

**FROM PSALMODY TO HYMNODY: THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF PRINTED HYMNBOOKS
WITHIN HYMN SINGING COMMUNITIES**

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SUMMARY

The aim of this study is to discuss developments in the presentation and singing of hymns from the minimal involvement of late eighteenth century congregations to the full participation expected in the late twentieth century. One source of important musical, social and cultural details illustrating developments in hymnody is found in a range of representative novels. This information is corroborated by other written accounts such as diaries, census material and church records. Early on in the research three handwritten part-books were discovered, dating from 1837 to 1911. This primary source material is vital in the discussion concerning changes in hymn and psalm tunes, and provides substantive evidence that such part-books are forerunners of published hymnbooks. Furthermore a direct link is established between local manuscripts and fictional writing as the provenance of the earliest part-book is traced to the family of novelist Flora Thompson.

Further developments in hymnody are seen in the examination of children's hymns. A case study is presented of the flourishing tradition of hymn singing at Bicester Methodist Sunday School. One innovation was the formation of a harmonica band, and detailed notebooks and concert plans reveal the range of the band's sacred and secular programme.

A fieldwork survey was conducted to investigate the hymn singing preferences of regular worshippers from five Christian denominations in Bicester. Whilst the responses reveal few differences between the groups, there is compelling evidence that the popularity of certain published hymnbooks has led to a common ownership of hymns, enabling them to be enjoyed both in and out of worship.

This study therefore reveals the clear line of development from psalmody to hymnody, from handwritten manuscripts to published hymnbooks. The social context in which both texts and tunes are considered provides a clear illustration of the importance of hymns to the singing population.

FROM PSALMODY TO HYMNODY: THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PRINTED HYMNBOOKS WITHIN HYMN SINGING COMMUNITIES.

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CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

This study of the performance and collection of hymns developed from my personal enjoyment of, and involvement in hymns and hymn singing. This experience led me to realise that hymns are an essential part of British culture, often creating a common bond across society in times of sorrow and celebration, and as a result many hymn texts and tunes have become familiar to large sections of the population. As the research developed it became apparent that both the words and the melody of hymns are of equal importance, and whilst many studies exist which isolate the tunes from the texts, the two have rarely been considered together in the context of social comment. This study explores the significance of both the words and the music of hymns and religious songs in the transition from the oral tradition prevalent prior to common literacy, through the introduction of notation, both handwritten and printed, to the general use of hymnbooks now accepted both in church and in the broader community. As the discussion develops it will become apparent that there is a feeling of common ownership with regard to psalm and hymn texts and their associated tunes, and this will be considered from various perspectives.

The principal objective is to trace the developmental stages of psalmody to hymnody. The presentation and performance of texts for church singing, especially during the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, is commonly referred to by the term psalmody, defined in the Concise Oxford Dictionary as “the action, practice, or art of singing psalms (or sacred vocal music in general), esp. in public worship”. Although it will become clear that the term psalmody can be used to refer to spiritually inspired verse other than psalm texts, in the context of the present research the term hymnody will be used to describe the study of words written specifically for the purposes of

worship and supplication, intended to be set to music and frequently available in printed form.

As the investigation focuses specifically on the transition from psalmody to hymnody from the 1830s to the 1970s, the very earliest examples of liturgical music, including the Gregorian plainchant of the Middle Ages, will not be considered. The starting point for the research, chronologically speaking, is the time when written articles on the subject of church music began to appear in print, thus demonstrating the general interest in the topic. One of the earliest of these, published in 1712, was A letter on church music by Joseph Addison.¹ From this time forward it is clear that the subject of church music is one that is capable of provoking very strong feelings, all aspects of performance and presentation being hotly debated in the public forum. Evidence of this rabid discussion emphasises the fact that church music is considered to be the common property of the general population. Criticism is not confined to musical interpretation alone, but has encroached on the social aspects of church music, and has come to include all those involved in church musicmaking. The result of this is that the discussion of developments in church music has become multi-faceted and should be seen against a backdrop of social change. There are few early first-hand sociological accounts of hymn singing, the majority appearing in the published diaries of Parsons Woodforde, Skinner and Kilvert, and these are frequently used by writers and scholars of the subject to illustrate social details. A wider method of exploring the conflicting attitudes to hymn singing is to turn to the work of the writers of fiction. The study of references to the development and performance of church music in novels has proved vital to this research, as through them social attitudes can be examined over a long chronological period. The fact that such references, encompassing the many musical and social aspects of the debate surrounding church musicmaking, can be found in novels set in all geographical regions, means that it is possible to take a broad

¹ The Spectator, number 338, 28th March 1712.

overview of trends and developments and these will be fully explored in Chapter Three. It would, of course, be unrealistic to attempt to cover more than a representative sample of literary texts, but those that emerged as being of particular interest during the research are easily recognisable through their enduring popularity.

As much of the attention surrounding changes in church music is focused on musicians themselves, it seems appropriate to consider their activities first. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries many small rural churches employed a group of musicians who led the singing of psalms, hymns and anthems. These musicians have become known collectively by various titles, including “West Gallery Musicians” and “Gallery Minstrels”, because they sometimes played in a specially constructed gallery at the west end of the church. However, a more useful general term for these musicians is “choirband”, as it both acknowledges that such groups consisted of singers and instrumentalists, and that they did not perform exclusively in a gallery. The examination of the activities of the choirband provides an excellent example of early church musicians who fanned the fires of controversy, and whose activities are frequently described by novelists. These musicians accompanied the worship on a variety of both stringed and wind instruments, which they played with varying degrees of skill. According to contemporary accounts, the music was divided between melodic and harmonic parts, and there was frequent doubling of parts at the octave both above and below, all vocal parts being supported by an appropriate instrument. The choirband enjoyed a particular social status, as although tradespeople and skilled artisans, they enjoyed an elevated position, both literally as they were playing in the gallery above both congregation and clergy, and metaphorically in that they had great influence on the musical content of the services. The activities of the choirband can be traced through the personal recollection of novelists and diarists whose rich descriptions add to information that can be found in census material and parish documents. The choirband movement reached its zenith in the 1840s, then fell into a decline largely as a result of the sentiments of the Oxford Movement and the

streamlining of hymn singing, particularly with the introduction of Hymns Ancient and Modern in 1861.

Prior to the existence of these choirbands, early attempts to modernise worship were made by Jean Calvin, who introduced metrical psalms to the Protestant tradition. These proved useful as they were suitable for congregational participation, serving as a substitute for popular songs, but were quite different from the plainsong which had long been used in the Catholic service, thus giving the reformed religion an element of sung worship of its own. The general problem of illiteracy in congregations led to the common practice in many churches of the clerk leading the psalm by "lining out". This meant that the parish clerk delivered portions of the psalm, which were then taken up by the people. The continental influence of Calvin was soon felt in England: Thomas Sternhold versified nineteen of the psalms and put them into "English Metre", that is common ballad metre (8,6,8,6). By 1562 the collection had grown to the full 150 psalms familiar to us today, mainly due to the work of a parson-schoolmaster, John Hopkins. It was this collection, which has become known both as Sternhold and Hopkins and The Old Version,² that was to be the mainstay of English church music until well into the nineteenth century. Around the close of the seventeenth century Nahum Tate and Nicholas Brady issued their New Version.³ This contained material other than psalms, which was why, in spite of the official backing it received from the church authorities, it never really replaced the Old Version. Part of the reason for this was that for many years hymns were looked upon with great suspicion, as they were considered the imperfect creation of individual men, not the word of God spoken through the psalms.

²Sternhold, T., and Hopkins J., The whole Book of Psalmes, collected into English, London, John Day, 1562.

³Tate, N., and Brady, N., A New Version of the Psalmes of David, Fitted to the Tunes Used In Churches, London, Printed by M. Clarke, for the Company of Stationers, 1696.

The investigation of the activities of the choirband is important to the present study, as it raises questions about the social stratification of the Anglican Church and the cultural implications for the development of hymns. As the choirband consisted of lay members of the congregation there is a suggestion that, when they performed, the people rather than the clergy held responsibility for the music. Furthermore, as the choirbands used their musical skill to perform outside the church, an early opportunity was presented for church music to be enjoyed in secular as well as sacred environments. The very existence of choirbands had considerable social implications, as the members were of relatively low social status, and this was one of the reasons that the church authorities viewed them warily. Gradually it emerged that the clergy became convinced that to empower a group of such low social standing was not of benefit to the Church of England, and opposition started to gain momentum during the 1830s.

Part of the threat felt by the church authorities can be seen from the fact that an active choirband required the redesigning of the social space within the church community, allowing untrained and uneducated individuals to participate in the leading of church services. Furthermore, enrolment in a choirband could be achieved only by musical merit and not social status, and this led to the exclusion of many people who had previously enjoyed prominence within the church. The resulting changes in local church hierarchy make it important, at this point in the study, to consider the social make-up of the choirband. In his dissertation Parochial Music in Sussex,⁴ V. Gammon draws attention to the fact that it is possible to trace known musicians in the 1841 census, and to ascertain their occupations, and therefore make assumptions about their social status and lifestyle. The following passage, taken by Gammon from the 1841 census illustrates this, and also emphasises their positions within the choirband and the church.

⁴Gammon, V., Parochial Music in Sussex: a study in Social and Cultural Conflict, unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Sussex, 1977.

Henry Ridgeway who played the violin was a shoemaker, Henry Hayott who played the bassoon was a baker and Henry Reed singer and leader of the choir was a wheelwright...James Fleming was a hairdresser by profession...The bass singer Thomas Cox was a cordwainer, he was also the parish clerk.⁵

This is a clear example of the laity being active in church services and introduces the concept that church music, especially hymns, can be claimed as part of the popular culture of all sections of the community.

However, although the idea that lowly artisans set about reclaiming church music for the people is satisfying, it must be said that membership of the choirband brought some social benefits. These included not only a certain prominence in society, but also a measure of financial security, as choirband members received payment, which was enviable amongst the tradesmen of the nineteenth century. Gammon writes that any financial gain was of utmost importance to the players. He writes of the basic income that might be expected by a tradesman around the time of the 1841 census:

Henry Burstow, the Horsham shoemaker and friend of Michael Turner, the Warnham fiddler, earned about fifteen shillings a week throughout his life; both Burstow and Turner ended their days in poverty.⁶

As has been said, one method of tracing developments in psalmody and hymnody is to analyse descriptions of the subject in novels. It will be seen that novelists used hymns for a variety of purposes to illustrate and contribute to their works. For example, "lining out" of psalms is described in the earliest novels such as those by Tobias Smollett. It can be learned through the works of Thomas Hardy that hymns were carried down through families and communities, and the differences and conflicts between Anglican and Nonconformist hymns can be read about in the novels

⁵Gammon, p. 23.

⁶Ibid, p. 23.

of George Eliot and Charlotte Brontë. The fact that hymns are used by novelists emphasises the fact that sections of the reading public would be familiar with hymnbooks, and this is revealed by the quoting of verses from hymns and tailoring them to suit the context of the novels. Furthermore, nineteenth-century novelists provide modern readers with descriptions of how music was performed by the choirband, commenting on the instrumentation and repertoire in detail. The romantic fictional descriptions can be tempered by the accounts of church musicmaking given by diarists such as John Skinner, William Holland, John Woodforde, and Francis Kilvert. Both novelists and diarists discuss the transition from handwritten local compositions to the introduction of the published hymnbook, and details are also included of the changes in the Anglican Church as a result of the Oxford Movement, and the subsequent ousting of the choirband. With the increase in literacy and the growing awareness of hymns amongst children and young people, it is apparent that children's novelists too could confidently include references to hymns in their books, and the American writer, Laura Ingalls Wilder in particular presents developments in hymn singing from a child's perspective. Further evidence that the reading public was knowledgeable about hymns comes with the ample quotation of hymns by twentieth-century novelists such as Howard Spring and Barbara Pym, who quote hymns to illustrate situations on which religion has little or no bearing. Hymns apparently remain of sufficient importance to be used by novelists in the very closing years of the twentieth century when the descriptions of the minutiae of daily life include accounts of the most recent developments in hymn singing, both in church and in the community.

The fact that the choirband was central to the community within which it operated is

observed by novelists of the period. References to the choirband in novels are not only charming and entertaining, but also, in the absence of other printed evidence, serve to emphasise developments in church music from a cultural point of view. Furthermore, the analysis of these references contributes to the exploration of developments in hymn writing and singing, and adds to a realisation of the importance of hymns as part of a public consciousness. Historical and geographical evidence is important, as accurate locating and dating of musical activities enables a broad overview to be established and commented upon, and in these instances novelists are often helpful, providing useful evidence which is not available from other sources. For example, it is very convenient for the purposes of this study that George Eliot dates Adam Bede⁷ in the very first paragraph of the novel, making it an important source of detailed information when considering the development of hymns in the early nineteenth century.

The fact that hymns can be regarded as commonly owned is apparent in the way in which novelists draw on their own experiences of hymn singing, trusting that their readers will relate these to their own lives. Examples of this occur frequently in the novels of Thomas Hardy, who uses his youthful experiences as a church musician in Dorset as the background for many of his tales, notably Under the Greenwood Tree,⁸ and his preface to this novel is particularly revealing, providing details about many aspects of the activities of the choirband. However, he is not the only novelist to draw directly on the memories of his own childhood; George Eliot, the Brontë sisters and Elizabeth Gaskell all reveal aspects of their religious upbringing in the first half of the nineteenth century through references to hymns in their novels, as will be more fully discussed in Chapter Three, but it is important to note that the use of hymns in this way by novelists suggests common childhood memories that can be recognised and

⁷ Eliot, George, Adam Bede, London, Blackwood, 1859; reprinted, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1985.

⁸ Hardy, Thomas, Under The Greenwood Tree, London, Tinsley Brothers, 1872.

shared by the reading public. In some instances an explicit experience serves as an introduction to wider social comment, as can be seen in the description given by Samuel Butler in his notes to The Way of all Flesh.⁹ In the novel we read of a choirband of varied instrumentation, and Butler substantiates this by writing,

I have described the choir with its orchestral accompaniments exactly as they existed at Langar in my own earliest boyhood.¹⁰

This comment is of particular relevance to the present study as the novel itself describes the many changes that were to occur in the musical traditions within the Anglican Church during the middle years of the nineteenth century. In this instance, the author suggests that, whilst the book is a work of fiction, the detail is accurate and therefore believable.

It will be revealed in Chapter Three that, according to the evidence of the novelists at least, the choirband movement appeared, on the surface, to be characterised by rustic charm. However, it has already been suggested that these groups of musicians were not well regarded in the higher echelons of the Anglican Church. The fiercest attack came in the 1830s from the publication fulsomely entitled The Music of the Church considered in its various branches Congregation and Choral: An historical and practical treatise for the general reader by J. A. La Trobe.¹¹ This lengthy book criticises the state of music in the Anglican Church at the time, finding fault with musicians and castigating the indifference of the clergy. La Trobe's greatest criticism concerns the pride that he felt was evident in the country performers. This attitude will be explored more fully in Chapters Three and Four, but it is important to note that

⁹ Butler, Samuel, The Way Of All Flesh, London, Grant Richards, 1903; reprinted, London, Everyman, 1993.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 372.

¹¹ La Trobe, J. A., The Music of the Church considered in its various branches Congregation and Choral: An historical and practical treatise for the general reader, London, Seeley and Burnside, 1831.

this is the beginning of an attempt by the church authorities to end the people's ownership of their church music.

First-hand narratives from members of the clergy describing a certain dislike of the activities of the choirband exist in the various diaries kept by the nineteenth century parsons Woodforde, Skinner and Kilvert. Such accounts are vital to the understanding and reconstruction of the activities of the choirband, and the many examples of disagreement and debate serve to illustrate the uneasy relationship between church and choirband. These diaries provide information about developments in church singing which can be located in a specific geographical area and provide detail from a chronological period from 1758, the beginning of Woodforde's diary, to 1879, the end of Kilvert's diary.

Although the choirband movement is normally associated with the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, its legacy can be seen well into the twentieth century. To this end, the autobiographical novels of Flora Thompson, especially the trilogy published under the title Lark Rise to Candleford,¹² have proved invaluable. These three novels, Lark Rise, Over to Candleford and Candleford Green, describe the many social changes of the early twentieth century and are of particular relevance to this study as they provide specific details about a choirband that was active in the village of Ardley, six miles north of Bicester in Oxfordshire. Furthermore, the discovery of three handwritten part-books from the village during the research enables Thompson's comments to be authenticated in both a musical and historical context. The analysis of these part-books provides information for a case study based in North Oxfordshire and substantiates much of the evidence already discussed by Gammon in his research

¹² Thompson, Flora, Lark Rise to Candleford, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1945; reprinted, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1973.

on the choirband's activities in Sussex. Furthermore, the contents of the three books provide a musical record of the many changes that took place in church music between the 1830s and the first decade of the twentieth century. The part-books are dated from 1837 to the first quarter of the twentieth century and an examination of them provides information about musical practice in church throughout that time. As the oldest of the three books is signed, dated and contains a place-name, details about a choirband in a specific area have been revealed. Searches of parish documents and census material have shown that the lifestyle of the owner of this book, Charles Williams, corresponds to that described in fiction by Thomas Hardy. The analysis of the contents of this volume illustrates the gradual changes in psalmody, from the florid "Handelian" style of composition favoured by choirband composers, to the tamer style preferred by the Victorians. Further developments in the transition from psalmody to hymnody can be seen in the second of the three part-books, a collection of hymn tunes written in a formal style, without harmonization. Whilst a few original compositions are included in this book, the style suggests a reformed choir of the post-Tractarian era, as well as the influence of classical composers on hymn writing. The most recent of the part-books is interesting in that it was apparently compiled well after hymnbooks were available to almost all churches. However, the analysis of the contents reveals changes in church music, notably the use of chants for the accompaniment of psalms and canticles. There is also an anthem, which shows the specific need for organ accompaniment for children's voices, suggesting a reformed choir. In this last part-book, published hymnbooks are mentioned, along with dates, displaying the range of material available to hymn singers by the first half of the twentieth century.

It is apparent from an examination of the three part-books that handwritten material was used long after printed hymnbooks became more easily available to singing congregations. As has been noted, the initial introduction of hymns in church services was a slow process, as it had been generally considered that only scriptural passages,

such as psalms, should be used. Gradually, religious lyrics (i.e. hymns in the modern sense of the word) became more usual. Isaac Watts published his first book of hymns in 1707, and John Wesley's first publication appeared in 1737 in Georgia, USA. It was the Methodist movement that was to make enormous use of hymns, abundantly supplied by the Wesley brothers. In contrast, the Anglican Church of the early and middle nineteenth century adopted the more general use of hymns long after the Nonconformists had done so. The opposition to the use of certain tunes in the Anglican Church service is well described by George Eliot in The Sad Fortunes of the Rev. Amos Barton,¹³ the first of three stories under the title Scenes of Clerical Life.

As church singing developed away from the largely oral tradition, or at least one which involved only a small number of literate members of the congregation, hymns collected together into bound volumes started to be used in church services. As a result of the mass printing and production of hymnbooks the general population developed a wider knowledge of hymns. The common access to hymn texts meant that they could be used not only for their intended purpose, that of moral and spiritual guidance, but also as a tool in basic education, both at school and in the home. Although, for the devout Christian, hymns are intended for praise and petition within the context of the church service, it is equally the use of hymns and hymn singing in environments other than places of worship that has led to them gradually becoming part of a commonly held heritage. Although the general consensus, especially amongst churchgoing Christians in England, is that hymns should be treated in a solemn fashion, their role as a source of entertainment, both in public, such as in concerts, and in private, with the altering of words for amusement and the resulting parodies, will be considered in Chapter Eight.

¹³ Eliot, George, Scenes of Clerical Life, London, Blackwood, 1857; reprinted, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1973.

Although many popular collections of hymns were in use throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, one volume appeared in 1861 that was to become ubiquitous in the Anglican Church. This was Hymns Ancient and Modern, a collection that is still much used today. Its publication was significant in the transition from psalmody to hymnody and effected a permanent change in Anglican Church music. Seen by many as the ultimate taming of hymn tunes, Hymns Ancient and Modern has come to represent all that is staid in Victorian worship. Indeed it is described by V. Gammon as, “a triumph for the four-square hymnody that these earnest Victorians thought best for public worship”.¹⁴ However, for the purposes of the present study, its introduction has proved invaluable; because of its almost universal use in church, school and home, the contents have become extremely well known to the general public. This means that a major source of hymn tunes and texts has entered the public consciousness, forming the basis for commonly known and loved tunes. However, it should not go unnoticed that Hymns Ancient and Modern was not universally accepted at the time of its publication. Samuel Butler blames it entirely for the end of the choirband in the fictional village of Battersby, writing simply, “they got Hymns Ancient and Modern”.¹⁵ After its introduction into Anglican churches, a few choirbands struggled on, but they were for the most part replaced by harmoniums or similar keyboard instruments, which were deemed more suitable as accompaniment for the more sedate hymns favoured by Victorian taste. The introduction of a keyboard instrument as the accepted accompaniment was closely followed by the use of children as a lead to congregational singing. Their role as leaders of congregational singing is fully introduced and explored by Robert Druitt in The Parish Choir¹⁶ in 1846, and more recently by Nicholas Temperley in The Music

¹⁴ Gammon, p. 57.

¹⁵ Butler, p. 372.

¹⁶ Druitt, Robert, The Parish Choir, London, the Society for Promoting Church Music, monthly publication, 1846-1852.

of the Parish Church;¹⁷ the contributions of both of these will be discussed more fully in Chapter Two. Thomas Hardy, in Under The Greenwood Tree, extensively explores the uneasy relationship between musicians and officials of the church, when the choirband is eventually replaced by groups of Sunday school girls singing around the harmonium. More first-hand accounts exist in the writing of diarists such as John Skinner who, finding that the choirband had clearly not conformed to acceptable behaviour for those involved in worship, sought to replace them with girls. On July 21st, 1822, Skinner remarks that:

The girls sang both morning and evening, and much more to my satisfaction than the great Bulls of Bashan in the gallery used to do.¹⁸

This is one of the earliest references to girl singers occupying the position as leaders of the congregation - a trend that was more fully explored by later writers, critics and novelists alike. A timely reconciliation took place between Skinner and these singers on July 27th, 1822.¹⁹ However, the popularity of the choirband with the congregation does not go unnoticed by Skinner, and by 1830 it seems that an uneasy truce has been called. He writes on February 14th, 1830:

The service in the evening was numerously attended, the congregation attracted by the Singers, who now muster a large band of various instruments. I do not like their mode of performing this part of the service near so well as that of the schoolgirls; but if it induces the people to come to Church, I will bear with them patiently.²⁰

As the nineteenth century moved into its last quarter, so the involvement of children in hymnody became all the more important. As the Sunday school movement gathered momentum, especially during the years 1841 to 1884, the need was felt for

¹⁷ Temperley, Nicholas, Music of the English Parish Church, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1979.

¹⁸ Coombe, Howard, and Coombe, Peter, eds., Journal of A Somerset Rector, London, Kingsmead, 1930, p. 207.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 213.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 398.

suitable hymns for children. Indeed, even the Tractarians felt that if Tractarian children were to sing hymns at all, new ones had to be written. The first noteworthy attempt was Mrs. F. M. Yonge's Child's Christian Year.²¹ Keble wrote the preface and contributed two new hymns. Dr Neale published the first series of his Hymns for Children,²² followed by a second edition in 1844. These became very popular, and according to J. Julian, in his Dictionary Of Hymnology,²³ remained so for some time. Nevertheless, a need was felt for something simple, and in 1848 Mrs. Cecil Frances Alexander published her Hymns for Little Children.²⁴

As hymns became an accepted part of worship for both children and adults, they were also used explicitly to educate and to convert. The general availability of hymnbooks meant that they became a part of everyday life, and in addition to being used in Sunday Schools and church services, they were used in schools and other secular settings. It therefore became necessary to provide the necessary mix of education and religious values. In his Dictionary J. Julian presents a substantial article about the development of hymns written specifically for children. Although he acknowledges the important contribution made by Isaac Watts and John Wesley, he remarks that the establishment of Sunday Schools in different parts of the country immediately resulted in people finding Watts' hymns inadequate, and consequently new collections were made and fresh hymns written. New factors emerged in the history of children's hymns with the issue of magazines for children and the formation of the Sunday School Union. These magazines included many fresh hymns and other edifying material such as moral stories and poems, and were issued under the auspices of religious organisations. Regular contributions included hymns from now established hymn writers such as John Burton, junior, who sent his hymns to the

²¹ Yonge, F. M., Child's Christian Year, London, John Henry, 1841.

²² Neale, J. M., Hymns for Children, London, James Burns, 1844.

²³ Julian, J., ed., Dictionary of Hymnology, London, John Murray, 1907.

²⁴ Alexander, C. E., Hymns for Little Children, London, Joseph Masters, 1848.

Children's Friend,²⁵ Dorothy Ann Thrupp, under the signature of *Iota*, and H. F. Lyte. The Sunday School Union provided an authorised hymnbook for Sunday Schools. Many hymns were issued on flysheets for anniversary services, notably those of Montgomery for the Sheffield Whitsuntide gatherings. As these sheets were an inexpensive method of providing whole sections of the population with copies of hymn words, the study of them clearly adds to the debate on the introduction of hymns to general public awareness. The importance of hymns as music education should not be ignored, and the contribution of the Rev John Curwen from Stowmarket, who introduced the Tonic Sol-fa²⁶ system in many Nonconformist schools, was significant in this field.

As hymns were clearly sung by children in all kinds of environments, and apparently large numbers of young people attended Sunday School, it seemed appropriate that writers of fiction for children should use hymns by way of description and illustration as much as those writing for an adult readership. An examination of the many references to hymns in children's literature reveals that they must have been extremely well known. The earliest known collection of hymns for children is Isaac Watts' Divine Songs attempted in easy language for the use of children²⁷ and, whilst these are intended as songs of praise, in common with Watts' other hymns, they are also exercises in Christian religion and consist of both exhortation and admonition. In spite of their original religious purpose, certain items in this collection have become more enduring through their treatment at the hands of Lewis Carroll who parodied them in Alice in Wonderland.²⁸ The parody of song number 20 in Watts' collection, How doth the little busy bee, is undoubtedly the best known of these parodies.

²⁵ Children's Friend, London, Partridge, from 1859.

²⁶ Scholes, Percy, The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music, 2nd edn., John Owen Ward, ed., London, Oxford University Press, 1964. p. 579.

²⁷ Watts, Isaac, Divine Songs Attempted in Easy Language for the Use of Children, London, 1715; reprinted, J. H. P. Pafford, ed., facsimile of the 1st edn., Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1971.

²⁸ Carroll, Lewis, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, London, Macmillan, 1865.

Reworked by Lewis Carroll, it becomes the now familiar How doth the little crocodile improve his shining tail.

As is the case in fiction intended for adults, references to hymns and hymn singing in children's books are rare, but when they appear they contribute to the cultural and social detail of the novel. Laura Ingalls Wilder is an example of a novelist whose stories catalogue many of the changes seen in hymn singing in all environments, especially hymn singing at home, in church and as music education. Her books detail the life of a pioneer family in the USA in the 1870s. However, the family is of English origin and she weaves illuminating comments about hymn singing into the text, including the difficulties for hymn singers in dealing with the transition from an oral to a print-oriented approach. She also mentions specific hymns and describes performance practice in some detail, and this will be discussed fully in Chapter Three. As the hymn singing tradition she describes has its roots in England, her novels provide a wealth of useful detail about it, especially in the absence of such information from popular English children's novelists. The example of Wilder suggests that writers could assume that not only were adults generally aware of the words of hymns, but so too were the young readers for whom their works were intended.

As has been noted earlier, in order to understand this general acceptance of hymns as part of children's culture, this study will present a detailed analysis of hymn sheets used for the Anniversary services at Bicester Methodist Sunday School (BMSS) in Chapter Six. This will examine some of the many changes in hymnody between the years 1850 and 1970 and further reveal that social changes and opinions are frequently reflected in the subject matter of hymns. Those who attended BMSS enjoyed a particularly rich musical experience during the first three quarters of the twentieth century, almost entirely due to the influence of Mr. S.G. Hedges, always referred to as "SG". He held the position of Sunday School Superintendent from

1937 until 1968 and put his musical and organisational skills to work in maintaining high standards of hymn singing and performance.

Although SG took hymn singing very seriously and was always keen to introduce new material to the Anniversary services, he was also aware that if he was to maintain young people's interest in staying in Sunday School, he would need to occupy them, or at least enable them to provide their own amusement. Although hymns had long been enjoyed as a means of entertainment, during the first half of the twentieth century their more popular appeal becomes apparent, and the advent of radio, television and recording techniques gradually established them as a form of popular music to be enjoyed by the masses. The examination of the use of hymns in this way is significant to this research because it emphasises the growing general knowledge of hymns outside the church environment. It would appear that SG realised this, and during the 1930s he established the Red Rhythmics Harmonica Band, which was to become the pioneer of the then fast-spreading harmonica band movement. The wealth of material that exists cataloguing the Red Rhythmics' activities at Bicester Methodist Church illustrates the growing tendency to mix sacred music with more popular music hall type pieces to form an entertaining programme.

The first two case studies considered in this research both focus on the Bicester area. These are, 1) the analysis of the handwritten part-books, and 2) the discussion of the use of hymns at BMSS including the anniversary service flysheets, the introduction of new hymnbooks and the description of the activities of the Red Rhythmics. In view of this it seemed appropriate that a third case study, a fieldwork survey, should be undertaken amongst the regular worshippers from a range of Christian denominations in Bicester. This survey, which takes the form of a questionnaire, seeks to establish how far hymns could be considered to be in the public consciousness at the end of the twentieth century and is concerned with the respondents' childhood experiences of hymn singing, as well as their current attitudes and practices. Furthermore, the

questionnaire seeks to explore the extent to which hymns are sung outside church services. The findings of the fieldwork survey will be analysed in Chapter Eight, but it is clear that much of the data collected corresponded with that already discovered during the research.

This concludes the introductory section of the study. Before moving on to the main body of the work, Chapter Two will outline the methodology used, drawing attention to the range of relevant primary and secondary source material discovered during the course of the research. The following chapters will analyse and discuss this material and present an account of the line of development from psalmody to hymnody.

CHAPTER TWO – METHODOLOGY

The data for the present study consists of information gathered from a wide variety of sources with the aim of discussing and presenting the many cultural, social and musical changes that took place within church singing from the early nineteenth century to the late twentieth century. In order to present a broad and balanced view of events, the starting point of the research was to identify and examine comments and references made by novelists on the subject of hymn singing. These comments and references, drawn from representative texts dating over the last two hundred years, were studied alongside other source material, such as diaries and articles, and critical works also concerned with church singing. This initial investigation enabled general assumptions to be made about developments in church singing, as it was possible to trace broad trends concerning, for example, the use of musical instruments, the introduction of hymnbooks, and the consequent seemingly inevitable tensions between clergy and congregations.

The data collected from the descriptions of hymn singing in novels was initially drawn from those whose popularity has endured and which are the subject of continuous study and debate. These include early novels, such as those by Tobias Smollett, and novels from the middle of the nineteenth century, for example the works of Elizabeth Gaskell, George Eliot and the Brontë sisters. Developments in hymn singing in the later nineteenth century are considered through the experiences and descriptions of Thomas Hardy, whose Under the Greenwood Tree provides undoubtedly the richest account of nineteenth-century musicmaking, and Samuel Butler, whose The Way of All Flesh catalogues many significant changes in the performance of church music. The transitional period between the nineteenth and the twentieth century is considered through the novels of Flora Thompson, whose Lark Rise to Candleford, noted earlier, serves as an introduction to the analysis of the three part-books originating in North Oxfordshire, which will be examined in detail in Chapters Four and Five. More general developments in hymn singing in the first half

of the twentieth century are noted by the novelists Howard Spring, Barbara Pym and some of the popular novelists of the 1990s emphasise the continued awareness and knowledge of hymns and hymn singing amongst the general population. Hymn singing for children is represented by the consideration and analysis of the work of the children's novelist Laura Ingalls Wilder.

