 October	
	St Eval	31 May	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
	Bolventor	7 December	<i>Cornish Times</i>
	Trenegloss	14 January	<i>Cornish and Devon Post</i>
	Launceston [performance by Beaford, Devon, male choir]	1 December	
1957	Portloe	31 January	<i>West Briton</i>
	Providence	7 March	
	Boscastle	4 April	
	Flushing	25 April	
	St Martins	2 May	
	Devoran	26 September	
	St Cleer	22 March	<i>Cornish Times</i>
1958	St Erme	2 January	<i>West Briton</i>
	Praze	12 June	
	Canonstown	18 September	
	Polperro	15 August	<i>Cornish Times</i>
1959	Condurrow	23 April	<i>West Briton</i>
	Polperro	14 August	<i>Cornish Times</i>

Table 27 Male Voice Choir Sacred Concerts 1955-9

the 1960s saw a marked decrease in sacred concert performances. One has to question whether the evidence of Table 28 confirms a trend towards secularisation. Before arriving at a definitive conclusion it is worth noting that in the 1960s, more so than in the 1950s, male voice choirs operated in a socio-cultural context that included increased leisure time and an emerging popular youth

YEAR	PLACE/NAME of Methodist Chapel/Church	DATES	RECORDED
1960	Liskeard	30 September	<i>Cornish Times</i>
	Budock	24 November	<i>West Briton</i>
1961	Chacewater	12 January	<i>West Briton</i>
	Truro	17 July	
	St Austell	24 August	
	Perranzabuloe	26 October	
1962	Feock	25 January	<i>West Briton</i>
	Carn Brea	5 April	
	Wendron	5 April	
	Newquay	26 July	
1963	St Day	5 December	<i>West Briton</i>
1964	Praze	11 June	<i>West Briton</i>
	Wheal Busy	26 November	
1965	Plain-au-Gwarry, Redruth	11 March	<i>West Briton</i>
	Fowey	6 August	<i>Cornish Times</i>
	Mithian	16 December	<i>West Briton</i>
1966	Grampond Road	24 February	<i>West Briton</i>
	Praze	16 June	
1967	Mount Hawke	23 March	<i>West Briton</i>
	Constantine	18 May	
	St Germans	18 May	<i>Cornish Times</i>
	St Pinnock	23 November	
	Kehelland	7 December	<i>West Briton</i>
1968	Chacewater	25 January	<i>West Briton</i>
	Baldhu	14 November	
	Redruth	28 November	

Table 28 Male Voice Choir Sacred Concerts 1960-8

culture. There was a changing emphasis placed on home life, with television creating a passive attitude and approach to entertainment and leisure. Live music performances were becoming the domain of the young generation.³⁴ The response of newspapers was to give column inches to the 'new' happenings increasingly setting to one side news pertinent to traditional cultural events.³⁵

³⁴ Arthur Marwick, *Culture in Britain since 1945* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), pp.86-97.

³⁵ *West Briton*, 8 May 1958. Skiffle evening of rock 'n roll. *Cornish Times*, 23 June 1961. Teenagers pack Liskeard Hall for three hours of non-stop music. *West Briton*, 29 March 1962. Jive sessions closed due to rowdiness. *West Briton*, 31 October 1963. Jive, twist and rock 'n roll. *Cornish Guardian*, 26 November 1964. Call to Beat Groups to turn down the amplifiers. *Cornish Guardian*, 14 September 1967. The Beatles in Newquay.

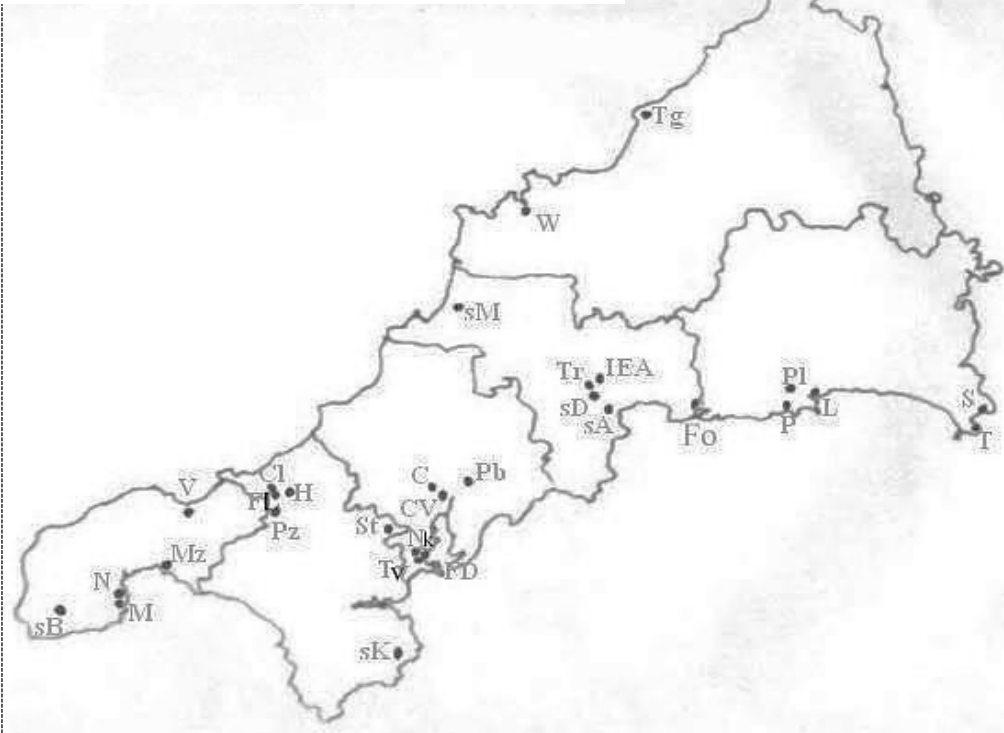
From the above examination of congregational and community choral practices we have seen how hymns from the Methodist canon, those by Sankey together with the sacred music of Merritt, continued to figure prominently in Cornish male choral repertoire. From the performance details in Tables 23-25 we have seen how the mixed choirs and congregations of the churches and chapels maintained the wider Cornish choral tradition of part-singing. The tabulated evidence in conjunction with the Synod's own population statistics help us to understand how Cornish choirs were resistant to the secularisation process. Adherents of the Methodist faith were ageing, but for the time being, at least until the end of the 1960s, the strength and depth in numbers of male voice choirs remained undiminished.

3.

We can now underline the vitality of the choirs by mapping their geographic location. The map illustrating the distribution of post-World War II choirs (Figure S) shows choirs situated in all the county sub-regions defined and discussed in Chapter Five. A comparison with the choir map of the interwar years (Figure Sa)³⁶ initially suggests that the majority of pre-1939 choirs re-formed successfully. Upon closer analysis, however, we see that nineteen choirs detailed

³⁶ See Chapter Five for a diagram of 1919-1939 map with key.

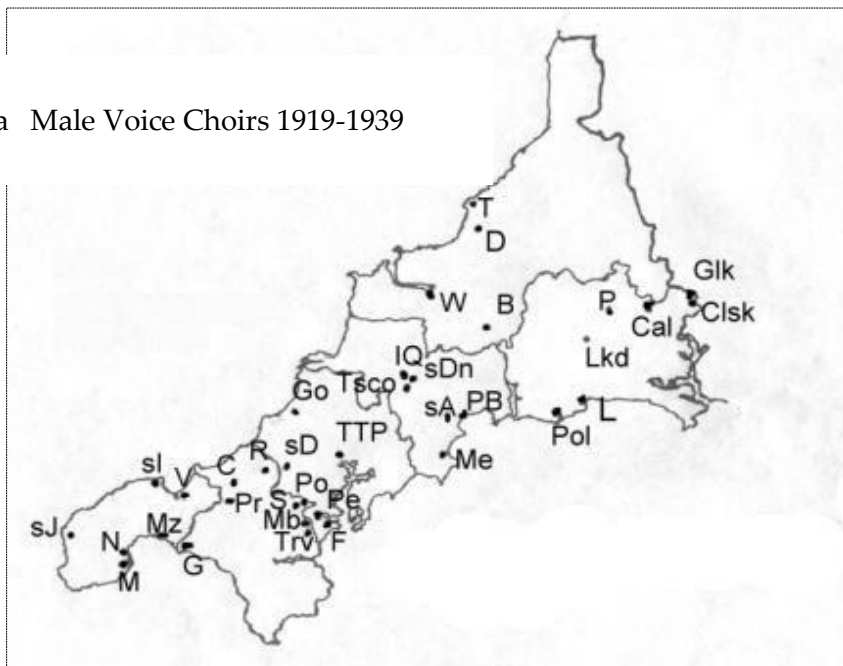
Figure S Male Voice Choirs 1946-1968



C Chacewater **CI** Climax **CV** Carnon Vale **Fo** Fowey **FD** Falmouth Docks **FL** Four Lanes
H Holman **IEA** Imerys Eastern Area **L** Looe **M** Mousehole **Mz** Marazion **N** Newlyn
Nk Nankersey **P** Polperro **Pb** Probus **PI** Pelynt **Pz** Praze **S** Saltash **sA** St.Austell
sB St.Buryan **sD** St.Dennis **sK** St.Keverne **sM** St.Mawgan **St** Stithians **T** Torpoint
Tg Tintagel **Tr** Treviscoe **Tv** Treverva **V** Ventonleague **W** Wadebridge

Cornwall Police Choir

Figure Sa Male Voice Choirs 1919-1939



on the 1919-39 map did not restart after the cessation of World War II. Located on the 1946-68 map are fifteen new choirs, five formed during the war years of which four are recorded in Chapter Six. We thus see that there were fifteen choirs which negotiated the war years continuing into the 1950s with varying degrees of success, but not all of the choirs detailed on the 1946-68 map managed to negotiate the 1960s.

The following selected choirs are variously grouped in order to facilitate examination of the broadening base of the male choral movement in Cornwall. Firstly we will see how aspects of change affected choirs and how that change was managed. A second group of choirs, headed by Treviscoe, will show that festivals and broadcasting were the prime avenues for the re-establishment of individual choir reputations, culminating in the re-affirmation of a regional Cornish male voice choral identity. And from a third group, we will see why noted pre-1939 choirs lapsed and at the same time recognise the formation of new choirs. Overall it will be shown that the 1950s and 60s formed a span of years which could be termed a 'golden period'.

In the immediate post-war years Cornish male voice choirs in general continued to reflect pre-War socio-cultural mores, performances reliant on the traditional repertoire from the sacred and secular genres. For a choir to demonstrate its receptivity and response to change the two main issues to manage were the position of conductor and choir membership numbers. To illustrate how each or both can impact on choir culture we turn our attention to

the two neighbouring west Cornwall choirs of Mousehole and Newlyn, each illuminating choir management in relation to internal choir politics.

At Mousehole certain choir members assumed that Leonard Collins (see Chapter Four, Table 15) would continue in the position of musical director upon his return to the area in 1944. In the event the position was advertised and after a 'heated general meeting' John Maddern Williams was appointed, 'much to the disappointment of Leonard's supporters. Some walked out of the meeting – but most eventually returned'.³⁷ From the outset of Newlyn male choir's restart in 1946 issues of choir numbers and attendance affected choral balance and overall performance standards. Membership problems were still evident in 1949.

A serious recruitment drive commenced and there were also some adjustments, following voice checks for all members. Choir rules were amended and a period of more drastic action commenced which continued for the next two or three years and resulted in a renewal of commitment amongst members, after a few 'sackings'.³⁸

Both situations reflected internal tensions but both choirs found an acceptable resolution.

Having been absent from Cornwall during the war years, it may have been that returning choir members were no longer prepared to accept the status quo and a more democratic management structure was being sought. Whatever the underlying situation, the politics of choral direction remained at the discretion of the musical director, as the experience of Probus male voice choir demonstrates. A post-war change of musical director led to anxiety. At the choir's 1949 AGM

³⁷ Douglas Williams, *A Century of Song The Story of Mousehole and its famed Male Voice Choir* (Penzance: Headlands Printers Ltd., 2008), p.28.

³⁸ Ivan Balls, *Buccas' Song! a short history of Newlyn Male Voice Choir*, p.15.

Mr L. Lobb, whilst acknowledging the purpose of festivals and choir festival successes in 1948, stated that 'building up a good programme was an essential feature of policy'.³⁹ Having re-established a circuit of concerts the inference is that the choir would concentrate on community endeavours rather than festivals. Re-establishing a choral reputation was important. The male voice choir in the clay mining village of St Dennis re-formed in 1946⁴⁰ and the following year saw the start of a further two choirs, Stithians and Chacewater.⁴¹ The wartime fledgling choirs of St Buryan, St Keverne, Four Lanes and Carnon Vale had cemented their reputations via concerts and festival participation by the close of 1949. All became longstanding choirs.

The fact that nineteen choirs did not re-start post-1945 or did not survive from the war period into the 1950s indicates that some choirs were failing to adapt. The Lanner Home Guard male voice choir was illustrative of a choir seeking to prolong its wartime identity. Despite difficulties centred around membership numbers, vocal balance and the need to appoint a new conductor,⁴² as well as the formation of another male voice choir in Lanner,⁴³ Lanner Home Guard choir retained its name through to 1951.⁴⁴ The likely explanation for this retention of the choir's title may have been a desire to maintain wartime camaraderie, that it said something indefinable to the choir membership and only

³⁹ *West Briton*, 28 July 1949.

⁴⁰ *Cornish Guardian*, 21 November 1946.

⁴¹ *West Briton*, 9 January 1947 (Stithians); *West Briton*, 13 March 1947 (Chacewater).

⁴² See Chapter 6.

⁴³ *West Briton*, 1 August 1946.

⁴⁴ *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 17 January 1951.

when they sang together could they re-live the true meaning and emotion of the adversity of the war years. What the Lanner Home Guard choir's history suggests is, as Deacon has pointed out, that some aspects of cultural life could not easily be 'measured, tabulated and dissected'. Deacon argues that there exists a symbolic dimension beyond the objective: 'This view of "culture" stresses what cultures do rather than what they are, their practices rather than their content'.⁴⁵

4.

Underlying the apparent strength of the male choral movement in the immediate post-war years was the need for choirs to re-establish their pre-1939 identity and re-assert a Cornish male choral culture and identity within the county and nationally. As we have seen festival participation was one approach where choir identity and reputations were established. Another, and one of growing importance, was broadcasting and recording. In what follows the focus is placed on these two different approaches taken by conductors, and in each of the performance arenas we will see that success brought a resurgence and re-affirmation of Cornish choir and ethnic identities.

Proven to be symbolic of Cornish music culture and an accepted part of the traditional music calendar by 1939, festivals were again to play a vital role post-1945. The class for male voice choirs was re-introduced into the County Music Festival in 1946 and as choirs were still re-forming initial numbers were down. A prompt resumption of the Wadebridge and St Austell festivals enabled

⁴⁵ Bernard Deacon, 'And Shall Trelawney Die? The Cornish Identity', in Philip Payton (ed.) *Cornwall Since the War* (Redruth: Dyllansow Truran, 1993), p.204.

choirs to concentrate on performance standards directed to learning test pieces and revising repertoire for concert series. Table 29 illustrates those choirs which took an early step back into the competitive arena. Festivals in a more intimate village setting such as those at Lanner and Mabe also contributed to the

YEAR	FESTIVAL	PARTICIPANT CHOIRS	DATE	RECORDED
1946	County [Falmouth]	Falmouth Orpheus, Newlyn West, St Austell, St Keverne	10 May	<i>Cornish Echo</i>
	Wadebridge	Treviscoe, Holmans, Ventonleague, Queens St Dennis,	21 November	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
1947	County [Bodmin]	St Keverne, Treverva, Stithians, Treviscoe, Climax, Newlyn West	1 June	<i>West Briton</i>
	Wadebridge	Climax, St Dennis, Falmouth	20 November	<i>West Briton</i>
1948	County [St Ives]	St Keverne, St Dennis, Treviscoe, Holmans, Stithians	12 May	<i>Royal Cornwall Gazette</i>
	Wadebridge	Holmans, Roche, Newlyn West	25 November	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
	St Austell	Bugle and District Works, Bugle, Probus, St Mawgan, Newquay, Fal Valley	8 December	<i>Royal Cornwall Gazette</i>
1949	County [St Austell]	Stithians, Marazion, Holmans, Treverva, Carnon Vale, Bugle, St Mawgan, St Dennis, St Keverne	25 May	<i>Royal Cornwall Gazette</i>
	Wadebridge	Bugle, Liskeard Choral, Treviscoe, Holmans, Roche	23 November	<i>Royal Cornwall Gazette</i>
	St Austell	Probus, Bugle, Treviscoe	17 December	<i>West Briton</i>

Table 29 Music Festivals 1946-49

regeneration of male choral music.⁴⁶ The annual Methodist music festival at Camborne re-commenced in 1947 following its established format of two designated test pieces or choir choice and a hymn.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 13 August 1947 (Lanner); *Cornish Echo*, 24 June 1949 (Mabe).

⁴⁷ *West Briton*, 13 February 1947, eight male choirs competed; *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 10 March 1948, seven choirs competed; *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 9 March 1949, reference to only two choirs.

Chapter Five detailed pre-1939 choirs which based a choral reputation and choir identity specifically on festival participation. The post-war years yield like examples. The 1950s became a period when choirs were to prove themselves in the national and international competitive arenas. Leading choir conductors began to look to participate in noted provincial festivals. In 1951 three choirs Treverva, Treviscoe and Newlyn, competed in a regional contest at Bath as an elimination for the Festival of Britain classes.⁴⁸ The key year proved to be 1953. In July Treviscoe Male Voice Choir entered the Llangollen International Eisteddfod and came third. The symbolism bound up in international recognition was not lost on the local press with the *Cornish Guardian* trumpeting, 'Clay Country Choir Brings Honour to Cornwall'.⁴⁹ Later that year Climax Male Choir participated in the competitive festival at Blackpool.⁵⁰ Although Climax was not successful, together with Treviscoe the two choirs were demonstrating to the rest of the nation that Cornwall had a distinctive choral culture. The two musical directors were also signifying to other Cornish choirs that Cornishmen were as able as other male choralists in England and Wales. Furthermore with Treviscoe welcomed in Llangollen by the Festival president with the words 'Our Celtic cousins from Cornwall', the common heritage between the two Celtic nations was given a voice on the international stage.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Balls, *Buccas' Song!*, pp.16-17. St Austell would have been the fourth choir but illness and departures precipitated their withdrawal – *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 28 February 1951.

⁴⁹ *Cornish Guardian*, 16 July 1953.

⁵⁰ *West Briton*, 12 November 1953.

⁵¹ *Cornish Guardian*, 16 July 1953.

Treviscoe and Climax choirs were Cornwall's representatives at Llangollen and Blackpool respectively in 1954. The experience gained the previous year by Climax helped to secure a fourth position in the overall ranking. The success of these two choirs resulted in Stithians male voice choir raising funds and journeying to Blackpool alongside Climax in 1955.⁵² Again Russell Kessell took Treviscoe choir to Llangollen in an attempt to achieve his and the choir's ambition in winning the ultimate prize.⁵³ Awarded second place behind Modena, Italy, they were lauded in the local newspapers. Headlines such as 'Treviscoe Male Choir now British Champions' and 'Noted Tribute to Cornishmen's Singing' placed the choir's achievement within the international arena: 'It had sung before an audience of 15,000 in competition with 18 other choirs from England, Wales, Italy, Yugoslavia, Germany and the United States.'⁵⁴

The high point of the decade for Cornish male voice choirs was 1956 for two important reasons. First, Climax male choir triumphed at Blackpool Festival and thus won the All England Championship.⁵⁵ And second, Treviscoe choir emulated this feat at the International Festival, Llangollen, and thus became world champions within the international male voice choir movement. The accolades which came Russell Kessell's way and the plaudits accorded the choir were unprecedented in the history of the male voice choir movement in

⁵² *West Briton*, 5 May (Stithians) and 1 September (Climax) 1955. The Climax reference confirms the 1954 choir entry.

⁵³ *Cornish Guardian*, 14 April 1955.

⁵⁴ Yvonne Puttick, *Cornish Gold: A History of Treviscoe Male Voice Choir 1936-1993*, p.11.

⁵⁵ *West Briton*, 29 November 1956.

Cornwall.⁵⁶ Kessell paid tribute to the value he attached to Methodism and its associated choral singing:

My wife and I are Methodists, and we are often told by our friends that it is our Christian influence that prevails throughout our teaching that has led us to gain such distinction. Two-thirds of our Choir members sing in our places of worship, either Methodist or Anglican, and ninety-five per cent of our concerts are to raise funds for chapels and churches in Devon and Cornwall.⁵⁷

In 1957 Stithians male voice choir again competed at Blackpool with the choir from Treverva competing in 1959.⁵⁸ Cornish choirs regularly competed at Blackpool, Paignton for the South West of England Trophy, Cheltenham and Llangollen.⁵⁹ But choirs stayed loyal to the county festival circuit which remained based on the pre-1939 format. The year commenced in the spring with Launceston festival, the County Music Festival was May-June, Queens and Wadebridge early autumn with St Austell the last in the calendar year.⁶⁰ At the County Music Festival 1961 the adjudicator remarked: 'I have recently adjudicated at many male voice choir classes in Lancashire, where one hears so much about male choirs. I wish some of you chaps would go up there and show them how it should be done.'⁶¹

⁵⁶ Puttick, *Cornish Gold*, pp.12-20.