The collection and examination in Chapter Three of the references, descriptions and comments made by novelists illustrates changes in hymn singing, hymn writing and the more general use of hymns both in and out of the church. The data from the novels will be presented in the form of a chronological discussion of the representations of hymns in fiction, and commences with some of the earliest fictional references to psalmody, which are described by Tobias Smollett through his character Humphrey Clinker.¹ In this instance the reader is introduced to the concept of psalms as accompaniment to impromptu outdoor preaching, as well as to some of the musical responsibilities of an eighteenth-century parish clerk. The novels of the mid-nineteenth century, such as those by George Eliot and the Brontë sisters, reveal much about the introduction of more formal congregational singing. George Eliot draws attention to the introduction of both the Old and the New Versions, and describes the activities of choirbands, including comments about performance and instrumentation. Both George Eliot's and Charlotte Brontë's apparent familiarity with the Collection of Hymns for the People Called the Methodists introduces readers to the idea that the hymns sung in church services are part of a commonly held heritage, as hymns are used to embellish a variety of sacred and social situations. Elizabeth Gaskell draws upon her Nonconformist background, illustrating her novels with both psalmody and hymnody. Of all the novels examined, the references from two emerge as fundamental in the tracing of the developments in church music in the nineteenth century. As noted above these are Hardy's Under the Greenwood Tree and Butler's

¹Smollett, Tobias, The Expeditions of Humphrey Clinker, Salisbury, W. Johnston and B. Collins, 1771; reprinted Ware, Hertfordshire, Wordsworth Classics, 1995.

The Way of All Flesh.

Whilst the data gathered from what can be considered to be classic works of fiction reveals many developments in the transition from psalmody to hymnody, it also became apparent that further trends in church music are evident in less “mainstream” works. Through the examination of a range of other texts, more evidence emerged suggesting that hymns entered into many aspects of everyday life between the middle of the nineteenth and the twentieth century. With the advent of general education, hymns became increasingly important as a means of moral and spiritual guidance for the young, and to this end the analysis of representative texts detailing developments in hymns and hymn singing unveils extensive references to hymns in novels intended specifically for children. As noted earlier, the autobiographical novels of Laura Ingalls Wilder have been invaluable in the collection of data for this study. Wilder describes hymn singing in a variety of different situations including home, school and Sunday School, as well as using hymns to illustrate aspects of everyday life. It is quite clear from this that, writing in the middle of the twentieth century, she expected at least the concept of hymn singing, if not the hymns themselves, to be understood by young people. By contrast, however, the research revealed that the subject of hymn singing is curiously absent from the works of British writers for children whose works appeared in the same period. It is surprising, for example, that in Noel Streatfeild’s Ballet Shoes,² a novel published in the same year as Wilder’s first book, and which champions the virtues of hard work and discipline, there is only one mention of hymn singing, and this in the secular setting of carol singing. This occurs on Christmas day, an occasion entirely remarkable for its presents and food, when some carol singers call.

They asked if Pauline and Petrova would like to choose a carol before they went to another street. Pauline thought a moment, and before she had done thinking, Petrova said – ‘Oh, please, “Like Silver Lamps”,’ so

² Streatfeild, Noel, Ballet Shoes, London, Dent, 1936; reprinted, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1949.

they sang that one.³

Enid Blyton does not mention hymn singing in her popular schoolgirl sagas, St Clare's and Mallory Towers, both of which were published during the 1940s. This again seems surprising, as the analysis of data collected from Bicester Methodist Sunday School and the writings of SG all draw attention to the growing availability of hymnbooks for children at this time.

The data collected from novels intended for adult readership of the twentieth century shows that whilst the treatment of hymns by novelists differs from their counterparts in the nineteenth century, the use of and references to hymns are just as prevalent in these more recent works. For example, writing in the 1940s, novelist Howard Spring weaves hymns into his text to add colour and interest. However, his concentration on the use of hymns for other than religious purposes, for example for the rallying of political fervour, shows that whilst hymns remained in the public consciousness, it could no longer be assumed that they were learned in church. Similarly, Barbara Pym uses the poetic language of hymns to illustrate everyday events. This “secular” use of hymns in novels has continued into the closing years of the twentieth century and the so-called “aga-sagas” of the 1990s, notably those by Diana Saville and Mary Sheepshank whose works will be discussed in detail in Chapter Three of this study. Ultimately, the examination of these most recent novels brings the history of hymn singing well into the present day, with descriptions of photocopied hymn sheets, the use of guitars, amplified music and overhead projectors. It will be revealed that such illustrations of these developments are just as valuable in the collection of information about hymn singing as Humphrey Clinker’s account of “lining-out”.

The references to hymns that novelists make provides an introduction to the many changes that have occurred in church singing over the last two hundred years. However, as all of these descriptions are essentially fictional, a more reliable account

³ Streatfeild, p. 65.

of the changes and developments needed to be gathered from various other sources. With this in mind, articles and books on the subject of church singing were considered, alongside fictional data and other source material. Hymn writing was itself gaining in popularity, partly as a result of the prodigious output of Isaac Watts, whose Hymns and Spiritual Songs was published between 1707 and 1709. However, in these early years, apart from Joseph Addison's letter in the Spectator referred to on page 13 of this study, there was little discussion of hymn singing. Articles on the subject became much more common around the middle of the eighteenth century, and their arrival coincided with the earliest novelists' contribution to the discussion. Two publications, which add to the illustrations found in early novels such as The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker, are The Parish Clerk's Guide⁴ published in 1731 and Arnold's The Compleat Psalmist,⁵ which appeared some years later. Both of these volumes describe the duties of a Parish Clerk. The Compleat Psalmist proves useful when considering the activities of the choirband. Whilst novelists offer ample, often humorous, descriptions about the quality of music and details of performances, Arnold gives a long list, with prices and manufacturers, of the instruments used in church musicmaking. He also writes enthusiastically about the use of "church Organs of the Machinery Kind", remarking on their suitability for unskilled musicians in rural churches. Indeed he mentions that they are specifically designed with this purpose in view, writing that they are,

so contrived as to play (having Barrels fitted to them for that Purpose) a set of Voluntaries, also most of our ancient Psalm-Tunes, with their Givings-out and Interludes, Ec, which are very commodious for Churches in remote Country Places, where an Organist is not easily to be had or maintained, and may also be played by a Person (unskill'd in Music) who is only to turn a Winch round, which causes the Barrels to play the Tunes they are set to; which Organs also generally have, or should have, a Set of

⁴ P. B. The Parish Clerk's Guide, London, J. March, 1731.

⁵ Arnold, J., The Compleat Psalmist, 6th edn., London, J. Buckland, 1759.

Keys to them, that a Person might play on them at Pleasure, notwithstanding the Barrels, Ec.⁶

Arnold also discusses the use of specific instruments, according with the descriptions by novelists such as George Eliot. The bassoon, for example, was an instrument beloved by the colourful choirband and Arnold clearly approves of this:

The bassoon being now in great Request in many Country Churches, I presume therefore, it will not be improper for me here to acquaint my Reader, that it makes exceeding good Addition to the Harmony of a Choir of Singers, where there is no Organ, as most of the Bass Notes may be played on it, in the Octave below the Bass Voices; The Bassoon requires a pretty strong Breath to blow it, but it is not at all difficult to learn to play upon, all the Instructions, belonging to it, being only a Scale of its Notes.⁷

The quality of the music will be discussed later in this study, but it is important to note that it was not well received by critics of the time. George Eliot and her contemporary Washington Irving describe musical works, especially anthems, in full and whilst, as will be seen in Chapter Three, this is frequently in humorous vein, Arnold is scathing. He writes:

I could have wished, for their own Sakes, they had kept their Compositions to themselves, and that they never had exposed their Ignorance by exhibiting their Compositions to the public View; that they had followed the Art for teaching the Compositions of their Superiors, instead of composing such whimsical flighty Psalm-Tunes (as several Authors late have) since most of their Compositions cannot be reckoned any other than an unconnected Jumble of Notes confusedly put together, being founded on no musical Rules.....⁸

In addition to the comments about instrumentation, and remarks about the quality of the music performed, there is evidence that tensions existed between the clergy and choirband members. It is the diaries of the time that best illustrate this aspect of

⁶Phillips, C. H., The Singing Church, London, Faber and Faber, 1971.

⁷ Ibid., p. 121.

⁸ Ibid., p. 122.

church musicmaking. In Parson Woodforde's diaries, for example, the uneasy relationship between church musician and church authorities is explored, with the suggestion that this conflict has been in existence since the advent of the earliest psalm tunes. According to Woodforde, it seems that the choirband in Cary Church were a troublesome group, and his is one of the best accounts of a dispute between choirband and church authorities. Aside from the political intrigue, dealt with more fully in Ken Baddley's Trouble in the Gallery,⁹ many details concerning the power base of the choirbands emerge from the diaries.

The use of the galleries for the accommodation of the choirbands is of particular interest to this study, especially when considering the activities of the choirband in Ardley, Oxfordshire in Chapter Four. To present a balanced picture of this, Parson Woodforde's comments have been closely examined. It would appear from him that using the galleries solely for musicmaking was a point of conflict. On February 9th 1769, he attended a meeting concerning the proposal to reduce the seating accommodation for the choir, which was "large enough to contain between 3 & 4 score people", and it was proposed to reduce this so that anyone could sit in the remaining area. It would seem from Woodforde's diaries that there is ample fuel to feed the fire of opposition to the choirbands apparent in the novels considered in this study.

Not long after Parson Woodforde finished his diary, arguably the most significant contribution to hymn singing appeared in 1780 with the publication of Wesley's A Collection of Hymns for the Use of People Called Methodists which is an essential

⁹ Baddley, Ken, Trouble in the Gallery, Parson Woodforde Society, Vol. 29, number 1, Spring 1996.

work when considering developments in church music. This collection of hymns, which was for the most part to serve as the liturgy of the Methodist church, was organised in sections dealing with the many and various aspects of Christian life. For the purposes of the present study, this is an important feature of the hymnbook as it can be seen that it was easy for novelists to call upon a particular hymn to represent some moral dilemma, or religious experience. For example, in Shirley¹⁰ Charlotte Brontë clearly deliberately chooses hymns from the separate sections “for believers fighting” and “for believers rejoicing” to illustrate aspects of spiritual life, and this will be explored in Chapter Three.

Although the diarists already mentioned, Parsons Woodforde, Skinner and Kilvert, undoubtedly contribute to our knowledge of the personalities and tensions within the choirband, another diarist provides more details about the quality of the musicmaking. William Holland’s diary is published under the title Paupers and Pig Killers¹¹ and his consideration of church life makes an excellent comparison with the novels of the period. The quality of the performances is an aspect of choirband music over which there is little agreement. The subject is often dealt with in humorous vein by novelists of the time, as will be seen through the writing of Washington Irving and Thomas Hardy. However, of the fact that William Holland was less than appreciative of his own resident choirband there can be no doubt, and his writing suggests a certain bleak acceptance of the situation, rather than the comical enjoyment evident in novels. He writes of Sunday, 15th April 1804:

A disagreeable fellow was playing his fiddle in the Church when I came

¹⁰ Brontë, Charlotte, Shirley, London, Smith Elder, 1848; reprinted, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1994.

¹¹ Ayres, Jack ed., Paupers and Pig Killers – The Diary of William Holland, A Somerset Parson 1799 – 1818, London, Alan Sutton, 1984.

in, without tune or harmony, intending I presume to accompany the Psalm singers. I however ordered him to stop his noise which he would hardly do and then he began trying his discordant hautboy. I had a good mind to order him to be turned out.¹²

Even the Christmas musical offerings from Holland's choirband do not appear to be as warmly tolerated as they might by novelists, as on Friday December 25th 1801 he writes:

The Singers at the window tuned forth a most dismal ditty, half drunk too and with the most wretched voices.¹³

However, as the references to choirbands in diaries are examined, it becomes increasingly apparent that there was a growing dislike of the musicians and the social position that they enjoyed. As early as 1807 William Holland remarks with discontent that his choirband was becoming famous locally, and therefore benefiting from an elevated social status, and in this respect he was inclined to agree with the accusations voiced by J. A. La Trobe some twenty five years later:

Our Singers are become famous in the Country, which makes them vain and fond of Exhibiting themselves and I think they think more of their own Praise than the Praise of God. As we of our own Parish subscribed for the Instruments I observed that they should not forsake us in the time of our own Service, for we did not buy the Instruments for the Amusement of other Churches.¹⁴

The growing hostility towards the choirbands is also evident in the diaries of the Reverend John Skinner, who kept his diary between the years of 1803 and 1834. This information is important to this study, as it provides an insight into changes in church music, especially its taming and reformation. It seems that the behaviour of the choirband members gives cause for both concern and comment, and Skinner even

¹² Ayres, p. 80.

¹³ Ibid., p. 61.

¹⁴ Coombes and Coombes, p.151.

threatened to “dissolve the Band altogether”¹⁵ on account of riotous behaviour. Clearly he does not have a great deal of influence over his choirband, as more than a year later, on July 14th 1822, he writes:

The singers, who have been in a state of constant intoxication since yesterday, being offended because I would not suffer them to chaunt the service after the First Lesson, put on their hats and left the Church. This is the most open breach of all religious decorum I have ever witnessed.¹⁶

The gathering together of references both from novels and diaries gives a clear overall impression of the activities of the choirbands, and contributes significantly to the discussion of developments in hymn singing. It is also clear, that whilst popular in the 1830s, the choirbands also fell into decline during this decade. The writing of the period reflects this opinion as criticism continued to be strong, especially from the established church, the fiercest attack coming from J. A. La Trobe. He suggests that the clergy should see the regulation of the musical proportions of the service as part of their duty, and that the vicar should win the confidence of the choirband with Christian kindness. However, he then suggests ways in which the vicar might reform or suppress a choirband. He would start with the tunes:

In place of boisterous anthems and fuges... he would seek to substitute simpler and more sober compositions.¹⁷

Then he would alter the instrumentation of the band:

The bassoon must be dispensed with at all hazard... The fife may be easily put down... considering the usual coarseness of country performances, the clergyman can reduce his instruments to a single violincello (sic), he will possess every requisite support for plain psalmody.¹⁸

La Trobe is especially critical of the “Fondness for display” he considered evident in

¹⁵ Coombes and Coombes, p.162.

¹⁶ Ibid., p.200.

¹⁷ La Trobe, p. 91.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 91.

the choirband, and disapprovingly suggests that their practice of “wandering from parish to parish serves only to feed their own fondness for display”, thus echoing the thoughts of William Holland some thirty years previously.

Criticisms such as those of La Trobe are significant when studying trends in church music, because they reveal the deep divisions of opinion within the church, and partially explain the complexities of the next stage in these developments. Writing such as that of La Trobe was an important reflection of the mood of the time, a mood that found its most pronounced expression in the reforms favoured by the Oxford Movement. The strength of the attack in the 1830s had made it impossible for any clergyman to continue with the unruly groups of musicians that had hitherto dominated the services. After the demise of the choirbands in the Anglican Church, their existence is rarely noted in literature, and certainly novels set after the 1840s hardly acknowledge them at all. As will be discussed in Chapter Three, writers deal with their ousting in various ways. However, a few hints serve as a reminder that the some of the musicians themselves found an alternative venue for their activities. One example of this comes from Samuel Butler in The Way of all Flesh, when Mr. Overton describes one of his later visits to Battersby-on-the-hill. Certainly the gallery has been removed, and the harmonium accompanies the hymns, selected from Hymns Ancient and Modern.

But in the evening later on I saw three very old men come chuckling out of a dissenting chapel, and surely enough they were my old friends... There was a look of content upon their faces which made me feel certain they had been singing; not doubtless with the old glory of the violoncello, the clarinet and the trombone, but still songs of Sion, and no new-fangled papistry.

This quotation hints that choirbands received less opposition in the Nonconformist chapels.

There is ample written evidence to suggest that the musical reform within the Anglican Church was only just beginning. During the 1840s articles continued to be published on the subject of church music, including those by Robert Druitt whose writings appeared in The Parish Choir between 1846 and 1851. Changes in the performance of church music are expressed in this publication and will be discussed later. For example, early editorials set about impressing on the reader that vocal music constituted an essential part of public worship, and urged that all children should be taught to sing. This idea was quickly taken up, not only in the National and charity schools for the children of the poor, but also in the private schools to which more wealthy parents were able to send their children and it clearly paved the way for the foundation of Sunday School hymn singing, which will be discussed in Chapter Six. Other recommendations made by Druitt include the suggestion that Anglican chants rather than Gregorian tones should be used for the psalms, a change not only detailed by Samuel Butler in The Way of all Flesh, but one which is also apparent in the three part-books which will be analysed in Chapters Four and Five.

It is important for the purposes of this study to consider the contribution made by twentieth-century critics to the subject of church singing. Interest in psalmody and hymnody has grown, especially in the second half of the century, with all branches of church music being explored. One of the earliest authors to explore the choirband in more detail was K. H. Macdermott, whose book, The Old Church Gallery Minstrels,¹⁹ was the first to fuel interest in the choirband and serves as a basis for the research of more recent historians and musicologists. Macdermott illustrates his book with quotations written in local dialect, emphasising the rural facet of these groups. He

¹⁹ Macdermott, K.H., The Old Church Gallery Minstrels, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1948.

also draws attention to the apparent lack of interest from the clergy in the behaviour and activities of the choirband, an aspect explored many years earlier by Thomas Hardy in Under the Greenwood Tree. Macdermott reports:

The vicar didn't care what we sung and told us to "bawl out what we pleased, s'longs we didn't bother him".²⁰

Macdermott further suggests that the choirband was responsible for choosing the hymns and psalms, and that it could not altogether be blamed for its autocratic characteristics because of the lack of support it received from the clergy. He also provides information concerning the social make-up of the choirband, observing that "whole families served in the band",²¹ and this is a significant detail as will be seen when the choirband of Mellstock is discussed in Chapter Three. In the second half of the twentieth century, writers considered the social aspects of church music, notably E. D. Mackerness, in his A Social History of English Music.²² Although the so-called "Choral Revival" of the 1970s examines the turbulent years in the history of church music in books such as Bernarr Rainbow's The Choral Revival in the Anglican Church (1839-1872)²³ which describes many of the more formal aspects of church music, the social and community components of hymn singing assume growing importance. Whilst hymns continued to be considered by some writers for their overtly spiritual content, it has become recognised that they are also a vital part of English cultural heritage. In By Rite by R. Bushaway²⁴ hymns are considered for the vital contribution they make to rites of passage, alongside secular activities, and this

²⁰ Macdermott, p.6.

²¹ Ibid., p.11.

²² Mackerness, E.D., A Social History of English Music, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964.

²³ Rainbow, Bernarr, The Choral Revival in the Anglican Church (1839-1872), London, Barrie and Jenkins, 1970.

²⁴ Bushaway, R. By Rite: Custom, Ceremony, and Community in England, 1700 - 1800, London, Junction Books, 1982.

discussion has proved valuable in the examination of community hymn singing in Chapter Seven. This more inclusive attitude to hymn singing is also apparent in the work of more recent scholars such as V. Gammon and S. J. Weston, which in turn prove valuable in the examination of the three part-books.

Whilst musical developments over the country as a whole remain of interest to many scholars, the study of particular geographical areas started to become significant during the later years of the twentieth century. This side of hymnody was of particular interest when analysing the three part-books and locating them in their historical, social and geographical setting. V. Gammon's work on the choirband in Sussex provides an enlightening account, which serves to aid the understanding of these issues, and the analysis of three part-books will be related to issues discussed in his Parochial Music in Sussex, where the mix of musical detail, enriched by historical sources and cultural comments adds significantly to the research into the developments of church singing in North Oxfordshire. Similarly, as the musical details of the part-books are analysed, the work of S. J. Weston has provided a suitable starting point, especially his Northamptonshire Church Music In the Late Eighteenth Century²⁵ and The Instrumentation of the Church Choirband.²⁶

It was clear, early on in the research, that the analysis of the three part-books would provide a significant overview of developments in church singing, and it was of particular interest that it was possible to link them to one of the works of fiction studied, namely Lark Rise to Candleford by Flora Thompson. Although the data collected from novelists, the comments of the critics and diarists, and the examination of primary source material such as these part-books are invaluable, the linking of the three sources provides detailed information regarding the development from

²⁵ Weston, Stephen J., Northamptonshire Church Music in the Late Eighteenth Century, Department of Adult Education, Leicester, University of Leicester, 1992.

²⁶ Weston, Stephen J., The Instrumentation of the Church Choirband in Eastern England, unpublished PhD thesis, Leicester, University of Leicester, 1995.

psalmody to hymnody. The earliest of the part-books is inscribed with the place name Fewcott, a hamlet five miles north of the Oxfordshire market town of Bicester, and adjacent to the village of Ardley. The descriptions of rural church musicians given by Flora Thompson apply specifically to the village of Ardley, and research revealed that the parish church at Ardley not only had an active choirband, but also served the hamlet of Fewcott. Analysis of the data from the part-books then assumed greater significance, as not only was it possible to explore the general musical trends in the developments of psalmody to hymnody, but the part-books could also be linked to a specific geographical region. As the oldest of the part-books is named and dated, other data has been used to establish more details about church musicmaking in the area. For example, it is evident from Thompson's writing that a choirband existed in Ardley, and the fact that the church also served the Fewcott inhabitants can be substantiated from publications relating to the deanery of Bicester, the significance of which will be discussed in Chapter Four. The name in the oldest part-book has also made it possible to obtain social data about its owner through census material and churchwardens' accounts. This serves to substantiate the findings of V. Gammon in his research in Sussex, and verifies the colourful descriptions of the choirband by Thomas Hardy in Under the Greenwood Tree.

Musically, the contents of the three part-books illustrate the many changes and developments in hymn singing between the middle of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. It will be seen how the florid settings beloved of the choirband gave way to more restrained settings more popular with the Victorians. These changes will be discussed within the historical and musical analysis of the books, and this will demonstrate how handwritten collections such as these can be seen as forerunners of published hymnbooks. Indeed research into the earliest published collection of hymnbooks reveals that it was precisely part-books such as these that formed the basis of later popular hymnbooks. Evidence of this exists in the

introduction to A Companion to the Wesleyan hymn-book,²⁷ which states that in this particular instance,

The work originated in a private manuscript collection of tunes, commenced more than thirty years ago, for the use of a small congregation in the country.²⁸

It will be seen in Chapter Five, where the contents of this oldest part-book are analysed, that similarities exist between it and the Companion quoted above. Similarly, the tunes contained in the second part-book have their roots in some of the earliest significant collections of hymn and psalm tunes. Many, for example, can be found in A Collection of Thirty-six tunes, set to music, as they are sung at the Foundry.²⁹ The last of the three part-books contains hymn tunes written out in short score form: two parts written on each stave, handwritten versions of chants that became accepted accompaniments for canticles and psalms as the nineteenth century progressed, and an anthem, which occupies the middle pages of the book. In order to appreciate the range of psalm and hymn tunes collected in the books, as many as possible were identified with the help of N. Temperley's Hymn Tune Index.³⁰ This was especially useful in the case of the oldest part-book, as many of the tunes in it have now fallen from use. This enabled early sources of the tunes to be identified, and as will be seen in Chapter Five, illustrated some of the many changes each underwent. In all three part-books local compositions reveal unique musical information and this, when analysed, illustrates changes in hymn tunes throughout the period.

The examination of this handwritten source material provided a large quantity of data

²⁷ A Companion to the Wesleyan hymn-book, London, Wesleyan Conference Office, c. 1849.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. iii.

²⁹ Wesley, John, A Collection of tunes, set to music, as they are commonly sung at the Foundry, London, printed A. Pearson, sold, T. Harris, 1742.

³⁰ Temperley, N., The Hymn Tune Index – A census of English Language Hymn Tunes in Printed Sources from 1535 – 1820, Volumes 1-4, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1998.

concerning the development of hymns, their musical characteristics, and social importance. In addition, other data was considered with the aim of establishing trends in hymn singing in the twentieth century. Any study of the cultural importance of hymns cannot ignore their role in the education of children, and the current research stresses the link between the use of hymns in children's books and in youth culture, especially in the Sunday School movement. An examination of the use of hymns in BMSS Anniversary services shows that they are vital in the life of a young worshipper, both in church and in daily life. Many hymn sheets from anniversary services at BMSS still exist, the earliest dating from 1872, and it is the analysis of these that forms the basis for the section of the study which deals with hymns for children. The hymn sheets from BMSS were found in a variety of places, including the collection of the church archivist, Mrs. Mary Bryden, private collections of members of the congregation, and neglected in cupboards at church. Whilst the use of hymn sheets in Anniversary services was clearly a practical alternative to hymnbooks, their analysis was difficult as the earliest sheets do not give the authors of the words, and tunes are not mentioned until well into the 1930s. However, as Sunday School hymns were of such interest to novelists, it seems appropriate to trace as many as possible of the hymns used in Bicester. The hymn sheets at BMSS were always printed by the same local printing firm, Pankhursts, but it was difficult to find the sources of all of the hymns, as there are few acknowledgments of author or composer, especially in the early sheets. However, as Bicester Methodist Church enjoys a loyal, if static, congregation, many older members of the church were able to assist in the collection of this data, especially from the period around the Second World War.

The examination of the Sunday School records and account books revealed financial details concerning the organisation of the Anniversary services, and these also provided useful social information. From the establishment of BMSS in 1850, the Anniversary service was reported regularly in the local press, and this has made it possible to trace many of the hymns used in such services, even when the hymn sheets

are no longer available. Other documents and notebooks contain details about the use of hymns in the church, including plans for services, and notes for secular occasions. The papers of the late Mrs. Hedges, wife of SG, have proved to be a valuable source of information, as has the vast collection of SG's own writing on the subject of hymn singing in Bicester, including his regular column in the Bicester Advertiser, entitled "Youth News". The presentation of the data will focus on the changes in Anniversary repertoire throughout the first seventy-five years of the twentieth century, discussing the use of hymns to illustrate social trends, and the introduction of new hymn words and tunes. The examination of more recent hymnbooks is also valuable to this research and it will be seen that these modern collections reflect the changes felt in society at large.

Aside from the use of hymns specifically in church, the youth of Bicester were encouraged to remain connected with the Sunday School via the harmonica band, the Red Rhythmics. The examination of the activities of this group will reveal that as hymns became well known by large sections of the population, it was possible to mix hymns with secular items for musical events of all kinds. Details of many of the performances are contained in SG's notebooks, which were found amongst Mrs. Hedges' papers. These include plans for all the radio broadcasts, which have proved invaluable, as enquiries addressed to the BBC and the National Sound Archive have revealed that no audio record remains. The Bicester Advertiser covered the Red Rhythmic s' local concerts, while the Methodist Recorder, for which SG also contributed a regular column called "Super's Diary", reported the larger events, such as the appearances of the Red Rhythmics at the Albert Hall. The analysis of these sources will provide a detailed account of how hymns were used in the community as a source of entertainment. The examination of the available information concerning the Red Rhythmics clearly suggests that hymns, when used for entertainment, were well received by audiences because they were familiar.

The final section of the study presents the results of a fieldwork survey aimed at identifying the extent to which the familiarity of hymns has acted as a unifying force across the Christian denominations locally in more recent years. The resulting data from the fieldwork survey is valuable because it reveals the continuing developments in hymn singing right up to the end of the twentieth century, as can be seen in the examination of the answers concerning the use of hymnbooks and the modern presentation of hymns on overhead projectors and leaflets. Initially a small pilot survey was directed at two regular churchgoers, who were selected because of their detailed knowledge of hymns, and their interest in the subject. The answers to this first pilot survey were extremely full, and after a second, larger pilot survey, the final revised questionnaires were distributed amongst the six largest churches in Bicester, the Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, Pentecostal, Roman Catholic, and Salvation Army. The analysis of the responses to the fieldwork survey provides the basis for further discussion of the common bond of hymns singing, and the use of hymns in places other than church. The questions were concerned with singers' likes and dislikes with regard to hymns, the hymnbooks they sang from, and the kinds of environments in which they were accustomed to singing. More specific questions were asked about the kinds of emotions aroused during hymn singing. The examination of this last set of data in Chapter Eight of this study concludes the current research into development in church singing over the last two hundred years.

CHAPTER THREE - THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HYMNS AND HYMN SINGING AS REPRESENTED IN LITERATURE.

In his 1977 dissertation V. Gammon closes with the sentence

The historian can only fill out the detail and try to understand the phenomena; he cannot match the great artist's way of telling a story.¹

The purpose of this chapter is to take this comment as a starting point for tracing the development and cultural uses of hymns as they are represented in novels, and in so doing reveal a fresh slant on these topics from the perspective of the writers concerned. This discussion will draw on references from some of the earliest examples of the genre, such as the picaresque novel, Humphrey Clinker, by Tobias Smollett, which was written in three-volume form in 1771, to the recent novels that have been published in the closing years of the twentieth century. The intention of this section of the study is to add to the written comments and descriptions that appear in various non-fictional sources such as treatises, articles and diaries, as well as in census material and private collections. Through the study of novels it is possible to observe the developments and changes in all aspects of hymn singing as they occurred from the middle of the eighteenth century onwards. More general non-fictional writing about hymns evolved naturally as the hymn writing itself gained momentum, thanks in part to the prodigious output of Isaac Watts (1674-1748), and with this the debate on the rights and wrongs of all aspects of hymn singing raged as freely in print as it did within the church and community. The fact that this debate was aired so freely within the public domain suggests that it concerned and interested a large section of the population. This chapter will examine the ways in which authors used fiction to discuss the emotive subject of church music. The examination of representations of hymns in novels adds much to the current study as it emphasises that hymns are of sufficient importance to the reading public to contribute to their enjoyment and understanding of fiction, and by definition, of leisure reading.

¹ Gammon, p. 65.

Alongside the study of the growth of the print culture, and to an extent the rise of the popularity of the novel, hymn singing in all areas of life, be it in the church or community, will be examined. This will reveal the importance of music performed within the church service to people who take an active part in worship. It will encompass descriptions of all aspects of psalmody and hymnody, along with details about repertoire, instrumentation and performance. It will also include details of how these were received by church members who did not participate in musicmaking. References to such music in novels also include hymns and psalms sung outside the church building, both for use with more informal types of service, such as that enjoyed by dissenters, and for some secular occasions. To indicate social change, writers highlight changes in hymn singing and the development of hymns, and it will be seen that even the introduction of a hymnbook could be taken as indicative of this. Whilst non-fictional sources of all kinds provide valuable and necessary dimensions to any discussion, it is the contribution of the novelists that provides a quantity of detailed information about the importance of hymn singing in the church and community, which embellishes non-fictional accounts and offers greater social understanding of events.

It is apparent from the analysis of the earliest novels that the existence of the discussion and description of hymns and psalming in novels suggests that hymns themselves were already well known amongst the reading population. This can be seen in the study of the kind of references made and the sort of novel in which they appeared. The types of novel to be considered are those which for the larger part consider “problems of the day”,² such as controversies in religion, and social ills, and will include historical novels, even those concerned with the recent past, as well as those whose settings are contemporary with their writing. This study will not consider the so-called “church novels”³ of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, other than in

² Tillotson, Kathleen, Novels Of The 1840s, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1954, p.121.

³ *Ibid.*, Introductory, § 17.

passing, as the religious nature of these books means that hymns are used overtly rather than contributing to the overall background and plot. It would seem that novelists realised that hymns would be sufficiently familiar to readers to be used in conjunction with characterisation and would therefore affect the reader's opinion of that character. Hymns are frequently mentioned alongside good works and a methodical approach to life to suggest a good and reliable individual. For example, in The Moonstone by Wilkie Collins⁴ the reader is introduced to Miss Clack, niece of the late Sir John Veriner, who describes herself as a person of sober and religious habits:

I am indebted to my dear parents (both now in heaven) for having had habits of order and regularity instilled into me at a very early age.

In that happy bygone time, I was taught to keep my hair tidy at all hours of the day and night, and to fold up every article of my clothing carefully, in the same order, on the same chair, in the same place at the foot of the bed, before retiring to rest. An entry of the day's events in my little diary invariably preceded the folding up. The 'Evening Hymn' (repeated in bed) invariably followed the folding up. And sweet sleep of childhood invariably followed the 'Evening Hymn'.

In later life (alas!) the Hymn has been succeeded by sad and bitter meditations; and the sweet sleep has been ill exchanged for the broken slumbers which haunt the uneasy pillow of care.⁵

Clearly, with the mention of the Evening Hymn⁶ in this context, Wilkie Collins hopes that his readers will trust the account of events, which is vital as Miss Clack is the first narrator in the novel. Other examples of this use of hymns to present a good character and a godly scene appear in the children's novels of Laura Ingalls Wilder and the more recent novels of Barbara Pym which will be discussed later in this chapter. However, Samuel Butler in The Way Of All Flesh hints at a darker side of Christian

⁴Collins, Wilkie, The Moonstone, London, serial form in All The Year Round, 1868, reprinted Harmondsworth, Penguin Popular Classics, 1994.

⁵ Ibid., Second period, First narrative, Chapter one.

⁶ It is possible that the Evening Hymn referred to here is one of the specific hymns written for evening such as Glory to thee, my God, this night by Bishop T. Ken (1637-1711), which is frequently paired with his Morning Hymn, Awake my soul.

life. The narrator, Mr. Overton, questions the validity of introducing children to so stern a Christian upbringing. He is critical of

a child only a little past five years old, trained in such an atmosphere of prayers and hymns and sums and happy Sunday evenings - to say nothing of daily repeated beatings over the said prayers and hymns, etc.⁷

However, a further, more romantic use of hymns is made by novelists to illustrate the greater goodness of God in nature. Examples of this appear in Anne Brontë's The Tenant Of Wildfell Hall.⁸ She writes:

the happy redbreast was pouring out its little soul in song, and my heart overflowed with silent hymns of gratitude and praise to Heaven.⁹

More overt is Laura Ingalls Wilder's mention of a "Land of milk and honey"¹⁰ which she hopes will be yielded from the prairie's bounty. This, linked with the hymn writer's promise of a life hereafter, adds both romance to a given situation, and a strong religious dimension.

The wide use of hymns by novelists throughout all the relevant chronological periods suggests an ownership of hymns enjoyed by all sections of the community, with the all-encompassing world of the novelist including all that is familiar to the reader. As attention is turned away from factual and critical debate, the rise of the novel from the beginning of the eighteenth century provides a rich addition to any information that has been acquired as writers gained a freedom to express an opinion about all manner of subjects in the name of fiction. Although there are non-fictional accounts which carry ample detail about all aspects of hymn singing, the novel can be considered to

⁷ Butler, p. 95.

⁸ Brontë, Anne, The Tenant of Wildfell Hall, London, Thomas Cautley Newby, 1848.

⁹ Ibid., Chapter 20.

¹⁰ A quotation from Jerusalem The Golden, translated by J. M. Neale, which is frequently quoted in Wilder's novels.

be much more immediate, and the assumed personal involvement of the writer gives credence to each situation. As has been said, some of the novels that mention hymns, especially those that appeared in the middle of the nineteenth century, were set at some time prior to their actual writing. Some of these works about the recent past belong to, or encroach upon, the category of 'historical novels' because of the emphasis that they place upon public events. By turning to the past, the novelist disclaims the responsibility for interpreting contemporary life. This aspect of the novel is significant to the current study as it enables the reader to observe the social differences and stratification apparent within a church community at any given historical period. The importance of this is revealed in the examination of the demise of the choirband as it occurs in novels such as Thomas Hardy's Under The Greenwood Tree, Samuel Butler's The Way Of All Flesh, and George Eliot's The Sad Tale Of Amos Barton. In these three examples, with the benefit of hindsight, the novelist is able to draw attention to the demise of various musical traditions such as the choirband, the convention of 'lining-out' psalms, and the performance of florid anthems, giving examples of how these affected the church music of future generations. The observance of past traditions is a convention in novel writing that is particular to works that appeared around the middle of the nineteenth century. These were concerned with social ills of all kinds and had little in common with the so-called "silver fork" novels that enjoyed considerable popularity in the first half of the nineteenth century.¹¹ As writers chose to extend the social frontiers of their novels, so readers become more involved with the events surrounding a world within which they are both involved and familiar - it is their world. This is significant to the current study of the representations of hymns in novels as it emphasises the increased knowledge of hymns and hymn singing in all sections of the community.

This growing familiarity with hymns has much to do with the growth in the use of the

¹¹ Tillotson, p. 73.

hymnbook, which gained steady momentum throughout the nineteenth century. As hymns became better known through the innovation, and subsequent general use, of the hymnbook, so the novelist was able to recast both words and subject matter to suit all manner of effects, situations and discussions. This is a clear example of how hymns moved from the church into the community, the novelists assuming that hymns were known to their readers and therefore reinforcing that knowledge. Readers were able to think about hymns in a new way because they were being presented to them out of the traditional context of the church's liturgy. Novelists tell the "story" of how the hymn developed from an oral tradition, through handwritten representations, into the print culture in several ways. One such example of this is the simple narrative of the development in hymn singing, as will be discussed in novels such as Thomas Hardy's Under The Greenwood Tree. In this instance the reader is introduced to various characters in connection with church music, and follows the events as changes are made over which the church musicians have no control. However, even a cursory glance at this novel, and others which illustrate the same changes, presents a significant contribution to the debate, the importance of the growth of a print culture itself being an integral part of the discussion as the shift from an oral and handwritten culture to printed hymnbooks is described. It is clear from the novels that the introduction of hymnbooks was a long and slow process, the bulk of the repertoire being transmitted orally through several generations. The carol-singers from Mellstock, whom the reader meets in Under The Greenwood Tree, emphasise this, particularly in their performance of the carol Remember Adam's fall. This is a fine example of a traditional carol containing, as it does, many of the characteristics of oral literature outlined by David Buchan in The Ballad and the Folk.¹² There is plenty of repetition to facilitate its memorisation including a rhyme scheme that although not always exact, continues to fit the metre of the tune. This carol is contained in the group of three manuscript books frequently referred to by Hardy and as such

¹² Buchan, David, The Ballad And The Folk, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972.

illustrates the progression from oral tradition, through handwritten manuscript books, to mass-produced hymnbooks. It seems that in true oral tradition Thomas Hardy obtained this carol from his mother.

Remember Adam's fall,
O thou Man:
Remember Adam's fall
From Heaven to Hell.
Remember Adam's fall;
How he hath condemn'd all
In Hell perpetual
There for to dwell.¹³

It is worth noting here how the characteristics of oral literature vary according to geographical area. In carols such as this we see the oral tradition of the Western world, where songs and poems are rhymed and largely strophic. Certainly, geographical considerations are worthy of note in this study, as many of the novels considered have regional significance, especially works such as Charlotte Brontë's Shirley, dealing as it does with the Luddite riots.

The shift from an oral tradition to the mass-production of hymnbooks is of sufficient importance to the novelist for it to be afforded comment. Specific repertoire is mentioned such as the Christmas carols of the Mellstock choirband who feature in Under The Greenwood Tree, and the various hymns quoted by such nineteenth century novelists as the Brontë sisters and George Eliot. However, more significant to this study is the fact that novelists linked these changes to a broader picture of the Industrial Revolution. It will be noted later in this chapter that George Eliot discusses the hymnbook in the same sentence as she mentions cotton production, whereas Samuel Butler comments on the end of a pastoral idyll with the introduction of Hymns Ancient and Modern, 1861. One of the many roles of the novelist is to highlight such social changes, and as non-fictional discussions on the subject of

¹³ Hardy, 1872, p. 60.

hymns became more usual, so novelists allowed themselves to be drawn into the debate. Much of the critical writing considered in the research for the present study has been concerned with changes within the Anglican Church from the middle of the eighteenth century, and this especially applies to the earlier examples of such writing. However, the then newly emerging Nonconformist sects are subsequently given a portion of the debate in the later studies, notably those of B. Rainbow, and N. Temperley.

Even in the very earliest novels a clear contrast is seen between the Anglicans and Nonconformists, and a fine example of this can be seen in Smollett's The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker, which provides an imposing picture of Great Britain during the reign of George III. A picaresque novel, it comments upon many aspects of English life and manners in the 1760s, and through the central character of Bramble it is possible to see the dislike the author had of the fashionable spa towns and Palladian architecture of the time. It is upon the introduction of the protagonist Humphrey Clinker that some of the conventions of early informal Nonconformist preaching and attendant psalming are exemplified, and these make a stark contrast to the hitherto accepted conventions of the established church. Clinker himself appears, at the beginning of the novel, as a shirtless wastrel who is subsequently employed by Bramble. Of his many accomplishments, the knowing "something of single-stick and psalmody"¹⁴ appears high on the list and he is apparently "qualified to be a clerk to a parish".¹⁵ The musical responsibility that this position carried was considerable, as the clerk was deputed to "line out" the psalm - a task that was enshrined in an Act of Parliament in 1644, which stated that:

where many in the congregation cannot read, it is convenient that the minister, or some fit person appointed by him and the other ruling officer, do read the psalm line by line before the singing thereof.¹⁶

¹⁴ Smollett, p. 76.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

¹⁶ Gammon, p. 31.

This is a good example of the writer using an aspect of church musical life to embellish a novel, as interested readers would be familiar with the duties of a parish clerk, both from their own church attendance and from the writing of specialists such as Arnold who outlines the duties of the Parish Clerk in The Compleat Psalmist, which was published in 1731. Humphrey Clinker can be seen preaching on various occasions throughout the novel, and through him some of the early conventions of congregational psalming, which have already been detailed in the previous section, can be observed. For instance when he finishes his sermons he “gave out a psalm, the first stave of which he sung with peculiar graces”.¹⁷

The spiritual commitment of itinerant preachers such as Humphrey Clinker is evident, and this is an important facet of psalmody overlooked by the critics of the time, who were more concerned with musical excellence than the spiritual dimension offered by the setting of words to music. This aspect will be explored when Dinah Morris in George Eliot’s Adam Bede is introduced later in this chapter. Smollett uses Clinker to emphasise the preacher’s concern with saving souls, and his use of psalming serves as a reinforcement of this. Although Clinker receives no direct payment for his services, he is rewarded by the love of a faithful woman who recognises his worth.

Through Humphrey Clinker Smollett suggests that outdoor preaching was, of course, the only way that Nonconformist preachers could meet their congregations. It therefore follows naturally that psalming and hymn singing outdoors are not an uncommon subject for comment by novelists concerned with the activities of such preachers. The novels of George Eliot, Elizabeth Gaskell and the Brontë sisters who, amongst others, illustrate what can be seen as the bringing of the hymn outside of the church. The significance of the appearance in 1780 of Wesley’s A Collection of

¹⁷ Smollett, p.126.

Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodists¹⁸ has already been noted, as has the fact that it was now easier for novelists to call upon a particular hymn to represent some moral dilemma or religious experience. As this volume was arranged to represent stages of Christian experience, with Wesley referring to it as “a spiritual biography of the sort of person whom he called in the Preface a real Christian”,¹⁹ it lends itself to some extent to being used to illustrate novels. Even so, Valentine Cunningham in his Everywhere Spoken Against²⁰ explains the difference between Eliot’s adaptation of a hymn text to suit a mood, and Charlotte Brontë’s accurate quotation of a hymn to illustrate an event.

It is essential that, if the reader is to gain an accurate picture of social change, the information be fully authenticated by date as George Eliot demonstrates at the beginning of Adam Bede. She writes:

With this drop of ink at the end of my pen I will show you the roomy workshop of Mr. Jonathan Burge, carpenter and builder in the village of Hayslope, as it appeared on the eighteenth of June, in the year of our Lord 1799.²¹

Published in 1879, the action of the novel occurs in the closing year of the previous century, 1799, only nineteen years after the publication of Wesley’s A Collection of Hymns for the Use of People Called Methodists. As Adam Bede is concerned with social problems, Eliot sets it some years prior to its writing and the nostalgia that she hopes to awaken in her reader is not disguised as she writes that she is to introduce us to a picture of the past. In common with other novels rich in references to hymns, Adam Bede is certainly not “about” music, but a close study of the text yields ample information about gallery musicians and musical practice, with a description of a band

¹⁸ Wesley, J., Collection of Hymns for the People called the Methodists, London, J. Paramore, 1780.

¹⁹ Manning, B., The Hymns Of Wesley and Watts, London, Epworth, 1942, p. 11.

²⁰ Cunningham, Valentine, Everywhere Spoken Against Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1978, pp., 164-168.

²¹ Eliot, George, 1859, p. 49.

of mixed musicians and lively psalm tunes which lead to the tensions between the Methodist hymnbook and the Anglican style of worship. Through the central characters of Adam himself and Dinah Morris, a Nonconformist leader of some stature, we are introduced both to the Anglican church service with attendant music, and to outdoor sermons which use lengthy hymns to illustrate a spiritual point. On both occasions the mood is captured.

However, by quoting hymns in her novels Eliot reveals more about the growing knowledge and awareness of hymns at the time than does Smollett. This shows that by the middle of the nineteenth century novelists of reputation could assume that hymns had sufficiently entered the public consciousness to be included in novels that would reach a wide reading public. This is illustrated by the fact that Smollett, in Humphrey Clinker, tells his readers *how* the psalm was performed whereas Eliot goes considerably further, telling her readers exactly *what* was sung on various occasions. For example, we are introduced to Adam Bede on the first page, where he is seen to be accompanying his work as a carpenter by singing Bishop Ken's Morning Hymn.²² That Adam is an Anglican is apparent from his choice of hymn, Bishop Ken having held high offices within the Church of England, notably Prebendary of Winchester.²³ Adam is an enthusiastic singer who contributes to the singing in church. It is in this first chapter that Eliot introduces us to the idea that hymns can be used as a reflection of mood in any situation, as they are here in the workplace. Morning Hymn appears several times in the opening chapter, and a verse from it introduces the reader to some of the traits of Adam's character:

Let all thy converse be sincere,
Thy conscience as the noonday clear.²⁴

²² Probably written before 1674, the first authorised printing appearing in 1694. There are fourteen verses.

²³ Watson, R. and Trickett, K., ed., Companion to Hymns and Psalms, London, Methodist Publishing House, 1988, p. 584.

²⁴ Eliot, 1859, p. 50.

The fact that Adam is singing at his work also reflects the concept that work is worship, an idea exemplified by Dinah Morris for whom the singing of hymns is an integral part of her preaching and punctuates her life of goodness - perhaps she may be thought of as the “real Christian” to whom Wesley refers. Furthermore, Dinah, who ends her lengthy sermon with a hymn, continues the idea of hymns as a reflection of mood:

Its streams the whole creation reach,
So plenteous is the store;
Enough for all, enough for each,
Enough for evermore.²⁵

From this the reader can see that the singing of a Methodist hymn could be considered to be an expression of personal experience, rather like a religious testimony of some kind. Valentine Cunningham reminds us that the use of hymns in Adam Bede is vital as an illustration, and indeed an explanation of the importance of the role of hymns to the Methodist experience. He writes: “Clearly the hymns have a face value in the novel, they are to signal the Methodist mentality; but they are also tailored to serve the novel, especially its humanism”,²⁶ and an example of this is when Seth quotes, “In darkest shades if she appear....”²⁷ in response to Hetty’s plight.

George Eliot not only uses hymns as an indication of emotional turmoil as in other episodes in Adam Bede, she also gives insight into repertoire and performance practice experienced and enjoyed both by Anglicans and Methodists. The tension she recognises between the two doctrines is clear when Joshua Rann expresses the concern that if the sober Methodists have their way, then it will mean the end of the

²⁵ Wesley, J., No 241 in the Collection.

²⁶ Cunningham, pp. 164-168.

²⁷ Eliot, 1859, Chapter 38.

lively Christmas singing rounds, with ample opportunity for consuming alcohol.²⁸ Even with the “work is worship” ethic held by the Methodists, if tradesmen such as wheelwright Will Maskery continue to disapprove of lively music, then the choirband of the Anglican Church will disappear. The reader is supplied with examples of this Anglican music-making at various times in Adam Bede, perhaps the finest of these being the episode which describes the funeral of Adam’s father, Thias, which gives us considerable information about an Anglican funeral. Lisbeth, Adam’s mother, is clearly uplifted by the prospect of her importance as chief mourner and “she cried less to-day than she had done any day since her husband’s death”.²⁹ She was aware that a “special service” was to be read for her husband, and that the “funeral psalm” would be sung. It is in novels such as this that the choirband makes its biggest impact. Full descriptions of the instruments used are given, and serve to bring to life the contemporary explanation Arnold outlines in his Compleat Psalmist. S. J. Weston has studied this aspect of psalmody with his particular interest in wind instruments. George Eliot describes the sound like this:

presently the sound of the bassoon and the key-bugles burst forth; the evening hymn which always opened the service, had begun, and every one must now enter and take his place.³⁰

Eliot’s detailed description of the instrumentation of the choirband, especially the mention of the keyed bugle, is interesting as although this instrument appears both in the choirband in Hayslope and in Shepperton, the setting for her novel Amos Barton, it quickly became obsolete. Macdermott describes the attributes of the keyed bugle in The Old Gallery Church Minstrels thus:

Keyed or Kent Bugle was invented in 1810. This was an ordinary bugle which had five holes, covered by keys. These enabled the player to encompass two octaves. It was used until 1835 when its rival the

²⁸ Eliot, 1859, p. 102.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 241.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 241.

cornopean ousted it.³¹

However, the instrument seems to have had little use outside the choirband, as S. J. Weston details in his research.³²

The choirband described by Eliot in Adam Bede is an early example as the church of Hayslope did not play from “the modern blemish” of a gallery.³³ This contrasts with later fictional descriptions of the choirband, such as her own gallery in Amos Barton and that of Samuel Butler in The Way Of All Flesh, whose novel deals with the period after 1835. It also accords with the research of the current study into the gallery in Ardley, Oxfordshire, which will be considered in detail in Chapter Four.

In this early description Eliot hints at the unrest, which was not unusual within the choirband, as has been seen in the diaries of Woodforde, Holland and Skinner in the Introduction of the current study. To this end the musicians of the choirband can be seen as a microcosm of a society racked by social change, and this will be discussed with reference to George Eliot’s novels. The very real conflict between the Anglican Church and the Methodists has already been hinted at in Adam Bede, with Joshua Rann’s concerns about Will Maskery. In the novels of Charlotte Brontë this social unrest is sometimes set against a backdrop of both Anglican and Nonconformist hymn singing heard outside the church, where it meets a society in turmoil. In Shirley, Valentine Cunningham tells us, Charlotte Brontë uses hymns in an entirely different way from Eliot, choosing to quote them accurately as they would have appeared in her copy of Wesley’s Collection. Like Eliot, she emphasises the Methodist familiarity with hymn singing, writing in Shirley, chapter nine, that the congregation “passed jauntily from hymn to hymn and from tune to tune with an ease and buoyancy all their

³¹ Macdermott, K. H., p. 22.

³² Weston, Stephen J. An index of extant choir-band instruments in the United Kingdom, Leicester, University of Leicester, 1990.

³³ Eliot, 1859, p. 241.

own".³⁴ However, this is a representation of people singing in chapel and reflects Charlotte's own experience in 1839 whilst on holiday at Bridlington with Ellen Nussey. Here she had lodgings opposite a Ranters' chapel, and her initial impulse was to go and see "the violent Excitement within its walls".³⁵ In contrast, Charlotte Brontë chooses to draw on an incident in her own childhood to illustrate the conflict between church and chapel. The incident occurred at Whitsuntide in 1810, when her father, leading the Dewsbury Sunday Schools procession, had an altercation with some locals. This is fictionalised in chapter seventeen of Shirley as a clear contretemps between church and chapel as the rival Sunday Schools of Helstone process in Royd Lane. Charlotte is most specific and colourful in her writing, as we read that a lusty rendering of Rule Britannia drowns a "most dolorous" canticle, and the "hostile commander-in-chief", a spirit-merchant, fat and greasy, is shoved into the ditch to drink "more water than he had swallowed for a twelvemonth before".³⁶

Valentine Cunningham tells us that Charlotte has an eye for detail even in the presentation of hymns, which makes her a very reliable source of information when considering the literary representations of hymns. Again this is a clear indication that the reading public would be familiar with these hymns as they read the novels. Charlotte was clearly familiar with her own edition of Wesley's Collection, moving freely from section to section. Examples of this can be seen in chapter nine of Shirley, which describes a meeting at Briar-chapel, "a large, new, raw, Wesleyan place of worship".³⁷ The first hymn she quotes is verse four of Omnipotent Lord, my Saviour and King, which is from the hymnbook's section "For Believers Fighting". Then, as the prayer meeting progresses, the worshippers take up a new theme. Here Brontë quotes from "Wesley's birthday hymn" Away with our fears - The glad morning appears, and Meet and right it is to praise, both from the section "For

³⁴ Brontë, Charlotte, 1849, p. 148.

³⁵ Cunningham, p. 122.

³⁶ Brontë, Charlotte, 1849, Chapter 17.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

Believers Rejoicing". The quotations are on the whole accurate, but the stanzas of "Oh, who can explain" are written as eight lines of five syllables each, whereas in Wesley's Collection they are printed in four lines of ten syllables each. Brontë begins halfway through an eight line stanza in her quotation from "Meet and right it is to praise",³⁸ starting with the quotation "Sleeping on the brink of sin", whereas the verse actually begins:

By our bosom-foe beset,
Taken in the fowler's net.
Passion's unresisting prey,
Oft within the toils we lay....

before continuing with Brontë's quotation. The fact that she quotes the next verse in two sections suggests that she believed that the hymn was written in stanzas of four lines each. The implication is that she had the words by heart, but was unsure of the line divisions of the printed version.³⁹

During the first half of the nineteenth century, whilst the Methodists were establishing their hymnbook as an integral part of their worship, the Anglicans were still trying to constitute a suitable form of music to accompany services that would be agreeable to all sections of the congregation. It has already been noted that members of the choirband composed their own music for various occasions and, as mentioned by Arnold in The Compleat Psalmist, this did not always satisfy more musically appreciative worshippers. However, the choirbands that operated within the Anglican Church were viewed with affection by novelists. Whilst many of the accounts are, to some extent, burlesques, the detailed descriptions prove to be a valuable indication of the sort of music played. Around the middle of the period covered by John Skinner's diary, the writer-traveller Washington Irving was visiting England. In 1815, writing as Geoffrey Crayon, gent., he describes many of the aspects of rustic English life,

³⁸ Hymn 238 from Wesley's Collection.

³⁹ Tillotson, p. 90.

including a rich illustration of the activities of the local choirband. He writes with ebullience about every aspect of English rural life, not least the visiting musicians on Christmas Eve. In The Sketchbook of Geoffrey Crayon, gent.,⁴⁰ Irving devotes five short chapters to the festive season. Obviously he was completely fascinated by all things English, and his writing gave pleasure to many Americans and filled a literary niche on both sides of the Atlantic. He gave the English scene romance and tradition, and his “sketch book” approach lived for many years on Christmas cards and posters. Although Washington Irving’s writing lacks the detail of Hardy, there can be no doubt that he still enjoyed the music at Christmas, finding it the perfect backdrop for his stay in England. His description of the carollers he heard from his bed on Christmas Eve contrasts starkly with William Holland’s account of Christmas singers. Washington Irving writes:

I had scarcely got into bed when a strain of music seemed to break forth in the air just below the window. I listened, and found it proceeded from a band, which I concluded to be the waits from some neighbouring village. They went round the house, playing under the windows. I drew aside the curtains to hear them more distinctly. The moonbeams fell through the upper part of the casement, partially lighting up the antiquated apartment. The sounds, as they receded, became more soft and aerial, and seemed to accord with the quiet and moonlight. I listened and listened - they became more and more tender and remote, and, as they gradually died away, my head sunk upon the pillow, and I fell asleep.⁴¹

Thus he captures the mood and the romance of the occasion. However, by contrast William Holland writes in his diary on Friday, December 25th, 1801:

The Singers at the window tuned forth a most dismal ditty, half drunk too and with the most wretched voices.⁴²

When the enthusiastic traveller, Geoffrey Crayon, attends church on Christmas

⁴⁰ Irving, Washington, The Sketchbook Of Geoffrey Washington, gent., London, T. Nelson and Son, 1822, reprinted, London, Everyman, 1963.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 199.

⁴² Ayres, p. 61.

morning, it should be noted that although he is clearly still charmed by the rural scene, he has a discerning ear, and eye, and his account of the service is no less valuable as it contains various points worthy of note. For example, he notices the “village tailor” amongst the players, emphasising the fact that craftsmen would be in such a band, a detail already noted in the research of V. Gammon, and one much referred to by other novelists, especially Thomas Hardy in Under The Greenwood Tree. Washington Irving also lists the instruments he observed on that Christmas morning, and in this instance they included the “clarionet”, and “a bass-viol”. This is in keeping with the instrumentation noted in other fictional bands, as well as that included in contemporary non-fiction accounts. Although there are accounts suggesting the poor quality of the music performed by the choirband, Irving’s charming description of a choirband struggling in performance is well worth quoting in full:

...the usual services of the choir were managed tolerably well, the vocal parts generally lagging a little behind the instrumental, and some loitering fiddler now and then making up for lost time by travelling over a passage with prodigious celerity, and clearing more bars than the keenest fox-hunter to be in at the death. But the great trial was an anthem that had been prepared and arranged by master Simon, and on which he had founded great expectation. Unluckily there was a blunder at the very onset; the musicians became flurried; master Simon was in a fever, and everything went on lamely and irregularly until they came to a chorus beginning “*Now let us sing with one accord*” which seemed to be a signal for parting company: all became discord and confusion; each shifted for himself, and got to the end as well, or rather as soon as he could, excepting one old chorister in a pair of horn spectacles, bestriding and pinching a long sonorous nose, who happened to stand a little apart, and, being wrapped up in his own melody, kept on a quavering course, wriggling his head, ogling his book, and winding all up by a nasal solo of a least three bars’ duration.⁴³

It seems that Irving, or at least his character Geoffrey Crayon, was prepared to tolerate the musical shortcomings of the ensemble, and there is no suggestion that members of the congregation thought otherwise. This contrasts with the diarist’s account, as

⁴³ Irving, p. 208.

Parson Woodeford notes the comments from one member of the congregation who clearly did not approve of the choirband's efforts. On July 15th, 1770 it is reported that:

Thos Speed came into the Church quite drunk and crazy and made a noise in the Church, calling the Singers a Pack of Whoresbirds.⁴⁴

Washington Irving has hinted at the complexity of the works composed and performed by the choirbands, and the fact that they were not highly regarded has already been noted in Arnold's comments detailed in the Methodology of this study. As the nineteenth century progressed, so the shift from psalmody to hymnody moves on apace. Whilst there are still descriptions of the choirbands, complete with members full of rustic charm, there is a shift from the Handelian locally composed anthems, such as that described by Washington Irving, to a repertoire which clearly reflects the possession of hymnbooks by a congregation. The 1830s was a decade that marked both the zenith of the choirbands and their decline. These aspects are both fully represented in print. Although published in 1857, George Eliot's Amos Barton draws on the experiences of her time at school in 1828 to set the scene for the novel. The tale begins with an evocation of the fictional village of Shepperton as it was before the unfortunate Amos Barton arrived. Thus the reader is drawn into a wistful nostalgia for the good old days before Evangelicalism had reached the parish, or Tractarianism was heard of. This Eliot achieves, in part at least, by using the metaphors of church music. The reader is reminded of the great triumph of the choirband: the anthem. The description in Amos Barton serves, alongside that in Geoffrey Crayon, gent., as a fine example of the importance these anthems enjoyed in the service. We know, for instance, that the choir at Shepperton was held in high regard within the locality, on account of its rendering of metrical psalms. We are to learn also that:

⁴⁴ Beresford, John, ed., James Woodforde: Diary Of A Country Parson - 1758-1802, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1978, p.68.

the greatest triumphs of the Shepperton choir were reserved for the Sundays when the slate announced an ANTHEM, with a dignified abstinence from particularization, both words and music lying far beyond the reach of the most ambitious amateurs in the congregation; an anthem in which the key-bugles also always ran away at a great pace, in which the bassoon every now and then boomed a flying shot after them.⁴⁵

It is clear from this that these anthems were no mean compositions, and that either the musical prowess of the choirband far exceeded that in the congregation, or that such renderings were too much even for the choirband members themselves.

As George Eliot looks back on earlier days at Shepperton she explicitly writes of the opposition within the congregation to any changes in the performance of church music:

The innovation of hymnbooks was as yet undreamed of; even the New Version was regarded with a sort of melancholy tolerance as part of the common degeneracy.⁴⁶

This “degeneracy” not only referred to groups of Nonconformists, particularly the Methodists, who had more success with their hymnbooks than did the Anglicans, but also hints at other social ills, which were being felt in small communities in the middle of the nineteenth century. She remarks that the introduction of the New Version was occurring at a time

when prices had dwindled, and a cotton gown was no longer stout enough to last a lifetime.⁴⁷

She also remarks that the musical tastes of the choirband at Shepperton had been founded on Sternhold and Hopkins and because of this the congregation was very

⁴⁵ Eliot, 1857, p. 43.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 43.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 43.

reluctant to move on. This debate was certainly not new, even in the 1830s when Amos Barton is set. Indeed William Holland, as early as February 23rd, 1800, writes of one member of the congregation that:

Poor Ben could not make it out this day being in the background with these youngsters. He is old Sternhold and Hopkins for ever in the plain old stile [sic] and cannot well comprehend this grunting and tooting.⁴⁸

George Eliot's specific mention of the change in editions of the psalms serves as a transition to the more general introduction of the hymnbook. With this it is certain that, as George Eliot's readers in the twentieth century would know, hymn tunes quickly became linked with religious sects. This point is clearly made in Amos Barton when, as hymnody becomes established, George Eliot is free to mention tunes easily found in collections of the day. In Amos Barton, she mentions the tune of Lydia,⁴⁹ which has its roots firmly in the Nonconformist tradition, a fact that does not go unnoticed by the reformed congregation at Shepperton. This comment is made in connection with its rendering at church there:

he was rather scandalized at my setting the tune of "*Lydia*". He says he's always hearing it as he passes the Independent meeting.⁵⁰

As the 1830s progress, so the debate about the musical preferences of the religious sects is discussed in novels. George Eliot was not the only writer to remind her readers of the remembrance of the former glories of the choirband. Like Eliot, Samuel Butler in The Way of all Flesh explores a humanitarian form of Christianity, the subtext of which refers to the shift of the Established churches from a basic humanitarianism to the earnestness and repressiveness, gloom, missionary zeal, and bigotry that we have come to recognise as the Victorian Church.

⁴⁸ Ayres, p. 26.

⁴⁹ Eliot, 1857, p. 53.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

Although the novel was not published until 1903, Butler began writing it in 1873 and returned to the incomplete work at various times throughout his life. In keeping with the example of Eliot and Charlotte Brontë, whilst not autobiographical, this novel contains elements of Butler's own life, including the significant fact that the protagonist, Ernest, was born in the same year as Butler himself, 1835. This places him at the centre, chronologically speaking, of the debate surrounding church music. As a child Butler heard a "choir with its orchestral accompaniments",⁵¹ and drew on this memory in The Way of all Flesh. He notes that he has described it "exactly as they existed at Langar in my own earlier boyhood". Certainly the choirband of Butler's youth would have been a fine example of the genre, if the description does it justice. It is when Ernest's godfather, Mr. Overton, makes an early visit to the Pontifex household that he hears the choirband in its full splendour. Here too the choirband described contains the range and mix of instruments readers have become familiar with in Eliot's novels. The language Butler uses also suggests the complex musical passagework already mentioned by Washington Irving:

The choir clambers up into the gallery with their instruments - a violoncello, a clarinet, and a trombone. I see them and soon I hear them, for there is a hymn before the service, a wild strain, a remnant, if I mistake it not, of some pre-Reformation litany.⁵²

The members of the choir receive a rich description, which is all the more poignant because the narrator knows they will soon be victims of sweeping changes which were to become the fashion of the 1830s. On Mr. Overton's subsequent visit to Battersby he was to observe:

Gone now are the clarinet, the violoncello and the trombone, wild minstrelsy as of the doleful creatures of Ezekiel.... Gone is that scarebabe stentor, that bellowing bull of Bashan, the village blacksmith, gone is the

⁵¹ Butler, p. 372.

⁵² Ibid., p. 57.

melodious carpenter, gone the brawny shepherd with the red hair, who roared more lustily than all.⁵³

Opposition to the choirbands gains momentum as a result of the Tractarian movements, and of publications such as The Music of the Church considered in its various branches Congregation and Choral: An historical and practical treatise for the general reader in the 1830s. During the following decade the pace of change was fast, and Samuel Butler in The Way of All Flesh presents a fictional account of these changes. He writes sympathetically about the church musicians, and whilst La Trobe is critical of any pride possibly felt by church musicians, Butler hints at a modesty that is both touching and humorous in its manifestation. For example, when the singers come to the words “Shepherd with your flocks abiding” the shepherd in their midst was

covered with confusion, and compelled to be silent, as though his own health were being drunk.⁵⁴

However, it should be noted that whilst the warmth of nostalgia exhibited by Butler encourages the reader to feel warmth for the choirband, William Holland, writing twenty-five years before La Trobe’s comments were published, is clearly irritated by his choirband’s “fondness of display”. He writes on Sunday, July 12th, 1807:

Our singers are become famous in the Country, which makes them vain and fond of Exhibiting themselves and I think they think more of their own Praise than the Praise of God.⁵⁵

Whilst La Trobe, in common with other portions of the Anglican church at the time he was writing, chose to emphasise the importance of reverence in church, novelists concerned with the turn of social events clearly did not support this attitude. Once

⁵³ Butler, p. 57.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 57.