⁵⁷ Puttick, *Cornish Gold*, p.21.

⁵⁸ *West Briton*, 24 October 1957 (Stithians); *Falmouth Packet*, 23 October 1959 (Treverva) .

⁵⁹ Blackpool – *West Briton*, 24 October 1957 (Stithians); 26 March 1959 (Treverva); 12 October 1961 (Treviscoe). Paignton – *Cornish Guardian*, 16 May 1963 (St Dennis); *Cornish Times*, 28 May 1965 (Saltash). Plymouth – *Cornish Times*, 20 November 1964 (Saltash). Cheltenham – late 1960s (Climax and Treverva). Llangollen – *Cornish Guardian*, 14 August 1957 (Treviscoe); *West Briton*, 1 August 1963 (Treviscoe); Puttick, *Cornish Gold*, p.29 (Treviscoe, 1965).

⁶⁰ Choirs achieving success at County Festivals during the 1960s: Treverva, Nankersey, Stithians, St Dennis, Treviscoe, Marazion, Fowey, Saltash, Climax, Carnon Vale, Four Lanes, Launceston, Foxhole (ad hoc choir).

⁶¹ *West Briton*, 18 May 1961.

Festivals were therefore central to why the two decades after 1945 formed such a productive period in the Cornish male choral movement. Two elements in the dynamics of a Cornish choral identity in particular stand out. Firstly, participation in national and international festivals situated Cornish choirs within the wider choral music culture of the western world. In this way Cornwall became the subject of attention by national and international print media in relation to the arts, albeit for but a few weeks annually. Secondly, the choral direction taken by leading musical directors demonstrated previously unknown ambition. More outward-looking in the 1950s, the widening of horizons raised the overall level of choir performances. Many conductors aspired to succeed in the field of choral competition, but Russell Kessell of Treviscoe and Edgar Kessell, conductor of Climax, Treverva and Cornwall Police Choir, above all excelled. Both were profiled in televised documentaries featuring the choirs of Treverva and Treviscoe. They each talked personally of a life full of music, their love of the Cornish male voice choirs and how male choral singing originated in the choral music of the Methodist churches and chapels. The documentaries form the only extant recordings of these two men, pivotal figures in the history of Cornish male voice choirs.⁶²

5.

Yet festivals were not the only means by which music standards were raised or audience contact widened. Other conductors placed their choir's focus

⁶² Television Documentaries: *'Places Where They Sing'* – Treverva Male Voice Choir, Westward Production, 1966; *'White Gold'* Treviscoe Male Voice Choir, Westward Production, 1974.

on broadcasts and recordings. Where broadcasting was concerned, the lead conductor was Mousehole choir's Sampson Hosking, conductor from 1954 to 1968. During his tenure Mousehole choir did not enter competitive festivals.⁶³ Hosking chose instead to raise the choir's and Cornwall's musical profile nationally through broadcasts. Alongside the radio programme 'Choir Night' on the Home Service were the television programmes in which the choir performed. Mousehole availed themselves of both regional and national recording opportunities. With regional programme experience at the Independent Television (ITV) Studio in Plymouth, during an extended visit to London in 1956 the choir undertook a major live programme broadcast from the BBC's Shepherds Bush Studio, London. The television programme 'In Town Tonight' was simultaneously broadcast on the radio providing Mousehole choir with an audience of millions: 'The Saturday night sound programme was relayed around the world.'⁶⁴ Other television opportunities followed in the ensuing decade. During the 1950s and 1960s the BBC West of England regional radio broadcasts featured male voice choirs on such programmes as 'Take It Easy', 'Choir Night' and 'Let the People Sing'.

As early as 1948 proof of how radio was bringing choirs to the attention of a wider public is to be found in the extensive reporting of a concert by Climax male voice choir. The report refers to Climax as 'well-known to wireless fans, is

⁶³ Williams, *A Century of Song*, p.31.

⁶⁴ Williams, *A Century of Song*, pp.31 and 83.

YEAR	CHOIR	DATE	RECORDED
1946	Looe	15 August	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
	Ventonleague	3 and 24 October	<i>West Briton</i>
1947	Ventonleague	9 October	<i>West Briton</i>
1950	Ventonleague	9 February	<i>West Briton</i>
	St Austell	22 February	<i>Royal Cornwall Gazette</i>
1952	St Dennis	21 February, 23 October	<i>West Briton</i>
1953	St Dennis	12 March	<i>West Briton</i>
1954	Carnon Vale	25 March	<i>West Briton</i>
	St Dennis	25 March	
1955	St Dennis	14 February	<i>West Briton</i>
	Carnon Vale & Mousehole	14 April	
1956	Looe & St Dennis	17 February	<i>Cornish Times</i>
	Launceston Male Choir	18 February	<i>Cornwall and Devon Post</i>
	Newlyn	15 November	<i>West Briton</i>
1959	Treverva	26 February	<i>West Briton</i>
1963	Treviscoe and St Dennis Silver Band	22 August	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
1965	Treviscoe	21 January	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
1966	Fowey	21 January	<i>Cornish Times</i>
	Treviscoe	3 March	<i>Cornish Guardian</i>
	Fowey	1 April	<i>Cornish Times</i>
	Newquay	14 July	<i>West Briton</i>
1967	Fowey	27 January	<i>Cornish Times</i>
	Polperro	17 March	
	Fowey	25 August	
	Fowey	31 August	<i>West Briton</i>

Table 30 Choir BBC Radio Broadcasts 1946-67

certainly among the best in the West country'.⁶⁵ It was a common occurrence for choirs to undertake innumerable radio concert performances as part of their year's concert calendar. Two examples are afforded by Ventonleague's AGM minutes. Seven broadcasts are referred to in 1947 but twenty-five by 1956.⁶⁶ Table 30 confirms that programme opportunities were taken up by choirs from a wide geographic area not only by lesser known small choirs such as Looe and Fowey,

⁶⁵ *The Cornish Echo*, 9 April 1948.

⁶⁶ *West Briton*, 13 February 1947; 8 March 1956.

but also by the renowned Treviscoe choir. The male voice choirs from St Dennis and Marazion provide further illustrations of early television performances,⁶⁷ but beyond the move to take-up such opportunities choirs availed themselves of alternative recording facilities. Mousehole choir recorded its first LP at EMI Studios, Abbey Road, London in 1966.⁶⁸ Treviscoe's first commercial record was produced in 1967 selling over a 1,000 copies by February 1968.⁶⁹ Choirs also began tape-recording their own concerts to re-play at a later date.⁷⁰

Neither repertoire nor audience were concerns of choirs when participating in festivals. However, broadcasting and recording raised the important question of generating a more populist, contemporaneous repertoire if public interest was to be sustained. Repertoire selection had to be balanced and contain works of musical interest to the younger generation. The musical value of some of the traditional repertoire was being questioned in the early 1950s by professional choralists. A comment from the 1954 male voice choir adjudication at the County Music Festival bears witness: 'There is a good deal of music in your repertoire which is not worth singing.'⁷¹ The role of the conductor was crucial in determining any move away from the traditional core repertoire to include popular 'light entertainment' music. The decade under W. Norris Williams's

⁶⁷ *West Briton* 16 January, 1964. Westward TV appearance (St Dennis choir); <http://www.apollo-choir.co.uk/history> [accessed 3 June 2011]. Westward TV appearance (Marazion choir, 1968).

⁶⁸ Williams, *A Century of Song*, p.42.

⁶⁹ Puttick, *Cornish Gold*, p.30.

⁷⁰ *West Briton*, 2 June 1966. A tape recording of a concert at Camborne by the combined male choirs of Climax, Treverva and Stithians was played a week later to the congregation of Tregajorran Methodist Church as part of raising money for the organ fund.

⁷¹ *West Briton*, 20 May 1954.

(1964-73) musical directorship at Newlyn was crucial in that choir's history because of this very issue. He introduced a markedly different approach to repertoire. Concert programmes based around music from the shows and contemporary chart favourites brought a new found stability to the choir. Choral standards were raised and a growing reputation meant Newlyn choir flourished.⁷² St Dennis choir was fortunate in that its musical director Mr H. Treloar included his own arrangements of both popular songs of the day and music from the shows.⁷³

To an extent repertoire changes did begin to address the need to generate a wider audience appeal but they failed where the issue of recruiting young singers was concerned. Whereas fifteen year olds readily joined male voice choirs in the immediate post-war years,⁷⁴ twenty years on this was not the case. In recognising the onset of secularisation and a growing apart of the generations we come to understand how and why the lyrics of hymns, anthems and the traditional male choral repertoire no longer appealed to the youth of the 1960s. In her research and study of local music-making Ruth Finnegan points out that

what is heard as 'music' is characterised not by its formal properties but by people's view of it, by the special frame drawn round particular forms of sound and their overt social enactment. Music is thus defined in different ways among different groups, each of whom have their own conventions supported by existing practices and ideas about the right way in which music should be realised.⁷⁵

⁷² Balls, *Buccas' Song!*, pp. 19-20.

⁷³ <http://www.fed-cornishchoirs.org.uk/St.Dennis> [accessed 15 December 2006].

⁷⁴ Interview: *Polperro Fisherman's Choir*, 15 October 2008.

⁷⁵ Ruth Finnegan, *The Hidden Musicians* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2007), p.7.

Within popular music culture song has consistently been the supreme musical form given to expressing thought, feeling and observation. The diversity of melody and lyric evident in song form acts as a reflection of the society from which it emanates.

A comparison of lyrics concerning programme content of two Mousehole Male Voice Choir concerts in August 1963⁷⁶ and the songs of The Beatles in the same year⁷⁷ illustrates that the younger generation were no longer inhabiting the same socio-cultural world as that of their parents. Mousehole choir sang of love in terms of: 'Fain would I change that note/To which fond Love hath charm'd me ... O Love! They wrong thee much/That say thy sweet is bitter.'⁷⁸ And of battle they sang: 'With a proud smile/ The warrior with a stab let out his soul/Which fled and shrieked through all the other world.'⁷⁹ The youth of 1963, on the other hand, sang of love and adolescent angst in terms of: 'There is a place/ Where I can go/When I feel blue/And it's my mind/And there's no time when I'm alone/I think of you/And the things you do/Go'round my head/The things you said/Like "I love only you".'⁸⁰ Rather than a battle, to sing of personal relationships in their language was more meaningful: 'Whenever I want you around yeh/All I gotta do Is call you on the phone and you'll come running home yeh.'⁸¹ The youth were distancing themselves from the past and living absorbed in their present. A

⁷⁶ Concerts – St John's Hall, Penzance, 11 August 1963; Paul Parish Church, 18 August 1963.

⁷⁷ Ian Macdonald, *Revolution in the Head* (London: Pimlico, 1995).

⁷⁸ *Fain would I change that note* – Vaughan Williams.

⁷⁹ *The Herald* – Edward Elgar.

⁸⁰ *There's A Place* – Lennon and McCartney.

⁸¹ *All I've Go To Do* – Lennon and McCartney.

complex web of socio-musical and generational-cultural factors which were slowly to erode the confidence of the traditional male voice choir were taking shape by 1968.

6.

Earlier chapters have shown that the cessation of choirs was principally caused by lack of numbers or loss of the conductor. Two choirs with established histories lapsed before the close of the 1950s for these reasons. In west Cornwall the choir from Holman Engineering works disbanded in 1956-7. It is probable that the successful neighbouring work's choir at Climax under the baton of Edgar Kessell drew away its membership. In the clay country the choir of St Austell had ceased a few years prior to Holman's, a probable reason here might have been the formation of Imerys Eastern Area Choir with its direct connection to the clay mining company. By the close of the decade the long established choir of Ventonleague disbanded.⁸² Ventonleague is notable in that it was started by Mr C. E. Williams (see Chapter Four, Table 15) who was its one conductor. With the age of its membership being generally more senior to other choirs even prior to the Second World War,⁸³ the issues of age plus conductor must be considered as reasons for the choir folding.

Beyond concerns regarding choir membership there was the general issue of audience numbers. As the 1960s dawned the traditional male voice choir was

⁸² *West Briton*, 29 October 1959.

⁸³ *Western Weekly News*, 25 July 1936. A photograph of the choir and conductor provides the historical text.

having to make greater efforts to maintain its audience. For a village choir like Probus, '... it used to be a simple matter to run a choir and attract a large audience, today it took a good deal of organising'.⁸⁴ Treviscoe and St Dennis choirs from the clay district also struggled to maintain audience support.⁸⁵ Nor were regional events immune from outside influences. Public apathy and competition from television were reasons cited for the cancellation of the Wadebridge Festival in 1960. A decline in attendance numbers over the previous four years had produced yearly financial losses.⁸⁶ The re-establishment of the festival five years later, resulted in the male voice choir of Wadebridge also being revived.⁸⁷

Despite the concerns raised above new choirs did form. To the far southwest at the mouth of the Helford river lies the coastal village of Flushing. There is evidence that a Flushing choir existed in 1925.⁸⁸ It was a choir which illustrates two common features prevalent within the male choral movement. Firstly, it showed that choirs can wax and wane and secondly, it provides further evidence of a choir's existence being determined by the ability and personality of the individual who holds the position of conductor. The choir re-formed in 1950 as the Nankersey Glee Singers.⁸⁹ The choir's first conductor was Harry B. Owen,

⁸⁴ *West Briton*, 25 February 1960. Comments at a concert by Probus Male Voice Choir at Tresillian. *West Briton* 23 March 1961. The same concerns were raised in this item, with particular reference being made to 'stay at homers' whose choice was to watch television.

⁸⁵ *Cornish Guardian*, 21 January 1960 (Treviscoe); *West Briton*, 31 August 1961 (St Dennis).

⁸⁶ *Cornish Guardian*, 31 March 1960.

⁸⁷ *Cornish Guardian*, 25 November 1965.

⁸⁸ *Falmouth Packet*, 17 January 1964. A reprint of the 1925 choir photograph.

⁸⁹ <http://www.nankerseychoir.org>. Nankersey is the Cornish name for Flushing.

the renowned conductor of Falmouth Docks Christmas Choir. Nankersey Male Voice Choir charts its official formation as 1950.⁹⁰

Attention might also be drawn to the choir on the north coast at St Mawgan in the parish of Pydar. Although it lapsed in the late 1950s, its history and geography illustrate how a choir arguably remains germane to the later formation of permanent choirs within the same district. In this instance reference is to Newquay and St Columb Celtic choirs.⁹¹ In the same context is the aforementioned Ventonleague. Its choir history resulted in a male voice choir reforming many years later as Hayle male voice choir.⁹² At the eastern boundary of the county along the shores of the Tamar river, Torpoint formed a choir in 1951.⁹³

Cornwall Police Male Voice Choir necessitates special reference for two reasons: it was the first regional Cornish male voice choir and it was one which did not originate specifically from Methodism. Formed in 1950,⁹⁴ it was free of the concerns regarding choir numbers and repertoire. Membership was open to individuals, civilian or uniform gainfully employed in Cornwall Police Force, and from the outset repertoire was based on pieces from the light entertainment, popular secular genre. Under the musical directorship of Edgar Kesell, conductor

⁹⁰ *Cornish Echo*, 29 December 1950.

⁹¹ *Cornish Guardian*, 31 May 1956. This recorded date appears to be the last public notification of a concert by St Mawgan. St Columba Celtic dates from 1970. <http://www.celticmvc.co.uk> [accessed 15 December 2006]. An ad hoc choir existed at Newquay from 1947 but its modern formation is 1974. <http://www.newquaymalevoicechoir.co.uk> [accessed 15 December 2006].

⁹² <http://www.prazehaylemalechoir.awardspace.com/History> [accessed 12 March 2008].

⁹³ *Cornish Times*, 9 February 1951.

⁹⁴ *West Briton*, 13 July 1954, records a concert in Truro Cathedral. Interview: *Cornwall Police Choir*, 30 January 2009. A 96 years old member of the Plymouth Police Choir confirmed that the Cornwall Police Choir was formed in 1950, he being one of the original members.

of Treverva Male Voice Choir and Mabe Ladies Choir, Cornwall Police concerts regularly included such numbers as *The Gendarmes – Offenbach*, *Pretty Polly Perkins of Paddington Green*, *Old Mother Hubbard*, *Sweet Nightingale*, *Fantasia on English Melodies*.⁹⁵ Arrangements of *Old Mother Hubbard* and *Seventy Six Trombones* were also popular. Not attuned to the sacred repertoire beloved of traditional male voice choirs such as Mousehole, the contrast in repertoire can be seen in a selection from Mousehole's concerts of the 1960s.⁹⁶ Mousehole's concert programmes illustrate proportionately more songs by Elgar and the traditional repertoire, as detailed in Chapter Four, with glees retaining regular selection.⁹⁷

Three entirely new choirs formed in the 1960s: Pelynt, Fowey and Saltash. The latter two became synonymous with their conductor. On the south coast Fowey Male Voice Choir was formed during 1959-60 by Mr Roger Brady. It drew its membership from the Polruan-Fowey environs where previously a choir had existed on an ad hoc basis singing as the Polruan and Troy Male Voice Choir.⁹⁸ Fowey choir remained small in number throughout its existence.⁹⁹ By 1962 the choir's reputation was such that that an extended article appeared in the *Cornish Guardian* praising the choir's charitable works and the musical directorship of its conductor.¹⁰⁰ In the east of the county Torpoint's male voice choir membership

⁹⁵ *West Briton*, 12 March 1959.

⁹⁶ Programmes: 13 August 1961; 12 August 1962; 11 August 1963; 8 August 1965; 2 August 1970.

⁹⁷ Programmes: 12 August 1962, 8 August 1965.

⁹⁸ *Cornish Guardian*, 4 December 1958. There are infrequent entries in the local newspapers, principally the *Cornish Guardian*. The entry 4 December 1958, is evidence of its ad hoc existence.

⁹⁹ *Cornish Times*, 26 August 1960.

¹⁰⁰ *Cornish Guardian*, 11 January 1962.

numbers slowly declined resulting in an inevitable disbanding of the choir in 1965,¹⁰¹ but a few miles inshore on the edge of the River Tamar, Saltash Male Voice Choir came into being. Within six months the Saltash choir achieved outright success at the Plymouth Music Festival.¹⁰² Under the baton of Betty Pawley the choir quickly became known as a 'festival' choir achieving innumerable successes in the county's festivals. Despite its Cornish credentials and musical successes in the name of Cornwall where western Cornish male choralists were concerned its geographic location was to give it an identity of a 'Plymouth' choir.¹⁰³

The socio-cultural context in which male voice choirs were positioned in the 1960s was far removed from the immediate post war years. Looe Fishermen's Choir can be deemed to symbolise not only the passing of a male choral era but also the passing of socio-cultural values held within the corporate body of the choir and the community to which it belonged. Such an epithet is not misplaced. With the original choir members re-assembling in 1960 after many years, along with Mr Mutton, the choir's one and only conductor, they performed a programme of traditional male choral music to a packed East Looe Methodist Church.¹⁰⁴ An anniversary concert in 1961 was the choir's final performance recorded in detail in the regional newspaper.¹⁰⁵ The personal account which follows, a reminiscence of an eighty-eight year old ex-fisherman and choir

¹⁰¹ *Cornish Guardian*, 11 November 1965.

¹⁰² *Cornish Times*, 5 June, notes the choir's formation, and 20 November 1964 records the success at Plymouth Music Festival.

¹⁰³ Interviews: *Saltash Male Voice Choir*, 7 September 2007; *Treverva Choir*, 4 December 2008.

¹⁰⁴ *Cornish Times*, 1 April 1960.

¹⁰⁵ *Cornish Times*, 21 April 1961.

member, is included at some length because it provides a clear statement as to why men gather together to sing; it makes evident the absolute respect, admiration and gratitude held by the choir where their conductor Mr Mutton was concerned.

We loved every minute of it. Old Harold Mutton, the skipper of the boat Sea Gull, was the choirmaster and a wonderfully good master he was. No doubt many of us got our love of singing from him. He was a great chap – all honour to him ... in those days we used to have as many as 50 fishing boats ... now when I tell you there are but five fishing vessels go out ... We used to sing the old Sankey and Moody hymns and we enjoyed being of service. We loved to sing.¹⁰⁶

Looe illustrates the social and cultural changes which had materialised by the early 1960s: a fishing port reduced in size and importance and the passing of traditions in a fast changing world.

7.