⁵⁵ Ayres, p. 151.

again Butler shows this in the rural parish of Battersby where change was in the offing. On Mr. Overton's second visit some years later, he found not the "lusty" singing of the choirband but:

a harmonium played by a sweet-looking girl with a choir of school children around her, and they chanted the canticles to the most correct of chants, and they sang Hymns Ancient and Modern⁵⁶

One short paragraph from a novel has cleverly shown how Anglican music has shifted from the performance by a band of mixed musicians to a taught choir of children.

Thus it can be seen that the study of nineteenth-century literary authors captures a time of complex conflict within the church. This conflict was both social and cultural and was taking place within numerous rural churches in England. It was a conflict about class, status, definitions, and meanings, and concerned rich and poor, the formally educated and the non-formally educated, the articulate and the inarticulate. In short it was a conflict between elite culture and popular culture. The source of this conflict was that more and more vicars, under the influence of writers such as La Trobe, were attempting to re-establish control over aspects of church life which their predecessors had let slide out of their grasp. Samuel Butler mourns the passing of the choirband, and somehow shows a resignation to the passing of time and events as he reminds us that "Theobald was old, and Christina was lying under the yew trees in the churchyard".⁵⁷ Works such as that by La Trobe were an important reflection of the mood of the time, a mood that found its most pronounced expression in the Oxford Movement. However, as stated earlier, Samuel Butler suggests that ultimately musicians will continue to make the sort of music with which they feel comfortable, even if it means adapting their religious loyalties.

⁵⁶ Butler, p. 58.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 58.

The representation of a class struggle discussed in relationship to church music is nowhere better described than in The Way of All Flesh. We have already observed the choir on Mr. Overton's first visit to Battersby-on-the-Hill in 1831, only a few months after Theobald and Christina's marriage. As he entered the church with the rest of the congregation there is a very clear demarcation between the higher and labouring classes. Mr. Overton carries a picture of the congregation as it was then:

Even now I can see the men in blue smock frocks reaching to their heels and more than one old woman in a scarlet cloak; the row of stolid, dull vacant plough-boys, ungainly in build.⁵⁸

They are seen as members of the lower class, and the Pontifex family seem happy to accept them as such as:

They bob to Theobald as they pass the reading desk ('The people hereabouts are truly respectful' whispered Christina to me, 'they know their betters'.)⁵⁹

We have already observed that it is these very farm workers and tradesmen that go to make up the choir with all its colour and vitality, yet even on this first visit Mr. Overton recognises that they "were doomed".⁶⁰ It seems that he was correct, and a detailed examination of the last visit to the Pontifexes' will serve as an illustration of the great change in attitude and what this was to mean to church music. He remarks that, "The whole character of the service was changed".⁶¹ Although prepared to accept this change, Overton seems to suggest that there is some intangible quality that has been lost. This he describes as "slovenly", but his choice of words suggests not a careless but rather a carefree attitude, and I feel that he is referring to a relaxed form of worship with which all members of society could feel at home. By removing the

⁵⁸ Butler, p. 56.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 57.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 340.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 339.

musicians from the gallery, their social status within the church community had been drastically reduced.

Perhaps the changing attitudes within the Anglican Church can be summed up by the cajoling of Charlotte and Christina Pontifex , Ernest's mother and sister. They are clearly anxious that Theobald should move with the times and, having altered his dress, they turn their attention to the music. It was these two women who prevailed upon Theobald to allow the canticles to be sung. Christina is clearly concerned with the opinions of other influential ladies in the congregation, and uses this to persuade Theobald:

“I really think...that the people like the chanting very much, and that it will be a means of bringing many to church who have stayed away hitherto. I was talking about it to Mrs. Goodhew and to old Miss Wright only yesterday, and they *quite* agreed with me.”⁶²

Even in Theobald's absence his wife and daughter initiate sweeping changes until “whole psalms were being chanted as well as the Gloria”. Samuel Butler again seems to sum up the passing of time and the pace of change with the words:

This was the course things had taken in the Church of England during the last forty years.⁶³

The Way of All Flesh, then, covers many of the changes in church music in the second half of the nineteenth century, and uses these changes as a backdrop for the more far-reaching reforms taking place in the Established church. The writings of La Trobe in the 1830s had made it impossible for any clergyman to continue with the unruly groups of musicians that had hitherto dominated the services and by the 1840s their presence is less felt in literature. That being said, perhaps the greatest example

⁶² Butler, p. 339.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 340.

of any fictional group of musicians must surely be that described by Thomas Hardy in Under the Greenwood Tree. Although Hardy clearly burlesques the village choirband of Mellstock, he nevertheless illustrates the tensions within the church as a battle between old and new. The 1840s continued to witness great musical reforms along the lines suggested by Robert Druitt in The Parish Choir. Although there is little or no “story” to Thomas Hardy’s Under the Greenwood Tree, these changes are clearly catalogued from the introduction of the choirband as they prepare to go on their Christmas rounds to their final appearance playing, significantly, outside the church for Dick and Fancy’s wedding celebrations. The culmination of these reforms, resulting in the ousting of the choirband and the establishment of Fancy Day as harmonium player, is one of the climaxes of the book. The result is that the village residents at the lower end of the social spectrum have had their influence within the church greatly reduced, and therefore any ownership that they might have felt for the musical parts of the liturgy is removed. Although through a simple love story Hardy has attempted to illustrate how the old ways have no choice but to adapt to accommodate the new, it is also clear that the lower classes have little place in this new scheme of ideas. It is the progressive-minded vicar who asks Fancy to play the harmonium that is set to replace the village musicians, and the members of the old choir, which consist of three generations of Dewys as well as other tradesmen, have to submit to the use of the harmonium because they are not vigorous enough to resist it. The chapter when the choirband meets with Reverend Maybold is a humorous account of the meeting of old and new ways. Because he is not prepared to give way to the musicians, he presents his argument in such a manner that the tradesmen are in no position to argue:

“Now in my case, I see right in you and right in Shiner. I see that violins are good, and that an organ is good; and when we introduce the organ it will not be that fiddles were bad, but that an organ was better. That you’ll clearly understand, Dewy?”⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Hardy, 1872, p. 114.

Whilst it must be recognised that because the musical superiority of the choirband was acknowledged, at least in part, by the clergy, it was possible for the higher echelons of society to meet the lower, and to some extent cultural exchange could take place. However, confrontation was just as likely. Indeed, when the new vicar establishes himself at Mellstock, and makes known some of his plans to replace the choir, the choir members reflect on the relaxed ways of the former vicar, especially with regard to hymn choosing, remarking that he:

was a very jinerous genelman about choosing the psalms and hymns o' Sundays. "Confound ye," says he, "blar and scrape what ye will, but don't bother me!"⁶⁵

As the nineteenth century moved into its second half, contemporary writings about "real" church music diminished. As has been observed, those mourning the changes, such as George Eliot and Samuel Butler, chose to remind their readers of the past. The novelists who continued to mention the performance of hymns were those for whom the Nonconformist movement was of significance. Although the Brontës had known Methodism in its embryonic phase as a dissenting movement, in contrast Elizabeth Gaskell was descended from an old Presbyterian, now Unitarian, family. Dissent had her approval, and she taught Sunday school at Brook Street Chapel, and this is described exactly in Ruth.⁶⁶ Elizabeth Gaskell was herself connected to a strong hymn-writing influence as her father wrote hymns and translated sacred verse from German, and significantly the hymn writers Susanna and Catherine Winkworth were both William Gaskell's pupils.⁶⁷

Mrs. Gaskell came to appreciate some aspects of the Anglican Church, especially

⁶⁵ Hardy, 1872, p. 101.

⁶⁶Gaskell, Elizabeth, Ruth, Manchester, Chapman and Hall, 1853; reprinted, Oxford, Worlds Classics, 1981.

⁶⁷ Gérin, Winifred, Elizabeth Gaskell, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1976.

Gothic architecture and the liturgies, and she attended Anglican churches when no Unitarian worship was available. Her novels, however, emphasised that Chapel and its sanctions remained dominant in her life, resulting in the fact that Ruth was much criticised by her fellow worshippers, and Mary Barton was similarly received.⁶⁸ For Elizabeth Gaskell it was important that, in Manchester, Unitarianism was socially as prestigious as Anglicanism, if not more so, and she therefore finds the worlds of Cranford⁶⁹ and Wives and Daughters⁷⁰ very congenial. This is the rural town dissent that is relaxed and generous, reminding her, as Valentine Cunningham tells us, of Knutsford rather than Manchester. In her novels we have a clear indication that psalmody was very much a part of everyday life for the agricultural community. Again this suggests an ownership of such music, which enabled worshippers to move freely between workplace and place of worship. In the psalm-singing scene in Cousin Phillis⁷¹ Holman announces his intention to sing a psalm in the same speech in which he discusses his work plans:

- and there's old Jem's cottage wants a bit of thatch; you can do that job tomorrow while I am busy.' Then, suddenly changing the tone of his deep bass voice to an odd suggestion of chapels and preachers, he added, 'Now, I will give out the psalm, "Come all harmonious tongues",⁷² to be sung to "Mount Ephraim" tune.⁷³

In this instance it is clear that Gaskell safely assumed that her readers would be familiar with both words and tune, and a new ownership of church music is introduced with the growing availability of hymnbooks. It is also worthy of note that Gaskell makes a deliberate contrast between the rural character of Holman and the

⁶⁸ Cunningham, p. 132.

⁶⁹ Gaskell, E., Cranford, London, serially in Household Word, 1851-53, reprinted, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1976.

⁷⁰ Gaskell, E., Wives and Daughters, London, Cornhill Magazine, 1864-1866.

⁷¹ Gaskell, Elizabeth, Cousin Phillis, London, monthly in Cornhill Magazine, 1863, reprinted, Harmondsworth, Penguin Classics, 1976.

⁷² Composed by Benjamin Milgrove (1731-1810) and published in 1769. It can be found in The English Hymnal, 1906, number 196.

⁷³ Gaskell, 1863, p. 231.

professional Holdsworth, who represents the newly emerging middle-class of the Industrial Revolution. Holdsworth is not familiar with the psalm, although

the labourers seemed to know both words and music⁷⁴

The rural image is completed when the dying city-dweller Alice Wilson of Mary Barton⁷⁵ babbles of green fields. Although an Anglican, she could be calling to mind the world of Holman. She imagines:

Old snatches of primitive versions of the Psalms (such as are sung in country churches half draped over with ivy, and where the running brook, or the murmuring wind among the trees, make fit accompaniment to the chorus of human voices uttering praise and thanksgiving to their God)⁷⁶

As novelists became more confident in their direct reference to specific hymns and tunes in their works, it is apparent that these would be recognised by readers. The close examination of all kinds of works of fiction reveals that this is no less true of novels specifically aimed at children. Because of this it seems appropriate to explore the works of one of the most popular twentieth century writers for children. The writings of Laura Ingalls Wilder are worth close consideration because not only do they show warmth of understanding in the use of hymns both in formal and informal settings, but they also give examples of the many cultural and social changes witnessed in the second half of the nineteenth century. These novels are also significant as they provide a rare opportunity to witness changes in hymn singing through the eyes of a child. Although an American novelist, her books have been popular in Britain since their publication in the 1930s and 1940s, and as young English congregations have sung many of the hymns quoted, the study of these works

⁷⁴ Gaskell, 1863, p. 232.

⁷⁵ Gaskell, Elizabeth, Mary Barton, Manchester, Chapman and Hall, 1848; reprinted, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1985.

⁷⁶ Gaskell, 1848, chapter 17.

is appropriate. Their publication came at a time when Sunday Schools in Britain were extremely well attended and when hymn singing was very important, especially in the Nonconformist Sunday Schools. This will be discussed in detail in Chapter Six, which deals with BMSS.

Laura Ingalls Wilder was born in 1867 and spent the majority of her childhood travelling with her pioneer family from Wisconsin, to Kansas, to Minnesota, and to Dakota Territory. Wilder's writing is generous in its detail, which can be substantiated from authoritative sources, making her a reliable source of information. Laura's father, always referred to as Pa, was an enthusiastic violinist and used his violin to accompany secular and sacred music, especially at home, and this was a vital part of Laura's childhood. In her writing she mentions the names of many hymns, often quoting verses in full, and describes both formal and informal performances, which enables us to learn much about the performance of church music as it shifts, for the Ingalls family at least, from a largely oral tradition enjoyed in the small family unit, to the introduction of hymnbooks required for larger gatherings and corporate worship. As Laura's story progresses, we learn about the growth of a print culture, as whole congregations improve their singing with the aid of books and a town singing-school, and we read that an organ is introduced to accompany services. This last aspect does not seem to provoke the opposition that has been exposed in Eliot, Butler and Hardy, but Wilder links it to progress, noting that she would rather have the untamed prairie and the solitary violin than all the noise and bustle of living in a town under construction.

Our first experience of the Ingalls singing at home is in the first book of the series The Little House In The Big Woods,⁷⁷ where as well as the enjoyment of singing games and dancing, regular acts of worship are carried out in the isolation of a log cabin,

⁷⁷ Wilder, Laura Ingalls, The Little House In The Big Woods, New York, Harper and Brothers, 1932; reprinted, Harmondsworth, Puffin Books, 1963.

favourite hymns being accompanied on Pa's violin. The ritual of Sunday is keenly observed, even though the family lead a solitary way of life, and the Saturday night routine of bathing is described, giving a clear indication that cleanliness is really next to godliness for this family at least. Sunday in the big woods has all the components we have come to recognise in a nineteenth century Sunday: no work, other than essential chores, and no frivolous play. Simple acts of worship are held in the cabin, complete with prayers, catechism and hymns led by the fiddle. The five-year-old Laura did not like to sit so still for a whole day, and feels like a trapped animal. We see the personification of the fiddle as it assumes Laura's feelings:

Laura and Mary lay in their trundle bed and listened to the Sunday hymns, for even the fiddle must not sing the week-day songs on Sundays.⁷⁸

Many hymns are mentioned by name, which shows that in keeping with those novels written for an adult readership, Wilder assumes that her readers would know the hymns. She appeals to a wide readership by using favourites such a Rock of ages, cleft for me⁷⁹ mixed in with nineteenth century hymns that have since declined in popularity.

Hymn singing at home is to remain significant throughout the series of books. The Ingalls enjoyed singing hymns, both simply as entertainment and for acts of worship. The family endured frequent periods of isolation, partly because of their chosen pioneer lifestyle, but also because they were at the mercy of severe weather conditions which often made going to church impossible, even when it was only a three mile journey. These family services are detailed in every book of the series, each account including several hymns. Firm family favourites emerge which are sung on many

⁷⁸ Wilder, 1932, p. 57.

⁷⁹ This hymn, by Augustus Montague Toplady, has appeared in many forms since it was first conceived in 1775 and many changes have been made since it appeared in Wesley's Collection.

occasions. There is a happy land⁸⁰ is the most frequently mentioned hymn and appears, often quoted in full, in all of the books. Like Rock of ages, this hymn is enduring in its popularity and appears in many of the less expensive hymnbooks of the time. Wilder perhaps allowed some poetic licence in its extensive use in the second book of the series, The Little House On The Prairie,⁸¹ as the tune Indian Air, which is the one set to There is a happy land, is more than appropriate for this colourful account of life in Indian country.

The Ingalls family was amongst many migrants who moved from the eastern states, such as Illinois and Wisconsin, with the promise of cheap and prosperous land. Many of the hardships of this life are detailed in the works, especially the scarcity of fresh drinking water, and the dangers of prairie fire. Whilst they are not in themselves religious works but rather stories of a pioneer family, Christianity is a recurrent theme in all of the books, the central concepts of faith, hope, and love never being far from the surface. Wilder conveys this with many references to hymns. Laura's mother, always called Ma, holds the "happy land" of the hymn most dear. With this in mind it seems appropriate that in such a precarious life the promise of salvation and a life after death should be constantly called to mind, and how much Ma must have needed the promise of a land "from sin and sorrow free",⁸² the hope of which is available to all his saints. The Ingalls family lived in hope that the land, with God's help, would provide for their needs, and though their hopes were constantly dashed by disasters, such as the plagues of grasshoppers, which infested the prairies in the mid-1870s, the Ingalls continued to live in faith and in hope. They believed firmly in the land of "milk and honey blest" which they sang of explicitly from Jerusalem the golden,⁸³ another much-quoted hymn. They were sure such a land was theirs to claim, both in

⁸⁰ Words by Andrew Young (1807-89).

⁸¹ Wilder, Laura Ingalls, The Little House On The Prairie, New York, Harper and Brothers, 1935; reprinted, Harmondsworth, Puffin Books, 1964.

⁸² Quotation from Happy Land by A. Young.

⁸³ Translated by J. M. Neale.

this life and the hereafter.

Family values were of great importance to the Ingalls family, home life and the importance of stability, even within a migrant lifestyle, always coming to the surface of the stories. Wilder represents this by frequently quoting from the hymn Sweet Sabbath School,⁸⁴ a hymn which appears in what was to become a favourite hymnbook, Pure Gold For The Sunday School. The Ingalls family sing this throughout their travels, in the isolation of their many homes, from the poverty of log cabins, dugouts and claim shanty to the relative luxury of a newly built church, complete with hymnbook, organ and a bell. Always the message is:

My heart e'er turns with joy to thee,
My own dear Sabbath home.

No study of hymns and their cultural significance can ignore the festival of Christmas, and the descriptions written by Thomas Hardy and Washington Irving offer the full flavour of nineteenth century Christmases. The Little House books provide us with an equal insight into Christmas music and its performance, which is of interest on both sides of the Atlantic, this time through the eyes of a child. Christmas for the Ingalls family was full of popcorn balls, molasses, and a Santa Claus who was rather erratic in his attendance, as well as enough Christmas music to satisfy any student of hymnology. Certainly the family enjoyed the festivities in the small towns in which they lived, both in Minnesota and North Dakota, and met the rest of the congregation to benefit from gifts donated by more prosperous congregations in the east, and to enjoy corporate hymn singing. The family at home also celebrated Christmas, each book containing a chapter devoted to the festivities and mentioning several carols in detail. Of particular interest is the Christmas described in the fourth book of the

⁸⁴Lowry, Rev. R., and Doane, W.H., Pure Gold For the Sunday School, New York, Biglow and Maine, 1871, number 7.

series, By The Shores of Silver Lake.⁸⁵ That particular year the Ingalls family had intended to spend the festival at home, and Pa struck up as usual on the fiddle. Their singing however was interrupted by the arrival of unexpected guests who had heard them singing through the prairie winds. How apt it is that they were later that evening to sing the carol Merry, Merry Christmas,⁸⁶ the last verse of which begins with the words “Light for weary wanderers”. Here Wilder takes the metaphorical words of a hymn and tailors them to fit a “real” occasion as their visitor, Mrs. Boast, was to remark:

We were so glad to see your light. And when we came nearer, we heard you singing. You don't know how good it sounded.⁸⁷

It is in the last book of the series, These Happy Golden Years,⁸⁸ that some interesting Christmas repertoire is introduced. Hitherto many of the carols mentioned can be found in Pure Gold. However, as more music became available to the Ingalls family, so their repertoire increased. One of the carols sung on the Christmas Eve mentioned in These Happy Golden Years is When marshalled on the mighty plane (sic), which is a version of The Star of Bethlehem,⁸⁹ also known as both Marshalled and Old Marshalled. The text is by Henry Kirke White of Nottingham (1785-1806).⁹⁰ Ian Russell has recorded this carol in both Oughtibridge⁹¹ and Foolow,⁹² in Yorkshire and Derbyshire respectively, and similarities to both versions can be seen in the words written down by Wilder, although there are some differences, the most prominent being that Wilder uses the word “mighty” whereas both the Yorkshire versions have

⁸⁵ Wilder, Laura Ingalls, By The Shores Of Silver Lake, New York, Harper and Brothers, 1939; reprinted, Harmondsworth, Puffin Books, 1992.

⁸⁶ Lowry and Doane, number 150, words by Mrs. T. J. Cook.

⁸⁷ Wilder, 1939, p.142.

⁸⁸ Wilder, Laura Ingalls, These Happy Golden Years, New York, Harpers and Brothers, 1943; reprinted, Harmondsworth, Puffin Books, 1970.

⁸⁹ Russell, Ian, A Festival of Village Carols, Unstone, Sheffield, Village Carols, 1997.

⁹⁰ Julian, p. 1276.

⁹¹ Russell, Ian, To Celebrate Christmas, Unstone, Sheffield, Village Carols, 1993.

⁹² Russell, Ian, On This Delightful Morn, Unstone, Sheffield, Village Carols, 1994.

“nightly”. According to J. Julian⁹³ the original text, which was included in American hymnbooks, uses the word “nightly”, and this suggests that Wilder has inaccurately quoted the words from memory. Wilder also omits much of the repetition contained in the Yorkshire and Derbyshire versions, but this could be to facilitate the printing of the text in the novel.⁹⁴ As with many of her carols, Wilder does not mention a tune, but there is a suggestion of a symphony, or instrumental interlude as

The fiddle sang to itself again while Pa cocked his head.⁹⁵

This is in keeping with Ian Russell’s collections as he includes symphonies in both of his versions in To Celebrate Christmas and On This Delightful Morn.

⁹³ Julian, p. 1271.

⁹⁴ See Appendix I.

⁹⁵ Wilder, 1943, p. 185.

COMPARISON OF THREE VERSIONS OF WHEN MARSHALLED ON THE MIGHTY PLAIN

When Marshalled on the mighty plane. ¹	When marshalled on the nightly plain ²	When marshalled on the nightly plain ³
The glittering hosts bestud the sky	The glittering host bestewed the sky	The glittering Host bestood the sky:
One star alone of all the train	One star alone of all the train	One star alone of all the train
Can catch the sinner's wandering eye.	Can fix the sinner's wandering eye	an fix the sinner's wandering eye.
It was my light, my guide, my all	One star alone of all the train	Hark, hark! To God the chorus breaks
	Hark. Hark to God the chorus breaks	form every host, form every gem:
It bade my dark foreboding cease,	from every host, form every gem	but one alone the Saviour speaks
And through the storm and dangers thrall	form every host, form every gem	but one alone the Saviour speaks
It led me to the port of peace.	But one alone the Saviour speaks,	It is the star of Bethlehem
	But one alone the Saviour speaks,	
Now safely moored, my perils o'er.	It was the star of Bethlehem	Once on the raging seas I rode
I'll sing, first in night's diadem	But one alone the Saviour speaks,	The storm was loud, the night was dark
Forever and forever more,	It was the star of Bethlehem	The ocean yawned and rudely blew,
		The wind that tossed my foundering bark
		Deep horror then my vitals froze;
		Death struck, I ceased the tide to stem
		When suddenly a star arose
		When suddenly a star arose
		It was the star of Bethlehem
		It was my guide, my light, my all
		It bade my dark forebodings cease,
		and through the storms and dangers thrall
		It led me to the port of peace.
		Now safely moored, my perils o'er
		I'll sing first in night's diadem
		For ever and for ever more
		For ever and for ever more
		I'll sing first in night's diadem
		For ever and forever more
		For ever and forever more
		The Star, the Star of Bethlehem

¹ Wilder, 1943, This is the spelling and punctuation used in These Happy Golden Years, p. 185.

² Russell, 1993, p. 18.

³ Russell, 1994, p. 10.

Hymn singing at home was woven into the fabric of Laura's childhood, and it seems that the sound was always pleasing to her and at best a great comfort. As the family began to experience living in a more urban environment, Wilder notes that the hymn singing changed as well. This is noticeable for the first time in the third book of the series, On The Banks of Plum Creek.⁹⁶ This episode reveals that the family is no longer solely reliant on their own resources for worship, and they are able now to attend both church and Sunday school in the newly built church. On the first occasion that they attend church, Laura, spoiled by the purity of Pa's solitary violin, observes that the quality of singing is very poor. It is clear that the Ingalls family could sing well as a family unit, and Laura notices that this cannot be scaled up to apply to a whole congregation. She writes:

They all opened their mouths and tried to sing "Jerusalem, the Golden". Not many of them knew the words or the tune. Miserable squiggles went up Laura's backbone and the insides of her ears crinkled.⁹⁷

Whether they have arrived in this land of "milk and honey" or not, Laura is very dissatisfied with the singing and comments on this to Pa, who explains the need to pitch the hymn in such circumstances, and he mentions the necessity of a tuning-fork. Clearly Pa was aware of the procedures of pitching a hymn but he was not sufficiently senior in the church at that time to use his own skill. Obviously there was no instrument available to lead the hymns for the tune, and as Laura had observed, there was also no lead for the words. Ma's observations on the subject are also significant, as she realises that not all churches are in this impoverished state. Hymnbooks were clearly starting to be used, and the general situation was that some people would have learned the words of a hymn from a printed source. However, as this was not quite universal, the Ingalls had to wait until their church was in a better financial position.

⁹⁶ Wilder, Laura Ingalls, On The Banks of Plum Creek, New York, Harper and Brothers, 1937; reprinted, London, Mammoth, 1992.

⁹⁷ Wilder, 1937, p. 123.

“Nowadays, Charles, said Ma, people have hymnbooks.”
“Well maybe we’ll be able to afford some, some day”, Pa said.⁹⁸

From this time on, hymnbooks started to play a significant part in the Ingalls worship sessions, both formal and informal.

The long hoped for “land of milk and honey” had come to nothing and the oldest of the four daughters, Mary, became blind as a result of scarlet fever. The family decided to try their luck elsewhere and moved to Dakota and we read about this in By The Shores Of Silver Lake. The journey itself was to be an enlightening experience for Laura as the female members of the family travelled to their new home by train. Although Laura had been to a town many times before, she had never been to a railroad depot. Wilder makes much of the noise and speed:

A sudden streak of white shot up through the smoke, then the whistle screamed a long wild scream. The roaring thing came rushing straight at them all, swelling bigger and bigger, enormous, shaking everything with noise.⁹⁹

It is on this first train journey that Wilder suggests that the simplicity of home life can be corrupted by progress. The noise and dust of rail travel is further sullied by the irreverent attitude of railroad workers. Laura, who has only heard hymns, either at home or at church, is now confronted by the new concept of parody. She is particularly sensitive to the fact that the parody she hears is of Ma’s favourite hymn, There is a Happy Land. How interesting for students of parody to note that this same verse is still often used today. The “boarders” Wilder refers to were the men who took temporary lodgings whilst building the railroad, although later renderings refer to boys at boarding school. Miles Kington in The Independent quotes exactly the same verse in October 1996.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 124.

⁹⁹ Wilder, 1939, p. 20.

There is a happy land
Not far away
Where they have fried ham and eggs
Three times a day
Wow! how the boarders yell
When they hear that dinner bell
Whoop! how those eggs do smell
Three times a day.¹⁰⁰

It is clear from this that for a parody to be successful the original needs to be well known. Wilder's readers would be familiar with the original version of the hymn, especially as she has quoted it many times in her own works. Furthermore, the mention of this hymn in a secular situation is in stark contrast to the religious purposes for which Wilder generally uses of hymns. Although Laura is scandalised by the event, as the books progress, the secularisation of hymns becomes more usual and even provides her with some amusement.

At this point in the series of novels it can be seen that travel is now fast and hymns are becoming more accessible to all. How does this affect the Ingalls family? They were certainly less isolated and enjoyed unannounced visits from new friends. These visitors included the Boasts, a newly married couple and work friends of Pa's. As the two families sang together the need for printed hymnbooks is demonstrated even for small gatherings. It is apparent that by this time they had the hymnbook Pure Gold for the Sunday School that they sang their way through. This was an enormously popular volume and was used both in England and America and cost a princely 35 cents a copy in the USA. How fortunate it was that the Ingalls had such a hymnbook, as during this first winter in De Smet they had an unexpected visit from the minister of their former Methodist Church, Reverend Alden, who was travelling as part of the Home Mission movement. Wilder wrings maximum romance from the occasion. It is Sunday evening and the Ingalls and the Boasts are singing the hymn When cheerfully

¹⁰⁰ October 1st, 1996.

we meet in our pleasant home,¹⁰¹ that ends with the words,

to those who are faint and weary.
Let us lend a hand to those on the pilgrim way.

The singing is joined by a voice from the cold outside as Reverend Alden joins in, accompanied by a younger minister who is with him. They stayed only a few days, but an impromptu service is put together, complete with sermon and hymns accompanied on the violin.

Wilder is very detailed in her reports of the singing sessions, and although she does not mention any book by name, many of the hymns she mentions are included in Pure Gold For the Sunday School. A particularly good example of the detailed accounts of hymn singing is the frequent mentions of the hymn My Sabbath Home. This is number seven in Pure Gold and is quoted in part in four of the six books. The hymn has an antiphonal chorus, a musical detail that can be recognised from Wilder's descriptions. In the final book of the series, These Happy Golden Years, Laura returns home after a short absence. She is delighted to see her friends in church and chats with them. She finds that "singing together was even better than talking."¹⁰² As Wilder writes we feel the closeness of two friends sharing a hymnbook as:

Clear and sure, Laura's voice held the note while Ida's soft alto chimed,
'Sabbath Home'. Then their voices blended again.¹⁰³

A close study of the text and music in Pure Gold will reveal that it is the tenor and bass voices that echo the soprano and treble. If Wilder had noted this the romance of the situation would be lost.

¹⁰¹ Lowry and Doane, number 22.

¹⁰² Wilder, 1943, p. 41.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 41.

Words by Dr. C. R. BLACKALL. **MY SABBATH HOME.** W. H. DOANE. 7

"It shall be a Sabbath of rest unto you."—Lev. 16: 31.

1. Sweet Sabbath School! more dear to me Than fir-est pa-lace dome, My heart e'er turns with
 2. Here first my wil-ful, wand'ring heart, The way of life was shown; Here first I sought the
 3. Here Je-sus stood with lov-ing voice, Eu-treat-ing me to come, And make of Him my

CHORUS.
 joy to thee, My own dear Sabbath Home. Sabbath Home! Bless-ed Home! Sabbath
 bet-ter part, And gained a Sabbath Home.
 on-ly choice, In this dear Sabbath Home.

Sweet Home! Sweet Home!

Home! Bless-ed Home! My heart e'er turns with joy to thee, My own dear Sabbath Home.
 Sweet Home! Sweet Home!

Entered according to Act of Congress A. D. 1871, by BIGLOW & MAIN, in the office of the Librarian of Congress at Washington.

By the time Laura has lived in town for a few years, she does not appear to be so shocked by the use of hymns for other than religious purposes. There is a delightful incident in The Little Town On The Prairie¹⁰⁴ that illustrates this. Laura is in town doing some errands, and while there she sees two men wandering around, generally causing a disturbance. When someone complains to them they respond with a rendering of the popular hymn by P. Bliss, The Life-Boat.¹⁰⁵ Wilder writes:

They were as dignified as could be. The tall man's long legs made the longest possible steps. The puffed-out little man tried with dignity to stretch his short legs to steps as long.¹⁰⁶

They continue on their way, singing through the hymn, and putting their feet through various screen doors. Storekeepers and shoppers are scandalised because not only are the men drunk but they are singing a hymn. Laura, though, is highly amused and tries to recount the story to her family at home. They do not find the episode at all funny! Like Laura's earlier encounter with the parody of Happy Land, this incident makes a

¹⁰⁴Wilder, Laura Ingalls, The Little Town on the Prairie, New York, Harper and Brothers, 1941; reprinted Harmondsworth, Puffin Books, 1969.

¹⁰⁵Sankey, Ira D., Sacred Songs and Solos, New York, Morgan and Scott, 1875, number 99.

¹⁰⁶Wilder, 1941, p. 43.

stark contrast with the sober singing to which the Ingalls family was accustomed. Wilder's mention of this incident, and indeed her acceptance of this humorous situation serves to show the beginning of an awareness that hymns could be used for purposes other than religious. However, Wilder employs this very hymn, The Lifeboat, in conjunction with religious fervour when it is used to whip up emotion at a mission in Laura's home chapel.