The changed social and cultural dynamics observed in the nation post-1945 came to be reflected in Cornish society and culture. The secularism which suffused the fabric of the nation was tempered in its impact in Cornwall by the strength of Methodism. Sacred concerts, community hymn singing, Sankey and Merritt celebrations, these were the visible signs of the continued strength in depth of sacred choral music throughout the 1950s and '60s carrying within them a force in number. And yet a growing generational divide was being realised

¹⁰⁶ *Cornish Times*, 30 August 1963. This extended article was titled, 'Looe Fishermen's Choir was Cornish Highlight' by E. Whitaker and of itself acts as an obituary. A further article appeared a month later in the *Cornish Times*, 13 September 1963.

where church, chapel and Sunday school attendance figures were concerned, compounded by change in the composition of the county's population.¹⁰⁷

In the 1950s the traditional male voice choirs generated a choral prestige which was acknowledged nationally and internationally. A new identity of internationalism became part of the mixture which had been built upon traditional Methodist identity. The choirs of Treviscoe, Treverva and Stithians and their esteemed conductors had re-established a strong Cornish male choral identity through competitive festival performance. With radio and television broadcasts enhancing further the profile of Cornish male voice choirs, with hindsight it was a golden age. As the 1960s drew to a close Cornish male choirs were looking toward the future with optimism. However, certain decisions were beyond a choir's control. A Government policy decision on policing affected the Cornwall Police Choir and brought about its demise through the Cornwall Police Force amalgamating with the Devon Constabulary, the Plymouth City and Exeter Police in June 1967.¹⁰⁸ Particular conductors had served their communities over several decades and by 1968 their age, health and level of commitment were issues which specific choirs had to address. Polperro Fishermen's choir were to lament the passing of their founder and only conductor to date, Eva Cloke.¹⁰⁹ Russell Kessell was soon to relinquish the post of musical director of Treviscoe

¹⁰⁷ Michael Winter, 'The Twentieth Century Part I: Cornwall', in Nicholas Orme (ed.), *Unity and Variety: A History of the Church in Devon and Cornwall* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1991), p.164.

¹⁰⁸ *E-mail*, 19 January 2009. Evidence provided by the Chairman of Plymouth Area Police Choir.

¹⁰⁹ *Cornish Guardian*, 15 January 1970.

Male Voice Choir.¹¹⁰ The social and cultural changes which became apparent during the 1960s altered the wider context in which male voice choirs were positioned by the close of the decade.

The most overt socio-cultural changes were manifested in the widening gap between the generations. Undeniably London was the centre of the new youth culture but the young people of Cornwall were not impervious to new cultural influences. The media vehicle for disseminating the new sounds was via the airwaves, Pirate Radio, Radio Caroline, Radio Luxembourg: 'If you turned on the radio you could hear humanity speaking. Music was very important in '68.'¹¹¹ Additionally, television brought into the home such as 'Juke Box Jury' and 'Ready Steady Go'. The ready availability of singles and albums stimulated the growth of a commercial media which would become a global, popular cultural frenzy: '... there was an unprecedented interaction that led to new forms, new possibilities and new attitudes, and that determined the music to be heard in the Seventies and Eighties'.¹¹² Despite Cornwall's geographic isolation the popular cultural revolution did permeate to youth in Cornwall, even if, as Dominic Sandbrook points out, 'Change often came slowly to provincial towns and rural villages.'¹¹³ In *Revolution in the Head*, Ian MacDonald saw the generation gap and the youth culture question which opened up at the end of the 1950s as one way of life

¹¹⁰ *Cornish Guardian*, 6 November 1969.

¹¹¹ BBC Radio 4 Debate, *The Year of Revolution 1968* broadcast 18 March 2008. Excerpt from an interview with Donovan played during the debate.

¹¹² Simon Frith, 'The Year it all came together 1967', *The History of Rock* Vol.1 Issue 1 (Orbis, 1981), p.2.

¹¹³ Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good*, p.xvii.

clashing with another. He did not regard the question as a simplistic parents versus children argument.¹¹⁴ In MacDonald's view the stability hitherto inherent in society, the accepted traditional values and structures which characterise British society, were challenged and discarded.

What was to follow, as we will see in the final chapter, was an introduction of trends which pushed male voice choirs out of mainstream culture, to being a genre of music-making categorised as a minority interest. A new set of issues arose directly out of this shift and punctuate the ensuing narrative. In particular the generational divide presaged the onset of the atrophy of the traditional male voice choir in the closing decades of the twentieth century.

¹¹⁴ MacDonald, *Revolution in the Head*, p.25.

Chapter Eight

Music, place and culture: generations apart, c.1970-2000

The 1970s saw Cornish male voice choirs maintain their reputation for choral excellence through successful participation in national and international competitive festivals.¹ Travelling beyond county and national borders, concert itineraries gained wider public acclaim. Critically, however, the various strands of Sixties social, cultural and musical reformation ultimately brought about the slow atrophying of male choral singing. In this chapter it will be shown that cause and effect did not become manifest until the closing decades of the twentieth century.

The focus is firstly centred on national economic policies and trends which determined the re-configuration of the demographic map of Cornwall. A concern for Cornwall was a dilution of its ethnic identity by the number of in-migrants. In the 1980s, a view held by some commentators was that being 'swamped by a flood of middle class, middle aged, middle browed city-dwellers who effectively imposed their standards upon local society' magnified the ethnic divisions already apparent from the industrial changes of the 1970s.²

¹ Llangollen, Blackpool and Cheltenham Festivals were the most frequented. *West Briton*, 25 April 1970; 3 July 1975; 5 June 1980.

² Bernard Deacon, *Cornwall A Concise History* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), pp.214-5. The quotation is cited by Deacon from: Perry et al, *Counterurbanisation*, p.129.

In relation to mass popular culture there emerged two generational issues which had a major impact on Cornish male voice choirs. The first stemmed from changes in types of musical behaviour exhibited by the 'new' young generation, and the second concerned the prevailing music educational pedagogy. Whereas changes in the pattern of musical behaviours in youth were of a global nature, radical change in music pedagogy was specific to the British education system. Both issues impacted on the male voice choral repertoire and a choir's ability to sustain its membership; a situation exacerbated through increased financial pressures placed on choirs. It will be evident that by the close of the 1990s Cornish male voice choirs were trapped in a social and cultural labyrinth, complex and perplexing; neither working-class nor middle-class, but a retired-class. At the start of the twenty-first century many questioned their ability to survive.

1.

Britain in the 1970s experienced a decade of economic paralysis. Industrial strikes, weak government and a country no longer the recipient of a guaranteed supply of oil nor an uninterrupted supply of coal, were all factors which merged to create a national mood of discontent.³ The impact on Cornwall of the rapid rise in world oil prices in 1973 was such that the 'shallowness of the 1960's boom was exposed'.⁴ With the government of the day turning its focus to the needs of the inner-cities, rural and peripheral regions were marginalised within national

³ Nick Tiratsoo, 'You've Never had it so bad?: Britain in the 1970s', in Nick Tiratsoo (ed.), *From Blitz to Blair A New History of Britain Since 1939* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1997), pp. 163-90.

⁴ Deacon, *Cornwall*, p.211.

economic policies. In relation to Cornwall, as Ronald Perry points out: 'The inflow of new factories dried up, tourist numbers dipped ... unemployment rose from 3.5% to 12%.⁵ Low wages and a failing economy were major elements in the continuing exodus of the county's young population.

From the early 1980s through to 1997 Conservative economic policies were based on 'free market' ideology. A positive economic outcome was that inflation was driven down but the negative aspect proved to be that it was at the expense of increased unemployment.⁶ In Cornwall the loss of over a thousand jobs at Falmouth Docks in 1979 signalled the near extinction of traditional industrial employment.⁷ Closures, mergers and transfers resulted in further lay-offs: 2,500 jobs lost from closure of an electronics factory at Pool; Holman engineering firm absorbed into a corporation, as was Silly Cox, ship-repairers at Falmouth Docks; and English China Clay transferred the firm's headquarters to Reading. Bernard Deacon notes: '... by the 1980s, the Cornish economy was controlled from the outside by multinational and other companies and run to a large extent on the inside by a new population of in-migrants.'⁸

However, nationally there were economic winners as well as losers. In the second Thatcher administration priority was given to policies devoted to de-

⁵ Ronald Perry, 'Economic Change and 'Opposition' Economics', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornwall Since the War* (Redruth: Dyllansow Truran, 1993) p.54.

⁶ Paul Hirst, 'Miracle or Mirage?: The Thatcher Years 1979-1997', in Nick Tiratsoo (ed.), *From Blitz to Blair* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1997), pp.191-217.

⁷ *West Briton*, 31 January 1980.

⁸ Deacon, *Cornwall*, p.211-2.

regulation and privatisation.⁹ Additional hardship befell those categorised as 'low wage earners'. In *Britain Since 1960*, a detailed examination of the political and economic landscape of the time, Brian Spittles draws attention to the consequence of changes within the tax system on those classified as low wage earners. Spittles cites a report of February 1994 compiled by the Institute of Fiscal Studies¹⁰ which concluded that the lowest wage earners were disproportionately worse off than those in a higher income bracket. With Cornwall's economy classified as 'low wage' Conservative policies only served to magnify the county's problems.

By the 1990s Cornwall's population was still beset by the two constants of low wages and high unemployment. It was the traditional industries which suffered most: 'A massive shake out of labour occurred in the traditional male-orientated activities of Cornwall ... farming, fishing, mining, quarrying, clay-working, ship-repairing and hard-rock engineering'.¹¹ Moreover, Cornwall's inability to break free of its 'remoteness' label and the continuing notion to outsiders of a region of cheap, idyllic, unpressurised living resulted in what Bernard Deacon describes as a 'two tier society'.¹² Deacon pointed to a divide which has come to exist between the in-migrants and the indigenous population concerning lifestyle, economic status, health and opportunities. The county's population broadly saw a reduction in working-class numbers with the decline

⁹ Hirst, 'Miracle or Mirage?' p.199.

¹⁰ Brian Spittles, *Britain Since 1960 – An Introduction* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1995), p.42.

¹¹ Perry, 'Economic Change and "Opposition" Economics', p.62.

¹² Deacon, *Cornwall*, p.227.

of traditional industries, a demographic change which gradually filtered through to male voice choir membership.

Of greatest significance to Cornwall was the rapid increase in house prices in the south of England, the spike in in-migration numbers of the early 1970s and late '80s reflecting the upturn in the housing market. Surveys charting the composition of in-migrant population place the greatest number from London, the South East and the Midlands.¹³ Profit gained from house sales generated an influx into Cornwall of those in middle-age seeking a career change and early retirees in-migrating permanently or else buying up the housing stock for second homes.¹⁴ The doubling of house prices from the period of Thatcher's premiership which remained artificially high through to the close of the 1990s in itself resulted in a housing crisis hitherto unresolved in Cornwall.¹⁵ Given this social and economic situation it is of no surprise to note that the greater percentage of out-migrants at this time comprised young 'semi-skilled and unskilled workers'.¹⁶

Alongside national socio-economic re-configuration there ran in parallel a transformation of mass popular music culture, global in its reach, driven by technological innovation creating a new and monied younger section of society. The collapse of the Conservative government and a Labour victory in the 1997

¹³ Winter, 'The Twentieth Century Part I: Cornwall', p.164; Douglas Davies, Charles Watkins, Michael Winter, *Church and Religion in Rural England* (Edinburgh: T and T Clarke, 1991), p.38.

¹⁴ Bernard Deacon Andrew George, Ronald Perry, *Cornwall at the crossroads?* (CoSERG [The Cornish Social and Economic Research Group] Redruth: Earles Press, 1988). See also Paul Thornton, 'Second Homes in Cornwall', in Philip Payton (ed.) *Cornish Studies 4*, (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1996), 152-57.

¹⁵ Malcolm Williams, 'Housing the Cornish', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornwall Since the War* (Redruth: Dyllansow Truran, 1993), pp.157-80.

¹⁶ Davies, Watkins, Winter, *Church and Religion in Rural England*, p.38.

General Election heralded a new style of politics. In contrast to the outgoing John Major government, Tony Blair's 'youthfulness', 'presentational skills' and 'dynamism' were all personal assets which connected with the public. Critically Blair had developed a 'fine understanding of media relations'.¹⁷ Under 'New Labour', there was an overt courting and an unprecedented focus on youth culture. 'Cool Britannia' recognised that youth culture wielded significant economic and social influence. In addition, the notion of 'youth' was expanded:

By the 1990s marketers were coining the term 'middle youth' to denote consumers aged from their late twenties to early forties who resisted the trappings of encroaching middle age, favouring instead the tastes and life styles (pop music, clubbing, fashion, drugs) once the preserve of the young.¹⁸

As we have seen economic, social and demographic transformations had been a recurring theme during the twentieth century. Even so, what occurred after 1972 amounted to a radical shift, a cultural and generational shift beyond anything which had previously been conceived. The past gives rise to generational differences at each turn but here the cultural future was shaped by a young generation which had a very different perspective from that of its parents. As the historian Arthur Marwick argues: 'What was happening was that the old reference points by which individuals and groups measured their behaviour, and by which behaviour was constrained, had drastically changed.'¹⁹

¹⁷ John Rentoul, 'Tony Blair 1994 - ', in Kevin Jefferys (ed.), *Leading Labour From Keir Hardie to Tony Blair* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1999) p.220.

¹⁸ Bill Osgerby, 'Youth Culture', in Paul Addison and Harriet Jones (eds.), *A Companion to Contemporary Britain 1939-2000* (Oxford: Blackwell 2005), pp.127 and 141.

¹⁹ Arthur Marwick, *Culture in Britain since 1945* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), p.139.

2.

Fieldwork investigations by the anthropologist Margaret Mead on the issue of generational differences underscored the rate of social and cultural change. In *Culture and Commitment* she argued that it was this very rapidity of change which reinforced the belief that, 'it will be the child – and not the parent and grandparent – that represents what is to come'.²⁰ Gone was an unquestioning adherence by the young to the historic social norms and conventions of their elders.

The generational gulf which opened up in relation to male choral singing contained within it a cluster of predicaments. In his contribution at an international Symposium in Vienna 1972, where debate centred on the subject of new patterns of musical behaviour, the socio-musicologist Charles Hoffer asserted that to ignore the generation gap as merely a cyclical problem was in his view to make a serious miscalculation as to its significance. Hoffer asserted that the dominant environment was one which was filled with sounds and messages, the common experience of youth being the media experience.²¹ British studies by Paul Willis into youth subcultures further exemplified how music gave

²⁰ Margaret Mead, *Culture and Commitment, A Study of the Generation Gap* (St Abans: Panther Books Ltd., 1977), p.110.

²¹ Charles R. Hoffer, 'Youth Music Education and The New Sound Environment', in I. Bontinck (ed.), *New Patterns of Musical Behaviour of the Young Generation in Industrial Societies* (Vienna: Universal Edition 26246, 1974) 167-77.

expression to the social realities of young people's lives.²² A day-to-day all-inclusive lifestyle identity was radically different from that which through tradition bound together the membership of Cornish male voice choirs. The contrast was marked.

The uniformity and social cohesion so important to male voice choirs was a very similar social bond against which superficially the young railed. And yet it is precisely peer group bonding that youngsters sought out, primarily through their own music but also through clothing, hairstyle, language and daily lifestyle. Popular symbols of youth and music which defined the generational differences had become embedded into everyday society by the 1980s²³ and yet male voice choirs did not respond to counteract the problem, neither through repertoire selection or active recruitment. Consequently the average age of choir membership rose sharply. By 1988 Treviscoe male voice choir, like other choirs, was losing its ageing membership, a situation compounded by no new, young singers joining.²⁴ Amalgamation with the neighbouring clay choir of St Dennis, itself in a similar position, was mooted but not pursued.

²² Paul Willis, 'Youth Groups in Birmingham and their specific Relation to Pop Music', in I. Bontinck (ed.), *New Patterns of Musical Behaviour of the Young Generation in Industrial Societies* (Vienna: Universal Edition 26246, 1974) 108-13. See also: Paul Willis, 'Social Practice and Expressive Symbolism', in K. Blaukopf and D. Mark (eds.), *The Cultural Behaviour of Youth, Towards a Cross-Cultural Survey in Europe and Asia* (Vienna: Universal Edition 26247, 1976) 29-36. See additional and complementary research by: Simon Frith *Sociology of Rock* (London: Constable, 1978).

²³ Dick Hebdige, *Subculture – The Meaning of Style* (London: Methuen, 1983); Simon Frith, *Sound effects - Youth, leisure, and the politics of rock* (London: Constable, 1983).

²⁴ Yvonne Puttick, *Cornish Gold: A History of Treviscoe Male Voice Choir 1936-1993*, p.46.

Overt parochialism did not help matters. Amalgamations were mooted but often did not succeed.²⁵ As one long-standing choir member said: 'You get factions within choirs, unfortunately they don't want to lose their identity, don't want to mix with another choir for some silly reason.'²⁶ This sense of belonging, identity with a place, a choir and its traditions, remained so strong that for some it was deemed preferable to ultimately disband rather than lose integrity.

By not merging with St Dennis when it still retained a degree of choral strength, Treviscoe male voice choir, the only Cornish choir to gain premier position at Llangollen International Eisteddfod, ultimately caused its own demise in February 1993. A decrease in choir membership was merely viewed as a sign of the times by choir members: 'Numbers in the 1980s dropped to twenty-five ... lost the village families, they were the crux of the matter at one time – knock on effect, all round.'²⁷ Membership loss was indiscriminate in relation to the geography of the county. Choirs in the north were as affected as those in the south: 'Dropped down to 15-16 at one period'.²⁸ From a present day perspective the issue of an ageing choir is one that is routinely faced. In the 1980s early 1990s however, by not perceiving advancing age as a 'problem to be solved' the very survival of male voice choirs came into question.

²⁵ A successful amalgamation was Chacewater and Carnon Vale in 1991. The choirs united to become Chacewater Carnon Vale Male Voice Choir and then, primarily due to demographic changes, moved to Truro becoming the City of Truro Male Choir in 2003. Hayle and Praze male voice choirs were to merge in 2006.

²⁶ Interview: *Imerys Mid-Cornwall*, 14 July 2011.

²⁷ Interview: *Polperro Fisherman's Choir*, 15 October 2008.

²⁸ Interview: *Tintagel*, 20 January 2009.

Personal testimonies reinforce the way which the issue of age adversely affected Cornish choirs. By not initiating strategies in the last decades of the twentieth century to counteract an ageing membership, the notion of what one commits to at a 'certain' age became obstacles to achieving a generational crossover.

Youngsters won't come ... they don't want to make a commitment;

Nearly all over seventy-nine, next generation not interested ... join choir is a big commitment, a lot of time, mitigates against young family, that is fifty-five and under;

Most people that like singing are my era, sort of elderly;

The generations in choirs now gone ... not a rosy future, not attracting many youngsters really;

Our sons brought up in a different era;

No youngsters coming up that are interested;

Cannot expect teenagers to join a choir when the average age is sixty, seventy;

So many distractions let them bury themselves in modern music.²⁹

Even though different generations believed that music had meaning, those of differing ages empathised with the identity of their own group, its culture and its aesthetic values. So diverse were musical genres that the different generations failed to recognise these characteristic traits within each other - therein lay the predicament. What emerged here was an impasse: 'The two generations will not meet.'³⁰

²⁹ Interviews: *Saltash*, 24 August 2007; *Wadebridge*, 9 December 2008; *Burraton*, 7 December 2009; *Mevagissey*, 8 July, 2011; *Tintagel*; *Polperro*; *Holman Climax*, 28 February 2008; *Truro*, 3 December 2009.

³⁰ Interview: *Burraton*.

3.

We next turn attention to a predicament arising from the changed educational music pedagogy established within the British education system by the close of the 1970s. Before addressing the specifics of singing and music literacy the educational context is set by commencing with a short, general examination of the music curriculum of the 1970s and '80s.

No longer limited to the music of their parents or involvement in the leisure activities of the older generation, a characteristic of the post-Sixties school generation was the desire and need to create music with a degree of immediacy.

Hoffer dealt specifically with this issue in 1972:

Many young people are impatient with the time needed to work towards a long-range goal or the complexity of many of society's problems, and do not appreciate the contribution of the past. The tendency to live only for the moment has several implications for music.³¹

The need for instant expression meant that creating music was arrived at aurally by personal, individual trial and error, consequently negating for most the necessity to read or write music. Kurt Blaukoff, one of a group of music-sociologists researching in the field of popular culture during the 1970s concluded: 'The generation of spontaneous musical needs and music activities is thus an element of the mutation of our music life.'³² In the field of music education, the mutation of which Blaukoff spoke was evident in greater inclusivity regarding music styles, performance and composition. Leading

³¹ Hoffer, 'Youth Music Education and The New Sound Environment', p.170.

³² Kurt Blaukopf, 'The Mutation of Musical Culture Statement of the Problem', in D. Mark (ed.), *Stock-Taking of Musical Life* (ISME Ed. No.1 1980), p.13.

proponents in this field moved the music curriculum forward to reflect changes in youth culture, popular music and the fast changing music-media technology industry.³³ There was a concerted move away from the formerly accepted pedagogy that to be able to play, compose or perform it was essential to be musically literate. With an upsurge in live music-making in British schools, instrumental music became mainstream and central to music activities. Singing, and choral singing in particular, became marginalised within the classroom in both the state and private sectors of education from primary through to secondary, but particularly where 11 to 18 year olds were concerned.

From the latter decades of the nineteenth century and through to mid-twentieth century, collective music-making in state and private schools was predicated on classroom singing, grounded in a musical literacy based as we have seen on the sol-fa system.³⁴ By the 1960s the days of the national preoccupation with sight-singing were long gone and by the 1970s singing had vacated the classroom and was notably absent in extra-curricular activities. Instruments and instrumental group music-making became the focal point of music education policy and teaching.³⁵ The desire of youth for immediacy of response evoked by

³³ John Paynter, *Music in the Secondary School Curriculum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); George Self, *New Sounds in the Classroom – A Contemporary Approach to Music* (London: Universal, 1967); Murray R. Schafer, *The New Soundscape* (Canada: Ontario, 1969); Graham Vulliamy and Ed Lee, *Rock, Pop and Ethnic Music in School* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman, *Orff-Schulwerk* (London: Schott, 1977).

³⁴ See Chapter Two for a detailed explanation of the sol-fa system.

³⁵ Dorothy Taylor, 'Trends and Developments in Music Education – A British Perspective', in D. Mark (ed.), *Stock-Taking of Musical Life*, ISME Edition. No.1 (Vienna: Doblinger, 1980) 108-19. See also: John Finney, 'Curriculum Stagnation: the case of singing in the English National Curriculum', *Music Education Research*, Vol.2, No.2 (2000), 203-11.

popular music displaced the hitherto accepted adherence to notated traditions; there was no necessity to read or write music. Recorded in 1974 a relatively young choir member in the far west of Cornwall remarked: 'The majority in the choir don't know a note of music and yet when they hear it once on the piano and someone sings it over to them they automatically pick it up, they never forget it.'³⁶

Learned from a young age based on the hymnal tradition, unaccompanied part-singing was the very foundation of church and chapel choral music.³⁷ This tradition equally found no place in school music. Those of seventy, eighty plus years of age bear witness to the slow atrophying of the hymnal and congregational traditions of Methodist choral singing. The pillars of sacred and secular music upon which Cornwall's choral tradition was built had by the closing decade of the twentieth century collapsed.

'Cos don't sing, 'cos they don't go to chapel ... hymns set a tone, semi-tone lower ... in unison ... silly choruses;

Not singing in assemblies. ... not singing, find money to buy instruments, not taught to sing;

Talked to the music teacher and she said 'we don't do any choral work';

Something has to be done to maintain choral singing;

Instrumental playing ... time to practise and tutoring ... can't with a voice so that brings the numbers of new choir members right down;

Singing not in school ... only girls interested;

³⁶ 'Places Where They Sing' – Treverva Male Voice Choir, Westward TV Production, 1974. Copy of documentary courtesy of South West Film and Television Archive (SWFTA), February 2009.

³⁷ Colin Durrant, 'Shaping Identity Through Choral Activity: Singers' and Conductors' Perceptions', *Research Studies in Music Education*, No.24 (2005), 88-97.

Church part-singing gone, Songs of Praise unison ... part-singing not promoted in general public, new music is in unison, most choirs sing in unison.³⁸

Personal testimonies also underline the consequence of a decline in musical literacy; the acceptance that a majority of choir members were often unable to read music. Repetition of certain phrases in the following quotations emphasises the newly accepted method of learning new repertoire:

Learn by rote in rehearsals, can't read music ... most of members in male voice choirs don't read music;

Non-readers tend to get it better;

Can't read music;

Lot of note bashing;

Read patterns and phrase shapes;

Learn by rote, not pitching by notes, older ones could sing by sol-fa ... following shape and pattern;

Some can read, read a bit ... learn by rote;

Most can follow but not read;

Learn by rote;

None read music, it takes time, follow patterns up and down;

Learn by rote;

Most choirs the membership doesn't have to be able to read music;

Not concerned with reading music, more important to get them to hold the note and follow the line.³⁹

In this regard, modern Cornish male voice choirs were no different to comparable choirs in other parts of the country. Christopher Wiltshire, writing in 1993 on the

³⁸ Interviews: *Mousehole*, 8 October 2007; *Holman Climax*; *Tintagel*; *Burraton*; *Saltash*, 12 September 2007.

³⁹ Interviews: *Mousehole*; *Holman Climax*; *Polperro*; *Wadebridge*; *Tintagel*; *Truro*; *Liskerret*, 12 July 2011; *Mevagissey*; *Rame*, 7 July 2011; *Saltash*; *St Dennis*, 20 November 2007; *Launceston*, 27 July 2011.

subject of British male voice choirs, chronicles a definitive decline in musical literacy: 'Compared with choirs of Elgar's and Bantock's day contemporary male choirs have very little knowledge of staff notation let alone expertise in sight-singing.'⁴⁰

What has emerged here places the focus once again on inter-generational differences. There is a stark contrast between current standards of music education and the proficiency of male choralists who were choir members between the two World Wars. As Wiltshire points out, the interwar generation was schooled in choral singing in the classroom, Sunday school and the chapels. It was a vocal prowess based on an ability to sight-sing and a level of musical literacy which enabled the performance of a wide-ranging choral repertoire. Although the choir membership which closes out the twentieth century are the recipients of a higher standard of secondary education than the generation of which Wiltshire speaks, more rounded in its general subject knowledge, an educational quandary does exist. Better educated yes, but as choirs reach the cusp of the twenty-first century where music literacy is concerned they are musically illiterate compared to previous generations.

4.

By the close of the 1970s the place of Methodism and its influence in Cornish society was gradually but irrevocably diminishing with nearly a third of

⁴⁰ Christopher Wiltshire, 'The British Male Voice Choir: A History and Contemporary Assessment' (unpublished Ph.D thesis, Goldsmith College, University of London, 1993), p.363.

its membership lost by the late 1980s.⁴¹ Chapels had ceased to be at the centre of community life. In an increasingly fractured society established social and cultural traditions disintegrated as the 'rhythms of change' gathered pace.⁴² At the dawn of the new millennium the traditional male voice choir came to be positioned socially and culturally in a very different world to that of the opening decade of the twentieth century.

One understanding within the male choral movement which gained acceptance after 1970 was the view that by modernising, by updating programme content, the choir recruitment problem would be solved. The following examination of repertoire across three decades reveals the dilemma. Parallel with technological innovations,⁴³ the catalyst for the paradigm shift in popular music culture came through the medium of song. The history of song form is extraordinarily diverse, whether composed for the soloist or choral medium. It is a genre which has existed in all spheres of social interaction and it continues to be the most popular vehicle for musical composition, performance and expression.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Michael Winter, 'The Twentieth Century Part I: Cornwall', in Nicholas Orme (ed.), *Unity and Variety: A History of the Church in Devon and Cornwall* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1991), p.161.

⁴² BBC Radio 4 Debate, *The Year of Revolution 1968* broadcast 18 March 2008. This debate involves a small but select group with political and media credentials who were active in these areas at the time. Each had personal experience in some form of the Grovesnor Square riots of March and October that year. From this debate it becomes clear as to the complexity of the social, cultural, national and international issues of the day.

⁴³ Tim Blanning, *The Triumph of Music* (London: Penguin, 2008). See pp.210-30.

⁴⁴ For a comprehensive history of song see, Stephen Banfield, *Sensibility and English Song* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). A wealth of material is also contained in: Edward Lee, *Music of the People* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1970); Henry Raynor, *Music and Society Since 1815* (London: Barrie and Jenkins Ltd., 1976).

Writing from a music-sociology perspective in 1969, Dave Laing in *The sound of our time* encapsulated the new generation's desire to express itself through song by asserting that 'the words give us the key to the human universe that the song inhabits'.⁴⁵ This placed the repertoire of male voice choirs in an age-related dilemma from two aspects – style and lyrics. The expression of identity as defined by Kevin Hetherington in *Expressions of Identity: Space, Performance, Politics*, is 'not only achieved through identification with groups of individuals who share a common outlook but also through recognisable performance repertoires that are expressive and embodied'.⁴⁶ Repertoire demonstrates that one cannot divorce music from this duality of meaning; to a degree it formed the basis of the dilemma which confronted the traditional Cornish male choirs from the 1970s onwards.

A survey undertaken in 1974 indicated that a considerable number of male voice choirs and mixed choral ensembles which existed at the time were the subject of criticism regarding repertoire selection, style of singing and interpretation:

The Cornish repertoire and style is now frowned on by trained and paid conductors, by choir members from other parts of England, and by school trained young members. It is doggedly defended by Chapel trained Cornish singers. Choirs tend therefore to have very distinctive local sound and reputation, with a very local membership, or else to aim towards an English standard.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Dave Laing, *The sound of our time* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1969), p.99.

⁴⁶ Kevin Hetherington, *Expressions of Identity: Space, Performance, Politics* (London: Sage Publications, 1988), pp.17-8.

⁴⁷ Myrna Combella, *Survey of Musical Activities in Cornwall. Institute of Cornish Studies: Special Report No.1* (Penzance: Headlong Printing Co., 1974), p.9.iv.

The use of the word 'traditional' itself identifies the boundaries of repertoire, but when linked with Wiltshire's research findings the problem is compounded. Wiltshire concluded that by not moving towards the more 'adventurous' choral choices, with more innovative and unusual textures and harmonies, repertoire stagnated: '... since male choirs were not given to appointing young, newly trained enterprising conductors, these developments passed the gentlemen by.'⁴⁸

TITLE	COMPOSER
<i>All in the April Evening</i>	Roberton
<i>As Torrents in Summer</i>	Elgar
<i>By the Cool Siloam</i>	Roberton
<i>Calm is the Sea</i>	Pteil
<i>Comrades in Arms</i>	Adolphe Adam
<i>Evening Pastorale</i>	Shaw
<i>Fain Would I Change that Note</i>	Vaughan Williams
<i>Fishermen of England</i>	Phillips
<i>God's Choir</i>	Overholt
<i>Goin' Home</i>	Dvorak, arr.
<i>Gwahoddiad</i>	Davies
<i>Jacobs Ladder</i>	Davis
<i>Love Could I Only Tell Thee</i>	arr. Arnold
<i>Lullaby</i>	Brahms
<i>Martyrs of the Arena</i>	Laurent de Rille
<i>Morte Criste</i>	Jones
<i>Newquay Fisherman's Song</i>	MacKenzie
<i>Row, Boatman, Row</i>	arr. Giebel
<i>Silver Trumpet</i>	arr.
<i>Soldiers Chorus [Faust]</i>	Gounod
<i>Song of the Jolly Roger</i>	Candish
<i>Speed Your Journey [Nabucco]</i>	Verdi
<i>Steal Away</i>	Cocks
<i>The Battle Hymn of the Republic</i>	arr. Roberton
<i>The Long Day Closes</i>	Sullivan
<i>The Night Has a Thousand Eyes</i>	Behenna
<i>The Old Woman</i>	Roberton
<i>The Silver Birch</i>	arr. Alexandrov
<i>The Tide Rises the Tide Falls</i>	Carse
<i>Trelawney</i>	Pelmear

Table 31 'Traditional' Repertoire common to decades 1970s, 1980s and 1990s.

⁴⁸ Wiltshire, 'The British Male Voice Choir', p.206.

In placing the focus next on programme content for the period leading to the close of the twentieth century, we see that concert selection pointed to a degree of regional insularity. Table 31 details concert items from what can be termed the traditional male voice choir repertoire. If we re-direct our attention momentarily to the previously recorded performance repertoire of 1919-39 (see Chapter Four), one can see that there is a degree of familiarity with certain pieces and composers.

TITLE	COMPOSER
<i>A Smuggler's Song</i>	Edmonds
<i>Bushes and Briars</i>	Vaughan Williams
<i>Down Among the Dead Men</i>	Robinson
<i>Evening Prayer</i>	Wynford Jones
<i>Hail to the Homeland</i>	Pelmear
<i>I Got Shoes</i>	Cocks
<i>Kum Bah Yah</i>	arr.
<i>Lily of the Valley [Spiritual]</i>	arr.
<i>Matona, My Beloved</i>	Di Lasso
<i>My Luv is like a Red, Red Rose</i>	Bantock
<i>Myfanwy</i>	Parry
<i>On Newlyn Hill</i>	Redman/Northey
<i>Roman War Song [Rienzi]</i>	Wagner
<i>Snowbird</i>	arr. Woodgate
<i>Song of the Western Men</i>	arr. Pearson
<i>The Happy Wanderer</i>	Elgar
<i>The Holy City</i>	Adams arr. Arnold
<i>The Sweet and Low</i>	Barnby

Table 32 'Traditional' Repertoire in two of the three decades.

1970 [44]	<i>Chacewater and District, Loveny, Mousehole, Newlyn, Polperro, Wadebridge.</i>
1980 [82]	<i>Chacewater and District, Hayle, Loveny, Mevagissey, Mousehole, Newlyn, Polperro, Wadebridge.</i>
1990 [53]	<i>Burraton, Chacewater and District, Hayle, Liskerret, Loveny, Mousehole, Newlyn, Polperro, Rame, Wadebridge.</i>

Table 33 Programmes related to choirs [] numbers of programmes.

Table 32 indicates choral items regularly performed and which appear in programmes in any two of the three decades. Table 33 lists those choirs from which the programmes originated. Accepting that relative to the totality of concerts undertaken within this period this is a very small sample, the critical factor in the analysis is that responding choirs sent a random selection. Even so, the inference which can be drawn from this data is that pieces which occur with frequency must be indicative of the general repertoire.

To further support this assertion additional evidence is to be found in programmes at concert events of massed choirs. By way of illustration a concert programme from each decade is detailed and here again the selection is random. In 1973 the programme of a 'Massed Male Voice Concert', Redruth, consisted of nine pieces, all of which appear in either Table 31 or Table 32.⁴⁹ Furthermore, four of the participating five choirs are additional to those listed in Table 33. The concert programme items were taken from the regular repertoire of the participating choirs. The programme from a 'Massed Cornish Choirs in Concert' 1983, has eleven of the concert's thirteen items listed in Tables 31 and 32.⁵⁰ At this event twenty-seven choirs were represented. Again it would be reasonable to conclude that the selected concert items were regularly featured in each choir's concert programmes. Finally, evidence for the 1990s is taken from 1991 'A Festival of Cornish Male Voice Choirs', when ten of the twelve items performed

⁴⁹ *Massed Male Voice Concert Programme*, Redruth Wesley Church, 17 February 1973.

⁵⁰ *Massed Cornish Choirs in Concert*, The Cornwall Coliseum, Carlyon Bay, 25 September 1983.

appear in Tables 31 and 32.⁵¹ Twenty six choirs participated. From the above we can determine that the data in Tables 31 and 32 when considered with massed choir concert selections affords substantive evidence that the pieces listed dominated the overall concert repertoire of this period.

TITLE	COMPOSER
<i>All in the April Evening</i>	Robertson
<i>Bless This House</i>	Brahe
<i>The Gypsy</i>	Trad.
<i>With Cat Like Tread</i>	Gilbert and Sullivan

Table 34 Popular repertoire across all 3 decades

<i>Anthem [Chess]</i>	Andersson/Ulvaeus
<i>If I were a Rich Man [Fiddler on the Roof]</i>	Bock/Harnick
<i>Rhythm of Life [Sweet Charity]</i>	Coleman
<i>Ol' Man River [Showboat]</i>	Kern/Hammerstein
<i>Love Changes Everything [Aspects of Love]</i>	Lloyd Webber
<i>Memory [Cats]</i>	
<i>Music of the Night [Phantom of the Opera]</i>	
<i>You'll Never Walk Alone [Carousel]</i>	
<i>Some Enchanted Evening [South Pacific]</i>	Rodgers and Hammerstein
<i>There is Nothing Like a Dame [South Pacific]</i>	
<i>Les Misérables, selection</i>	Schönberg

Table 35 1980s-1990s decades. Musicals

<i>Beautiful Dreamer</i>	Foster, arr.
<i>Cavatina</i>	Myers/Lane
<i>He ain't heavy, he's my brother</i>	Scot/Russell
<i>I'll Walk Beside You</i>	Murray
<i>My Grandfather's Clock</i>	arr.
<i>Panis Angelicus</i>	Franck
<i>Pie Jesu [Requiem]</i>	Lloyd Webber
<i>Portrait of My Love</i>	Ornadel/West
<i>Softly as I Leave You</i>	arr. Simmons
<i>The Owl and the Pussycat</i>	arr.
<i>The Way You Look Tonight</i>	arr. Mitchell
<i>What Would I Do Without My Music</i>	arr. Arnold
<i>When the Saints Go Marching In</i>	trad. arr.
<i>Yesterday</i>	Lennon and McCartney

Table 36 Popular Choral Arrangements by the 1990s

⁵¹ *A Festival of Cornish Male Voice Choirs*, 5 October 1991.

However, although programme content indicates an adherence to traditional and well-established repertoire, it does not follow that pieces from the popular genre of light music and post-1960 'pop-style' pieces, were not regularly included. Tables 34-36 list examples of arrangements from musicals and popular ballads which were being regularly featured in concert programmes by the 1990s. It is questionable whether the style and lyrics of these pieces would have engaged the interest of young vocalists. (The data is retrieved from the same programme sources as for Tables 31 and 32.)

For further evidence of the divergence of repertoire choice between the generations we focus on a programme of 1983 (Figure T).⁵² The programme is given in full because the contrast in performance contribution by the different generations gives rise to rival interpretations. On the one hand it could be said that the programme selection by Mousehole Male Voice Choir reflects the Cornish choral insularity spoken of in *Survey of Musical Activities in Cornwall* regarding the previous decade.⁵³ A further possibility is that Mousehole choir's programme choices constitute an overt statement of its continuing adherence to its choral traditions, a repertoire traceable back to the nineteenth century. On the other hand, the programme highlights how each choir drew its repertoire from a different source. Whereas Mousehole was rooted in a rural community, the New

⁵² *Concert*, Mountbatten Theatre, Southampton, 14 May 1983.

⁵³ Combellack, *Survey of Musical Activities in Cornwall* (1974), p.9.iv.

PART ONE:
The New Music Makers
 Top of the World
 Yesterday Once More
 Lonely Goatherd
 Hey Jude
 Music to Watch Girls By
 Feelings
 Take Me Home Country Roads

Carpenter/Bettis
 Carpenter/Bettis
 Rodgers/Hammerstein
 Lennon/McCartney
 Ramin/Valona
 Morris Albert
 John Denver

PART TWO:
The Mousehole Male Voice Choir
 The Night has a thousand Eyes
 A Roman War Song
 Fain Would I change that Note
 Haste Ye Soft Gales

The Karensa Singers
 Close to You
 Barbara Allen
 Come to the Fair

20 minute Interval

PART THREE:
The Mousehole Male Voice Choir
 The Old Songs
 I Got Shoes
 Johnny Come Down to Hilo

The Karensa Singers
 Juanita
 You'll Never Walk Alone

The Mousehole Male Voice Choir
 Love Could I Only Tell Thee
 Time for Us to Go

PART FOUR:
The New Music Makers
 Elijah Rock
 Yesterday
 Ghost at the Bottom of the Stairs
 El Condor Pasa
 Jesus Christ Superstar

arr. Jester Hairston
 Lennon/McCartney
 Anonymous
 Milchberg/Robles
 English Lyric Paul Simon
 Webber/Rice

The New Music Makers were formed at Hedge End in 1970 by a group of young people interested in making music. Over the years the musical side of our activities have developed to stage production, where the members of the group enjoy singing a wide range of styles in concerts, pantomime and musicals. In 1979 the group released their first record, and in the same year we became part of Eastleigh's twinning arrangement with Kornwestheim, West Germany, linking with the Liederkranz Male Voice Choir. We have taken part in 3 joint concerts with the Liederkranz - two in Germany and one at our home base of Hedge End. Tonight we would like to give a special welcome to our guests, The Mousehole Male Voice Choir and The Karensa Singers. We thank you for supporting this concert and hope you will enjoy the evening. The New Music Makers return to the Mountbatten Theatre on May 19th 1984 when our guests will be The Liederkranz Male Voice Choir.

The Mousehole Male Voice Choir was formed in 1909 by a small group of fishermen who came together in the Autumn to rehearse carols for Christmas. Their interests soon widened to include Part Singing. Choir activities were interrupted during the 1914-18 war but were resumed in 1919 and the choir progressed under a succession of long serving conductors. By 1927 there were 30 members participating in music Festivals in addition to concerts. The choir has made numerous appearances on radio and television and have made several records, in recent years they have presented a number of combined concerts with other Male voice choirs. Following a concert in Bristol with 10 Welsh choirs they are now members of the Welsh Association of Male Voice Choirs. The Mousehole Male Voice Choir will be singing a programme of sacred Music at Hedge End Methodist Church tomorrow May 15th at 2-45 p.m.

Figure T Southampton Programme, 1983

Music Makers, a mixed choir formed in 1970 by young people, was urban based. Their concert selection was drawn from popular repertoire current at the time of the choir's formation. If the 1983 programme is typical then the New Music Makers could be said to have become more 'traditional'; a repertoire based on established light, popular, easy listening pieces. Neither programme selection would have encouraged young singers in the 1980s to identify with the choirs or consider themselves potential choir members.

To complete the examination of repertoire the following personal testimonies, memories and opinions centre specifically on the aspect of modernising repertoire.