“Come forward, come forward and be saved! Come to salvation! Repent, ye sinners! Stand up, stand up and sing! Oh, lost lambs! Flee from the wrath! Pull pull for the shore!” His hands lifted them all to their feet, his loud voice sang,
‘Pull for the shore, sailor!
Pull for the shore’¹⁰⁷

By the time the Laura of the books is in her late teens, corporate singing is at least as usual as singing at home. The Ingalls family now spends a portion of the year in town, and so can attend church nearly every Sunday. We have already seen the importance to Laura of singing hymns with her friends in Sunday School, and this aspect is developed in the last two books of the series, Little Town On The Prairie, and These Happy Golden Years. Now that the Laura of the books has regular access to hymnbooks, Wilder no longer quotes verses of hymns, preferring to mention them by title or, more usually by number, which has inevitably made it much harder to track down specific hymns that were clearly favourites in the Ingalls household. This demonstrates that Wilder takes the reader's knowledge of hymnbooks for granted. It should also be noted that Ma's earlier hope for hymnbooks is realised, and the congregation can all sing together, the hymnbook that they used being Pure Gold for the Sunday School. This is clear from Wilder's descriptions of church services in De Smet. Not only do they have hymnbooks, but an organ has also been loaned to the church, to Laura's obvious delight.¹⁰⁸ After the sermon the congregation joined together for more singing, and:

¹⁰⁷ Wilder, 1941, p. 203.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

Best of all was Hymn Eighteen, when the organ notes rolled out and everybody vigorously sang,

‘We are going forth with our staff in Hand
Through a desert wild in a stranger land,
but our faith is bright and our hope is strong,
And the Good Old Way is our pilgrim song.’”

The following illustration shows that hymn eighteen in Pure Gold is indeed We are going forth with our staff in Hand.

18 THE GOOD OLD WAY.
Words written for this work. "Teach me thy way, O Lord."—Ps. 27: 11. W. H. DOANE.

1. We are go - ing forth with our staff in hand, Thro' a des - ert wild in a stran - ger land; But our
2. There are foes without, there are foes within; They would turn us back to the path of sin; We will
3. In the bliss - ful hour of communion sweet, Let us come with joy to the Mer - cy - seat; O we
4. On the brink of time when we stand at last, When our sun has set, and our work is past, When we
faith is bright and our hope is strong, And the Good Old Way is our pil - grim song.
stop our ears to the words they say, While we on - ward press in the Good Old Way.
love to sing and we love to pray, And we bless the Lord for the Good Old Way.
bid fare - well to our mor - tal clay, We will praise the Lord for the Good Old Way.

CHORUS.
'Tis the Good Old Way, by our fathers trod; 'Tis the way of Life, And it lead - eth un - to

Entered according to Act of Congress A. D. 1871, by BIRLOW & MAIN, in the office of the Librarian of Congress at Washington.

The Ingalls were firmly entrenched in both Methodist and Congregationalist traditions, embracing both as it suited their travels and lifestyle, and Christian ideals were certainly of great importance. However, as essentially children’s novels, Wilder’s books have none of the spiritual struggle endured by other Nonconformists who chose to air their feelings through works of fiction. One such author whose writing considers changes in philosophy is the autobiographical novelist William Hale White. Details of his spiritual life appear in Valentine Cunningham’s Everywhere spoken Against, and this spiritual aspect is strongly reflected in his novels. Cunningham writes that Hale White is a conscientious writer and is “undeviatingly

straightforward and direct”.¹⁰⁹ Whilst this directness has been criticised by writers such as E. M. Forster, it makes his work an excellent source of detailed information about the use of hymns. Hale White’s Autobiography of Mark Rutherford¹¹⁰ clearly draws on his own experience, and from this it is possible to date with certainty the existence of certain choirbands and place them within a historical context. Even more explicit than Laura Ingalls Wilder, William Hale White helps us to date the activities of these musicians by informing us that he, or rather his protagonist Mark Rutherford, was born “just before the Liverpool and Manchester Railway was opened”,¹¹¹ which was on 15th September, 1830, before going on to describe his earliest memories of the “singing pew” in his chapel. As with Wilder’s novels, the use of hymnbooks becomes increasingly important to Hale White’s characters. In Catharine Furze¹¹² the great comfort the reading of hymns can be to a suffering believer is apparent as Catharine comforts the dying Phoebe.

As the use of hymnbooks became universal to large sections of the population, so novelists were able to weave hymns into their texts to add colour and interest, and to illustrate situations on which religion had little bearing. This clearly shows that the reading public could no longer be assumed to be a church attending public, and that hymns themselves had come to mean many things to many people. The novels of Howard Spring¹¹³ are fine examples of this. His two early successes, O Absalom¹¹⁴ and Fame is the Spur,¹¹⁵ are both peppered with quotations from hymns all emphasising the different qualities that both believers and non-believers can find in

¹⁰⁹ Cunningham, p. 255.

¹¹⁰ White, William Hale, The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford, London, Trübner, 1881; reprinted, Oxford, Worlds Classics, 1990.

¹¹¹ White, 1881, p. 4.

¹¹² White, William Hale, Catharine Furze, London, Trübner, 1893; reprinted, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1936.

¹¹³ Howard Spring, 1889-1968.

¹¹⁴ Spring, Howard, O Absalom, London, William Collins, 1938; reprinted as My Son, My Son, London, Fontana, 1955.

¹¹⁵ Spring, Howard, Fame is the spur, London, William Collins, 1940; reprinted London, Fontana, 1956.

them. In these twentieth century novels, hymns are used not only to emphasise religious fervour, but also to reflect political struggle, social change, and personal dilemmas. In My Son, My Son, the successful Mary Latter, daughter of the mad Captain Judas, remembers a time when hymn singing represented a secure and happy childhood, before she was aware of her father's peculiarities. She remembers:

A harmonium played a large part in it. Mother played it every night, and they sang hymns; and when father was home he played it and they sang hymns.... we always had the hymns last thing at night - just mother and I...but the sadness would turn to joy when ...father himself was there playing the hymns.¹¹⁶

Here the singing of hymns is important because it can be seen as a unifying force within the family. At this stage the child Mary was unaware of her father's suffering, recognising only that he is familiar with hymns. The religious fervour, so despised by his fellow sailors is not apparent to her. He would sing at sea and the crew mocked him.

It was ghastly, the atmosphere of mockery, that he was never aware of. They would parody the hymns, using obscene and blasphemous words.¹¹⁷

Although Judas is clearly an eccentric, the reader shares a common bond with him in the knowledge of the same hymns. This makes his story all the more poignant. In this instance Spring is gradually drawing the reader's knowledge of hymns away from the church and using them for purposes other than religious. Certainly, later in the novel, the reader can identify with the young political activists in Ireland who choose to continue to sing hymns and ballads round the piano when they are warned of approaching detectives. This assumes that his readers will be familiar with one of the most popular hymns of the twentieth century, mentioning When I survey the wondrous cross by Isaac Watts as a backdrop for Donnelly's execution, when it is

¹¹⁶ Spring, 1938, p. 207.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 208.

reported:

But I remember it the more poignantly because the hymn we then sang was the one which, years later, Donnelly's gaolers heard him singing the night before they led him out and shot him against a wall. It is now part of the Irish legend, Donnelly's hymn in the prison¹¹⁸

Far from the comfort that has been assumed as a result of the hearing of hymns, Spring chooses instead to use them to emphasise the frailties of human nature and suggests that the message of salvation advocated by those such as Wesley can be twisted to suit almost any argument. This contrasts with the use of hymns by Laura Ingalls Wilder, who adopted the straightforward message of the hymn writer in her hope for blessings on earth and in heaven. Spring suggests an overtly political message in the hymns he quotes in his novel Fame is the Spur. This includes "John Addington Symon's great hymn",¹¹⁹ which is These Things Shall Be.¹²⁰ Hamer Shancross records that he had come across this hymn during a church meeting, and now twists its use to suit his political message. As his writing develops, Spring chooses to emphasise the fact that comfort cannot be found in the message of the hymn writer, and the harshness of the mid-twentieth century is illustrated by the transience of human promises, rather than the permanence of God's. For example, when Ann and Hamer visit their first home, Ann calls to mind the words of the hymn Rock of Ages Cleft for me, using it as an illustration of the security of the home life she is hoping to enjoy. In this instance Ann is using the hymn in the same way that Wilder would, relying on the security offered by the hymn words. The reader, however, is aware that her hopes will be dashed as, unlike Wilder and her interpretation of the same hymn, Spring offers no assurance of eternal life. The emotion of the situation is illustrated by Spring, who uses the words of the hymn in an

¹¹⁸ Spring, 1938, p. 127.

¹¹⁹ Spring, 1940, p. 313.

¹²⁰ The Methodist Hymnbook, London, Methodist Conference Office, 1933, number 910.

entirely secular setting. Ann's hope is for an "eternal" home with Hamer, which emphasises her hope for happiness during her lifetime, rather than the promise of happiness in the life hereafter, which is the traditional view held dear by writers such as Laura Ingalls Wilder.

As the twentieth century progressed, novelists continued to use hymns to illustrate aspects of both plot and everyday life. There is a clear assumption that the reader would be familiar with the words of hymns, but their secular connection makes it increasingly obvious that the spiritual message has become diluted. Novelists such as Howard Spring constantly call upon the reader's memory of, and indeed nostalgia for, Sunday school and school assembly singing to draw them more personally into the plot.

Novelist Barbara Pym uses the Anglican Church as a backdrop for several of her novels, and weaves hymn words into the text in a gentle, evocative way that has little to do with the hymn writers' original vision of Salvation. A fine example appears in A Few Green Leaves¹²¹ when anthropologist Emma Howick notices a brooch on the hat of the vicar's "char":

Mrs. Dyer...was wearing a smarter hat than usual, a maroon felt with a paste ornament in the form of an anchor. 'Fierce was the wild billow, dark was the night,'¹²² Emma thought, remembering a hymn from school days. 'Oars laboured heavily, foam glimmered white.....'¹²³

This illustration of an everyday object with a metaphor from a hymn serves to show how novelists, whilst recognising that their readers would be familiar with hymns, no longer required the added moral dimension of religious edification through the use of

¹²¹ Pym, Barbara, A Few Green Leaves, London, Macmillan, 1980; reprinted, London, Granada, 1980.

¹²² Hymns Ancient and Modern, Revised, London, Hymns Ancient and Modern, 1950, number 312.

¹²³ Pym, 1980, p. 56.

hymns in their “real” context. Even more explicit of this is Barbara Pym’s recognition that her readers may not attend church, and she even uses hymns to illustrate this. In Less Than Angels¹²⁴ Deidre Swan wakes on a Sunday morning to hear the sound of hymns being sung in the nearby church. Deidre thinks for a moment that perhaps she ought to be in there, singing with the other voices, but feels only “almost” guilty that she is not.¹²⁵

Indeed, hymns as an exhortation to the reader to follow a spiritual path seem to have disappeared from English novels in the second half of the twentieth century. Writers are no less concerned with the meaning of life and a search for spiritual fulfillment, but a conclusion is rarely reached, and readers must answer these more searching questions for themselves, rather than relying on the views expressed by a hymn writer. Instead, the debate concerning the merits of the many available hymnbooks has opened in the pages of these more recent novels. The importance of and the rivalry between The Methodist Hymnbook and Hymns Ancient and Modern have been greatly debated by novelists of the nineteenth and early twentieth century and now the many other collections enter the fray. Barbara Pym introduces the idea of a hierarchy amongst hymnbooks and extols the virtues of The English Hymnal,¹²⁶ especially in the highest Anglo-Catholic congregations. She even goes so far as to write, “we used the English Hymnal of course” in Excellent Women.¹²⁷

Novelists have therefore shown that a hymnbook, indeed any hymnbook, is itself a vital part of our collective heritage, whether of believers in church, or as an aide memoire of childhood. Its continuing use is important to many people, and any

¹²⁴ Pym, Barbara, Less Than Angels, London, Jonathan Cape, 1955; reprinted, London, Granada, 1980.

¹²⁵ Pym, 1955, p. 43.

¹²⁶ Dearmer, Percy, general ed., The English Hymnal, London, Oxford University Press, 1906.

¹²⁷ Pym, Barbara, Excellent Women, London, Jonathan Cape, 1952; reprinted, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1978, p. 110.

chance that it might be ousted by the growing popularity of overhead projectors and printed service sheets is firmly opposed by current novelists. The reasons for this appear to be to do with collective ownership of a given hymnbook. Hymnbooks belong to all who know and love their contents, regardless of social background, and any attempt to remove their use from society is to lose this vital part of a collective cultural past. This point is clearly illustrated in A Price for Everything¹²⁸ by Mary Sheepshank. This novel considers the importance of the stability many people look for in the late twentieth century, especially when the breakdown of family life is, if not normal, an accepted state of affairs. As the heroine, Sonia, tries to hold on to the beloved house, which is only hers through her marriage to Archie, it seems that the twentieth century trend for broken marriages is going to affect her. The stability that Sonia hopes for herself and her children is illustrated in an episode in church. We see “Miss Dunn, a lone Chorister”¹²⁹ and this is surely an indication of the stand a few stalwart members of the congregation are prepared to take in maintaining a tradition held dear by them. We meet Terry the vicar who, with the habit of altering the hymns at the last minute and not putting these alterations on the board, reminds us of the power the new breed of musically literate vicars is prepared to wield. On this particular Sunday, instead of the traditional favourite Lead us, Heavenly Father, lead us,¹³⁰ they “crossly” sang

Red and Yellow, Black and White
All are equal in Thy sight”

A hymn so new, that it did not appear in the hymnbook and was printed on slips of paper in the pews.¹³¹

If congregations are not free to sing their favourite hymns in church, then traditions of hymn singing need to be kept alive outside the church for social reasons, as is

¹²⁸ Sheepshank, Mary, A Price For Everything, London, Black Swan, 1995.

¹²⁹ Sheepshank, p. 164.

¹³⁰ Ibid. p. 164.

¹³¹ Ibid. p. 164.

described by Diana Saville in The Marriage Bed.¹³² The passage, which describes how the village carollers are received, reveals as much social stratification as any nineteenth century novel. We read how husband Geoffrey takes his self-appointed position of Lord of the Manor very seriously, and on Christmas Eve he dispensed largesse in the form of mulled wine and a “small cheque”. However, with the passing of years these duties become irksome, and gradually his generosity diminished.

The three carols were reduced to one; the glass of mulled wine turned into instant coffee; the mince pies were replaced by biscuits; and the cheque began to suffer from melt-down.¹³³

On the last terrible year when the family knew that they must move from their beloved house, Geoffrey is intent on ending the tradition once and for all. When the ring on the door occurs

accompanied by the usual rendering of ‘O come all ye faithful’. Geoffrey leapt up, primed for action. ‘It’s the porch this time. One carol, one biscuit, nothing to drink and a cheque invisible to the naked eye’.¹³⁴

The study of the representations of hymns in these last, more recent, novels shows that writers have continued to recognise the importance of hymns and hymn singing to all sections of the community. They reveal how all members of church and community are portrayed in these late twentieth century novels as having to accept or adapt changes over which they have no more control than did their nineteenth century predecessors. Over the two centuries that have seen the rise of the novel to its present form, novelists have illustrated the many changes and developments from psalmody to hymnody in church and community. They have documented for the reader the suppression of the choirbands and the removal of most of the west galleries. They have illustrated the revival of religious feeling and expression that became associated

¹³² Saville, Diana The Marriage Bed, London, Sceptre Books, 1995.

¹³³ Saville., p. 136.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

with the Oxford Movement. They have also emphasised the new feeling of the importance of the dignity of the church, its buildings, liturgy and music. We have read how if the music preferred by the community did not conform socially and aesthetically to the elite ideas of church leaders, then that music has moved outside the church wall to be enjoyed by the whole community. Furthermore, the novelists have acknowledged the significance that the growth the print culture has had for hymn singing. Hymns and their representation in novels, then, allow the reader additional insight into the development of hymns from oral to print culture, from church to community, and through spiritual and social debate, whether these works date from the eighteenth, nineteenth, or twentieth century. These novels have added colour and dimension to the debate and undoubtedly have revealed how the “great artist”¹³⁵ can use the detail from their own knowledge and experience to tell the real story.

¹³⁵ Gammon, p. 1.

CHAPTER FOUR - THE IMPORTANCE OF HANDWRITTEN MANUSCRIPTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF HYMN WRITING AND THE SUBSEQUENT COLLECTIONS OF HYMNS.

The discussion in Chapter Three has revealed that whilst many novels contain references to hymns and hymn singing, there are no novels actually "about" church music, perhaps with the exception of Thomas Hardy's Under The Greenwood Tree. However, many novels contain references to hymns and hymn singing, and whilst these may add up to only a sentence or two, they remain an indication and illustration of social and ecclesiastical change. The purpose of this chapter is to examine specific musical changes in the developments in psalmody and hymnody, with particular reference to handwritten music manuscript books. This will not only corroborate the descriptions of the novelists, but will also illustrate the progression from a tradition which supported the performance of church music by small groups of musicians, to congregational singing made possible by the general use of printed hymns. Readers of Thomas Hardy's Under The Greenwood Tree will already be familiar with the idea that church musicians used to write out the music that they require for each piece in a part-book, which they then used in both practices and services. The contents of these books came from a variety of sources, often, as will be discussed later in this chapter, drawn from the published volumes available from the early nineteenth century. Clearly such editions were not generally used by choirbands and for this reason the two extremes of oral tradition and printed hymnbooks were linked by the employment of handwritten part-books. Thomas Hardy describes these books in his own preface to Under The Greenwood Tree, which he added in 1896, and this provides an excellent introduction to the study of handwritten manuscript books such as those which will be examined in this chapter. He writes, of the musicians:

Their music in those days was all in their own manuscript, copied in the evening after work, and their music-books were home-bound.¹

¹Hardy, 1872, p. 34.

The contents of these books provided those people who were directly concerned with the musical aspects of the service in the appropriate notation required. Such manuscript books are frequently referred to as “part-books” because, rather than containing the full musical score of a given piece, they would have only the part required by the principal user.

At this point it is relevant to comment on musical literacy in the early nineteenth century. It is possible that, in common with other members of the congregation, many of the musicians and singers of the choirband could not read musical notation. In these instances, musicians would learn both the psalms and the anthems by hearing them sung by others.² For the congregation the practice of “lining-out” remained widespread. However, Gammon suggests that as musical literacy is “only a function of normal literacy”,³ it is possible to learn to read music before reading the written word. It is therefore widely assumed that many of the musically literate members of the choirbands were self-taught. Another important detail is that, as the members of the choirbands were artisans, it was more likely that they would be literate than those members of society who had no skilled employment. For those interested in learning to read music, there were various publications from which the rudiments could be learned, and many editions of the Old Version contained instructions in the introduction. Other material concerning musical notation could be obtained from penny broadsides, which were sold at fairs by peddlers of tunes in eighteenth century England. Another way in which villagers might acquire the ability to read music was through the activities of itinerant singing and music teachers. Although it may be thought that the work of these people was not held in high regard, especially by the church authorities, there are examples of them being paid to train the church choir. S. Weston mentions the example of William Tans’ur of St Neots, Cambridgeshire, who

² Gammon, p. 30.

³ Ibid., p. 30.

occupied such a position in the eighteenth century.⁴ Furthermore these “professional” choir-trainers published editions of their own music, and presumably allowed it to be copied out as required. It is therefore both possible and probable that with this access to written musical notation, members of the choirband would be able to write down quantities of the music they required. From these handwritten sources pieces frequently found their way into what was later considered to be mainstream repertoire. However, as each book contained the notation required by an individual musician, part-books by their very nature remained very informal and incomplete collections.

Those who could read music, then, wrote down their own music in part-books, which were used before hymnbooks were easily accessible to the singing congregation. It is these that have provided much of the source material for the study of music performed by the choirband. The three part-books that are to be examined here span a long chronological period from 1837 to well into the twentieth century, thus emphasising their extensive use in church services. This long historical period shows that the study of handwritten material is valuable, adding to the detailed knowledge gained from the examination of published hymnbooks. The detailed analysis of these part-books and their contents reveals many of the changes in convention in the performance of church music from the middle of the nineteenth century, and provides another perspective on the information already supplied by the novelists whose references to hymns and hymn singing were discussed in Chapter Three. It will be seen that the part-books examined contain music from a wide variety of sources, from local compositions and contributions from the earliest published collections, to examples of hymn tunes and chants that were already easily available as published material at the time when they were copied.

Part-books such as the three in the current study are not rare, and many exist today

⁴ Weston, Stephen J., 1997, p. 56.

amongst family papers. Because they were written for the use of individual musicians, the repertoire in the early examples is sometimes incomplete and fragmentary, both harmonically and melodically. This means that their use as performance material is limited, although the close examination of their contents reveals much about the musical conventions of the time in which they were written. The analysis of such books is vital in the search for genuine West Gallery repertoire, and indeed it is the study of these that has enabled the West Gallery Music Association to both publish and perform prodigious amounts of music. The examination of these part-books also provides a link with the novels considered earlier, as such books are mentioned explicitly by novelists. For example, it is known that some of the hymns and pieces quoted in Under the Greenwood Tree are contained in the books used by the Hardy family in the Stinsford choirband. The more recent examples of part-books contain complete copies of hymn tunes and chants, some of which can be found in published collections. This is because the music is written for keyboard performance, and is therefore complete both harmonically and melodically. All of these books are very individual collections and this gives a rare insight into the repertoire of a particular church.

All three of the part-books under scrutiny here are from the collection of Mr. Ted Beasley, now aged eighty, a retired solicitor and currently one of the organists at Bicester Methodist Church, who grew up in Ardley within both the Anglican and Methodist traditions. He attended the Wesleyan Chapel in the mornings and the Anglican Church in the evenings, together with his aunt. Although he began playing the organ for church services at a very early age, this was in the Methodist Chapel, and he has no firsthand knowledge of the part-books being used for services. However, they have been in his collection of music for some time. All three of the books are about the same size, ten centimetres by twenty-five centimetres. The oldest, which is dated 1837, is hand bound in brown leather with stitching in the middle. It is of an irregular shape and some of the pages are ruled by hand. The next

is a commercially bound book covered in green silk and therefore more regular in shape. The binding and the style of handwriting, which is very even and well formed, suggest that the contents were collected in the second half of the nineteenth century. The most recent is a dark blue hardback board manuscript book. It contains a variety of dates referring to the occasions on which various tunes were used, and these are all in the first quarter of the twentieth century. As the three books cover such a wide historical period, it will be seen that a study of their contents encompasses many of the changes already commented on in Chapter Three, especially bearing in mind the remarks of Samuel Butler in The Way Of All Flesh. For example, the oldest of the three books contains examples of florid psalm tunes that the reader imagines Mr. Overton hearing on his first visit to Battersby-on-the-Hill. These would have been set to metrical versions of the psalms and would be suitable for the “orchestral accompaniments”⁵ heard during Ernest’s childhood. The second of the part-books contains only hymn tunes of the type that could have been used at Theobald’s church after the choirband had been removed and the harmonium accompanied the singing. The most recent book contains examples of the chants that the congregation of the Pontifex’ church found difficult to follow, and would be set to canticles and responses. Butler mentions this explicitly, in the episode when Charlotte and Christina prevail upon Theobald to allow the canticles to be sung:

And sung they were to old-fashioned double chants by Lord Mornington and Dr Dupuis and others. Theobald did not like it, but he did it, or allowed it to be done.⁶

Although the repertoire contained in the three part-books is disparate, certain characteristics are held in common by all three, the most striking similarity being that all three are worked from both ends, with other random pages used in the middle, and a number of blank pages are left in each. However, far from being unsystematic collections of tunes, they are in all three cases well organised, emphasising that they

⁵ Butler, p. 339.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 339.

were used as working volumes. In all three some system of classification is used, the tunes being ordered by metre, and even, in the case of the oldest book, alphabetically. The pages are partially numbered in all three books, but as this is not consistent throughout any of the volumes, it will be disregarded when discussing the contents of the books. Two of them show the owner's name, and in the case of the oldest book, the date of 1837. The pages of the second book are numbered consecutively from the front, which also shows the owner's name. The most recent volume does not have a name written inside, but has a contents list inside both covers. The book is also completed upside-down as well as back to front, which will be explained and illustrated in Chapter Five. This most recent book is much more ordered in its compilation, as hymn tunes are written together at one end, and chants are grouped together at the other. The middle pages are devoted to an anthem. The pages are numbered from one to fifty four from each end, although a few are left unnumbered around the middle of the book. It was not unusual in choirband music to write from both ends of a part-book, and Thomas Hardy explains in his preface to Under The Greenwood Tree that musicians frequently wrote

A few jigs, reels, hornpipes, and ballads in the same book, by beginning it at the other end, the insertions being continued from front and back till sacred and secular met together in the middle, often with bizarre effect.⁷

However, this characteristic is not in evidence in any of the volumes in the current study, and all three contain only music intended for church use, such as psalm tunes, hymn tunes and chants, which are written out from both ends of the books. This feature makes it difficult to place the contents chronologically, as only a few of the pieces are dated, and other information has to be taken into account before an overall picture of the development of psalmody to hymnody can be distinguished. The identification of the source of as many tunes in the books as possible has contributed to the tracing of the development of the establishment of the printed hymnbook.

⁷ Hardy, 1872, p. 34.

A more detailed analysis will now be presented illustrating how social and cultural aspects of the development of psalmody to hymnody can be traced in these handwritten manuscripts. Although no geographical boundaries within England have been applied to the study so far, the concept of rural church musicmaking has been explored by examining the activities of the choirband in the fictional villages written about by George Eliot, Samuel Butler and Washington Irving. This general examination of country music will be continued, bearing in mind that, as has been said, music teachers travelled widely. However, social aspects of the make-up of the choir band are important when considering developments in psalmody, and historians such as Gammon in his study of rural Sussex, add to the picture by drawing on census material to reveal details about the members of various bands, including their trades and therefore their social status. The discovery of a part-book contributes to this information, providing an indisputable record of both repertoire and performance practice.

The oldest of the three books, the Williams part-books, can be directly linked to the village of Ardley, situated six miles north of Bicester. This volume provides valuable source material for the current study, and will serve both to illustrate and verify the fact that handwritten part-books serve as for-runners to published hymn and tune books. It is also interesting to examine the book in the light of the comments of novelists on the subject of mid-nineteenth century rural church music. As will be seen, a direct comparison can be drawn between the music written in this volume and that described in Hardy's Under the Greenwood Tree. In considering this part-book, another writer provides a wealth of information about the rural choirband that is of particular relevance. This is Flora Thompson (1876-1947), whose autobiographical writings richly describe this area of north Oxfordshire, home of her parents in their younger days. Gillian Lindsay has provided a detailed biography of this famous

daughter of north Oxfordshire in Flora Thompson - the Story of the Lark Rise Writer,⁸ and is quick to make the connection between the church's musicmaking in Ardley and the fictional musicians of the village of Mellstock featured in Thomas Hardy's Under The Greenwood Tree. Thompson's most famous work, the trilogy Lark Rise, Over to Candleford, and Candleford Green, describes the passing of many social customs and introduces many of the concepts of a more modern British society, such as the welfare state. Once more, against the backdrop of social change, the activities of the choirband assume a special importance. It is in the first of the trilogy, Lark Rise, that a choirband is mentioned,⁹ although, in keeping with the novels studied in the previous chapter, this is no more than a passing reference. The details in Lark Rise, however, contribute to those already known, and include remembrances of the Christmas rounds and the fact that Laura's grandfather was an active fiddler in the church band. Although the demise of the band at Lark Rise is not catalogued, that it ceased to function prior to Laura's lifetime is apparent, as her grandfather sold his violin to acquire some much needed cash. It has already been noted that Samuel Butler reinvented the band of his youth in The Way Of All Flesh, and this is also true of Flora Thompson in Lark Rise. Lindsay specifies that Flora Thompson's grandfather, John Dibber, was a member of a choirband that played regularly in the gallery at Ardley church. She writes:

Like Reuben Dewy of Mellstock, he [that is Flora Thompson's grandfather] played the violin and was also host to the other musicians who came once a week to his cottage by the church to practice. On Sundays the singers and musicians stood together in the gallery of the church to accompany the congregation hymn singing and sometimes to perform the anthems they had painstakingly rehearsed¹⁰

This accords with the description in Lark Rise itself when the reader learns that:

⁸ Lindsay, Gillian, Flora Thompson - The Story of the Lark Rise Writer, London, Robert Hale, 1990.

⁹ Thompson, p. 39.

¹⁰ Lindsay, p. 40.

Their mother would often tell the children about the Rectory and her own home in the churchyard, and how the choir, in which her father played the violin, would bring their instruments and practice there in the evening.¹¹

The Lark Rise of the book is in fact Juniper Hill, a hamlet on the Oxfordshire/Northamptonshire border, and it is this village that is the home of Laura and Edmund in the story. However, reminiscences come from the children's mother, who describes her childhood in another village. This is apparently Ardley, the place of Flora Thompson's mother's own youth. It is this connection that provides the link between the fictional choirbands of the current study and the actual source material apparent in the part-book under discussion. In The World of Flora Thompson,¹² Christine Bloxham details the history of the family in Chapter Two of her book, and she also mentions the connection with Flora Thompson's grandfather and the church choirband. Emma Dibber, Flora's mother, spent her youth in Ardley, and on leaving school went to work as a nursemaid in Fewcott, a hamlet almost adjoining Ardley. The history of the Anglican congregation in Fewcott is complex, and will be discussed throughout this chapter. However, that the Williams part-book was used in Ardley is clear, and it is this that serves to verify the claims of many of the novelists studied. The detailed analysis of its contents reveals much about the conventions of choirband music from the middle of the nineteenth century. It is important to note that the mention of church music in a popular novel of this kind emphasises that the writer could be sure that the reader would be familiar with the scenarios described.

The Williams part-book is a slim volume, hand-bound in brown leather and its charm lies in the irregular shape of its hand binding. It is in very good condition, sadly suggesting that it has been little used. The inside cover bears the inscription which reads exactly *C Williams, Fewcott - 1837*.

¹¹Thompson, p. 39.

¹²Bloxham, Christine, The World Of Flora Thompson, Oxford, Robert Dugdale, 1998.



At this time the population of Fewcott was around 220, and the small size of the hamlet is significant to this study. Whilst the contents of the part-book reveal a great deal about the musical conventions of the mid-nineteenth century, it must be said once more that as it was usual to start writing at both ends of the book, a study of the contents is not necessarily a chronological one. The variety of handwriting suggests that two musicians contributed to the book, one the first and last pieces, and another the material on the middle pages.

Whilst an interesting artifact in its own right, the linking of this Williams part-book with Ardley has proved significant in the study of so-called West Gallery music. There can be no doubt that the west gallery was the favoured position for musicians to play in churches, although this was not exclusively so. The gallery in Ardley church is still in place, and its original erection is both socially and architecturally important to this study. Novelists do not ignore west galleries, and they receive passing but full descriptions in various nineteenth century novels. For example in Trollope's The Small House at Allington¹³ the gallery:

Was all awry, and looked as though it would fall,¹⁴

whereas the gallery in the fictional village of Shepperton in George Eliot's Amos Barton was decorated with

¹³ Trollope, Anthony, The Small House at Allington. London, Tauchnitz, 1864; reprinted, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1980.

¹⁴ Trollope, 1980, p. 8.

Inscriptions... telling of benefaction to the poor of Shepperton, with an involuted elegance of capitals and final flourishes.¹⁵

These quotations serve to show that the galleries were themselves worthy of note, held in affection by members of the congregation, and were indeed as quirky as their musical occupants. It has already been established, both from novels and critical writings, that these galleries were almost exclusively used, at least during the middle years of the nineteenth century, for the accommodation of the choirband, which enjoyed a significantly elevated position above the rest of the congregation and even the clergy. It was partly for this reason that the galleries were certainly not beloved of the church authorities. The history of the gallery in Ardley church is interesting, as it appears that it was constructed with a dual purpose in mind, and this is particularly important with regard to the Williams part-book. That it was used for musicians is clear, and Gillian Lindsay substantiates the view that the gallery in Ardley was built for the use of the choirband, writing that

Ardley church had a small gallery built in 1834 to accommodate the handful of village musicians who provided the church music, just as the choir of Mellstock did in Thomas Hardy's Under the Greenwood Tree. John Dibber was one of the Ardley musicians.¹⁶

However, it must be recognised that whilst the prospect of a gallery built solely to allow lower class artisans to pursue their cultural activities is a romantic idea, this was not entirely the case in Ardley. Ample evidence exists to prove that the gallery in the church was provided so that the inhabitants of the adjoining hamlet of Fewcott might have a regular place of worship, there being no such suitable building in Fewcott itself. The church at Ardley was already well attended, and it is clear from the wishes of the benefactors of the gallery that they were anxious that allowing a substantial growth in the congregation could jeopardise their own space in the church,

¹⁵ Eliot, 1857, p. 42.