Syncopated rhythms, quite forward looking in the early days, 'Jesus Christ Superstar';

More ballads now, lighter pieces, don't sing as many choruses ... show-time medleys, we try and entertain the public;

Repertoire has changed, more modern pieces, 'California Dreaming', 'Back to the 60s';

Keep repertoire up to scratch ... change, move away from church type music, now music from the shows, compilations, medleys like the Beach Boy numbers;

Repertoire has moved from the traditional to numbers from Les Misérables, Westside Story, Oklahoma, South Pacific, usually three or four songs in the medley;

When I started first, it was real male choir pieces of music, now it's more lighter music, more modern because for the audience they couldn't appreciate if it's too heavy;

Repertoire has moved on from religious hymns ... to like, Freddie Mercury;

Repertoire has changed from the traditional stuff and hymn tunes, congregational hymns ... now shows, medleys, move with the times.⁵⁴

These comments become more nuanced when placed in a broader context. Even when taking a retrospective stance, looking back to a different culture, a time past, the previously quoted words of Laing are a truism: 'the words give us the key to the human universe that the song inhabits.'⁵⁵ For choir members of advanced years, nostalgia for and/or a return to a more traditional repertoire provides a means of modifying the musical soundscape of the post-1970 period.

The choir evolved to the point of not being traditional, in the process now of bringing back the old repertoire, responding to the feelings of the choir;

Most choir libraries are traditional, but you have to bring in modern stuff. Some like music from the shows, a passing fad?

⁵⁴ Interviews: *Mousehole; Mevagissey; St Dennis; Holman Climax; Rame; Treverva*, 4 December 2008; *Pelynt*, 8 July 2011; *Imerys Mid-Cornwall*.

⁵⁵ Laing, *The sound of our time*, p.99.

The choir did Lloyd Webber stuff a while back but have moved back to more traditional and new pieces, Elgar for one, Sixties medley.

The repertoire choices of the two generations so diverse.⁵⁶

This examination of repertoire shows the belief that updating equates with recruitment is baseless, it is a fallacy. The last quotation encapsulates the position of male voice choirs at the close of the twentieth century. To recall the concert programme of 1983 (Figure U), the foundation for a new 'easy listening' repertoire was established by the 1980s. A conclusion reached by Wiltshire in 1993 was that male voice choir repertoire was stagnating and had been so since the 1970s.⁵⁷ The above analysis echoes his findings further demonstrating that by not addressing the subject of repertoire in the 1970s and '80s the generational gulf had by the turn of the twenty-first century become too wide a gulf to bridge.

5.

One further issue to be considered is rooted in monetary dynamics and the reciprocity of the financial positioning of the individual, the individual as a choir member and the national economic climate. The seeds of this were sown by the 1990s with financial concerns for many choirs remaining a live issue in the opening decade of the twenty-first century. Several choirs became formally registered charities whilst for most income continued to be generated through subscriptions, lotteries, raffles and fund-raising events. For many, choir funds are assisted through the retention of ticket receipts from one major concert a year. Sales of CDs are now facilitated through online purchasing as well as at concert

⁵⁶ Interviews: *Loveny*, 4 August 2011; *Newlyn*, 8 October 2007; *Burraton*; *Mousehole*.

⁵⁷ Wiltshire, 'The British Male Voice Choir', p.206.

venues. Several choirs, notably Mousehole, Wadebridge, Tintagel, Rame, Pelynt, Liskerret, Mevagissey, Launceston and Loveny, have members who readily journey between 40-90 plus miles to weekly rehearsals. Those wishing to join a choir could almost choose any choir in the county if they had the means and wherewithal to meet the costs. The number of indigenous Cornish choir members living in the village of the choir can, in some instances, be in single figures.⁵⁸ This in itself has reflected social and demographic changes: '... people are from far away, they've retired here, so whereas back in the 1920s they were local people, now the numbers are greater but we're drawing from other places in the region. Lot of them non-Cornish.'⁵⁹ Many in-migrant choir members speak of themselves as 'Cornish'; a new-found identity, a Cornishness shaped by association, a sense of belonging and choir identity.⁶⁰ As Michael Winter observes, many 'come in search of local or "roots" culture which they find in a revived (or created?) Celtic culture'.⁶¹

The annual major music-social event has become the extended trip which incorporates a concert itinerary with sight-seeing and touring. Recent choir histories proudly record unforgettable concert performance experiences across the United Kingdom and Europe (Holland, Germany, France, Malta, Italy) and as

⁵⁸ Interview: *Polperro Fishermen's Choir*. Choir membership has only five indigenous Cornish Polperronian men and no fishermen.

⁵⁹ Information concerning travel and choir demographics arose from the following interviews: *Launceston; Liskerret; Mevagissey; Wadebridge; Mousehole; Rame; Tintagel; Loveny; Pelynt*.

⁶⁰ Interviews: *Mousehole, Stithians*, 27 February 2008. Regarding the issue of Cornish identity see: Joanie Willett, 'Cornish Identity – Vague Notion or Social Fact?' in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 16* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2008).

⁶¹ Winter, 'The Twentieth Century Part I', p.164.

far afield as America.⁶² Thus in all aspects and at all levels of a choir's structure and therefore its existence, lies the question of finance. The changing economic climate of the 1990s turning into a recession by 2008, has meant that the question of increased costs to the choir membership and to individuals became increasingly important.

If we return to the interwar period we find that the positions of accompanist and conductor of male voice choirs were peopled by those who held similar positions in the churches and chapels. In 1947 the Right Honourable Richard Law expressed the following opinion regarding commitment within the community: 'The Englishman, in any walk of life has always prided himself upon his status as an amateur ... there is scarcely a field of the community's activities ... which is not based upon the principle of part-time, unpaid service.'⁶³ This encapsulates the spirit of amateurism which historically has been the life blood of community based music-making. By the 1990s the position of the musical director and accompanist had become semi-professional, if not professional in some cases. A negotiated financial remuneration, often with additional monies for travel expenses, was paid to the post-holders. Furthermore, historically the social mores had been that rehearsal and concert space were freely given by church, chapel and community. Choirs were now charged for rent of rehearsal space and the heating thereof. The following comments from contemporary choir members

⁶² Interviews: *Mousehole; Holman Climax; Mevagissey; St Dennis; Loveny; Rame; Stithians; Wadebridge; Pelynt; Imerys Mid-Cornwall; Tintagel.*

⁶³ Right Honourable Richard Law, 'The Individual and the Community', in E. Baker (ed.), *The Character of England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1947), pp.37-8.

reflect a growing financial pressure being placed on individuals and the choir as a social group.

Difficult to replace conductors and accompanists. Churches and chapels can't get organists;
There's the cost of petrol;
A job to finance now;
Some trips lose money;
Pay rent and for heating;
Finance now is the cost of the room, the musical director and the accompanist;
The musical director comes from the professional field ... the subscriptions going up, musical directors now take more;
It cost us £92 to hold a rehearsal each week.⁶⁴

For a choir with a falling membership such costs would prove prohibitive. But as with the earlier issue of failure to initiate strategies to recruit a younger membership, so there was a lack of awareness of the financial constraints which were becoming more acute on choir members and the revenue generated to offset choir costs. As the 1990s drew to a close and choirs progressed in to the next century, to the outsider and/or the casual observer all appeared to be on a broadly financially sound footing. However, the prolonged economic downturn was creating additional financial constraints on many choirs which remain to this day.

6.

The argument outlined in this chapter has been predicated on a series of motifs, each of which has contributed to a marginalisation of male voice choirs,

⁶⁴ Interviews: *Saltash*; *Newlyn*; *Wadebridge*; *Tintagel*; *Marazion*, 8 October 2007; *Burraton*; *Mevagissey*.

with membership diminishing in number and public interest waning. Despite the underlying negative trends during this period it was not unknown for previously disbanded male voice choirs to be reconstituted, even if only temporarily.⁶⁵ New male voice choirs were formed⁶⁶ and indeed two were to emerge from existing mixed Methodist choirs.⁶⁷ On the other hand many formerly strong choirs ceased.⁶⁸ The contours of Cornish society were re-drawn as a changed industrial base reconfigured the composition of the working population. The indigenous sector of the population which had hitherto sustained male choral singing was contracting: 'In the old days, you had to be within the parish, now it's more cosmopolitan ... Outsiders in now creates a dilution of customs, people outside of Penwith are now in the choir.'⁶⁹

Writing in 1987 Pickering and Green coined the phrase 'vernacular milieu' to express the repositioning of minority cultural interests. Perceived as a growing problem they specifically viewed the mass media and the communication revolution as being detrimental to creating and sustaining an interest in small scale, localised cultural activities within the vernacular milieu. According to Pickering and Green the vernacular milieu referred to:

⁶⁵ Newquay Male Choir having ceased in 1956 reformed in 1974 and continues to this day. St Day Male Voice Choir (concerts reported in *West Briton* 1969, 1970) and Bodmin Male Voice Choir (recorded participation in, *A Festival of Cornish Male Voice Choirs*, Royal Albert Hall, London, 30 April 1988; *A Festival of Cornish Male Voice Choirs*, Launceston Methodist Church, 5 October 1991; *A Festival of Cornish Male Voice Choirs*, Royal Albert Hall, London, 22 October 1994) were no longer in existence at the close of 1990s decade.

⁶⁶ St Columba Celtic, 1970; Loveny, 1972; Mevagissey, 1974; Rame, 1976; Liskerret, 1993.

⁶⁷ Burraton Male Voice Choir, 1974; Launceston Male Voice Choir, 1992.

⁶⁸ Falmouth Docks, Probus, Fowey and Saltash Male Voice Choirs.

⁶⁹ Interview: *Mousehole*.

... the local environment and specific immediate contexts within which, as an integral part of everyday life, people participate in non-mediated forms and processes of cultural life. By definition that cultural life is non-official and while it is at times assimilated into national culture, it is experientially felt and understood by its participants as quite distinct.⁷⁰

Another notable feature of the post-1970 period was that a burgeoning mass media, coupled with technological advances, ensured that the commercial market within the popular music sector directed its economic power specifically towards youth and/or those aged in their thirties. Music was now inextricably at the core of the mass media phenomenon, style and repertoire identifying and distinguishing the young and 'middle' youth from an elderly and ageing choir generation through place, occasion and time.

If one acknowledges that each new generation transforms and re-translates sounds into new patterns then it follows that music is a reflection of the response to social forces. The outcome was a re-balancing of choir identities as well as a re-definition of generational identities. The 1970s dominant Methodist-internationalist identity gradually gave way to a male choral movement recognised nationally and internationally for its concert and non-competitive festival commitments. The element of choral competition was no longer regarded as necessary in the making of a choir's reputation or identity. A major factor in such a re-balancing was the advancing age of the choir membership coupled with the pressures of competing. A marked rise in the

⁷⁰ Michael Pickering and Tony Green, 'Towards a Cartography of the Vernacular Milieu', in M. Pickering and T. Green (eds.), *Everyday Culture in Popular Song, the Vernacular Milieu* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1987), p.2.

average age of the choralists and a fall in numbers were also factors to be observed in the audiences; superficially, choir identity became one associated with 'advanced age'. Even though we have seen again how identity changes over time and is multi-layered, one characteristic within the multi-faceted nature of each choir's identity continued to be its adherence to the core values of the male choral movement – charitable giving, service to the community, camaraderie and support network.

Repertoire selection, a passive acceptance that numbers would hold as 'everyone gets old' and a feeding off past glories dulling choral ambition, these were elements turning stagnation of the Cornish male choral movement in to a state of atrophy. Three of the four motifs outlined above had coalesced, had sown the seeds which by the end of the twentieth century contributed to the decline of male choral singing. The fourth, the financial issue, had mixed effects, sometimes enabling choirs to sustain themselves through paid conductors but in other cases making attendance and commitment more difficult to sustain. In 1993 Christopher Wiltshire concluded that the survival of the whole genre was in doubt and bound to be questioned:

when circumstances regarding recruitment and repertoire seem to be against it, while classroom singing remains such a low priority in our educational system, private or state, and the habit of church attendance and consequent hymn-singing is made very difficult for the evangelical conductor or committee member.⁷¹

⁷¹ Wiltshire, 'The British Male Voice Choir', p.362.

From his work as a musician and across all tiers of education Keith Swanwick perceptively stated in 1990: 'The labels we attach to music do seem to filter and shape attitudes through which it is perceived and received.'⁷² He arrived at the view that by its very abstractness music is able to step into other places, occasions and times from its place of origin. That does not mean that each generation readily avails itself of the music of 'times past'. Such labels as 'traditional' and 'choir', when linked to male singing, shaped the perceptions and attitudes which defined a generational divide. Clearly, strategies to re-invigorate repertoire, to further recruitment, retain musical directors and accompanists needed to have been enacted. By the turn of the twentieth century the socio-cultural context inhabited by the choirs was shrouded in a veil of a passive acceptance of the status quo. The closing decades of the twentieth century reflect the search for a positive outcome to the social and cultural labyrinth in which the male voice choirs found themselves. The opening decade of the twenty-first century has come to reflect the recognition by choirs that for a resolution to be forthcoming they need to move beyond passivity to active engagement and an acknowledgement that their actions hold the key to 'time future'.

⁷² Keith Swanwick, *Music, Mind, and Education* (London: Routledge, 1990), p.93.

Conclusion

This thesis has traced the development of Cornish male voice choirs since the end of the nineteenth century, showing that notions of identity associated with the male choral tradition are complex, fluid and multi-faceted. During the Victorian period and in the years prior to the Great War, the emergence of the fledgling male choral movement was very closely associated with Methodism, at a time when churches and chapels held a central place in Cornish communities. We have seen that early male voice choirs held to a dominant Methodist identity, their choral prowess learned from hymnody and mixed choral music and imbued with the aural acuity born out of an oral tradition and expanded in the learning of sol-fa. Another layer in choir identity at this time arose from the establishment of a core repertoire. The excerpts chosen for analysis demonstrate that choral skills were readily transferable between music styles and forms, and a significant impact on choir identity and male choral repertoire from 1910 was the County Music Festival.

During the interwar period, despite national economic difficulties, Cornwall experienced social and economic change via improved amenities, housing and infra-structure whilst the cinema, radio and an expanding record industry all augmented cultural change. Some developments between the wars, such as the rise of the Tinnners' Choir, were identified with political and economic strife. But in an era of continuity as well as change, the male voice choirs remained embedded in Cornish society becoming mainstream, recognised as

part of normal cultural practices. Choir numbers grew and the County Music Festival spawned other new competitive festivals. The raising of choral standards was reflected in analyses of a glee, partsong and chorus, illustrating advancements in degree of musical difficulty and hence choral accomplishment. Fresh dimensions of choir identity became apparent at this time, superimposing the Methodist identity not replacing it – a more overtly Cornish repertoire and the distinctiveness that was often associated with the role of the conductor. The length of tenure and musical direction taken by the conductor illuminate Stets and Burke’s reasoning that to ‘disentangle group identities from role identities’ and to ‘separate the group and role identity from the person identity’ is not easily achievable.¹ The conductor-choir relationship and consequent identity forms one reflection in the increasing notions of identity.

As male voice choirs emerged from the period of the Second World War many Cornish choirs distinguished themselves nationally and internationally, building a reputation for male choral singing on a par with the Welsh male voice choirs. Encroaching secularisation and a growing socio-cultural generational divide, with an increasingly youth orientated popular music market, had little impact on Cornish male voice choirs at least through to the end of the 1960s because of the reputation of the choirs within the wider national movement and importantly because of the war generation’s continuing adherence to Methodism. Although still retaining a Methodist identity through broadcasts,

¹ Jan E. Stets and Peter K. Burke, ‘Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory’, *Social Psychology Quarterly* Vol.63, No.3 (Sep. 2000), 228.

concerts and regional festivals, international acclaim engendered a different profile, one which identified the Cornish male choral movement as part of a wider European choral culture.

From the 1970s however, the choirs moved from mainstream to the sidelines as they failed to recognise the speed and scale of social and cultural change. In generational terms, in the fields of education, leisure activities, the commercialisation of a multi-media and multi-faceted youth life-style, all such changes mitigated against the male choral genre. Most notable was the impact of 'pop' music culture and music technologies. Where the youth were concerned making music could be immediately realised through instrumental playing, individually or within a group, usurping the historical dominance of choral music. There was no need to associate with the older generation and certainly no need for 'school' music or musical literacy. Accessibility to, and use of music technologies meant the garage, shed or bedroom provided the practise space. Small groups could meet as often as they wanted. The tradition of music-making through a weekly coming-together, the sense of belonging, male camaraderie, the acknowledged presence of a support network, as expressed through the set of practices in the male choral movement, were generationally cast aside. The generational-cultural schism was reinforced by a tacit acceptance on the part of choirs that being 'of an age' was how they were now identified. The younger

generation identified male voice choirs as old men who sang for other old people songs that no-one outside of their generation wanted to hear.

The dawn of the new millennium however appeared to indicate that after a period of lethargy the male choral movement was looking to the future with optimism. There were several reasons both regional and national for the renaissance. Twenty-five choirs performed in the fourth Cornish massed choral festival at the Royal Albert Hall in October 2000, organised by the Cornish Federation of Male Voice Choirs² with Dr Roy Wales as guest musical director. The positivity engendered by the event was tempered in the mind of Roy Wales by his knowledge that the then current situation concerning male voice choirs was in reality one of diminishing numbers and advancing years. With an internationally distinguished professional career in music education, performance and music directorship, the latter in terms of academia as well as orchestras and choirs, Roy Wales was in a position to make comparable value judgements.³ This event added to his concerns regarding the long term survival of male voice choirs, which he again voiced at the second International Festival of Male Voice Choirs in Cornwall, 2005 (see Introduction).

Despite the concerns of Roy Wales, it was apparent that by the third International Festival 2007 a renaissance was beginning. Proudly supported in

² Programme, *A Festival of Cornish Male Voice Choirs*, 14 October 2000, Royal Albert Hall, London.

³ A professional portrait of Dr Roy Wales is contained within the introductory notes of the *Festival of Cornish Male Voice Choirs*, 2000 programme.

financial terms by Cornish firms, the County Council and Education Authority, the successful third International Festival commenced with a symposium addressing the concerns of boys singing and male voice choirs, music workshops and international performances by men and boys' choirs. There still remained, however, concerns regarding music in the British education system generally. There existed a generation to whom singing and choral music in particular, was socially and culturally out of bounds. Policy-makers, music teachers, professional musicians and people working in the music industry agreed that musically something had to happen. In this regard the International Festival was leading the way. In November 2007 the Labour Government of the day released forty million pounds into the primary education system specifically to fund initiatives for high quality singing activities under the auspices of SingUp, the national singing programme in the music manifesto.⁴ This by itself was not likely to create a national cultural change in attitude to singing overnight least of all where adolescent boys were concerned.

But in 2007 Gareth Malone, British choirmaster, broadcaster and 'populariser of choral singing',⁵ had embarked on his second enterprise of demonstrating to the nation that everyone can sing. The televised documentary

⁴ BBC Radio 3, *Music Matters*, debate on music education, reference *SingUp* and the Government's Music Manifesto, 7 February 2009.

⁵ Gareth Malone is choirmaster to the London Symphony Orchestra's youth and community choirs. He has received national awards and personal recognition for his documentary work in developing choirs from scratch in socially and culturally deprived areas of Britain. Links to print and other media profiles, publications and awards are to be found at www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gareth_Malone [accessed 31 December 2012].

The Choir: Boys don't Sing was broadcast a year on from *The Choir*.⁶ Singing is wrapped up in contemporary concerns related to adolescent sub-cultures and peer group pressures,⁷ but Gareth Malone showed that singing in a choir produces personal satisfaction, self-confidence, a sense of belonging and a place for the individual in a secure community environment, irrespective of age. And importantly, all genres of music held value and had something to say. Nationally there has been a paradigm shift within popular culture in both attitude and response to choral music and choir involvement. The airing of the American High School show *Glee* on British television from 2010,⁸ has further contributed to a volte face regarding singing and being in a choir. Glee Clubs have become popular extra-curricula activities and feature as part of Comic Relief.⁹

There are further reasons to be cheerful. Choirs from four continents came to The International Festival of Male Voice Choir Festival in 2011. The conference and workshops debated and addressed various possible ways forward: 'recruitment, repertoire, learning new music, voice training, attracting larger

⁶ Gareth Malone's choirs have involved pupils from mixed (*The Choir*, 2007) and single sex (*The Choir: Boys don't Sing*, 2008) comprehensive schools, deprived urban environments (*The Choir: Unsung Town*, 2009), the 'forgotten' partners of service personnel (*The Choir: Military Wives*) and the workplace (*Sing While You Work*, 2012).

⁷ Clare Hall, "'Without music I'd just be another kid": Boys and the choral experience', in Scott D. Harrison (ed.), *Stories of Boys Learning Through Making Music* (Australia: ACER Press, 2009), pp.16-32.

⁸ *Glee*, www.sharetv.org/shows/glee?gclid [accessed 17 March 2013]. The immediate popularity of *Glee* and the forming of glee clubs was reported on BBC Radio 4, *Woman's Hour*, 13 May 2010.