¹⁶ Lindsay, p. 12.

and the following passage appears at the front of the register of baptisms:

The Gallery in the church was erected in the year 1834 at the expense of [a list of names follows]. It was particularly stated and understood that the above subscription did not give the several parties any actual or disposable property in the gallery, but only that they would not be disturbed in the possession of their several pews during the incumbency of the present Rector. Also that the back sittings should be kept free for the accommodations of the Fewcott people.¹⁷

The view that the gallery was built for the people of Fewcott is the one popularly held today, and the historian J.C. Blomfield, whose writing is much respected within the deanery, substantiates this as he wrote in his History of Ardley, Bucknell, and Stoke Lyne¹⁸ that:

There was not a church at Fewcott and the dwellers attended the parish church at Stoke Lyne [and a gallery was erected] to provide some accommodation for such as would attend public worship.... in the adjoining church of Ardley.¹⁹

Galleries in Anglican churches were not generally considered to be welcome architectural additions. Indeed Blomfield suggests this, as he writes that even after the church in Fewcott was built, the gallery in Ardley remained:

Though, through the happy provision of a church at Fewcott the need of this gallery is gone, it still keeps its place, a disfigurement to the building, and the only survivor in this deanery, with one other, of these most objectionable erections in churches.²⁰

Galleries were considered ugly, and this was the official reason given for their general removal towards the end of the nineteenth century. However, as has been stated in previous chapters, there was also concern over the social implication of elevating one

¹⁷ Register of Baptisms still used in Ardley church.

¹⁸ Blomfield, J. C., History of Ardley, Bucknell and Stoke Lyne, London, Parker, 1894.

¹⁹ Blomfield, p. 38.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

section of the congregation above the main body of the church. The study of the Williams part-book reveals that this is as evident in Ardley as in other areas of the country already considered by Gammon and Weston. That there was a choirband in Ardley is clear from the memories of Flora Thompson alone, and if it is remembered that the residents of Fewcott occupied only the back of the gallery, as suggested by the inscription at the front of the baptismal register, the front section would appear to have been left vacant for the choirband, and it is the contribution of these people that is now to be considered.

It has already been established that the examination of church documents and census material makes it possible to trace the occupations of members of choirbands, and to this end it can be seen that the choirband at Ardley was typical of others elsewhere in the England. The date of 1837 written in the Williams part-book meant that tracing the first owner through the 1841 census was neither unreasonable nor difficult. Sure enough, a Charles Williams lived in Fewcott at that time, and he proved no exception to the general understanding that choirband members were tradesmen, as his profession is noted in the 1841 census as a shoemaker. This means that the choirband at Ardley makes a delightful comparison with that of Thomas Hardy's Mellstock musicians, as there his band included

Mr. Robert Penny, boot and shoe-maker.²¹

It has not yet been possible to discover what instrument Charles Williams played, but a few other details about him have emerged from studies of the registers from Stoke Lyne church, the 1841 census and the churchwardens' accounts for Ardley church. He was a married man with children, and was forty-five years old at the time of the 1841 census, which states that he was born in the county, although no record of his

²¹ Hardy, 1872, p. 42.

birth has been found. At this point it is relevant to explain some of the complicated history of the Anglican residents of Fewcott. The church authorities suggested that those who wished to attend church travelled to nearby Stoke Lyne, although many preferred to attend Ardley church, as it was nearer. Williams' parents were John and Elizabeth Williams, and he married Catharine Coleman, who is called Kattern in some of the registers, on February 2nd, 1811 in Ardley. All of his children were baptised at Stoke Lyne in common with John Dibber. His children were Caroline, who was baptised on September 14th, 1817; Elizabeth, who was baptised on January 13th, 1821; John, who was baptised on November 10th, 1822. Two daughters followed, Ann, baptised on September 25th, 1825, and Anne baptised on July 12th, 1829. No record of Ann's burial could be found. These dates show that Williams was older than Flora Thompson's grandfather, John Dibber who, according to Christine Bloxham, was baptised in 1813, making him a contemporary of Williams' children.

It comes as no surprise that Williams occupied a position of responsibility within the church. This corresponds with the discussions of historians such as Gammon and the illustrations of writers such as Thomas Hardy. A search in the churchwarden's accounts for Ardley²² reveals that Charles Williams was elected churchwarden for the first time on Lady Day in 1840, a date very close to the one in the manuscript book. Previous to being elected as churchwarden, he is noted as being church constable. He was re-elected as churchwarden in 1842, 1843, and again from 1850 until 1858; he was not re-elected in 1859. He appears to have claimed various expenses of between four and ten shillings at random intervals, and in 1865 was paid a "salary" of £10, although unfortunately it is not documented precisely what this was for. The significance of payment of choirband members has already been mentioned in the Introduction to the current study, and that some remuneration was generally received is clear. However, Gammon suggests that the absence of payments for instruments or

²² Oxfordshire Record Office, catalogued as MSSDD Par Ardley C1.

repairs in churchwardens' accounts does not necessarily mean that no band was in existence, as it may be the case that individuals rather than the church paid for such things.

The Williams part-book contains a wide variety of tunes in several metres. Although not all of them are named, and none of them are attributed to any composer, most have been identified through The Hymn Tune Index by Nicholas Temperley. All but two tunes appear in earlier published sources, and the identification of these shows that the owner of the Williams part-book was able to draw on them. The remaining two unidentified compositions can be considered to be representative of the quantity of local composition used by choirbands all over the country, which were never published. The following table details the contents of the Williams part-book and includes relevant information. An attempt has been made to identify all the tunes contained in the Williams part-book. The information that is not included in the original has been added in red. Where Temperley has given several sources, a source common to several tunes contained in the Williams part-book has been quoted. The comments provide more information about each piece.

Name	Composer	Date	Metre	Key	Staff	Comments	Source
Concessionation	Isaac Jacob	1810	CM	F major	4	First of two staves in a double bar. Includes some rests.	A Year Season of Isaac May London, 1788.
Abridge	Isaac Smith	1750	CM	F major	2	Appears in very many sources	
Asley	Attributed to M. Madel		CM	G major	2	Appears in very many sources	
Abridge	Thomas Clark of Canterbury	1800	CM	D major	2	Appears with no title in the William's part books	A Year Season of Isaac May London, 1788.
Oxford			CM	F major	2	This is neither Oxford nor Oxford new, so it is presumably a calligrapher's composition and takes its name from the nearby city.	
Cambridge New	Calce, Ashworth	1700	CM	G major	2	Inscribed by Calce for his own use and attributed to Ashworth.	A Collection of English Songs London, 1700.
Davenny's Tune	W. Lawson	1700	CM	A minor	2	S. Weston attributes this tune to C. Ashworth. Has the word "tunefield" added in pencil at the top of the page.	A Collection of English Songs London, 1700.
Psalms One	Thomas Clark of Canterbury	1800	CM	G major	2	Has instruction "Psalms One" pencilled above. Includes rests with section in couplets.	Fourth Set of Psalms One with 20. Includes and rests in couplets added in the rest of century starts London. Double bar WELLES
Fragment				Bb major	2	Not enough detail to assess, but seems to be a working of the following tune	
Mary's Choice	H. Folbans	1810	CM	Bb major	2	Appears with no title in William's part book. Frequent falling slurs and although written in two staves, does have four parts. Note dotted rhythms and rests	Four New Versions of the Psalms. Four Hymns, &c. all arranged for the use of a church. London, by the author Bradley & Welch
Bradley	Mortimer		SM	D major	2	Under Bradley's name in the Wesleyan Hymn Book	
Consolation	W. Arnold of Pease	1800	LM	G major	2	Written for two, three and four parts. Frequent falling slurs and some quarter movement	Original Psalms and Hymns London, 1800. 6 copies
Derry			LM	G major	2	Short fuguing section towards the end	A Year Season of Isaac May London, 1788.
No name				A minor	4		

It should be noted that some attempt has been made to arrange the tunes in alphabetical order, apart from the obvious exception Oxford, which seems to be randomly placed. This is significant when considering the place of handwritten manuscripts in the development of psalmody to hymnody. It seems that as attempts were made to include the entire congregation in the sung parts of the service, much thought was given as to how to best present the music. As collection of hymns such as Wesley's Hymns For the Use of the People called Methodists became increasingly popular, as well as the use of versified psalms, it became apparent that easily accessible music was needed for the congregation. In 1846 the Companion to the Wesleyan hymn-book²³ appeared with the intention of fulfilling this role. The study of this Companion is particularly relevant to this study, as it contains a number of tunes in common with the Williams part-book. The Companion contains 228 tunes considered to be suitable accompaniments to Wesley's hymns, the idea being that the whole congregation could then sing these hymns. The introduction states,

It is impossible not to regret that so many of the sweetest songs of Zion are no longer heard in the congregations of the saints. Nor can it be doubted that a positive hindrance is frequently placed in the way of Divine Worship by the Preacher being prevented the use of hymns suitable to his subject, from the inability of his congregation to sing them; a cause which, it is feared, operates in other religious service of the society, public and private.²⁴

Furthermore the function of the Companions as a congregational book is emphasised by the fact that

Pieces and anthems are entirely excluded. In every department of Divine Worship the Music should be *congregational* – such as all can join in who are present to worship.²⁵

²³ A Companion to the Wesleyan hymn-book, London, Wesleyan Conference Office, 1846, p. 3.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

More significant to the current study is the fact that it is clearly stated that handwritten manuscripts formed the basis for this early collection of published tunes.

The work originated in a private manuscript collection of tunes, commenced more than thirty years ago, for the use of small congregations in the county. The number of tunes was restricted to one hundred. All the Metres were carefully ascertained, by the rules laid down.²⁶

Detailed analysis of the contents of the Williams part-book will follow in Chapter Five, but a number of features in the pieces will now be discussed, illustrating that the versions copied into the book are typical of those used in the first half of the nineteenth century by rural choirbands. The abstract noun of the title of the first piece, Condescention (sic), suggests an evangelical or even a Nonconformist influence, a characteristic that will be examined later. As has been said, it is not clear which instrument Williams played, although he did not play one of the higher instruments such as the flute or violin as can be seen from the fact that the three lower parts are written out in full but the stave at the top of each system has been left blank, and was therefore not required by the musician. This was usual in handwritten manuscripts, as a player would not write out a part he did not need. The piece itself is dated 1837, and attributed, in the Williams part-book, to Rd Smith, and although it is, according to Temperley, by Isaac Smith, the fact that Rd Smith appears falsely to claim the tune as his own serves to illustrate how difficult it is to correctly identify choirband music. It seems that a Richard Smith can be linked to Ardley as a record of a marriage of a Richard Smith whose banns were called in Ardley for his marriage to Maria Winter of Great Rissington in Gloucestershire. They were married on 3rd, March 1807. This would make him rather older than Charles Williams, although that does not make it impossible for Williams to have obtained his tune, because an exchange of tunes often took place. There are records of a large Smith family in Fewcott, consisting of mother, father and several children who appear to be similar ages to the Williams family, so it is quite possible they were known to each other.

²⁶ A Companion to the Wesleyan Hymn-book, p. 3.

Whilst the musical features of Condescention will be analysed in Chapter Five, certain aspects of the tune are important when considering the social development of hymn singing. The most significant point to notice when studying this version of Condescention is that the "air" or "tune" is indicated on the third stave of music. The significance of this will be fully explored in Chapter Five. However, it should be noted here that the ability of singers is noted in novels, as in Amos Barton we read of

A carpenter understood to have an amazing power of singing 'counter'²⁷

This type of voice is now more generally known as falsetto. It is singers such as this who would have sung a higher line, with the aid of melody instruments such as the violin and younger singers. The oral effect was that this line was the most prominent and thus became recognised as the melody. More recently this has come to be printed on the top stave of the music, but it should be noted that in choirband music this would feature in the middle of the harmonic structure.

The doubling of parts at the octave is one of the most colourful characteristics of choirband music, resulting in unusual harmonies often unacceptable to musicians today. One of the effects is that the musical parts become difficult to distinguish by both player and listener alike. In Under The Greenwood Tree Thomas Hardy described how the players and singers of the Mellstock choir needed to be careful to maintain their own part. It is in the following section that we learn most about performing choirband music, as William Dewy, the leader of the choir, issues some last minute advice:

“Now mind.... You two counter-boys keep your ears open to Michael's fingering, and don't ye go straying into the treble part along o' Dick and his set, as ye did last year; and mind this

²⁷ Eliot, 1859, p. 43.

especially when we be in 'Arise, and hail'".²⁸

This shows us that the doubling of parts between instruments and singers was usual. It has already been established that the said Michael played the second violin and so a part lower than the melody. Dick played the treble violin, the highest part - or melody. If the "counter-boys" were to start singing another part an octave lower, then the melody would leave the top, and become part of the second or lower parts.

Thomas Hardy set Under The Greenwood Tree in the 1840s, the period that marked the zenith of the choirband movement. In this novel we have an accurate account of the band members, their social status, and the sort of music that they played. However, as the tale unfolds, Hardy goes on to describe the many changes that took place in Anglican church music, changes that can be exemplified by the Williams part-book. Two trends are now to be examined; the effects of both were to alter Anglican music radically. These were the introduction of a formal hymnbook, and the more extensive use of the organ as accompaniment for the sung parts of the service. A study of the contents of the Williams part-book reveals that the hymns are carefully arranged by metre and this suggests that the use of a published hymnbook would not be long in coming to Ardley. This is because, in accordance with the instructions that appear in the Companion to the Wesleyan Hymn-book, tunes were arranged by metre and "placed in distinct Sections"²⁹ so that they can easily be selected by the preacher. The gradual introduction of a keyboard instrument to accompany worship is also apparent in the Williams part-book as all but two pieces are written on two staves, treble and bass.

It is only this version of Condescention and the last unnamed piece that show some of the characteristics of choirband music included the writing of the music on more than

²⁸ Hardy, 1872, p. 57.

²⁹ A Companion to the Wesleyan Hymn-book, p. 4.

two staves, and evidence of musical movement in all of the parts. The fact that the last piece shows the same features as the first is indicative of the fact that the books were completed from both ends simultaneously. The music of this last piece will be analysed in Chapter Five, but aspects of it are relevant to the discussion of the development of church singing from psalmody to hymnody. Written on four staves, and in an adapted form of common metre, this tune is a suitable accompaniment for a range of words, including the settings of the metrical psalms of both Sternhold and Hopkins, and Tate and Brady, as well as many common metre hymns which were starting to become popular in the middle of the nineteenth century. The adaptation of metre requires a repeating of the words, a characteristic which was extremely common in choirband music. The piece also contains detailed dynamic markings and rests, suggesting a fugueing section. However, the piece is representative of a tamer, Victorian style of composition as, rather than the florid ending expected in choirband music, it merely ends with a solid harmonic completion of the metre.

It is clear that the music for this last piece was intended for instrumental use, as it is written on four staves, not on two staves as later keyboard music was. It is the examination of the two stave pieces that reveals further developments in the transition from psalmody to hymnody. As well as tunes with abstract noun titles, the Williams part-book contains tunes called after place names. Titles such as Oxford and Cambridge have their roots in the collegiate churches and would have first been sung by the reformed choirs preferred by the Oxford Movement. Titles, such as Abridge and Daventry, to name but two, come from nonconformist traditions and would be sung to original words by hymn writers such as Isaac Watts or Philip Dodderidge. Many of the tunes copied into the Williams part-book can be found in the published collections of the day. However, in this instance the tunes are reduced to their simplest form. An example of this is the copying of Daventry Tune, a fine Nonconformist tune written by Caleb Ashworth, who was successor to Philip Dodderidge at Northampton Academy. This aspect of part-book writing will be

analysed in Chapter Five.

The consideration of Daventry as it appears in the Williams part-book serves as a fine introduction to the uneasy shift in the Anglican church from the rustic choirbands peopled by tradesmen and artisans, to the more general use of a keyboard instrument often played by a senior woman of the congregation, the minister's wife, or a schoolteacher. Here there is a clear illustration of how the reforms of the Oxford Movement were prevalent in Ardley. It has already been noted in the discussion of Condescention that the air of the tenor stave is richly embellished by a florid treble part, and that this piece is dated 1837. However, if Daventry is now held up to scrutiny it will be seen that the air is on the treble line and is supported by a firm harmonic bass. This suggests, that whilst the use of two staves indicates that the piece was intended to be performed on a keyboard instrument, the bass would be equally suited to being played on a bass instrument such as the cello or bassoon.

As has been stated, the only date in the Williams part-book is 1837, this being on the inside cover, and at the end of the first piece. The organ at Ardley was installed in the second half of the 1830s, and this corresponds exactly with the musical evidence. There is no record of any kind regarding the financing of church music in Ardley, the organ having apparently been tuned only once, on April 25th, 1878,³⁰ and it is possible that by this time musical reforms were well under way. It has already been noted that critics such as La Trobe advocated the use of Sunday School children to lead the singing and this could well be true in Ardley. An indication that this was so is that, with the exception of the few already mentioned, most of the tunes are written on two staves, suggesting the intention to perform them on a keyboard instrument. It is known that the transition from choirband to keyboard accompaniment was not without its problems. A return to Mellstock in Thomas Hardy's Under The Greenwood Tree

³⁰ Oxfordshire Records Office, churchwarden's Accounts.

illustrates how this might have been in Ardley as well as other village churches. Here Fancy Day can be seen playing the harmonium, surrounded by her scholars, and the choirband members have nothing to do.

When the singing was in progress there was suddenly discovered to be a strong and shrill reinforcement from some point, ultimately found to be the schoolgirls' aisle. At every attempt it grew bolder and more distinct. At the third time of singing, these intrusive feminine voices were as mighty as those of the regular singers; in fact, the flood of sound from this quarter assumed such an individuality, that it had a time, a key, almost a tune of its own, surging upwards when the gallery plunged downward, and the reverse."³¹

It can only be supposed that Ardley Church settled to the reforms and although there is no account of the purchase of hymnbooks, it is known that in nearby Heyford, according to the diarist George Dew,³² they were used for the first time on November 22nd, 1863. It seems reasonable to assume that, taken with the fact that the ubiquitous Hymns Ancient and Modern was published in 1861, this might also have been the case in Ardley. Another reason why there may no longer be any evidence of a choirband in Ardley was the fact that towards the end of the 1860s land was purchased in Fewcott especially so that a church could be erected for the residents of the hamlet. This land was consecrated to All Saints, Fewcott, in 1871. The request of the benefactor, Anne Hind, was that it be

Annexed to the living of Stoke Lyne in order to secure the residence of a Curate in the hamlet of Fewcote.³³

As has already been stated, although there was consequently no need for the gallery at Ardley, it was not dismantled and still remains there today.

³¹ Hardy, 1872, p. 72.

³² Horn, Pamela, ed., Oxfordshire Country Life in the 1860s: The earliest diaries of George James Dew (1846-1928) of Lower Heyford, Abingdon, Beacon Publications, 1984.

³³ Blomfield, part VIII.

The study of the Williams part-book offers an insight into rural musicmaking during the middle years of the nineteenth century and provides a link from the oral tradition of early psalmody to the introduction of a published hymnbook. It also serves as an introduction to the almost universal use of a keyboard, usually an organ, in the English parish church. The remaining two handwritten manuscript part-books under discussion provide further insight into the development of church singing from psalmody to hymnody. The fact that both volumes are more recent than the Williams part-book enables assumptions to be made about the changing trends in hymn singing. Whilst the two volumes were found with the Williams part-book, their owner, Mr. Beasley, has only a slight recollection of them being used for a church service. However, the two volumes will be considered together, alongside the Williams part-book, to provide an illustration of the developments in hymnody regardless of their geographical origins. The two volumes have a number of features in common; the most significant is that the name "Bache" appears frequently in both of them. The older of the two volumes has the name Alfred Bache inside one of the covers and includes a number of compositions attributed to this name, although prefixed by other initials. It is not dated, but the green fabric binding and the handwriting suggest that it was compiled well into the second half of the nineteenth century. This volume will be called the Green part-book. The second of the two volumes does not include any name but a number of the compositions are attributed to several individuals with the surname of Bache, there being a variety of initials, including "A". It is clearly much more recent, being bound in blue cardboard and will be referred to as the Blue part-book. Linking the Green and Blue part-books to the Bicester area proved to be challenging, but a connection was made after a visit to Oxfordshire Record Office. The name Bache was linked to a property in Oxfordshire via a group of solicitors, Adkins, from West Bromwich. This was a likely place to begin a search, as the only place actually mentioned in the books is Hagley, specifically Hagley Hall, in Worcestershire; it is written on an anthem in the middle pages of the Blue Part-Book.

This led to a search of the genealogy index for Worcester, and the following information was obtained which matches the information already gleaned from the part-books themselves. All initials correspond with those in the part-books, which suggests that they were in the possession of the same family. Another possibility is that the books have come to Oxfordshire via Fanny Bache who changed her name on marriage.

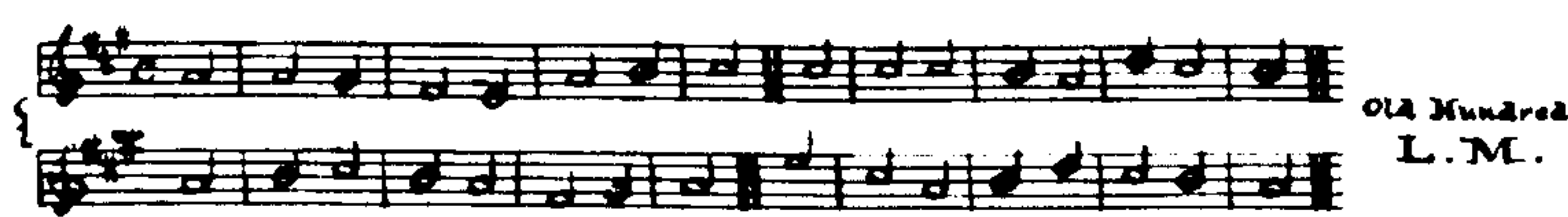
An Alfred Bache was christened on June 22nd, 1859, son of William Bache and Caroline.

An F. (F. E.?) was christened Fanny on September 14th, 1853, daughter of William Bache and Caroline.

An H Bache was christened Harry on August 12th, 1868, son of William and Caroline.

All of the above christenings took place in Halesowen in Worcester. A map of the area reveals that this is not far from West Bromwich, which could link the family to the solicitors in the index listed at the Oxfordshire Record Office.

The content of the Green part-book comprises hymn tunes, and in every case only the melody is written out. This suggests that the owner used it in a reformed choir. In almost every case the tunes contain only minims or semibreves with no performance indications of any kind, as the example below illustrates. This is the entire first page of the Green part-book.



The most noteworthy exception to the practice of writing the melody only is an arrangement of the tune of Rockingham,³⁴ which contains some delightful dotted

³⁴This is an adaptation by Edward Miller of a tune by Aaron Williams.

rhythms that add to the interest of the piece.

The following table shows the range of tunes written in the Green part-book. Alongside the melodies written in the book, the metre is given in all cases, although the name of the tune is not always mentioned and only occasionally is a composer referred to. The table provides information about the sort of music that was available to the compiler of the volume. Composers and dates have been added where possible. Most of the tunes have been found in the Bristol Tune Book,³⁵ the Methodist Hymnbook (1907), Hymns Ancient and Modern,³⁶ and the Anglican Hymnbook.³⁷

³⁵ Stone, A., ed., The Bristol Tune Book, London, Novello, 1891.

³⁶ Hymns Ancient and Modern, Old Edition, London, William Clowes and Son, 1889.

³⁷ The Anglican Hymnbook, Worthing, Willard Thompson Publishing, 1965.

NAME	COMPOSER	DATE	METRE	KEY	COMMENTS
Old Hundred	Louis Bourgeois	1551	LM	A maj	
No Name	Rinck.		LM	Bb maj	Choral 8, Rinck's Organ School, Book 2.
Winchester	From a chorale in the 1690 Musicalisches Handbuch.		LM	C maj	This piece is <u>Winchester New</u> .
Stonesfield	Samuel Stanley.		LM	Eb maj	Also called <u>Doversdale</u>
Rockingham	Edward Miller		LM	A min	Note dotted rhythms
Grantham	J. S Bach		LM	A min	
Grantham	J. S Bach		LM	F min	
No name	Mendelssohn		CM	D min	Sonata VI
St James	Raphael Courteville		CM	D min	
London New	Dodderidge		CM	D maj	
Bedford	W. Weale.		CM	F maj	
St Ann	Dr Croft.		CM	D maj	
Burford	Purcell		CM		
St Mary	D. Blow		CM	D min	
York	John Milton, sen.		CM	G maj	
Gloucester	J Tomkins		CM	F maj	
French	Scottish Psalter		CM	G maj	
Windsor	William Damon		CM	A min	
Burnley			SM	A maj	
Alexandria	James Leach		SM	E maj	
Aylesbury	J. Chetham		SM	G min	
No name	Mendelssohn		SM	C min	
Cambridge	Rev. R. Harrison		SM	C min	
Sacred Wisdom	Weber		3 ½	Bb maj	
Relief	Mendelssohn		3 ½	Ab maj	
Progress	F. E Bache		3 ½	Eb maj	
No Name	F. E Bache		3 ½	F maj	

An examination of the contents of the book shows that it was clearly organised as a working volume, with the Long Metre, Common Metre, and Short Metre pieces grouped together, again in keeping with early published tune books. There are blank pages separating each section, indicating that the compiler could return at any time to add to the collection. Many of the tunes could be considered to be well known and appear in many collections dating from the earliest sets of hymns. The last group of four tunes is of particular interest, especially when considered alongside the Williams part-book. The unusual abstract nouns in the titles of these pieces, Sacred Wisdom, Relief, and Progress suggests Nonconformist connections of the type already noted with regard to the Williams part-book. Whilst these tunes have none of the exuberance apparent in the tune Condescension in the Williams part-book, they suggest an individual contribution to hymn singing. These will be analysed in Chapter Five.

Perhaps the most significant point about this group of pieces is that they emphasise the saturation of the hymnbook during the nineteenth century with contributions by “classical composers”. The influence of Mendelssohn on the collector of the Green part-book is clear, as three contributions from this composer appear in the book. The penultimate page of the Green part-book shows this trend to advantage with both Sacred Wisdom and Relief being by “classical composers”, namely Weber and Mendelssohn. Abstract nouns are again used for tune titles, and such melodic fragments used as hymn tunes provides a further twist in the development of the writing of hymn tunes. Well-known composers, such as Mendelssohn, visited England during the nineteenth century and their legacy in subsequent hymn tune writing can be observed in the fact that many examples of their music are contained in

hymnbooks dating from the period. In his article The Decline Of The Gallery Tradition,³⁸ Christopher Turner suggests that this kind of repertoire was one of the fundamental causes of the decline of the gallery choirbands. If this was the case, then the study of source material such as the Green part-book is all the more valuable in tracing the development from psalmody to hymnody.

Sacred Wisdom can be found in The Bristol Tune Book,³⁹ simply titled “from Weber”. The Mendelssohn tune in the Green part-book, however, appears to be of Bache’s own collection. As can be seen from the table of contents, Mendelssohn features on two other occasions, although the other two instances have no tune titles beside them. Whilst the influence of classical composers is evident, it is worth noting that the setting of the words of hymns to fragments of classical melodies was not entirely new in the late nineteenth century. This practice was particularly popular with the industrialist William Gardiner (1770-1853), a keen amateur musician. His Melodies From The Music Of Nature⁴⁰ includes numerous examples and explanations of this. In the Green part-book two tunes by Weber and Mendelssohn are given abstract titles and arranged to suit the conventions of a hymn tune required by the compiler. The influence of “classical” composers on settings of portions of the liturgy is even more apparent in the Blue part-book, as this contains settings of canticles and chants. Whilst the Green part-book is of historical interest in the development of hymns, the fact that there are no notes or performance indications included anywhere in the volume makes it difficult to assess the exact tradition of the collection.

Much more comprehensive is the most recent of the three books, the Blue part-book. This contains a variety of hymn tunes, chants and anthems. It is carefully arranged,

³⁸ Turner, Christopher, The decline of the gallery tradition, in Turner, Christopher, ed., The Gallery Tradition: Aspects of Georgian Psalmody, Ketton, Peterborough, S. G. Publications, 1997, pp. 71-81.

³⁹ Stone, number 120.

⁴⁰ Gardiner, William, Melodies From The Music Of Nature, London, Novello, 1847.

hymn tunes are written at the beginning, chants at the back and a Christmas carol is in the middle. Inside both covers there is a contents page, and the range of music is shown below.

From front to back

Contents Page

P1 - Oxley Barney Gray Burton

P2 - Martin Hindle Kingston Jeffrey

P3 - Purcell Brailesford Wanless Lee

P4 - Taylor Kelway Simms

P5 - Caley from Beethoven (Different hand?)

P7 - Sketch - biblical verses in pencil (Different hand?)

From back to front

Contents Page

P1 - blank

P2 - Pascal

P3 - Whitsun S. Gibert

P4 - Redhead

P5 - Merton Litany (Redhead)

P6 - Ascension

P7 - Chorale (continued P 8)

P8 - Fulham

P9 - Magdalen

P10 - S Nicolas (Redhead) Bentinck

P11 - Deum Regem (H (K?) Bache - Attributed to Church Hymns No 411. There are some alterations to the transcribing in pencil. Also there is note added in shorthand, including the date of 1911.

P14 - St Bees "Hark my soul" - Dr Dykes

P41 - Kyrie- Mendelssohn

P42 - Kyrie - Rogers

P43 - Kyrie - Nares

P44 - Kyrie - H (K?) Bache

P45 - Kyrie - Dr Samuel Arnold

P46 - Kyrie - T F Walmisley

P47 - Kyrie - E J Hopkins

P51 - Christmas Carol "High and Low" supplied to Hagley Choir by Lady Lyttelton Christmas 1880.

P54 - Glory be to Thee O God (twice)

All of the pieces in this volume are written out with four parts on two staves, in other words, what has become the accepted conventional method of reproducing music for the church. Clearly this facilitates the reading of the music for performance on a keyboard instrument. Of the three books the Blue part-book is the only one to include

responses. This suggests that the church where it was used had a reformed choir and furthermore indicates that the compiler of the book was the organist in the church. This conclusion has been drawn because one of the original compositions is a setting of the Kyrie eleison, and it is unlikely that this would appear in the book owned and used by a singer.

As has been stated, the Blue part-book contains an indication of the geographical area in which the book was originally used. These details occur on the pages containing the anthem. On the top right hand corner we find:

Supplied to Hagley Choir by Lady Lyttelton; Christmas, 1880

Hagley Hall belongs to Lord Lyttleton and the following information was obtained from Wilson's Gazetteer:

Hagley, a village and a parish in Bromsgrove district, Worcester. The village stands near the West Midland Railway, and near the boundary with Stafford, 2½ miles SSE of Stourbridge and has a station. The manor, with Hagley Hall belongs to Lord Lyttleton, and was frequently visited by Pope, Shenstone, Thomson, and Addison...The church was built in 1200, and repaired and enlarged by the first Lord Lyttleton. It was restored in 1838.

The anthem, entitled High and Low, provides an interesting mix of styles that will be discussed fully in Chapter Five. This includes voices accompanied by keyboard, and lively unaccompanied singing.

The study of these three part-books has served as an illustration of the development of church singing as it progressed from psalmody to hymnody from the middle of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century. It seems appropriate to emphasise these changes further by returning to the descriptions given in The Way Of All Flesh. It has already been noted that Mr. Overton's first visit to Battersby-on-the-

Hill was in 1835, only two years before Condescention was written in the Williams part-book. During his second visit Mr. Overton laments the removal of the choirband, the chanting of the canticles and the complicated use of chants for the psalms. Butler writes:

This was the course things had taken in the Church of England during the last forty years.⁴¹

In short, the performance of church music moved, for whatever reason, from the lively gallery choirbands to the sober, reformed renderings associated with the decorum of the Oxford Movement. Whilst assumptions have been made about the ownership of the Williams part-book and the Green and Blue part-books there can be no doubt that the study of them has revealed important details about the development of psalmody to hymnody.

⁴¹ Butler, p. 341.

CHAPTER FIVE – DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THE THREE PART-BOOKS

The detailed examination of the three part-books introduced in the previous chapter illustrates the transition from psalmody to hymnody from 1837 up to the first quarter of the twentieth century. It will be seen that through these handwritten sources it is possible to trace different aspects of church music, from the florid music suitable for performance by the choirband used in the first half of the nineteenth century, to the complete copying out of hymn tunes which would already have been included in published volumes in the first half of the twentieth century. The many stages of these developments will be presented, illustrating alterations in the conventions of writing out music, obvious changes in performance practice, and variations in versions of hymn and psalm tunes.

Analysis of the oldest of the three part-books, the Williams part-book, reveals the first stages in the transition from instrumental to keyboard music. The first piece written in the Williams part-book, as noted in Chapter Four, is representative of choirband music as it contains the characteristics that have become associated with church music of this kind. Called Condescention, the unusual spelling of the title makes it an interesting focus when considering the transition from handwritten to printed manuscripts. A version of the tune appears in the Companion to the Wesleyan Hymn Book but in this instance the title is spelt Condescension. In his Hymn Tune Index Temperley records many versions of this tune, but only one spelt in the same way. This suggests that the compiler of the Williams part-book used the source noted by Temperley, A New Selection of Sacred Praise by Samuel Dyer, 1819. Further evidence of this is that other tunes contained in the Williams part-book can also be

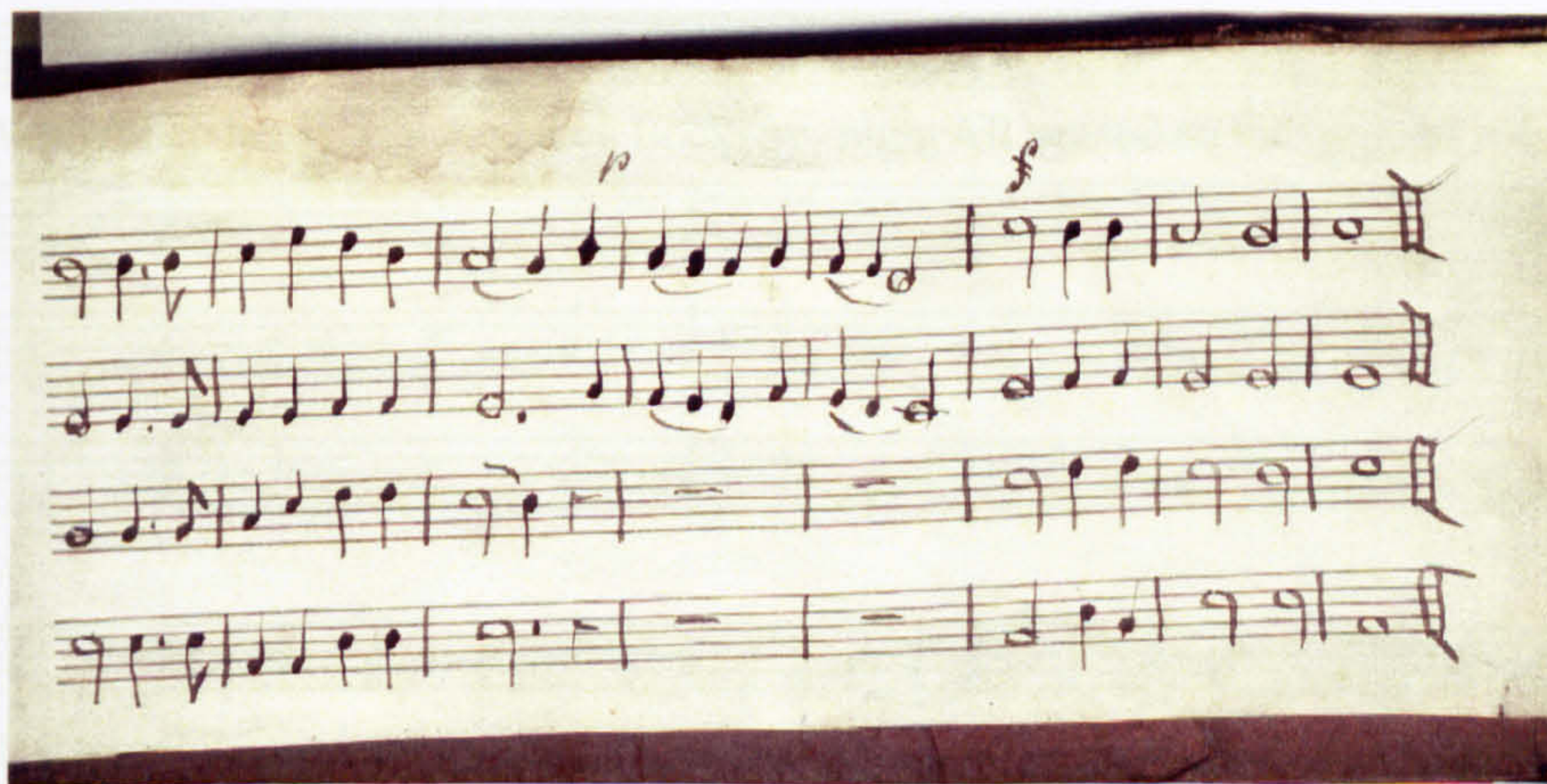
found in the Dyer collection. It is clear that this version was intended for performance on melodic and harmonic instruments rather than a keyboard because it is written on four staves, although in this instance the notation intended for the top staff has not been added.



Further examination of this handwritten version emphasises the characteristics of choirband music. For example, dynamics are carefully added, and in this instance the second half of the piece begins quietly, and increases in volume for the repeating last four bars. It should be noted that there is a flurry of semiquavers in the “air” in this last phrase so that rhythmic and melodic interest is maintained right to the end of the piece. As has been stated, the “air”, or tune, is in the tenor part, the third line on the staff, and this would have been sung by men in the choir, supported by strong melodic instruments such as the violin and clarinet. In this instance this line would also have been doubled at the octave above by the trebles, resulting in the confusion already noted by Hardy in Under The Greenwood Tree. It was the aural dominance of this part that ultimately led to the tune being printed on the top line. Because the part is simply doubled, Williams has clearly found it unnecessary to write it out. Both the so-called counter-boys - young men with the ability to sing at a higher pitch - and women, would have sung the second line of the music which in more modern music would be called the alto line. The bass line would be sung by men with the lowest

voices, supported by bass instruments such as the bassoon and cello. It should be noted that all parts contain plenty of melodic movement so that interest is maintained for both performers and listeners.

This version of Condescention can therefore be said to be representative of true choirband music written and performed in the mid-nineteenth century, and it is the only such piece in the collection. Other pieces in the Williams part-book reveal that, whilst some of the elements of choirband music are in evidence, and pieces display the legacy of choirband music, they are not truly written in this style and their examination reveals the gradual transition away from florid compositions towards a more sedate style of writing more favoured by the Victorians. It is important at this point to re-emphasise that part-books were not completed in page order, so that pieces written on later pages are not necessarily the last to be written. An example of this is the last untitled piece in the book, which exhibits some of the characteristics of choirband music. This piece cannot be found in Temperley's Index and so can be considered representative of a local composition. Even though it is written on four staves, the nature of the composition is more restrained than much choirband music, suggesting that it dates from the Victorian era, and as such cannot be considered to be a true choirband composition. Initial examination reveals that the music in this piece does not lend itself to performance on versatile instruments such as the violin, flute or clarinet, which can accommodate fast passages and leaps in the tune. This is because the melodic movement is frequently by step to the adjacent note, thus making it suitable for keyboard music.



Although the piece is in the bright key of A major, the range of the parts is not extensive, so great flexibility would not be required to sing it. The metre is an adaptation of common metre, 8.6.8.6. to 8.6.6.8.8.6., making the tune suitable for accompaniment to the settings of the metrical psalms, the alteration of the metre making it necessary to repeat some of the words of the verse, a characteristic of choirband music and which is demonstrated in Condescention. However, Victorian features are found in the second half, as although it contains the obligatory dynamic marking of *piano*, the subsequent *forte* does not herald a flurry of movement, such as that seen in Condescention, but merely draws the piece to an end with a solid perfect cadence. It is interesting to note that the composer has given a further suggestion of choirband music by using rests in the lower parts for the second half *piano*. This is a

common feature in choirband music, and listeners and performers might easily assume a fuguing section would follow. However, the remaining bars of the piece simply serve to complete the words of the verse. All of these features can be fully appreciated if the piece is seen set to a verse. Suitable words for this tune are While Shepherds Watch Their Flocks By Night,¹ which is set to many tunes of all historical periods.

Source - William's part book - last page

The image shows a musical score for a four-part setting of the hymn 'While Shepherds Watch Their Flocks by Night'. The score is written in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. It consists of two systems of four staves each. The first system contains the first two lines of the hymn: 'While Shep-herds watched their flocks by night All sea-ted on the ground All seat-ed on the ground'. The second system contains the next two lines: 'The an-gel of the Lord came down and glo- - - ry shone - - and glory shone a - round'. The vocal parts are arranged in SATB order (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass). The instrumental parts are also clearly defined, with the bass line providing a steady accompaniment. The score concludes with a final double bar line.

This set of words is popularly set to T. Est's Winchester Olē, or T. Jarman's Nativity. This latter tune makes an excellent comparison with the final page of the Williams part-book. Nativity, as it appeared in the Fuller Tune Book,² contains all the characteristics of a choirband piece, including the "air" written on the third line, a fuguing section in the second half of the piece and an elaborate conclusion.

¹ The words, by Nahum Tate, are a paraphrase of Luke 2:8-14.

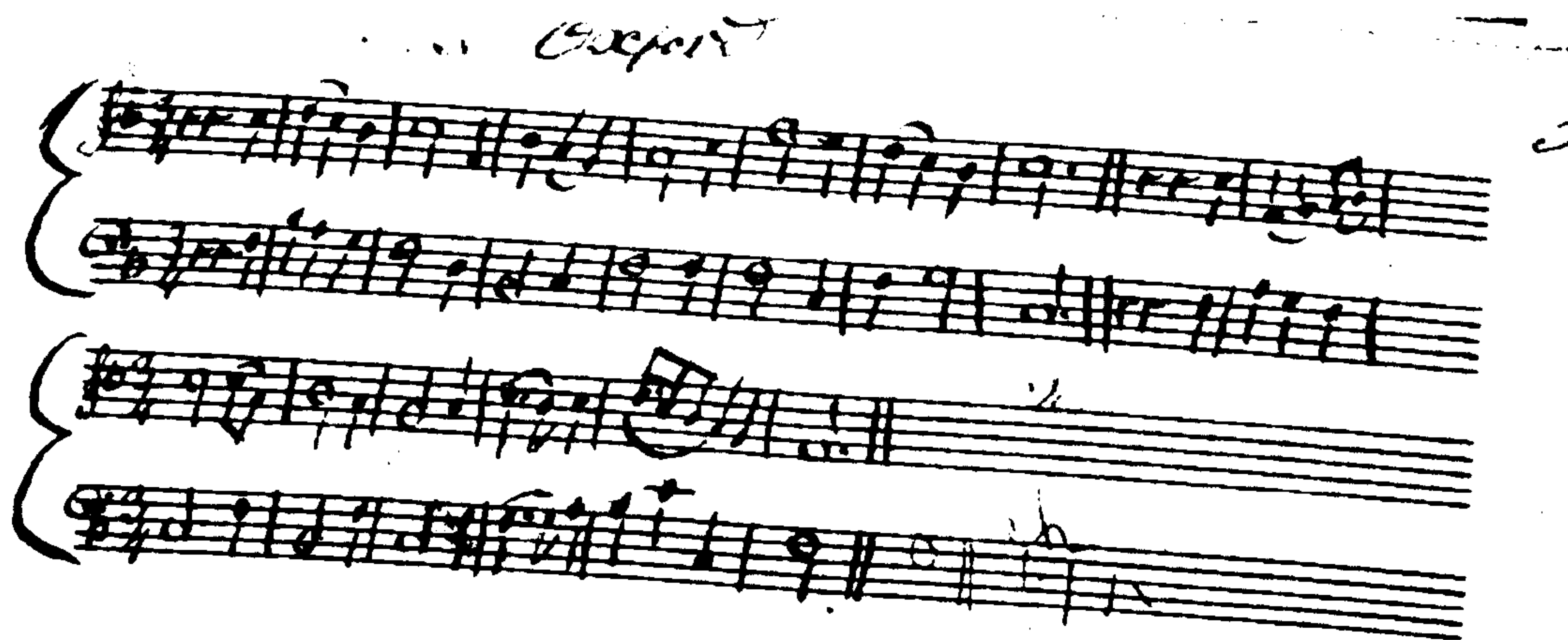
² Fuller, Andrew, The Fuller Tune Book. Northampton. 1794.

F 216 *Nativity* C.M. *All. ferm.*

Nativity Continued

It was after the demise of the choirband that music for hymns became more commonly written on two musical staves, indicating that they were played on a keyboard instrument such as the organ or harmonium. Further analysis of the Williams part-book reveals this stage of the development of psalmody to hymnody and even though the music is written on two staves, some of the pieces continue to exhibit some of the characteristics of choirband music. Another original composition can be found on page five of the book and, as the transition from psalmody to hymnody is traced, the analysis of this tune makes an interesting contribution to the discussion. A significant point is the title, which takes neither an abstract noun such as Condescension or Consolation, nor a name reminiscent of the Nonconformist academies such as Dayentry, but instead uses the collegiate title, that of Oxford, a city about twelve miles from Ardley. The use of such titles became prevalent after the

Oxford Movement had set the reforms in church music necessary to tame the free composition that had hitherto been popular. The tune Oxford in the Williams part-book, which cannot be identified so can be assumed to be locally composed, demonstrates little of the musical excellence seen in two other tunes bearing this title that became popular during the twentieth century, namely Oxford New by George Coombes,³ and Oxford by John Goss.⁴ However, its inclusion in the Williams part-book suggests that the influence of the Oxford Movement was starting to be felt in Ardley in the second half of the nineteenth century. The tune itself contains *few* of the features of choirband music, although final bids for a florid style can be seen in the dotted rhythms of the last three bars and the rests at the beginning of the second half of the tune. However, there are no dynamic markings, and the common metre setting requires no modification to fit to the words of a metrical psalm. Set in F major, it will be seen that an accidental is missing in bar seven, as the modulation clearly requires a B natural to move to C major suggested by the cadence at bar eight.

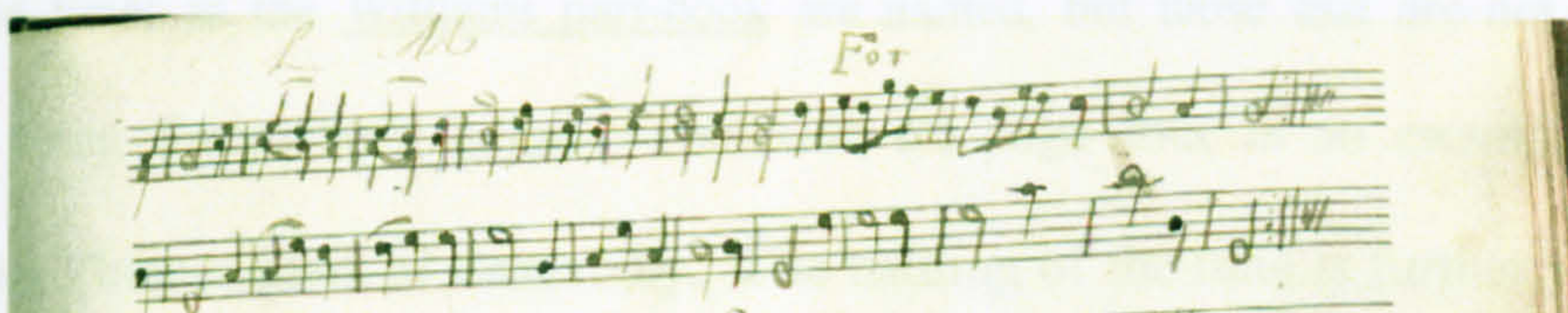


Other compositions in the Williams part-book can be seen to represent the kind of music used at the stage of congregational hymn singing immediately after the

³ Coombes, G., Twenty Psalm Tunes, Bristol, 1772.

⁴ This tune is popularly set to the words See Amid The Winter's Snow by Edward Caswall (1814-87)

choirbands fell from favour. An example of these is Consolation, a Long Metre tune that can be seen as a link between the uses of published hymn tunes available to all congregations and the use of handwritten manuscripts. This tune, by W. Arnold of Portsea, is written on two staves, but it maintains many of the characteristics of pieces composed for groups of melody instruments.



The “air” is written on the treble staff of the music, but the composer contributes to the harmonic interest by the addition of a lower part to the treble staff in the second half of the piece, which suggests that it may have been composed before it was usual to write pieces using treble and bass staves alone, and certainly before it appeared in a congregational tune book. Other similarities between Consolation and Condescention are the careful addition of dynamic markings, especially the final *forte* in the last four bars, along with a repeating second section. However, as in the piece on the last page of the Williams part-book, the promise of interest heralded with a flourish of quaver movement towards the end again comes to nothing, as the piece ends with a rhythmically uninteresting perfect cadence.

Written on the same page as Consolation, is a tune entitled Derby. Once more the name is interesting as many hymns were called after places. No composer is linked to this tune, but it is significant that one of the sources in which it can be found is the

same as other pieces in the Williams part-book, that of A New Selection of Sacred Music by Samuel Dyer. A few features make it worthy of note in this study, as it contains indications of the transition from psalmody to hymnody. It is the only tune in the Williams part-book to use grace notes, a device popular with choirband writers. The thirteenth bar has rests in the bass part, and the treble line joins in with an imitative rhythmic passage, again suggestive of choirband writing. However, the parts move frequently by step, and the harmonic structure is unadventurous. It is a Long Metre tune in C major, with only a brief modulation to G major.

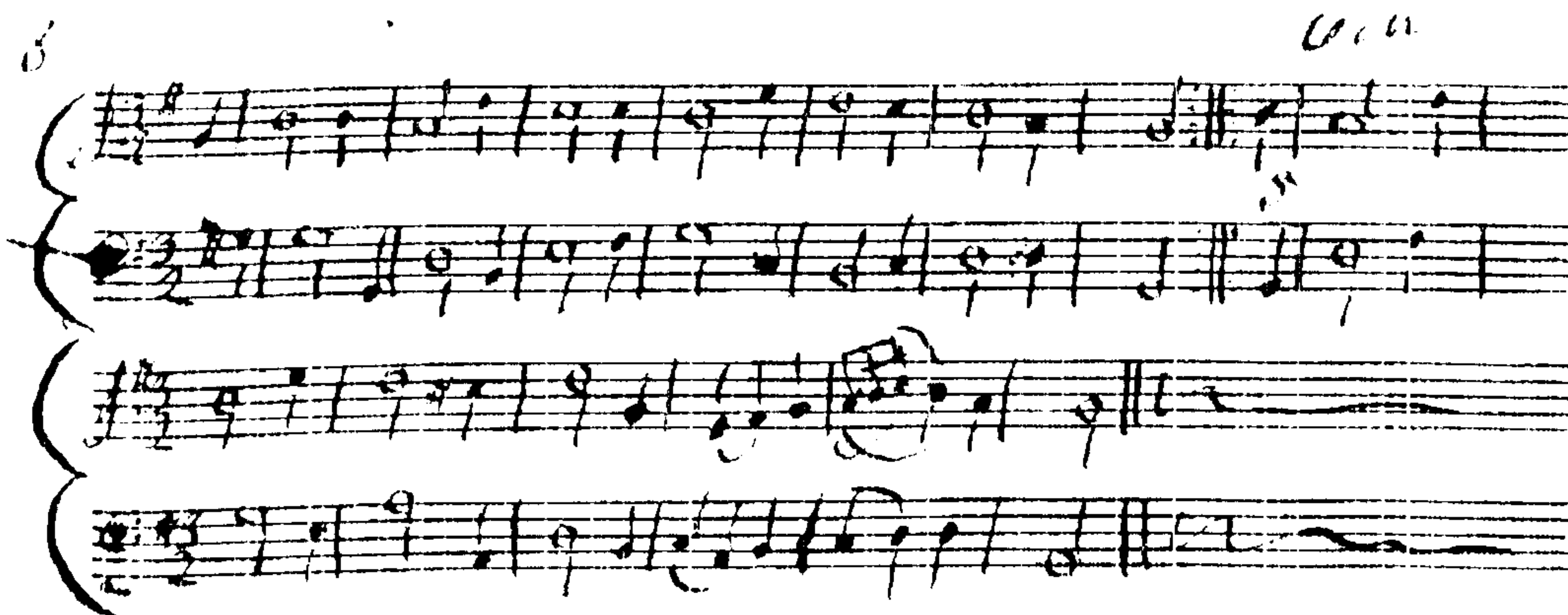
Not all the tunes in the Williams part-book are named, but those that are not have been identified using Temperley's Index. The tune on page four is an example of this, Axbridge by Thomas Clark of Canterbury. The naming of the tune is further verified by the fact that, alphabetically, it is in sequence with the preceding tunes. Another significant feature is that one of the sources quoted by Temperley, Dyer's A New Selection of Sacred Music, is the same as for Condescention. Although written for performance on a keyboard instrument shown by the two staves, one for treble and one for bass, the pieces continue to demonstrate some of the characteristics of choirband music, already seen in Consolation. These features include a flowing bass, repeating second half, and the addition of *piano* and *forte* markings towards the end. In triple time, it is in the key of D major, and does not have any accidentals, although it modulates to G major in bar 14. The parallel movement in thirds and sixths can be heard at various points throughout the piece, and the characteristic flurry in movement on the final bars makes use of a contrary motion scale, and a dotted rhythm in the penultimate bar in the upper part. A suggested set of words is written in pencil over the top, the number "23". This suggests that the tune would be suitable for the words of the twenty third psalm, and this tuneful composition proves to be a lively setting of it,

reminiscent of many choirband pieces.



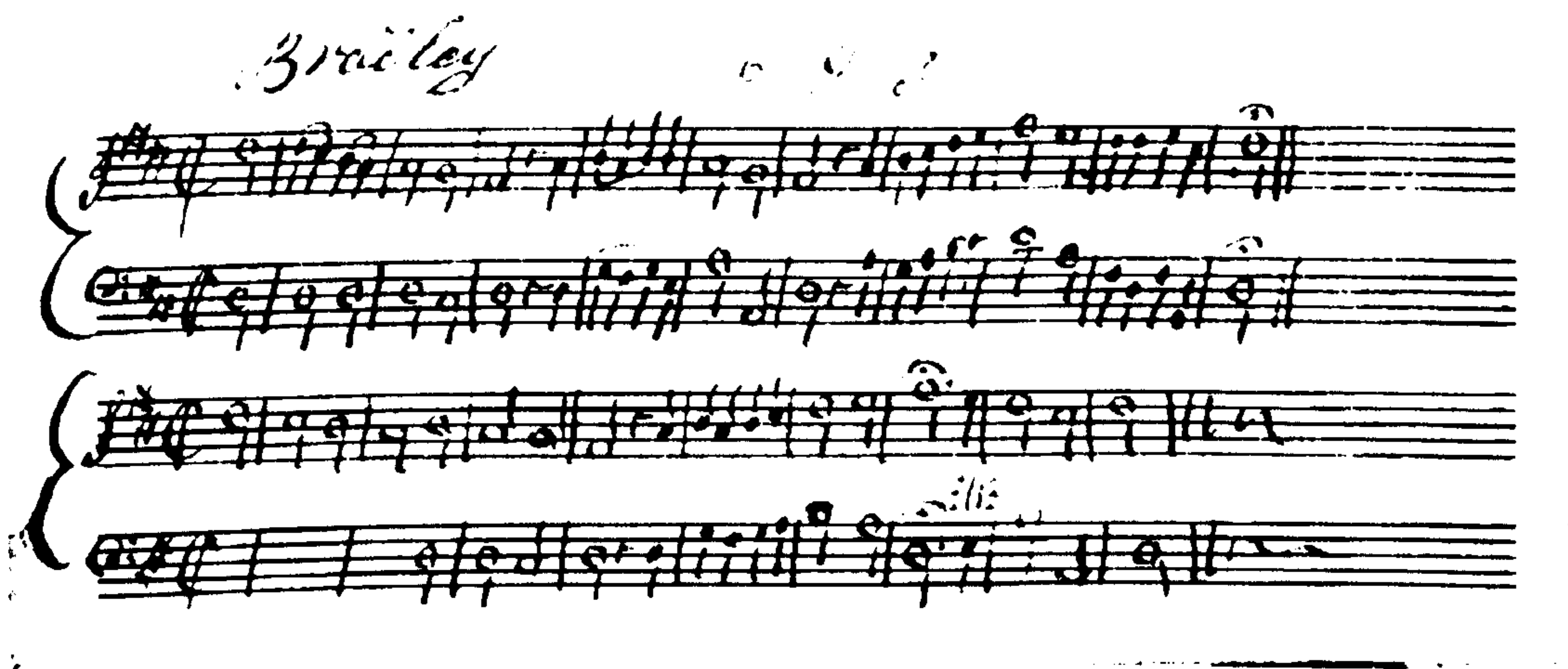
The Lo - rds my shep - herd. I'll - not want, he make me
down - to lie with - in the path of righ - - teous
ness - the qui - - et wat - ters by, th qui - - et - - wat - - ters by

The tune on page eight is again in triple time, although it is inaccurately written as 3/2, when, as there are three crotchets in a bar, not three minims, the divisions of the notes and bars clearly indicate that it is in 3/4. This has been identified in Temperley's Index as simply called Psalm One. On the handwritten manuscript the words "psalm I NV" have been added which corresponds with the evidence. The tune is by Thomas Clark of Canterbury, the second by him in the Williams part-book. Written in G major, with a modulation to D major in the second half, this is a rather more static piece than others in this section, although there is the characteristic flurry of movement in the treble part in the penultimate bar.



Handwritten musical score for a piece in 3/4 time. The score consists of four staves, with the first two staves grouped by a brace on the left. The music is written in G major and modulates to D major in the second half. The penultimate bar shows a characteristic flurry of movement in the treble part.

Temperley does not index the tune Bradley and this suggests that it was composed later than many tunes in the Williams part-book, that is, after 1820. However, the same tune is used in the Companion to the Wesleyan Hymn book with the title Bradley Church. This means that the tune was certainly in use before 1846. Written on two staves, the piece reveals few of the features associated with choirband music, and once more there are inaccuracies in the harmonic writing. Other features that indicate it was composed more recently include the static bass part, and the fermata markings at the ends of each line, a trait that became popular with the Victorian hymn writers. In this version of the tune, there is little independent movement between the parts and, save for a short descending passage in the second half of the tune, when the treble functions alone, both parts have the same rhythmic patterns.



Most of the tunes in the Williams part-book are very clearly written, the exception being an unnamed tune that appears in the middle of the book. Although it contains many inaccuracies in the melody writing and mistakes in harmonic progression, the piece can be identified through Temperley's Index as Mary's Choice by H. Lolhurst. Once more the handwritten version of this tune can be seen as a link between the freer compositions of the choirband composers and the more restrained writing of the Victorian era. Although it is written on two staves, the copyist appears to be ill at

ease with the conventions of writing in short score form (i.e. writing two top parts on the top stave and two on the bottom, with the tails for the soprano and tenor parts going up, and the alto and bass going down) as there are inaccuracies in the writing out. The original copy of the piece is so muddled in its writing that it is difficult both to follow and reproduce. There are also a number of inaccuracies in the harmonic structure of the part writing. An example of this is the writing of the note A in the bass as the last note, when this should clearly be a B flat, the key of the piece. There is none of the style that has come to be recognised as choirband music exemplified in pieces such as Condescension, suggesting that the composer was not familiar with these conventions. The score does not contain any of the dynamic markings characteristic of the period and furthermore there is no indication that the melody is in any part other than the treble. However, some attempt has been made to mimic some of the points of style. For example, in bars 4-8 both the alto and the tenor line have rests, allowing the tune to be carried by the treble and tenor parts which move in falling sixths, slurring on every beat. Although this musical device is a feature of mid-nineteenth century Nonconformist writing, in this instance the long section is not typical. The four-part harmony introducing the second half of the tune is reminiscent of choirband music, using dotted rhythms and a strong modulation to the dominant key of F major, and the subsequent sequential passage of thirds in two parts is a frequent characteristic of choirband music. This passage, in bars 13 and 14 of the original, further suggests that the music was written out for the keyboard and the lower part switches from the tenor to the alto in the middle of the phrase. As in the last piece of the Williams part-book, these rests herald a flurry of rhythmic and melodic movement in all parts, suggesting a fuguing tune, but instead simply end the tune with three chords, with only a suspended note in the altos to add harmonic

interest.

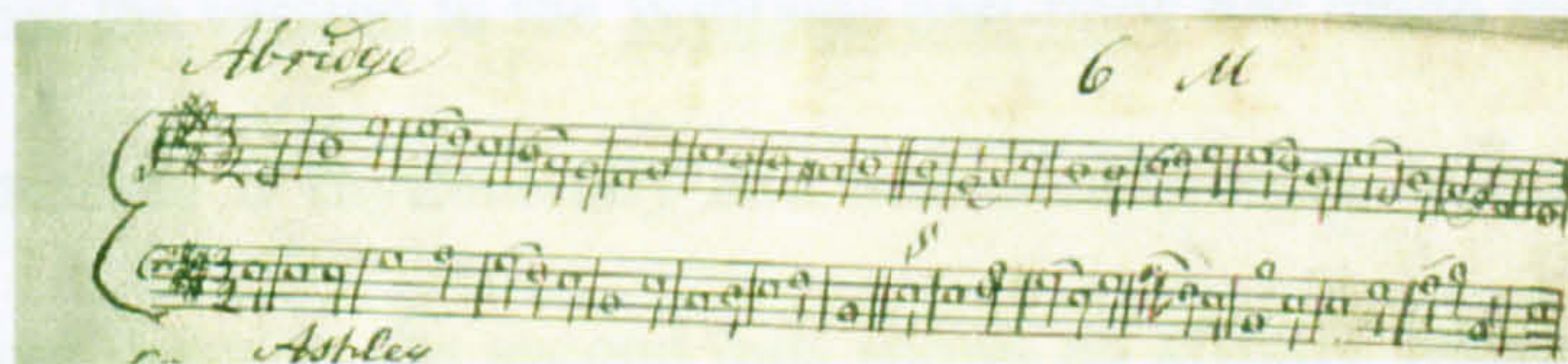
The time signature of the piece is marked as common time, the C suggesting four crotchet beats in the bar. However, the metre allows for two minim beats, and so the time signature should be C. The metre itself appears to be an extended form of Long Metre (8.8.8.8.), embellished with an extra half line, allowing for the repetition of a short phrase of the words. It has already been noted that the repetition of words toward the end of a verse is very characteristic of choirband music. Although no words are suggested in the Williams part-book itself, a suitable setting could be Before Jehovah's awful throne by Isaac Watts.

The image shows a musical score for a hymn. It consists of four systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "Be - fore Je - ho - vah's aw - ful throne Ye
ma - jesty bow with sac - red joy Know that the
Lord is God a - lone, He can - cre - ate, He - can cre - ate, and
He celi - ty". The music is in common time (C) and features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes in the vocal line, with a steady accompaniment in the piano part.

Many of the tunes mentioned so far in connection with the Williams part-book have subsequently fallen into obscurity. There are, however, a few examples of tunes that have remained enduring in their popularity. This clearly indicates that part-books, such as those of the current study, were forerunners of the established hymnbooks of

the twentieth century. For example, on the third page of the Williams part-book there is a version of Abridge. This is a fine example of a hymn tune that has become absorbed into all Christian denominations, appearing in many hymnbooks. Composed by Isaac Smith, it appears in A Collection of Psalm Tunes in Three Parts⁵ and in that version the melody was embellished with grace notes and trills. Dearmer describes the tune as “a beautifully fluent and graceful melody.... the best 18th century style of this class of tune”.⁶

The examination of the hymn tunes such as Abridge, which are copied into the Williams part-book, reveals that there are frequently many differences between handwritten and printed versions.



For example, the version of Abridge is unusual as it is in the key of E major, the same as the version in The Bristol Tune Book. However, this is a higher key than that to which the hymn is set in many other printed editions. For instance, in The Primitive Methodist Hymnbook⁷ and Hymns Ancient and Modern (Old Edition), both published in 1889, it is written in Eb major, whereas in Hymns Ancient and Modern, New Standard and The Anglican Hymnbook it is written in D major. This lowering of the pitch of hymn tunes is a trend that became particularly apparent with the introduction of Hymns Ancient and Modern. Other significant differences occur in the bass part

⁵ Smith, Isaac, A Collection of Psalm Tunes in Three Parts, London, c. 1780.

⁶ Dearmer, P., Songs of Praise Discussed, London, Oxford University Press, 1933, p. 67.

⁷ Booth, George, ed., The Primitive Methodist Hymnal, London, Primitive Methodist Publishing House, 1889.

as, whilst the melody remains constant in all versions, the bass part differs significantly. The following example shows the bass part from The Bristol Tune Book.

Abridge - bass part

Bristol Tune Book,



It can be seen that the version in the Williams part-book has much more movement in the bass part, making it rhythmically and melodically more interesting. A dotted rhythm of passing notes in the second half shows an affinity with earlier choirband music, as does the *forte* indication. The octave leap in the penultimate bar is more interesting than the repeated B found in the version in the Bristol Tune Book. This suggests that the writer's sympathies remained with the earlier choirband music.