⁹ The British charity Comic Relief is a biennial fund-raising event over a couple of months culminating in a madcap television show on 'Red nose day'. The BBC children's channel CBBC has run a national *Glee Club* competition as part of the event.

www.bbc.co.uk/search/?=comic%20relief%20does%20glee%20club [accessed 20 March 2013].

audiences and the use of media and IT for promotional purposes'.¹⁰ As it was with the boys' choirs of Trewirgie and Roskear during the 1920s and '30s,¹¹ a male choral tradition can now be seen across the generations. The Cornwall Boys' Choir participated alongside other boys' and men's choirs from the four continents. Beyond such gatherings, members of Cornwall's male voice choirs are working with primary and secondary school children.¹² The Cornwall Boys' choir based in Truro is the main body for the satellite choirs which have been set up in other towns in the county. The debate started in the committee of the Cornish Federation of Male Choirs about strategizing for the future of male singing has now become an exchange of ideas in open forum. It is clear though that much importance is attached to maintaining a sense of historical identity:

... the choir firstly concluded it would not abandon its roots and would continue to take engagements in the places it always has done such as churches and chapels. To do otherwise would be a betrayal of generations of tradition ... We need to make sure we keep the classic male voice choir repertoire ... balance this by adding in some much more up to date repertoire ... need to work with young musicians.¹³

As a confident statement of intent by those involved in the male choral movement, the Cornish Federation of Male Voice Choirs has once more booked

¹⁰ www.thisiscornwall.co.uk/news/International-singers-join-forces-Cornish-choirs-debate-way-forward/article [accessed 6 May 2011].

¹¹ A sample of the innumerable concerts recorded in the local newspapers: *West Briton*, 3 April, 20 November 1924; 2 April, 3 December 1925; 4 March 1926; 3 March, 1 December 1927; 17 May 1928; 15 January 1931; 24 February 1936. *Western Weekly News*, 18 March 1922; 13 March, 25 December 1926; 1 and 22 February, 18 October 1930.

¹² www.thisiscornwall.co.uk/news/Music-runs-Cornwall-s-veins/article [accessed 6 May 2011]. Only one choir is referenced in this article but discussion at the SingUp Conference, 23 and 24 February 2010, it became evident that several choirs were already committed to liaising with schools.

¹³ www.news.fed-cornishchoirs.org.uk/ [accessed 6 November 2012]. Item 'The Way Forward?' posted 29 May 2012.

the Royal Albert Hall, London in November, 2013 when the massed voices of the Cornish Male Voice Choirs will create a 'wall of sound'.¹⁴ With them will be the newly formed Cornish youth choir Cambiata.¹⁵ Cambiata could grow into a young male choir emulating the Australian choir The Birralees who performed at the 2007 International Male Voice Choral Festival.¹⁶ The strategies employed in schools, the Cornwall boys' and youth choirs are leading to newly invented traditions, each creating its own fresh sense of identity.

It remains to be seen if current socio-cultural dynamics ensure that what appears to be a promising future for Cornish male voice choirs actually materialises. Beyond the boundaries of Cornwall the national and world economic climate is again imposing burdens on the economy of the county. It could be said that a 'culture of dependency', a term used in Chapter One, has re-emerged, the difference from the past being that Cornwall's economy since 1995 has been under-written by European Objective One funding, poverty-related grants from the European Social Fund. Although the younger generation still seek opportunities outside the county there are some employment opportunities for the 18-24 year olds. Recent growth in tourism, catering, retail and hi-tech industries such as renewable energy have benefited from Convergence

¹⁴ *Western Morning News*, 27 November 2012. A double page spread was given over to reporting the first full rehearsal at St John's Methodist Church, St Austell.

¹⁵ Cambiata is the term meaning the breaking voice as a boy goes through adolescence. For an in-depth explanation see www.martin-ashley.com/cambiata-voice [accessed 21 March 2013].

¹⁶ Paul Holley, 'The Birralees', in Scott D. Harrison (ed.), *Stories of Boys Learning Through Making Music* (Australia: ACER Press, 2009), pp.156-72.

Funding.¹⁷ In times past, seeking higher education has been another reason for young people to leave the county but with the Combined Universities in Cornwall (CUC) and the status of Falmouth College of Arts raised to that of University, working in partnership with CUC, it is hoped that Cornwall will hold on to its young generation and thereby foster generational continuity in its culture and traditions.

The Military Wives Choir formed by Gareth Malone in 2011, a modern-day parallel of the Tinnners' Choir of 1920s, provides a contemporary illustration of choral music meeting the needs of humankind. History suggests that in the future choirs will continue to lapse, cease or merge.¹⁸ In examining the relationship between music, place and culture, we have seen how 'time past' and 'time present' have shaped and reshaped choir identities. Identities in 'time future' will draw upon past and present, as already reflected in the debate now taking place and quoted above.

Lost to the historian is the knowledge of a myriad of Cornish male voice choirs that have gone unrecorded, no substantive evidence being in the public domain. But what this thesis has sought to do is to understand and explain, using personal testimonies as much as traditional written sources, the ongoing evolution and changing hallmarks of the Cornish male voice choirs, from their origins to the present day. In so doing fresh light has been cast on the rich vein

¹⁷ BBC Radio 4, *You and Yours*, 21 November 2011. This edition broadcast a report on the then current position of 'Employment in Cornwall' as it pertained to 18-24 year olds.

¹⁸ The male voice choirs of St Austell and Imerys Engineers merged in 2008; St Columba Celtic ceased 2011.

of amateur music-making that characterises the past and – one hopes – the future,
of the male choral tradition.

Bibliography

PRIMARY SOURCES

Newspapers and Periodicals

Cornish and Devon Post

Cornish Echo

Cornish Guardian

Cornish Telegraph

Cornish Times

Falmouth and Districts Packet

Royal Cornwall Gazette

The Cornishman

The Independent

The Musical Times

The Times

West Briton

Western Echo (St Ives)

Western Morning News

Western Weekly News (The Illustrated)

Cornish World Magazine

My Cornwall Magazine

(Principal archive centres were: Cornwall Centre, Redruth, and Plymouth, Bodmin, Liskeard Public Libraries).

Oral History Interviews

(Participants were self-selecting: male voice choir members, musical directors/conductors, accompanists, recording engineer. All quotations from interviews are anonymous.)

Saltash Choir – Ex-Member, 24 August, 2007.

Saltash Choir – Founder Member, 7 September 2007.

Saltash Choir – Ex-Member, 12 September 2007.

Mousehole Choir – Members, 8 October 2007.

Marazion Choir – Member, 8 October 2007.

Newlyn Choir – Member, 8 October 2007.

St Dennis Choir – Members, 20 November 2007.

Recording Engineer – 27 February 2008.

St Stithians Choir – Members, Conductor and Accompanist, 27 February 2008.

Holman-Climax Choir – Members and Choir President, 28 February 2008.

Holman Climax/Cornwall Boys' Choirs – Musical Director of both choirs and boy choir members, 26 July 2008.

Polperro Fishermen's Choir – Members and Accompanist, 15 October 2008.

Treverva Choir – Member, 4 December 2008.

Wadebridge Choir – Member, 9 December 2008.

Tintagel Orpheus Choir – Members, 20 January 2009.

Cornwall Police Choir – *Plymouth Police Choir* – Member(s), 30 January 2009.

Holman Climax/Cornwall Boys' Choirs – Musical Director, 12 May 2009.

Tamar Valley Choir – Descendant of Original Member, 4 August 2009.

Chacewater/Truro Choir – Member, 3 December 2009.

Burraton Choir – Musical Director, 7 December 2009.

Rame Choir – Members, 7 July 2011.

Pelynt Choir – Members, 8 July 2011.

Pelynt Choir – Founder Member and current member of Mevagissey Choir, 8 July 2011.

Liskerret Choir – Member-President, 12 July 2011.

Mevagissey Choir – Members, 14 July 2011.

Imerys Mid-Cornwall Choir – Members, Accompanist, Musical Director and Member-President, 14 July 2011.

Launceston Choir – Musical Director, 27 July 2011.

Loveny Choir – Members, 4 August 2011.

Other Interviews – (with academics)

Dr Roy Wales – 7 November 2007.

Dr Scott Harrison – July 2008.

Dr Christopher Wiltshire – August 2010.

Memoirs/Diaries/Contemporary Writings

Betjeman, John, *Collected Poems* (London: Murray, 2000).

Betjeman, John, *Coming Home An Anthology of Prose* (London: Methuen, 1998).

Birkenhead, The Earl of (ed.), *John Betjeman Collected Poems* (London: John Murray, 2000).

Briggs, Asa, *They Saw It Happen* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962).

Causley, Charles, *Collected Poems* (London: Macmillan, 1992).

Frisby, Terence, *Kisses on a Postcard* (London: Bloomsbury, 2009).

Kent, Alan M. and Gage McKinney (eds.), *The Busy Earth – A Reader in Global Cornish Literature 1700-2000* (St. Austell: Cornish Hillside Publications, 2008).

Lycett Green, Candida (ed.), *John Betjeman Coming Home An anthology of prose* (London: Methuen, 1998).

Marshel, Arthur, M. M., 1879-1962, *The Autobiography of a China Clay Worker* (The Federation of Old Cornwall Societies, 1995).

Peters, Pat, *Land Girls Gang Up* (Ipswich: Old Pond Publishing, 2009).

Philip, Neil (ed.), *Best-Loved Poems* (London: Little, Brown, 2007).

Radford, Maisie and Evelyn, *Musical Adventures in Cornwall* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1965).

Rowse, A. L., *Poems of Cornwall and America* (London: Faber and Faber, 1967).

Rowse, A. L., *A Cornish Childhood* (Truro: Truran, 2003).

White, G. Pawley, *A Half-century of Cornish Methodism 1925-75* (Redruth: CHMA and Institute of Cornish Studies, 1975).

Field Research: Concerts and Rehearsals

Mousehole Male Voice Choir Concert, 7 October 2007.

Mousehole Male Voice Choir Rehearsal, 8 October 2007.

Stithians Male Voice Choir Rehearsal, 27 February 2008.

Polperro Fishermen's Choir Rehearsal, 8 October 2008.

Plymouth Area Police Choir Concert, 6 March 2009.

SingUp Male Singing Leaders Conference, 23 and 24 February 2010.

Mousehole Male Voice Choir Concert, 25 April 2010.

Plymouth Area Police Choir Concert, September 2010.

Imerys Mid-Cornwall Male Voice Choir Rehearsal, 14 July 2011.

Burraton, Pelynt and Launceston Male Voice Choirs Joint Concert, 16 July 2011.

Mousehole Male Voice Choir Concert, 28 April 2012.

Tamar Valley Male Voice Choir and the Plymouth Military Wives Choir Concert, 22 June 2013.

Choir and Festival Publications

Marazion Apollo Choir Centenary 1904-2004 booklet.

Buccas' Song! A Short History of Newlyn Male Voice Choir by Ivan Balls.

St Stythians Male Voice Choir: A Brief History by S. J. Stephens (Camborne: College Print, 2008).

Tintagel Orpheus Male Voice Choir 80th Anniversary (Wakefields, 2009).

Cornwall Music Competition Festival – Golden Jubilee 1910-1960, Souvenir Brochure.

Cornwall Music Festival, Seventy Years of Music Making, 1910-1980, Souvenir Brochure

Media – Visual

BBC 2 Documentary – *The Choir*, Gareth Malone, 2007.

BBC 2 Documentary – *The Choir: Boys Don't Sing*, Gareth Malone, 1, 8, 15, 22 February 2008.

BBC 1 Spotlight – *Decline of Cornish Male Voice Choirs*, 21 May 2008.
Cornwall Boys' Choir, Truro, 22 May 2008.

BBC 2 Documentary – *The Choir: Unsung Town*, Gareth Malone, 2009.

BBC 4 Documentary – *'A Tale of Two Britains'*, 25 October 2009.

BBC 4 Documentary – *'The Glamourous Golden Age'*, 2 November 2009.

BBC 4 Documentary – *Shanties and Sea Songs*, Gareth Malone, 7 May 2010.

ITV 1 Documentary – *Fisherman's Friends*, 15 June 2011.

BBC 2 Documentary – *The Choir: Military Wives*, Gareth Malone, 2011.

BBC 2 Documentary – *Sing While You Work*, Gareth Malone, 2012.

SWFTA – Documentary, *White Gold* – Treviscoe Male Voice Choir, Westward Production, 1966.

SWFTA – Documentary, *Places Where They Sing* – Treverva Male Voice Choir, Westward Production, 1974.

CARLTON – Documentary – *CENTURY*: A moving tribute that charts the changing face of the West Country during the 1900s.

Media – Audio

BBC Radio 3 – *Music Matters* debate on music education, reference *SingUp* and Government Policy, 7 February 2009.

BBC Radio 4 – *Reith Lectures*, Daniel Barenboim, 7, 14, 21, 28 April and 5 May, 2006.

BBC Radio 4 – 'Bal Maidens', *Woman's Hour*, 30 November 2007.

BBC Radio 4 – 'Tin mining in Cornwall', *Open Country*, 8 December 2007.

BBC Radio 4 – *The Year of Revolution 1968*, 18 March 2008.

BBC Radio 4 – *Why Do We Sing?* Gareth Malone, 2 November 2008.

BBC Radio 4 – 'Aqueduct – Fron Male Voice Choir', *Open Country*, 22 March 2009.

BBC Radio 4 – 'Family Britain' by David Kynaston, *Book of the Week*, 23 - 25 November 2009.

BBC Radio 4 – 'Tin mining in Cornwall (music)', *Questions, Questions*, 21 July 2011.

BBC Radio 4 – 'Youth Employment Opportunities in Cornwall', *You and Yours*, 21 November 2011.

BBC Radio 4 – ‘Rugby’s Greatest Try’, *Archive on 4*, 19 January 2013.

BBC Radio 4 – *G I Britain*, Documentary, 28-29 March 2013.

Sheet Music

Abt, Franz	<i>Thuringian Volkslied</i>
Adam, Adolphe	<i>Comrades in Arms</i> <i>Comrades Song of Hope, The</i>
Anon.	<i>The Saint Day Carol</i>
Bartholomew, Marshall (arr.)	<i>Steal Away</i>
Buck, Dudley	<i>In Absence</i>
Candish, C. F. Chudleigh	<i>Song of the Jolly Roger, The</i>
Cocks, Denis R. (arr.)	<i>Three Spirituals -1. Steal Away; 2. Nobody knows the trouble I’ve seen; 3. I got shoes</i>
Cooke, T.	<i>Strike the Lyre</i>
Danby, J.	<i>Awake, Awake, Aeolian Lyre</i>
Davies, Bryan (arr.)	<i>A Tribute to Mr Curwen</i>
Elgar, Edward	<i>Feasting I Watch</i> <i>As Torrents in Summer</i> <i>The Wanderer</i>
Gounod, Charles	<i>Soldiers’ Chorus, Faust</i>
Greaves, R. (arr.)	<i>Song of the Western Men</i>
Lassus, Orlando	<i>Matona, Mia Cara</i>
Lucas, Clarence	<i>Sunset and Evening Star</i>
Mackenzie, David	<i>Newquay Fisherman’s Song, The</i>
Parry, Joseph	<i>Sailors’ Chorus, The</i>

Rille, Laurent de	<i>Martyrs of the Arena, The</i>
Robertson, Hugh S. (arr.)	<i>My Luve Is Like A Red, Red Rose</i>
Shaw, Wilfrid	<i>An Evening Pastorale</i>
Spofforth, R.	<i>Hail! Smiling Morn</i>
Stanford, Charles Villiers	<i>Heraclitus</i>
Sullivan, Arthur	<i>The Long Day Closes</i> <i>Beleaguered, The</i>
Trad.	<i>Nobody knows de trouble I see</i> <i>Steal Away</i>
Vaughan Williams, Ralph	<i>Fain Would I Change That Note</i>
Willson, Meredith	<i>Seventy Six Trombones</i>
Woodgate, Leslie (arr.)	<i>Fantasia on English Melodies</i>

Song Collections

Dunstan, Ralph	<i>Cornish Songbook, The</i>
Truran,, Leonard H.	<i>Twelve Cornish Carols</i>
Pelmear, Kenneth	<i>Carols of Cornwall</i> <i>Songs of Cornwall</i>

Discography: CDs and LPs

Climax Male Voice Choir, Camborne Town Band (1974)	<i>The Reason Why</i>
1000 Cornish Male Voices with Camborne Town Band (1983)	<i>Royal Albert Hall Concert Live</i>
Cornwall International Male Voice Choral Festival (2003)	<i>(Compilation)</i>

Cornwall International Male Voice Choral Festival (2005)	<i>(Compilation)</i>
Festive Cornwall, Cornishworld	<i>(Compilation)</i>
Four Lanes Male Choir (2007)	<i>You'll Never Walk Alone</i>
Four Lanes Male Choir with Mabe Ladies, Camborne Circuit Ladies Choir, Redruth Methodist Church Choir	<i>A Cornish Christmas with Merritt</i>
Liskerret Male Voice Choir (2007)	<i>Thy Welcome Voice</i>
Loveny Male Voice Choir	<i>Loveny Live</i>
Loveny Male Voice Choir	<i>One and All</i>
Mousehole Male Voice Choir (2012)	<i>From Cornish Cliffs</i>
Music from a Cornishworld vol.1	<i>(Compilation)</i>
Music from a Cornishworld vol.2	<i>(Compilation)</i>
Newlyn Male Voice Choir	<i>Silver Trumpet</i>
The Combined Stithians Male Voice and Ladies Choirs (1978)	<i>Sing Again with Sankey</i>
The Grass Valley Cornish Carol Choir with the Grass Valley Male Voice Choir (1946, 1959 and 2001)	<i>When Miners Sang</i>
The Holman – Climax Male Voice Choir (1973)	<i>Selection</i>
Trelawney Male Choir (2007)	<i>New Zealand Tour Selection</i>

Ordnance Survey Maps

OS Landranger Series 190, 200, 201, 203, 204

SECONDARY SOURCES

Books

Adams, Richard, *A Book of British Music Festivals* (London: Royce, 1986).

Allen, Benedict, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 2006).

Ashley, Martin, *How High Should Boys Sing? Gender, Authenticity and Credibility in the Young Male Voice* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).

Balchin, W. G. V., *The Cornish Landscape* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1983).

Banfield, Stephen, *Sensibility and English Song* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

Barton, R. M., *A History of the Cornish China-Clay Industry* (Truro: Bradford Barton Ltd., 1966).

Bell, Elizabeth, *Theories of Performance* (SAGE Publications, Inc., 2008).

Benny, Clive, *The Archive Photographs Series: Around St Agnes* (Stroud: Chalford, 1996).

Berry, Claude, *Cornwall* (London: Robert Hale, 1949).

Betjeman, J. and A. L. Rowse, *Victorian and Edwardian Cornwall from Old Photographs* (London: Fitzhouse Books, 1990).

Blacking, John, *How Musical is Man?* (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1983).

Blanning, Tim, *The Triumph of Music* (London: Penguin, 2008).

Bocock, Robert, *Ritual in Industrial Society* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1974).

Bontinck, I. (ed.), *New Patterns of Musical Behaviour of the Young Generation in Industrial Societies* (Vienna: Universal Edition 26246, 1974).

Bradley, Paddy, *The Archive Photographs Series Redruth* (Stroud: Chalford, 1995).

Briggs, Asa, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom Vol.II 'The Golden Age of Wireless'* (London: London University Press, 1965).

- Briggs, Asa, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom Vol.III 'The War of Words'* (London: London University Press, 1970).
- Brown, Callum G., *The Death of Christian Britain* (London: Routledge, 2001).
- Calder, Angus, *The People's War Britain 1939-45* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1969).
- Caldwell, John, *The Oxford History of English Music Vol.2 c.1715 to the Present Day* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
- Crang, Mike, *Cultural Geography* (London: Routledge, 1999).
- Croll, Andy, *Civilizing the Urban: Popular Culture and Public Space in Merthyr, c.1870-1914* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000).
- Curwen, John, *Singing for Schools and Congregations (1852 edition of 1843)* (Ireland: Boethus Press, 1985).
- Davie, Grace, *Religion in Britain since 1945 – Believing without belonging* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995).
- Davies, Douglas, Charles Watkins, Michael Winter, *Church and Religion in Rural England* (Edinburgh: T and T Clarke, 1991).
- Deacon, Bernard, *Cornwall A Concise History* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007).
- Deacon Bernard, Andrew George, Ronald Perry, *Cornwall at the crossroads?* (CoSERG [The Cornish Social and Economic Research Group] Redruth: Earles Press, 1988).
- Dowley, Dr Tim (ed.), *The History of Christianity* (Oxford: Lion Publishing, 1990).
- Eliot, T. S., *Four Quartets* (London: Faber and Faber, 1979).
- Finnegan, Ruth, *The Hidden Musicians* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2007).
- Foote, Sarah (ed.), *Methodist Celebration A Cornish Contribution* (Redruth: Dyllansow Truran, 1988).
- Foreman, Lewis, *From Parry to Britten British Music in Letters 1900-1945* (London: Batsford, 1987).

- Frith, Francis, *Cornish Coast* (Salisbury: Frith, 2000).
- Frith, Simon, *Sociology of Rock* (London: Constable, 1978).
- Frith, Simon, *Sound effects – Youth, Leisure, and the Politics of Rock* (London: Constable, 1983).
- Frith, Simon, *Sociology of Youth* (Ormskirk: Causeway, 1986).
- Garnett, Liz, *Choral Conducting and the Construction of Meaning* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).
- Garside, W. R., *British Unemployment A study in Public Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
- Giles, Judy and Tim Middleton, *Studying Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008).
- Green, Lucy, *Music, Gender, Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
- Haile, Ian, *The Next Chapter, Cornish Methodism 1965-2005* (Truro: The Cornish Methodist Historical Association, 2011).
- Hall, Stuart and Paul Du Gay, *Questions of Cultural Identity* (London: Sage, 1996).
- Hambly, Hilda, *Old North Cornwall* (Bodmin: Bossiney Books, 1991).
- Hambly, Hilda, *North Cornwall Reflections* (Bodmin: Bossiney Books, 1992).
- Hancock, Peter, *Cornwall at War 1939-1945* (Wellington: Halsgrove, 2009).
- Harris, T. R., *Methodism and the Cornish Miner* (Cornish Methodist Historical Association Occasional Publication No.1).
- Harrison, Scott, *Masculinities and Music: Engaging Men and Boys in Making Music* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008).
- Harrison, Scott (ed.), *Male Voices* (Victoria: ACER Press, 2009).
- Hebdige, Dick, *Subculture – The Meaning of Style* (London: Methuen, 1983).
- Hetherington, Kevin, *Expressions of Identity: Space, Performance, Politics* (London: Sage Publications, 1988).

- Hillier, Paul, *300 Years of English Partsongs – Selected and Edited* (London: Faber, 1983).
- Holmes, Jonathan, *Penzance and Newlyn in Old Photographs* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1992).
- Holmes, Jonathan, *Penwith in Old Photographs* (Stroud, 1993).
- Hoppen, K. Theodore, *The New Oxford History of England The Mid-Victorian Generation 1846-1886* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).
- Horn, Pamela, *The Changing Countryside in Victorian and Edwardian England and Wales* (London: Athlone Press, 1984).
- Howkins, Alun, *Reshaping Rural England A Social History 1850-1925* (London: Harper Collins, 1991).
- Jefferys, Kevin, *Finest and Darkest Hours* (London: Atlantic Books, 2002).
- Jenkin, A. K. Hamilton, *The Story of Cornwall* (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1948).
- Jenkin, A. K. Hamilton, *Cornwall and its People* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1970).
- Kent, Alan M., *Druid Offsetting* (St Austell: Lyonesse Press, 2008).
- Kynaston, David, *Austerity Britain 1945-51* (London: Bloomsbury, 2008).
- Laing, Dave, *The Sound of Our Time* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1969).
- Lake, Jeremy, Jo Cox and Eric Berry, *Diversity and Vitality: The Methodist and Nonconformist Chapels of Cornwall* (English Heritage, 2001).
- Laviolette, Patrick, *The Landscaping of Metaphor and Cultural Identity: Topographies of a Cornish Pastiche* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2011).
- Lawrence, Jon, *Speaking for the People, Party, Language and Popular Politics in England, 1867-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
- Lee, Edward, *Music of the People* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1970).
- Lorigan, Catherine, *The History of the Slate Quarry and the Making of its Village Community* (Reading: Pengelly Press, 2007).

- Lorigan, Catherine, *Connections: Aspects of the History of North Cornwall* (Reading: Pengelly Press, 2009).
- Macdonald, Ian, *Revolution in the Head* (London: Pimlico, 1995).
- Mackerness, E. D., *A Social History of English Music* (London: Routledge and Keegan, 1966).
- Mark, D. (ed.), *Stock-Taking of Musical Life ISME Edition, No.1* (Vienna: Doblinger, 1980).
- Marwick, Arthur, *The Explosion of British Society, 1914-1970* (London: Macmillan, 1971).
- Marwick, Arthur, *Britain in Our Century* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1984).
- Marwick, Arthur, *Culture in Britain since 1945* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993).
- Massey, Doreen, *Space, Place and Gender* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996).
- McKinney, Gage, *When Miners Sang – The Grass Valley Carol Choir* (California: Comstock Bonanza Press, 2001).
- Mead, Margaret, *Culture and Commitment. A Study of the Generation Gap* (St Abans: Panther Books Ltd., 1977).
- Middleton, Richard, *Studying Popular Music* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2002).
- Miller, Russell and Roger Boar, *The Incredible Music Machine* (London: Quartet Books, 1982).
- Milward, Alan S., *War, Economy and Society 1939-1945* (London: Penguin, 1987).
- Mudd, David, *The Cornish Edwardians* (Bodmin: Bossiney Books, 1982).
- Nettel, R., *Music in the Five Towns 1840-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1944).
- Noall, Cyril, *The Cornish Midsummer Eve Bonfire Celebrations* (Marazion: The Federation of Old Cornwall Societies Warden, 1963).
- Noall, Cyril, *The Book of Penzance-Newlyn, Marazion and St Michael's Mount* (Chesham: Barracuda Book, 1983).

North, Christine and June Palmer (eds.), *The Charter Town of Marazion* (Marazion History Group-Marazion Town Council).

Orff, Carl and Gunild Keetman, *Orff-Schulwerk* (London: Schott, 1977).

Parnell, Christine, *The Book of Truro – Cornwall's City and Its People* (Wellington: Halsgrove, 2004).

Paynter, John, *Music in the Secondary School Curriculum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

Payton, Philip, *The Making of Modern Cornwall* (Redruth: Dyllansow Truran, 1992).

Payton, Philip, *Cornwall A History* (Fowey: Cornwall Editions Ltd., 2004).

Payton, Philip, *A. L. Rowse and Cornwall* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2007).

Pearsall, Reginald, *Victorian Popular Music* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1973).

Pearsall, Reginald, *Edwardian Popular Music* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1975).

Probert, John C. C., *The Sociology of Cornish Methodism to the Present Day* (Cornish Methodist Historical Association, 1971).

Puttick, Yvonne, *Cornish Gold: A History of Treviscoe Male Voice Choir 1936-1993*.

Rainbow, Bernarr, *The Land Without Music* (London: Novello, 1967).

Rainbow, Bernarr, *Music in Educational Thought and Practice* (Aberystwyth: Boethius Press, 1989).

Raynor, Henry, *Music and Society Since 1815* (London: Barrie and Jenkins Ltd., 1976).

Routley, Erik, *The Musical Wesleys* (London: Herbert Kenkins, 1968).

Royle, Edward, *Modern Britain A Social History 1750-1985* (London: Edward Arnold, 1987).

- Rule, John, *Cornish Cases: Essays in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Social History* (Southampton: Clio Publishing, 2006).
- Russell, Dave, *Popular Music in England 1840-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987).
- Schafer, Murray R., *The New Soundscape* (Canada: Ontario, 1969).
- Self, George, *New Sounds in the Classroom – A Contemporary Approach to Music* (London: Universal, 1967).
- Shaw, Thomas, *A History of Cornish Methodism* (Truro: Oscar Blackford Ltd., 1967).
- Smith, Harold L., *Britain in the Second World War, A Social History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996).
- Spittles, Brian, *Britain Since 1960 – An Introduction* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1995).
- Stevenson, John, *British Society 1914-1945* (London: Penguin, 1990).
- Storr, Anthony, *Music and the Mind* (London: Harper Collins, 1992).
- Swanwick, Keith, *Music, Mind, and Education* (London: Routledge, 1990).
- Thompson, E. P., *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Penguin, 1988).
- Tosh, John, *The Pursuit of History: Aims, Methods and New Directions in the Study of Modern History* (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2010).
- Trevelyan, G. M., *English Social History* (London: Book Club Associates, 1977).
- Turner, Mike, *Clay Country Voices* (Stroud: Tempus Publishing Ltd., 2000).
- Vulliamy, Graham and Ed Lee, *Rock, Pop and Ethnic Music in School* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).
- Weight, Richard, *Patriots: National Identity in Britain 1940-2000* (London: Macmillan, 2002).
- Wharton, Amy S., *The Sociology of Gender* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012).

Williams, Douglas, *West Cornwall in the Old Days* (Bodmin: Bossiney Books, 1985).

Williams, Douglas, *Festivals of Cornwall* (Bodmin: Bossiney Books, 1987).

Williams, Douglas, *Around Newlyn, Mousehole and Paul* (Bodmin: Bossiney Books, 1988).

Williams, Douglas (ed.), *A Century of Song The Story of Mousehole and its famed Male Voice Choir* (Penzance: Headland Printers Ltd., 2008).

Williams, Gareth, *Valleys of Song: Music and Society in Wales 1840-1914* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003).

Williams, Raymond, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fontana, 1983).

Zweiniger-Bargielowska, Ina, *Austerity in Britain – Rationing, Controls and Consumption 1939-1955* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

Reference

Arnold, Denis (ed.), *The New Oxford Companion to Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).

Board of Education, *School Management and Methods of Instruction with Special Reference to Elementary Schools* (London: HMSO, 1901).

Board of Trade Working Party Reports – *China Clay* (London: HMSO 1948).

Buchanan, Ian, *Oxford Dictionary of Critical Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

CAVA Review 2006 (The Cornish Audio Visual Archive).

Children's Employment Commission – Report by Charles Barham Esq., MD, on the Employment of Children and Young Persons in the Mines of Cornwall and Devonshire, and on the State, Condition, and Treatment of such Children and Young Persons – 1842.

Combella, Myrna, *Survey of Musical Activities in Cornwall. Institute of Cornish Studies: Special Report No 1* (Penzance: Headlong Printing Co., 1974).

Cornwall Record Office, *Sources for Cornish Family History* (Cornwall County Council, May 1991).

Garside, W. R., *British Unemployment A Study in Public Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1900).

Howarth, Ken, *Oral History* (Stroud: Sutton, 1999).

Payne, Michael (ed.), *A Dictionary of Cultural and Critical theory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004).

Sadie, Stanley (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (London: Macmillan, 1995).

The Federation of Old Cornwall Societies Warden, *The Cornish Midsummer Eve Bonfire Celebrations* (Marazion, 1963).

Thompson, Paul, *The Voice of the Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

Williams, Raymond, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fontana, 1983).

Articles/Essays in Books

Addison, Paul, 'The Impact of the Second World War', in Paul Addison and Harriet Jones (eds.), *A Companion to Contemporary Britain 1939-2000* (Oxford: Blackwell 2005), pp.3-22.

Baines, Dudley, 'The Onset of Depression', in Paul Johnson (ed.), *Twentieth Century Britain, Economic, Social and Cultural Change* (London: Longman, 1994), pp.169-87.

Blaukopf, Kurt, 'New Patterns of Musical Behaviour of the Young Generation in Industrial Societies', in I. Bontinck (ed.), *New Patterns of Musical Behaviour of the Young Generation in Industrial Societies* (Vienna: Universal Edition 26246, 1974), pp.13-30.

Blaukopf, Kurt, 'Postscript: Youth as an Agent of Cultural Change', in K. Blaukopf and D. Mark (eds.), *The Cultural Behaviour of Youth, Towards a Cross-Cultural Survey in Europe and Asia* (Vienna: Universal Edition 26247, 1976), pp.121-29.

Blaukopf, Kurt, 'The Mutation of Musical Culture Statement of the Problem', in D. Mark (ed.), *Stock-Taking of Musical Life* ISME Edition. No.1 (Vienna: Doblinger, 1980), pp.9-17.

Bontinck, Irmgard, 'Cultural Behaviour and Leisure-Time Needs of the Youth', in K. Blaukopf and D. Mark (eds.), *The Cultural Behaviour of Youth, Towards a Cross-Cultural Survey in Europe and Asia* (Vienna: Universal Edition 26247, 1976), pp.70-4.

Bowden, Sue, 'The New Consumerism' in Paul Johnson (ed.), *Twentieth Century Britain, Economic, Social and Cultural Change* (London: Longman, 1994), pp.242-62.

Cannadine, David, 'Preface', in David Cannadine (ed.), *What Is History Now?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp.vii - xiv.

Chapman, Malcolm, 'Thoughts on Celtic Music', in Martin Stokes (ed.), *Ethnicity, Identity and Music – The Musical Construction of Place* (Oxford: Berg 1997), pp.29-44.

Coleman, Bruce, 'The Nineteenth Century: Nonconformity', in Nicholas Orme (ed.), *Unity and Variety: A History of the Church in Devon and Cornwall* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1991), pp.129-55.

Croll, Andy, 'Popular Leisure and Sport', in Chris Williams (ed.), *A Companion to Nineteenth Century Britain* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), pp.396-411.

Crang, Philip, 'Regional Imaginations: an afterword', in Ella Westland (ed.), *Cornwall: The Cultural Construction of Place* (Penzance: Patten Press, 1997), pp.154-65.

Daniels, P. W., 'The Geography of Economic Change', in Paul Addison and Harriet Jones (eds.), *A Companion to Contemporary Britain 1939 - 2000* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), pp.203-25.

Davies, Andrew, 'Cinema and Broadcasting', in Paul Johnson (ed.), *Twentieth Century Britain, Economic, Social and Cultural Change* (London: Longman, 1994), pp.263-80.

Deacon, Bernard, 'And Shall Trelawney Die? The Cornish Identity?', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornwall Since the War* (Redruth: Dyllansow Truran, 1993), pp.200-23.

Deacon, Bernard, 'The hollow jarring of the distant engine: images of Cornwall between West Barbary and Delectable Duchy', in Ella Westland (ed.), *Cornwall: The Cultural Construction of Place* (Penzance: Patten Press, 1997), pp.7-24.

Evans, Richard J., 'Prologue: What is History? – Now', in David Cannadine (ed.), *What Is History Now?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp.1-18.

Frith, Simon, 'Music and Everyday Life', in Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert, Richard Middleton (eds.), *The Cultural Study of Music* (London: Routledge, 2003), pp.92-101.

Greaves, Julian, 'The First World War and its aftermath', in Francesca Carnevali and Julie-Marie Strange (eds.), *Twentieth Century Britain, Economic, Cultural and Social Change* (Harlow: Pearson, 2007), pp.127-44.

Green, Lucy, 'Music Education, Cultural Capital and Social Group Identity', in Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert and Richard Middleton (eds.), *The Cultural Study of Music* (London: Routledge, 2003), pp.263-73.

Haile, Ian, 'The Wesleys', in Sarah Foot (ed.), *Methodist Celebration A Cornish Contribution* (Redruth: Dyllansow Truran, 1988), pp.13-19.

Hall, Clare, "'Without music I'd just be another kid": Boys and the choral experience', in Scott D. Harrison (ed.), *Stories of Boys Learning Through Making Music* (Australia: ACER Press, 2009), pp.16-32.

Harrison, Scott, 'Let's Hear it for the Boys: the place of boys' music in a feminist world', in E. Mackinlay, D. Collins and S. Owens (eds.), *Aesthetics and Experience in Music Performance* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2005), pp.115-22.

Harrison, Scott, 'Aussie blokes and music', in Scott Harrison (ed.), *Male Voices* (Victoria: ACER Press, 2009), pp.4-15.

Herbert, Trevor, 'Social History and Music History', in Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert, Richard Middleton (eds.), *The Cultural Study of Music* (London: Routledge, 2003), pp.146-56.

Hind, Harold C. and Bram Gay, 'Brass band', in Stanley Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians Vol.3* (London: Macmillan, 1995), pp.209-13.

Hirst, Paul, 'Miracle or Mirage?: The Thatcher Years 1979-1997', in Nick Tiratsoo (ed.), *From Blitz to Blair* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1997), pp.191-217.

- Hobsbawm, Eric, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions', in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp.1-14.
- Hoffer, Charles R., 'Youth Music Education and The New Sound Environment', in I. Bontinck (ed.), *New Patterns of Musical Behaviour of the Young Generation in Industrial Societies* (Vienna: Universal Edition 26246, 1974), pp.167-77.
- Holley, Paul, 'The Birralees Blokes', in Scott D. Harrison (ed.), *Stories of Boys Learning Through Making Music* (Australia: ACER Press, 2009), pp.156-72.
- Huggins, Mike, 'Sport and the social construction of identity in the north-east of England 1800-1914', in Neville Kirk (ed.), *Northern Identities* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp.132-62.
- Law, Right Honourable Richard, 'The Individual and the Community', in E. Baker (ed.), *The Character of England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1947), pp.37-8.
- Mcnicol, John, 'The evacuation of schoolchildren', in Harold L. Smith (ed.), *War and Social Change* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), pp.3-31.
- Milden, Kayleigh, 'Kinship and Borders: Identity in the Tamar Valley', in Garry Tregidga (ed.), *Narratives of the Family* (Redruth: Cornwall Centre/Kresenn Kernow, 2009), pp.39-51.
- Mitchell, Peter, 'The Demographic Revolution', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornwall Since the War*, (Redruth: Dyllansow Truran, 1993), pp.135-56.
- O'Sullivan, Tim, 'Listening Through: The Wireless and World War Two', in Pat Kirkham and David Thoms (eds.), *War Culture, Social Change and Changing Experience in World War Two* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1995), pp.173-85.
- Osgerby, Bill, 'From the Roaring Twenties to the Swinging Sixties: continuity and change in British youth culture, 1929-59', in Brian Dwati and Harriet Jones (eds.), *What Difference Did the War Make?* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1993), pp. 80-95.
- Osgerby, Bill, 'Youth Culture' in Paul Addison and Harriet Jones (eds.), *A Companion to Contemporary Britain 1939-2000* (Oxford: Blackwell 2005), pp.127-44.
- Payton, Philip, 'Territory and Identity', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornwall Since the War* (Redruth: Dyllansow Truran, 1993), pp.224-52.

- Payton, Philip, 'Paralysis and Revival: the construction of Celtic-Catholic Cornwall 1890-1945', in Ella Westland (ed.), *Cornwall: The Cultural Construction of Place* (Penzance: Patten Press, 1997), pp.25-39.
- Ronald Perry, 'Cornwall Circa 1950', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornwall Since the War* (Redruth: Dyllansow Truran, 1993), pp.22-46.
- Perry, Ronald, 'Economic Change and "Opposition" Economics', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornwall Since the War* (Redruth: Dyllansow Truran, 1993), pp.48-83.
- Pickering, Michael and Tony Green, 'Towards a Cartography of the Vernacular Milieu', in M. Pickering and T. Green (eds.), *Everyday Culture in Popular Song, the Vernacular Milieu* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1987), pp.1-38.
- Rawnsley, Stuart, 'Constructing "The North": space and a sense of place', in N. Kirk (ed.), *Northern Identities* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp.3-22.
- Rentoul, John, 'Tony Blair 1994-', in Kevin Jefferys (ed.), *Leading Labour: From Keir Hardie to Tony Blair* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1999), pp.208-28.
- Rule, John, 'Methodism, Popular Beliefs and Village Culture in Cornwall, 1800-50', in Robert D. Storch (ed.), *Popular Culture and Custom in Nineteenth-Century England* (London: Croom Helm, 1982), pp.48-70.
- Russell, Dave, 'Music and northern identity, 1890-c.1965', in N. Kirk (ed.), *Northern Identities* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp.23-46.
- Russell, Dave, 'Singing the North', in Dave Russell (ed.), *Looking North* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), pp.208-35.
- Scott, Derek B., 'On Music and Hegemony', in D. B. Scott (ed.), *Music, Culture and Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp.127-32.
- Shaw, Watkins, 'John Curwen', in K. Simpson (ed.), *Some Great Music Educators A Collection of Essays* (London: Novello, 1976), pp.30-42.
- Shepherd, John, 'Media, Social Process and Music', in J. Shepherd, P. Virden, G. Vulliamy and T. Wishart (eds.), *Whose Music? A Sociology of Musical Languages* (London: Transaction Books, 1977), pp.7-51.
- Shepherd, John, 'Music and Social Categories', in Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert and Richard Middleton (eds.), *The Cultural Study of Music* (London: Routledge, 2003), pp.69-79.

Sillitoe, Alan, 'End and Beginning: 1945', in Pat Kirkham and David Thoms (eds.), *War Culture, Social Change and Changing Experience in World War Two*, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1995), pp.241-50.

Stokes, Martin, 'Introduction: Ethnicity, Identity', in Martin Stokes (ed.), *Ethnicity, Identity and Music – The Musical Construction of Place* (Oxford: Berg, 1997), pp.1-27.

Strange, Julie-Marie, 'Leisure', in Francesca Carnevali and Julie-Marie Strange (eds.), *Twentieth Century Britain, Economic, Cultural and Social Change* (Harlow: Pearson, 2007), pp.193-213.

Taylor, Dorothy, 'Trends and Developments in Music Education – A British Perspective', in D. Mark (ed.), *Stock-Taking of Musical Life ISME Edition. No.1* (Vienna: Doblinger, 1980), pp.108-19.

Thoms, David, 'The Blitz, Civilian Morale and Regionalism, 1940-1942', in Pat Kirkham and David Thoms (eds.), *War Culture, Social Change and Changing Experience in World War Two* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1995), pp.3-12.

Thorne, Roger F. S., 'Chapels in Cornwall' in Sarah Foot (ed.), *Methodist Celebration A Cornish Contribution* (Redruth: Dyllansow Truran, 1988), pp.35-47.

Thurmer, John, 'The Nineteenth Century: The Church of England', in Nicholas Orme (ed.), *Unity and Variety: A History of the Church in Devon and Cornwall* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1991), pp.109-28.

Tiratsoo, Nick, 'You've Never had it so bad?: Britain in the 1970s', in Nick Tiratsoo (ed.), *From Blitz to Blair A New History of Britain Since 1939* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1997), pp.163-90.

Vityani, Ivan, 'The Cultural Behaviour of Hungarian Youth', in K. Blaukopf and D. Mark (eds.), *The Cultural Behaviour of Youth, Towards a Cross-Cultural Survey in Europe and Asia* (Vienna: Universal Edition 26247, 1976), pp.18-27.

Williams, Malcolm, 'Housing the Cornish', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornwall Since the War* (Redruth: Dyllansow Truran, 1993), pp.157-80.

Willis, Paul, 'Youth Groups in Birmingham and their specific Relation to Pop Music', in I. Bontinck (ed.), *New Patterns of Musical Behaviour of the Young Generation in Industrial Societies* (Vienna: Universal Edition 26246, 1974), pp.108-13.

Willis, Paul, 'Social Practice and Expressive Symbolism', in K. Blaukopf and D. Mark (eds.), *The Cultural Behaviour of Youth, Towards a Cross-Cultural Survey in Europe and Asia* (Vienna: Universal Edition 26247, 1976), pp.29-36.

Winter, Michael, 'The Twentieth Century Part I: Cornwall', in Nicholas Orme (ed.), *Unity and Variety: A History of the Church in Devon and Cornwall* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1991), pp.157-174.

Woodward, Kathryn, 'Introduction', in Kathryn Woodward (ed.), *Identity and Difference* (London: Sage, 1997), pp.1-6.

Articles/Essays in Journals

Adler, Adam and Scott Harrison, 'Swinging Back the Gender Pendulum: Addressing Boys' Needs', *Questioning the Music Education Paradigm, Vol.2: Research to Practice* (Toronto: International Society of Music Education, 2004), 270-89.

Aldous, Philpa and Malcolm Williams, 'A Question of Ethnic Identity', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 9* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 2001), 213-26.

Bailey, Betty A. and Jane W. Davidson, 'Effects of group singing and performance for marginalized and middle-class singers', *Psychology of Music Vol.33(3)* (2005), 269-303.

Burton, Rob, 'A Passion to Exist: Cultural Hegemony and the Roots of Cornish Identity', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 5* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1997), 151-163.

Chapman, Terry, 'Nationalized Cornwall', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies Fourteen* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2006), pp.204-28.

Dalley, Stuart, 'The Response in Cornwall to the Outbreak of the First World War', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 11* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2003), 85-109.

Davey, Merv, "'Guizing": Ancient Traditions and Modern Sensitivities', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 14* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2006), 229-44.

Deacon, Bernard, 'Proto-Industrialization and Potatoes: A Revised Narrative for Nineteenth Century Cornwall', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 5* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1997), 60-84.

Deacon, Bernard, 'Under Construction: Culture and Regional Formation in South-West England', *Urban and Regional Studies 11*(3) (London: Sage Publications, 2004), 213-25.

Deacon, Bernard, 'Cornish or Klingon? The Standardization of the Cornish Language', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 14* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2006), 13-23.

Deacon, Bernard and Philip Payton, 'Re-inventing Cornwall: Culture Change on the European Periphery', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 1* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1993), 62-79.

Dickinson, Robert, 'Meanings of Cornishness: A study of contemporary Cornish identity', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 18* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 2010), 70-100.

Durrant, Colin, 'Shaping Identity Through Choral Activity: Singers' and Conductors' Perceptions', *Research Studies in Music Education No.24* (2005), 88-97.

Faulkner, Robert and Jane W. Davidson, 'Men in chorus; collaboration and competition in homo-social vocal behaviour', *Psychology of Music Vol.34* (2) (2006), 219-37.

Finney, John, 'Curriculum Stagnation: the case of singing in the English National Curriculum', *Music Education Research Vol.2, No.2* (2000), 203-11.

Francmanis, John, 'National music to national redeemer: the consolidation of a "folk-song" construct in Edwardian England', *Popular Music Vol.21/1* (2002), 1-25.

Freer, Patrick K., 'Hearing the Voices of Adolescent Boys in Choral Music: A Self-Story', *Research Studies in Music Education No.27* (2006), 69-81.

Frith, Simon, 'The Year it all came together 1967', *The History of Rock Vol.1:1* (Orbis, 1981).

Green, Lucy, 'From the Western classics to the world: secondary music teachers' changing attitudes in England, 1982 and 1998', *British Journal of Music Education 19:1* (2002), 5-30.

- Hale, Amy, 'Cornish Studies and Cornish Culture(s): Valuations and Directions', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 10* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2002), 240-51.
- Hall, Clare, 'Gender and boys' singing in early childhood', *British Journal of Music Education* 22:1 (2005), 1-16.
- Hall, Clare, 'If I didn't sing I'd go mad', *Australian Association for Research in Music Education* (XXVIIIth Conference Proceedings, 2006).
- Hall, Clare, 'Singing spaces: Boys getting vocal about singing in and out of school', *Redress*, 16:1 (2007), 23-27.
- Hargreaves, David J., Nigel A. Marshall and Adrian C. North, 'Music education in the twenty-first century: a psychological perspective', *British Journal of Music Education* 20:2 (2003), 147-63.
- Harrison, Scott, 'Real Men Don't Sing – or do they?', *Australian Voice* (2001), 31-36.
- Harrison, Scott, 'Engaging Boys, Overcoming Stereotypes', *Choral Journal Vol.45 Issue 2* (2004).
- Harrison, Scott, 'Engaging boys in sequential, voice-based music program', *Australian KMEIA Bulletin* (2006).
- Harrison, Scott, 'A perennial problem in gendered participation in music: what's happening to the boys?', *British Journal of Music Education* 24:3 (2007), 267-80.
- Harvey, D. C., C. Brace, A. R. Bailey, 'Parading the Cornish subject: Methodist Sunday Schools in west Cornwall, c.1830-1930', *Journal of Historical Geography* Vol.33, No.1 (January 2007).
- Ivey, Allen E. and Philip Payton, 'Towards A Cornish Identity Theory', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 2* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1994), 151-63.
- Jones, M. E. F., 'The economic history of the regional problem in Britain, 1920-38', *Journal of Historical Geography* 10, 4 (1984) 385-95.
- Kent, Alan M., 'Alex Parks, Punks and Pipers Towards a History of Popular Music in Cornwall, 1967-2007', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 15* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2007), 209-47.

Koza, Julia Ekland, 'The "Missing Males" and Other Gender Issues in Music Education: Evidence from the Music Supervisors' Journal 1914-1924', *Journal of Research in Music Education* 41:3 (1993), 212-32.

Lamont, Alexandra, David J. Hargreaves, Nigel A. Marshall and Mark Tarant, 'Young people's music in and out of school', *British Journal of Music Education* 20:3 (2003), 229-41.

Lynch, Michael, 'Towards the abolition of "payment by results": the end of school music or an opportunity for further development as reported in School Music Review 1892-1901?', *British Journal of Music Education* 18:2 (2001), 187-93.

MacKinnon, Kenneth, "'As Cornish as Possible" – "Not an Outcast Anymore": Speakers' and Learners' Opinions on Cornish', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies* 12 (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2004), 268-87.

Milden, Kayleigh, 'Are You Church or Chapel?', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies* 12 (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2004), 144-65.

Mizener, Charlotte, 'Attitudes of Children toward Singing and Choir Participation and Assessed Singing Skill', *Journal of Research in Music Education* 41:3 (1993), 233-45.

Monks, Susan, 'Adolescent singers and perceptions of vocal identity', *British Journal of Music Education* 20:3 (2003), 243-45.

Payton, Philip, 'Introduction', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies* 1 (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1993), 1-3.

Payton, Philip, 'Labour Failure and Liberal Tenacity: Radical Politics and Cornish Political Culture, 1880-1939', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies* 2 (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1994), 83-95.

Payton, Philip, 'Cornish Emigration in Response to Changes in the International Copper Market in the 1860s', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies* 3 (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1995), 60-82.

Payton, Philip, "'Reforming Thirties" and "Hungry Forties" – The Genesis of Cornwall's Emigration Trade', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies* 4 (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1996), 107-27.

Payton, Philip, 'Cornwall in Context: The New Cornish Historiography', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies* 5 (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1997), 9-20.

Payton, Philip, 'Industrial Celts? Cornish Identity in the Age of Technological Prowess', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 10* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2002), 116-35.

Perry, Ronald, 'The Changing Face of Celtic Tourism in Cornwall, 1875-1975', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 7* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999), 94-106.

Perry, Ronald, "'The Breadwinners": Gender, Locality and Diversity in Late Victorian and Edwardian Cornwall', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 8* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000), 115-60.

Perry, Ronald, 'The Making of Modern Cornwall, 1800-2000: A Geo-Economic Perspective', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 10* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2002), 166-89.

Rule, John, 'The Misfortunes of the Mine: Coping with Life and Death in Nineteenth Century Cornwall', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 9* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2001), 127-44

Russell, Dave, 'Abiding memories: the community singing movement and English social life in the 1920s', *Popular Music* Vol.27:1 (2008), 117-33.

Schwartz, Sharon P., 'In Defence of Customary Rights: Labouring Women's Experience of Industrialization in Cornwall c1750-1870', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 7* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999), 8-31.

Schwartz, Sharon, "'No Place for a Woman": Gender at Work in Cornwall's Metalliferous Mining Industry', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 8* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000), 69-96.

Seward, Andy, 'Cornish Rugby and Cultural Identity: A Socio-Historical Perspective', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 5* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1997), 164-79.

Stets, Jan E. and Peter K. Burke, 'Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory', *Social Psychology Quarterly* Vol.63, No.3 (Sep., 2000), 224-37.

Thornton, Paul, 'Second Homes in Cornwall', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 4* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1996), 152-57.

Tregidga, Garry, 'Socialism and the Old Life: The Labour Party in Cornwall During the Inter-war Period', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies 7* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999), 74-93.

Tregidga, Garry, "'Bodmin Man" – Peter Bessell and Cornish Politics in the 1950s and 1960s', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies* 8 (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000), pp.161-181.

Tregidga, Garry, 'Turning of the Tide? A Case Study of the Liberal Party in Provincial Britain in the Late 1930s', *Journal of The Historical Association* Vol.92, Issue 307 (2007), 347-66.

Willett, Joanie, 'Cornish Identity – Vague Notion or Social Fact?', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies* 16 (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2008), 183-205.

Williams, Christina, 'Does it really matter? Young people and popular music', *Popular Music Volume* 20/2 (2001), 223-42.

Williams, Colin H., 'On Ideology, Identity and Integrity', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies* 10 (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2002), 67-79.

Williams, Malcolm and Tony Champion, 'Cornwall, Poverty and In-Migration', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies* 6 (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1998), 118-26.

Woodhouse, Harry, "'Face the Music!" – Church and Chapel Bands in Cornwall', in Philip Payton (ed.), *Cornish Studies* 1 (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1993), 46-61.

Wright, Ruth, 'Gender and achievement in music education: the view from the classroom', *British Journal of Music Education* 18:3 (2001), 275-91.

Theses and Dissertations

Adler, Adam, 'A Case Study of Boys' Experiences of Singing in School' (unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Toronto, Toronto 2002).

Burton, Robert, 'A Passion to Exist: Cultural Entrepreneurship and the search for authenticity in Cornwall' (unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Exeter, 2000).

Davey, Mervyn Rex, 'As is the manner and the custom – Folk tradition and identity in Cornwall' (unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Exeter, 2011).

Luker, D. H., 'Cornish Methodism, revivalism, and popular belief, c.1780-1870' (unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Oxford, 1987).

Milden, Kayleigh, 'Remembered places and forgotten histories: the complexities of the cultural memory of politics and religion within Cornish Methodism' (unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Exeter, 2005).

Russell, David, 'The Popular Musical Societies of the Yorkshire Textile District, 1850-1914: A Study of the Relationship between Music and Society' (unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of York, 1979).

Wiltshire, Christopher, 'The British Male Voice Choir: A History and Contemporary Perspective' (unpublished Ph.D thesis, Goldsmith College, University of London, 1993).

Web Pages

A précis of Thomas Merritt's life,
http://www.bbc.co.uk/cornwall/content/articles/history_thomas
[accessed 20 May 2008].

ActionBristol, 'June Poole's Evacuation Memories: Bristol to Truro', WW2 People's War, BBC Archive List,
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/22/a4022722.shtml>
[accessed 25 January 2011].

Ambervalley, 'Air Raids in Falmouth',
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/69/a2829369.shtml>
[accessed 25 January 2011].

Bal Maidens – The Silent Valley and Bal Maidens at Work – The Mathematics of the Mole, www.bbc.co.uk/nationonfilm/topics/tin-mining [accessed 22 January 2012].

BBC Radio Norfolk Action Desk, 'People's War – A Schoolboy's Perspective', WW2 People's War, BBC Archive List,
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/07/a4110607.shtml>
[accessed 25 January 2011].

Benney, Clive and Tony Mansell, 'Blackwater Wartime Memories', WW2 People's War, BBC Archive List,
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/61/a4031461.shtml>
[accessed 25 January 2011].

Cambiata voice, www.martin-ashley.com/cambiata-voice
[accessed 21 March 2013].

Camborne Church <http://www.cambornechurch.org.uk/2008-christmas/Thomas-merritt> [accessed 5 December 2012].

Church Architecture of England
www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_architecture_of_England [accessed 5 June 2013].

Church History, www.genuki.org.uk/big/e,g/Cornwall/ChurchHistory
[accessed 10 May 2013].

Church Plans, www.churchplansonline.org [accessed 3 March 2012].

Conductor turns school tearaways into team of world-class choristers,
<http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/showbiz/article-23377490-details/Conductor>
[accessed 28 April 2008].

Cornish Federation of Male Voice Choirs-Choir Members,
<http://www.fedcornishchoirs.org.uk/htm>.

Cornish hurling, http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cornish_hurling
[accessed 25 June 2012].

Cornish Institute of Engineers, <http://www.emps.exeter.ac.uk>
[accessed 12 October 2012].

Cornish Mining *Methodism*, <http://www.cornish-mining.org.uk/story/religion>
[accessed 13 May 2008].

Cornwall CSV, 'My Memories as a Young Boy', WW2 People's War, BBC
Archive List, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/27/a4112227.shtml>
[accessed 25 January 2011].

Cornwall CSV, 'Memories of the Evacuees', WW2 People's War, BBC Archive
List, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/20/a4060720.shtml>
[accessed 25 January 2011].

Cornwall CSV, 'Americans in High Street St Austell', WW2 People's War, BBC
Archive List, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/31/a3975131.shtml>
[accessed 25 January 2011].

Cornwall CSV, 'D-Day – 60th Anniversary, Part 1 (The Yanks in Truro)', WW2
People's War, BBC Archive List,
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/21/a4158821.shtml>
[accessed 25 January 2011].

Cornwall CSV, 'Memories of when the Yanks came to Truro Part 2', WW2 People's War, BBC Archive List, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/24/a4090024.shtml> [accessed 25 January 2011].

Cornwall CSV, 'St Dennis and Goss Moor – Lend-Lease Tractors', WW2 People's War, BBC Archive List, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/24/a7357124.shtml> [accessed 25 January 2011].

Cornwall CSV, 'Donald Delves' War, Part 1: The Bombing of Redruth – 20 March 1941', WW2 People's War, BBC Archive List, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/35/a5367035.shtml> [accessed 25 January 2011].

Cornwall Boys' Choir, <http://www.cornwallboyschoir/aboutus>.

Cornwall Industrial Settlements Initiative (CISI) Report No.2004R093, p14. <http://www.historic-cornwall.org.uk/CISI/Pensilva> [accessed 31 January 2013].

CSV Devon, 'Evacuation to Trethosa', WW2 People's War, BBC Archive List, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/36/a4096136.shtml> [accessed 25 January 2011].

Davies, Pam, 'The Bombing of Looe Island', WW2 People's War, BBC Archive List, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/92/a2626292.shtml> [accessed 25 January 2011].

Department for Children, Schools and Families, *Every Primary School To Become A Musical School*, November 2007 <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/>.

'Fact File: Formation of the Home Guard 14 May 1940', WW2 People's War, BBC Archive List, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/timeline.shtml> [accessed 25 January 2011].

Falmouth, www.criticalpast.com/products/location_history/Falmouth_England/1940/1944 [accessed 22 February 2013].

Gareth Malone, www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gareth_Malone [accessed 31 December 2012].

Glee, American television series, www.sharetv.org/shows/glee?gclid [accessed 17 March 2013].

Historic inflation calculator, www.thisismoney.co.uk [accessed 18 May 2013].

Inglis, Majorie May, 'I Was There – ATS in Cornwall',
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/14/a2702314.shtml>
[accessed 25 January 2011].

International singers join forces with Cornish choirs to debate way forward,
www.thisiscornwall.co.uk/news/International-singers-join-forces-Cornish-choirs-debate-way-forward/article [accessed 6 May 2011].

'Last Choir Standing', <http://www.bbc.co.uk/lastchoirstanding/archive.shtml>
[accessed 5 October 2011].

Mahy, Euan, 'Helston during WW2',
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/91/a2358191.shtml>
[accessed 25 January 2011].

Merritt Remembered, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/Cornwall/History/Features>
[accessed 29 April 2012].

Methodist Recorder, <http://www.methodistrecorder.co.uk/cornwall>
[accessed 31 January 2012].

Mike, 'An Evacuee's WW2 Story: From Paddington to Coverack, Cornwall',
WW2 People's War, BBC Archive List,
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/35/a1115335.shtml>
[accessed 25 January 2011].

Miles, Kath, 'Kath's Wartime in St Agnes', WW2 People's War, BBC Archive
List, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/52/a4005352.shtml>
[accessed 25 January 2011].

Mineral and locality database, www.mindat.org/loc-975.html [accessed 18 May
2013].

'Moody and Sankey, the Legacy',
http://www.wolfkiller.net/Moody_Sankey/index2.htm
[accessed 28 February 2012].

Mousehole Male Voice Choir, <http://www.mouseholemalevoicechoir.co.uk>
[accessed 14 December 2006].

Music that runs in Cornwall's veins, www.thisiscornwall.co.uk/news/Music-runs-Cornwall-s-veins/article [accessed 6 May 2011].

Nordic-Baltic Male Choir Festival, <http://www.tartu2012.eu>
[accessed 21 October 2011].

Old Cornwall Society, <http://www.oldcornwall.org> [accessed December, 2009].

Palmer, Michael, 'The War in the West – A Child's Perspective', WW2 People's War, BBC Archive List,
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/75/a3253475.shtml>
[accessed 25 January 2011].

Parkin, John, 'Farmers in the Cornish Home Guard', WW2 People's War, BBC Archive List, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/96/a4365696.shtml>
[accessed 25 January 2011].

Pavis, John, 'Evacuation 1940: Life as a Farm Boy in Cornwall – Chapel, Oil Lamps and Signs of War', WW2 People's War, BBC Archive List,
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/19/a1992819.shtml>
[accessed 25 January 2011].

Polperro Fishermen's Choir, <http://www.polperrofishermenschoir.org.uk>
[accessed 15 December 2006].

Rationing in the United Kingdom,
[www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rationing in the United Kingdom](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rationing_in_the_United_Kingdom) [accessed 27 March 2013].

Riga Technical University Male Choir *Gaudeamus, Latvia*,
<http://www.thesingerlink.com/xn/detai/2144230:Group:3705>
[accessed 21 October 2011].

Salisbury, John, 'A Schoolboy's view of World War 2', WW2 People's War, BBC Archive List, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/72/a3278072.shtml>
[accessed 25 January 2011].

St Agnes Institute, 'Enid's War, St Agnes Cornwall', WW2 People's War, BBC Archive List, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/60/a4041460.shtml>
[accessed 25 January 2011].

St. Agnes mining area, <http://www.cornwall-calling.co.uk/mines/st-agnes/wheal-kitty> [accessed 26 November 2009].

St Just Decline of a Mining Town, 1930s,
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/nationonfilm/topics/tin-mining>
[accessed 22 January 2012].

Sumer Is Icumen [www./en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sumer Is Icumen](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sumer_Is_Icumen) [accessed 26 November 2012].

The British and International Federation of Festivals,
<http://www.federationoffestivals.org.uk> [accessed 14 May, 2012].

The Choir BBC 2: Interview with Gareth Malone,
<http://www.unrealitytv.co.uk/reality-tv/the-choir-bbc2>
[accessed 28 April 2008].

The Coalmining History Resource Centre, <http://www.cmhrc.co.uk>
[accessed 30 January 2012].

The Federation of Old Cornwall Societies, <http://www.oldcornwall.org>
[accessed 26 June 2012].

'The Methodist Church in Britain',
<http://www.methodist.org.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=openogod>
[accessed 28 February, 2012].

'The start of music at CLS', <http://www.jcc.org.uk/25th-Anniversary/From-the-Archives/> [accessed 28 February 2012].

The Times, <http://www.infotrac.galegroup.com/itw/infomark/910/764> [accessed 12 July 2012].

'The Way Forward?' www.news.fed-cornishchoirs.org.uk/
[accessed 6 November 2012].

UK Brass Band Websites – 'Geographical List',
<http://www.harrogate.co.uk/harrogate-band/link01g.htm> [2 February 2009].