It is perhaps the second of the two tunes written on page three of the part-book, which encompasses all the characteristics of change in church music in the mid-nineteenth century. It is a version of the tune Ashley and takes its name from the Northamptonshire town. Tunes of this name exist, although according to D. W. Perry⁸ there are only two recent versions in The Methodist Hymn Book (1933) and the Redemption Hymnal. The tune now appears to have been dropped from standard repertoire, but an earlier version is included in The Primitive Methodist Hymnal. The

⁸ Perry, D. W., Hymns and Tunes Indexed, Croydon, The Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1980.

history of the tune Ashley is confusing, and its inclusion in the Williams part-book serves to emphasise the many changes which hymn tunes have undergone during the last 150 years. In The Primitive Methodist Hymnal, the tune is attributed to Rev. M. Madan, a London minister and academic, who had “no inconsiderable reputation as a musical composer.”⁹ His contribution to hymn writing is in collecting and altering, and J. Julian stresses that there is no evidence that he ever wrote a hymn, and that furthermore John Wesley himself bitterly resented the alterations made by Madan.¹⁰ The original composer of Ashley has not been found, although the Methodist Hymn Book 1933 attributes it to The Gospel Magazine of 1774.¹¹ Most striking is the difference between the three available versions of Ashley. The version in the Methodist Hymn Book includes a refrain not used in either the Williams part-book or the Primitive Methodist Hymnal and so will not be discussed further. Both the printed versions of Ashley are written in common time. The Primitive Methodist Hymnal uses crotchets and minims and this suggests a lively pace, suitable for the words, Salvation! O the joyful Sound by Isaac Watts.

⁹ Julian, p. 710.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 710.

¹¹ The tune Ashley is set to the words Salvation! O the joyful sound! by Isaac Watts, number 250.

GOD THE FATHER—HIS GRACE.

41

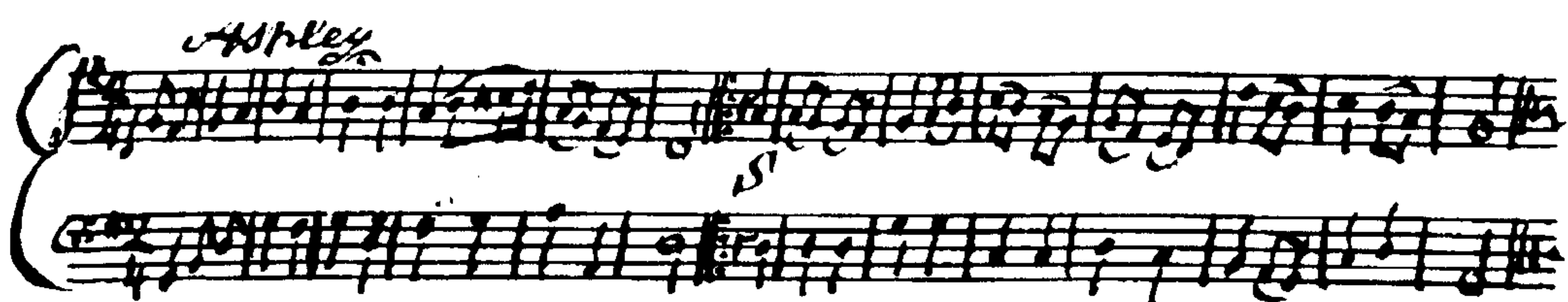
Ashley.—C.M.

REV. M. MADAM.

Although set to the same words, the version in the Methodist Hymn Book uses minims and semibreves, which creates an altogether more reserved mood for these joyful words. These versions are in different keys, A major and G major respectively, the lower key of the Methodist Hymn Book being in keeping with the trends of twentieth-century arrangements. Both versions are similar in harmonization and movement within the parts.

In contrast, the version in the Williams part-book is written in 2/4, and the extensive

use of crotchets and quavers sets a lively pace reminiscent of the choirband music enjoyed by novelists. The embellished phrase of the fourth bar is worthy of particular note. A quaver rest at the beginning of the second half sets a jaunty mood not seen in the printed versions, and the *forte* marking is entirely in keeping with tunes of the choirband era. However, the steady underpinning of the whole with a regular crotchet bass part is a reminder that this piece is intended to be played on a keyboard instrument.



Although the version of Ashley represents some of the more complex part writing, it has already been noted that the copying of tunes to a part-book frequently reduced them to their simplest form. Caleb Ashworth's tune Daventry, as it appears in the Williams part-book is an example of the uneasy shift in the Anglican church from the rustic choirbands peopled by tradesmen and artisans, to the more general use of a keyboard instrument played generally, although not exclusively, by a ~~man~~ woman of the congregation, such as the minister's wife, or a school teacher.

DAVENTRY



This version of Daventry can be used to illustrate how the reforms of the Oxford Movement were prevalent in small rural parishes such as Ardley. Instead of being richly embellished by the florid treble part of the earlier tunes, with the air in the tenor part, it can be seen that the melody is in the treble line, and is supported by a firm harmonic bass. Compare this simple arrangement of the tune to that researched and realised by Dr Stephen Weston in his Northamptonshire Church Music in the Late Eighteenth Century¹² which comes from Caleb Ashworth's A Collection of Tunes suited to the several metres commonly used in Publick Worships.¹³

¹² University of Leicester, Department of Adult Education 1992 - reproduced with permission.

¹³ London c1760.

We bless th' eternal source

Philip Dodderidge

Tune Daventry:
Caleb Ashworth c. 1760

[Air in Tenor]
1. We bless th' eter - nal source of light, Who
2. We bless the church 's sov' - reign King, Whose
3. Then, while be - tween our ranks he walks, And

1. makes the stars to shine; And, through this dark be -
2. gol - den lamps we are; Fix'd in the temp - les
3. all our state sur - veys, His smiles shall with new

1. cloud - ed world, Diff - u - seth rays div - ine.
2. of his love, To shine with rad - iance fair.
3. lust - re deck The peo - ple of his praise.

Once more note the air on the tenor staff, and the harmonic interest of the two higher parts. However, it is interesting to recognise that the air and bass parts are identical in both arrangements, suggesting our Ardley writer used the same source. This source was also apparently used for the last piece to be studied in the Williams part-book. This is Cambridge New, a title used for many hymn tunes during the nineteenth century. This particular version is catalogued by Temperley as called both Cambridge and Cambridge New. A tune with this title has been immortalized by Thomas Hardy who refers to it in his poem Afternoon Service at Mellstock (circa 1850). It seems particularly appropriate to end the analysis of the Williams part-book by mentioning the writer who was so concerned with the cultural loss of the choirband. Country churches, such as that at Ardley, had clearly benefited from the musical contributions of choirbands, and in his poem Hardy suggests that their passing serves no good end. As Hardy sets the scene, it is possible to imagine musicians playing from books such

as the Williams part-book.

On afternoons of drowsy calm
We stood in the panelled pew,
Singing one-voiced a Tate-and-Brady psalm
To the tune of "Cambridge New".

The examination of the Williams part-book has revealed many of the musical and cultural changes in hymn singing in the second half of the nineteenth and even though many were to follow, the fact that hymn tunes copied from other sources had started to creep into handwritten collections, suggests that this is the end of a particular phase in the development of church singing from psalmody to hymnody. Thomas Hardy clearly remembers such singing well.

So mindless were those outpourings -
Though I am not aware
That I have gained by subtle thought on things
Since we stood psalming there.

The examination of the Williams part-book has revealed the rich variety of music enjoyed by rural congregations in the mid-nineteenth century. The transition from psalmody to hymnody has been illustrated, using examples of locally composed psalm tunes as well as the addition of copied hymn tunes already available from other sources, and which were to form the basis for published collection of tunes and hymns, such as the Companion to the Wesleyan Hymn book.

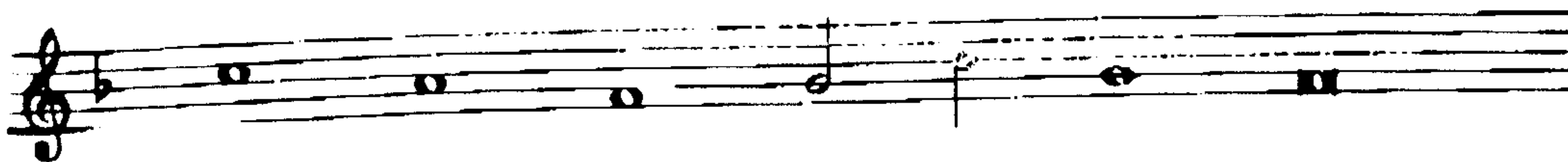
The analysis of the Green part-book indicates further developments in the subject as will now be discussed through a detailed study of its contents. As has been stated in Chapter Four, this part-book contains only tunes, making it difficult to make

assumptions about harmony and performance practice. However, as in the Williams part-book, many of the tunes can be traced to a very few sources, and in this case it is John Wesley's own Collection of Tunes, set to music, as they are commonly sung at the Foundery.¹⁴ It has already been noted in Chapter Four that this volume differs from the Williams part-book in several significant ways. For example, there has been no attempt on the part of the owner to copy or mimic any of the florid styles of the choirband era, and none of the pieces contain dynamic markings, repeat markings or fermatas. Instead, the tunes, which are melody only, are written almost exclusively in minim beats, with little embellishment, save for a very few crotchet passing notes. As the tunes written in the book have no indication of harmony and very little rhythmic interest, it is difficult to draw conclusions about either the original source of the music or any possible performance practice carried out by the owner of the book, and it can only be assumed that local conventions were put into practice. The most valuable contribution to the discussion made by the Green part-book is the wide variety of repertoire contained in it as, it includes both psalm and hymn tunes, as well as classical pieces copied from organ tutors, and fragments of melody by classical composers such as Mendelssohn and Weber. There are also a few representative local compositions which, when examined alongside those in the Williams part-book, reveal more information about developments in hymn singing in the second half of the nineteenth century. In common with the Williams part-book, the Green part-book does not have every page filled, and random groups of tunes appear after a large number of blank pages.

The grouping of the tunes in the Green part-book suggests that it was a working

¹⁴ Wesley, John, London, Printed, A. Pearson, sold, T. Harris, 1712.

volume, with tunes added randomly over a period of time. Because of this, it is useful to analyse the contents in accordance with the type of tune, rather than work through from first to last page. The first selection of tunes to be examined will be the ones that are in common with those noted by Tate and Brady in A New Version of the Psalms of David as suitable to accompany any of the psalms. In the “Directions about the Tunes and Measures”,¹⁵ the authors write that common metre tunes “may be sung to any of the most usual tunes”,¹⁶ and those which appear in the Green part-book are York Tune, Windsor, St Mary’s, St Anne’s and Old Hundred. Examination of these tunes reveals the stage of development in psalm tunes that was reached by the second half of the nineteenth century. In common with almost all the other tunes in the Green part-book, the version of Old Hundred, is written entirely in minims, and neither notes of a longer duration, nor are pause marks indicated. The tune, which is described by Dearmer as “probably the most famous of all psalm-tunes, whether early or late”,¹⁷ emphasises the usefulness of the Green part-book as a working collection. The tune takes its name from the fact that it was attached to Kethe’s paraphrase of Psalm 100, All People That On Earth Do Dwell and was composed or adapted by Louis Bourgeois, first appearing in the Genevan Fourscore and Seven Psalms of David, 1561. Dearmer illustrates that the original of the last line was as follows:¹⁸



This use of rhythmic variety in the middle of the phrase contrasts with the steady

¹⁵ Brady, N. and Tate, N., A New Version of the Psalms of David, London, Company of Stationers, 1767.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹⁷ Dearmer, 1933, p. 238.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

minims of the version in the Green part-book, suggesting that this handwritten version would be much easier to sing for members of a choir.



It is interesting to note that this version is a third higher than the original quoted by Dearmer, written in A major, the same key as the version which appears in the Bristol Tune Book. It should be noted that whilst the changes in key of psalm tunes, especially the lowering of keys, is sometimes an indication of a more modern rendering of a tune, this is not always the case. Indeed in the New Version it is clearly stated that all tunes can be sung in “cheerful”, (major) or “melancholy”, (minor) keys.¹⁹

On page 27 of the Green part-book a version of the tune St Ann (written frequently with and without a final “e”) is presented. This first appeared in A Supplement to the New Version of Psalms.

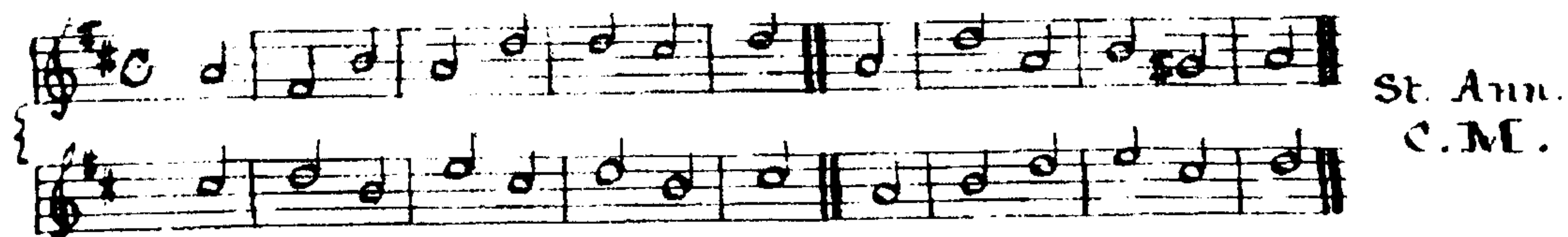
St Anne's Tune, Psalm XI.VV, Tate and Brady, p. 38.



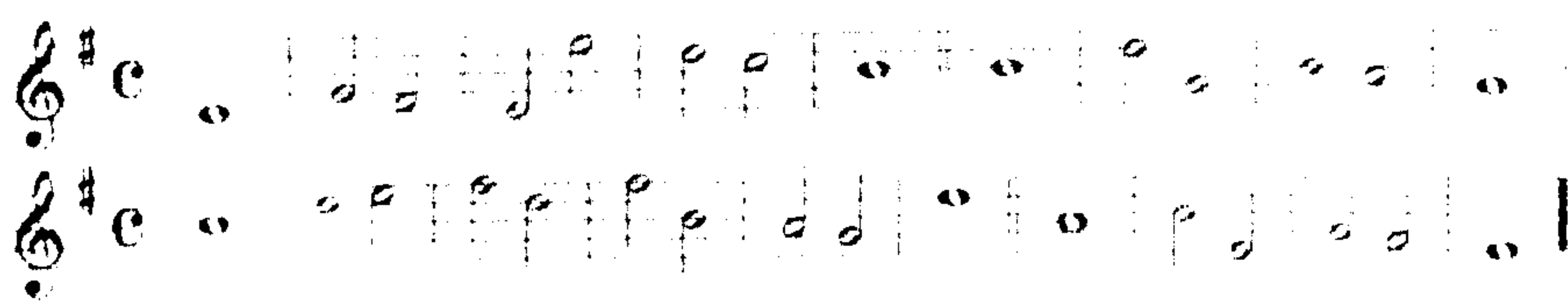
It is not known exactly who wrote this tune, but as William Croft was connected with the book's production, the tune is generally attributed to him. The version in the Green part-book is exactly the same as this early version, except for the difference in

¹⁹ Tate and Brady, p. v.

the rhythm of the last line.



Another example of a psalm tune suggested by Tate and Brady is St Mary, which was introduced by Edmund Prys in 1621, where it is set to psalm two in his version of the Psalms.²⁰ Its composer is entirely unknown, and in fact, it bears evidence of being made up from phrases of other tunes. St Mary was adapted to English words by Playford, and since then has been credited to various composers – amongst them Croft, Blow and Rathiel, none of whom were born when St Mary was first sung. The tune appears in John Wesley's Foundery Tune Book, where it appears a tone higher than that in the Green part-book, in G major.



The version in the Green part-book differs significantly from that of Wesley, especially in the third line. Here the melody continues to fall, ending the phrase on the supertonic note, rather than the dominant note. This, of course, makes it easier to sing, as it is lower in pitch.

²⁰ Prys, Edmund, Llyfr psalmau, wedi eu cyfiethu, a'u cyfansoddi ar fesur cerdd, yn, Gymraeg, Shrewsbury, Thomas Jons, 1700.



The analysis of the tune York as it appears in the Green part-book is particularly interesting in the debate concerning developments in hymn singing. This tune is a fine illustration of the treatment many of the original psalm tunes suffered at the hands of those anxious to tame church music during the nineteenth century. It is one of the twelve “common tunes”, that is those not assigned to any particular psalm, in Andro Hart’s The Psalms of David, where it is called The Stilt. It was a popular tune for a long time, and Sir John Hawkins says of it,

Half the nurses of England were used to sing it by way of a Lullaby, and the chimes of many county churches have it played six or eight times in twenty four hours.²¹

However, several clergymen undertook the edition of books on psalmody and their experimentation rarely led to good results. An example of this is the work of Revd. S. W. Gandy, vicar of Kingston-cum-Richmond who published his Book of Congregational Psalmody in 1828. In this he maintained that tunes ought to be more thoroughly harmonised, and created this solid version of York.

²¹ Lightwood, J. T., Hymn-tunes and their story, London, C. H. Kelly, 1906. p. 277.

York - Gandy's Psalmody.

The image shows a musical score for 'York - Gandy's Psalmody'. It consists of five systems of two staves each, one for the treble clef and one for the bass clef. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The tempo marking 'Slow' is written above the first bass staff. The music is primarily homophonic, with chords in the bass and single notes in the treble. The first system has a 'Slow' marking. The second system has a 'C' time signature. The third system has a 'C' time signature. The fourth system has a 'C' time signature. The fifth system has a 'C' time signature. The music ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

22

The tempo marking on this version of the tune is “slow” and this adds greatly to the debate about nineteenth-century conventions for the performance of hymns. There was a mistaken idea that all the old psalm tunes should be sung slowly, and they became unpopular because they were considered dull and heavy. However, it should be noted that when they first appeared in church services they were called “Geneva jigs”,²³ and it was this that led one writer of the period to write:

²² Lightwood, 1906, p.277.

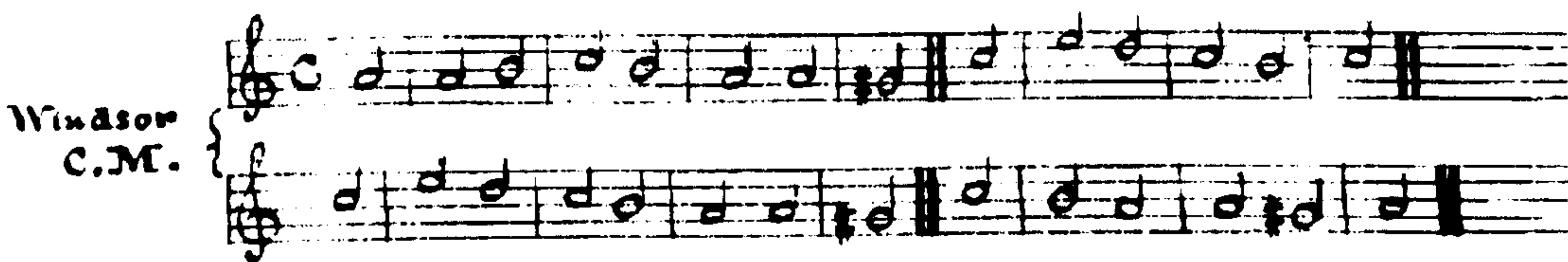
²³ Ibid.

Strange indeed it is that the very tunes that send us to sleep caused our forefathers to dance.²⁴

The final tune in of those suggested by Tate and Brady which appears in the Green part-book is Windsor. This is first found, set to Psalm 116, in the Booke of the Musicke of M. William Damon, (1591). In Este's Psalter (1592) the tune is classified as one of "those tunes newly added in this booke".²⁵



In this instance the tune is nameless, and it is in Ravencroft's Psalter that it first appears under the title of "Windsor or Eaton". In the Green part-book, Windsor is written in the higher key of A minor, once more the same as in the Bristol Tune Book. It is apparent that the most significant differences lie in the rhythm, which is entirely regular.



The study of the Green part-book reveals the complex problems of identifying tunes by their names. Research reveals that many tunes are called after place names and occasionally different tunes appear with the same title. This has already been seen in

²⁴ Lightwood, 1906, p.277.

²⁵ Dearmer, 1933, p. 291.

the examples of Oxford and Derby from the Williams part-book. In the Green part-book the Long Metre tune called Winchester, is an example of the meticulous care need when transcribing the title of a tune. The version of Winchester, which is copied into the Green part-book is commonly known as Winchester New in more recent collections, and is attributed to Casselius, with Winchester being quite another tune. Paradoxically The Bristol Tune Book entitles this Winchester Old, with the Casselius version being entitled Winchester. All this being said, the version in the Green part-book is identical to the one in the Bristol Tune Book in both key and rhythm, and is adapted from a melody in the Musicalisches Handbuch published in Hamburg in 1690.



This tune was included by John Wesley in his Foundery Tune-book of 1742, under the title of Swift German Tune. Examination will show that there are considerable differences between the Wesleys' version and that in the Green part-book. This emphasises that the owner of the part-book would have been in possession of a much more recent collection of tunes. The shape of Wesley's tune is similar, and both tunes are in Common Metre. However, Wesley introduces a dotted rhythm in the fourth bar, thus moving much more swiftly to the tonic, which forms the cadence for the end of the first line. The version in the Green part-book, ends the phrase on the mediant note of E, and makes a more elaborate modulation to the dominant key of G major. The third line is the same in both versions, but the fourth line shows considerable variation, as seen below.



The variety of repertoire written in the Green part-book can be seen when a further group of tunes is analysed. These are included in what Lightwood describes as “tunes commonly used in our churches at the beginning of the nineteenth century.”²⁶ Alongside St Anne’s and St Mary’s he mentions, with others, St James, Burford and Bedford, all of which are included in the Green part-book. It would seem that the owner of the volume was aware of the historical connection between these tunes, as they are grouped together. When analysed within the context of the Green part-book these tunes can be said to be representative of the transition from psalmody to hymnody, as it will be demonstrated how the simplification of tunes became more usual to accommodate the needs of the singing congregation. In keeping with the others in the book, the tunes are all written entirely in minims in common time, a characteristic not unusual as this allowed easy general participation. Thus it can be seen that the versions in the Green part-book emphasise that the congregation for whom it was intended was accustomed to joining in with simplified renditions of hymns and metrical psalms. It is also interesting to note that the examination of the handwritten versions reveals that such tunes would still be much altered to suit the requirements of the individual musician. In the case of the Green part-book this meant the simplification of the tune almost to skeletal form. St James, which is written on page twenty six, is by Raphael Courteville, and first made its appearance in Select Psalms and Hymns for the use of the Parish Church and Tabernacle of St

²⁶ Lightwood, 1906, p. 268.

James's, Westminster, (1697). This tune is representative of what Lightwood describes as “one of the many unfortunate tunes that have passed through many editions, and got straitened in the process.”²⁷ He comments that the original tune had four crotchets at the end, which greatly added to its charm.

J. T. Lightwood, page 215.



Versions that may have been contemporary with the Green part-book do not use these crotchets, although the version in the Primitive Methodist Hymnal introduces a crotchet passing note at the end of the second line, which embellishes the tune slightly.

Primitive Methodist Hymnal number 872.



The key of the handwritten version is B flat major, a tone lower than that in the Primitive Methodist Hymnal, which in turn is a tone lower than the original key of the tune, D major. This serves to emphasise that the simplification of tunes also included the lowering of the pitch with a view to making them easier for congregations to sing.

Further evidence of the taming of hymn tunes can be seen in the study of Bedford, which appears on page twenty-seven of the Green part-book. This tune, by William

²⁷ Lightwood, 1935, p. 215.

Weale is included in Wesley's Foundery Tune Book. When Wesley transcribed it, he seems to have made mistakes in the barring system, as can be seen below. In the second half of the tune, instead of adding a bar line after the first minim to complete the previous bar as is customary, he starts a completely new bar. This means that there is an unfinished bar at the end of the first half of the tune.

John Wesley

A Collection of tunes, set to music, as they are commonly sung at the Foundery.

Bedford Tune

The un - to my Lord hath said Sit
 thou in glor - ry sit, Till I thine en -
 e - mies have made To bow be - neath thy feet.

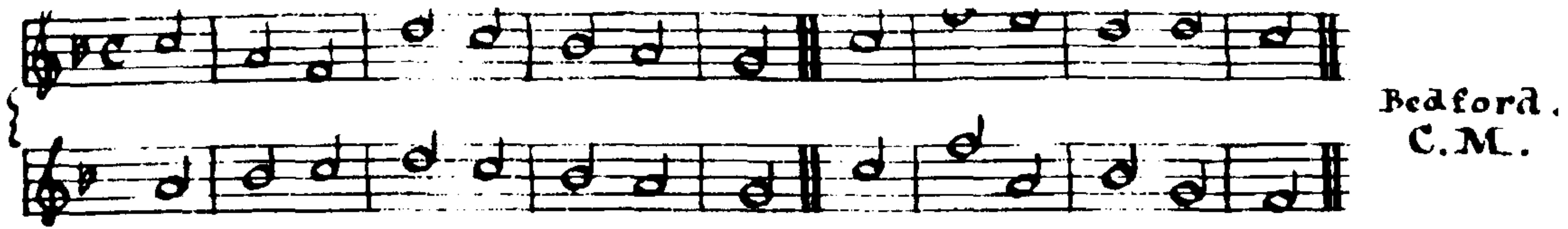
In Wesley's version the tune, as can be seen, is in 3/2, which gives it a spirited feel. However, in 1812 the tune suffered at the hands of William Gardiner who included it in a volume of Sacred Melodies, altering the time signature to 2/4, and also lowering the pitch of the tune. He wrote:

I have changed the key to E, and written it in common time, a measure that is more stately, and better accords with the solemn grandeur in which it is disposed to move.²⁸

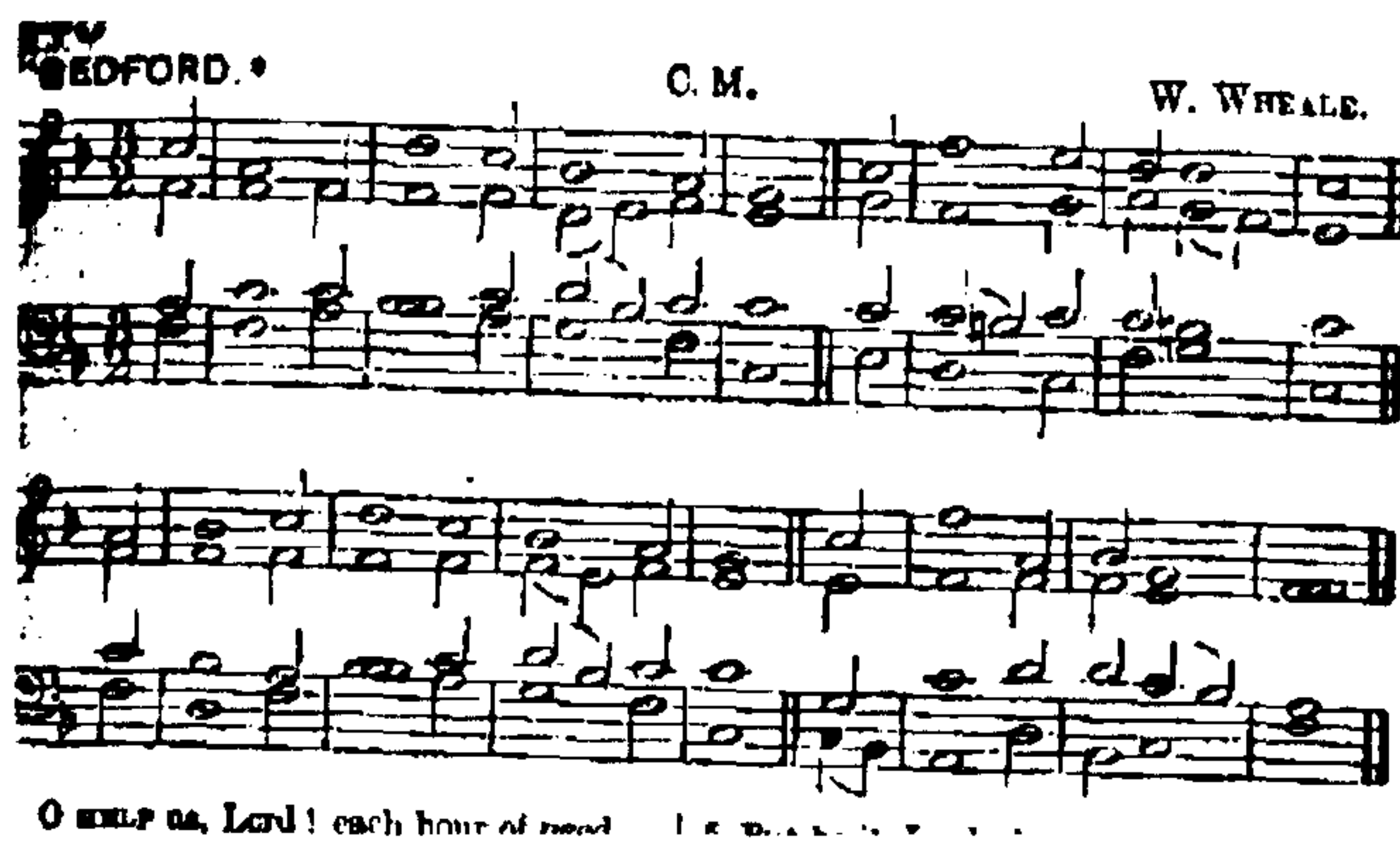
It seems that Gardiner influenced Alfred Bache, as his version is also in common time. However, the key signature of the tune in the Green part-book is F major, the

²⁸ Lightwood, 1935, p. 120.

same as Wesley's.



From an examination of this tune, as it appears in the Green part-book, it is possible to ascertain more information about the date of this volume. This is because it would appear that the taming of the tune did not meet with universal approval and at the beginning of the twentieth century, it appeared in the Methodist Hymn Book (1904) in the original triple time, still in the key of F major.

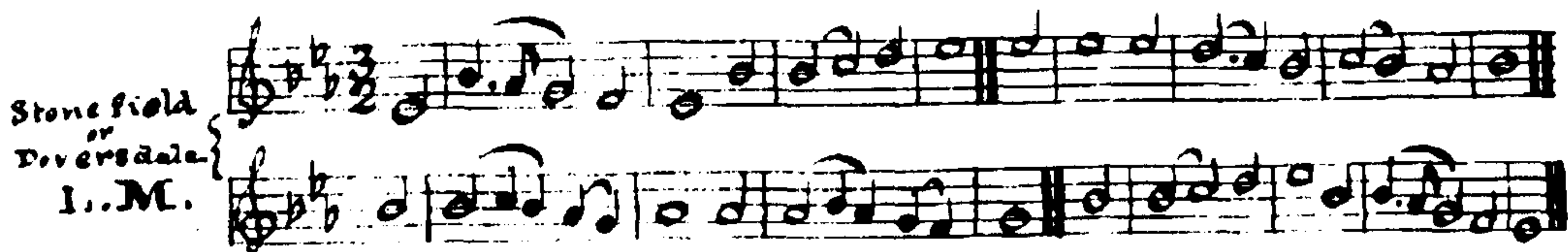


Sadly, in the 1933 edition of the Methodist Hymn Book, Bedford re-emerges in compound time, in the lower key of E flat major.

The tune Burford is possibly by Purcell and made its first appearance in the Foundery Tune Book. It was one of the more common tunes used in our churches at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Although it has been noted that the Green part-book contains tunes of very little rhythmic interest, two exceptions to this appear on pages four and five. On page four a version of "Stonesfield or Doversdale" is written. Lightwood writes that the tune

was “originally” called Stonesfield²⁹ and this suggests that the manuscript version was copied from an original source and provides a link with the Bache family and the Birmingham area. The tune is by Samuel Stanley (1767-1822), a native of Birmingham and a prominent musician, who published his own tunes. The version in the Green part-book contains some crotchet movement, and an embellishment to the tune in the third line.



This is exactly the version that appears in the Primitive Methodist Hymnal, save for an accidental A natural, which is missing from the penultimate note in the second line. Interestingly, this version is more ornate than that contained in the Methodist Hymn Book (1907).



²⁹ Lightwood, 1935, p. 437.

On page five of the Green part-book is a version of the tune Rockingham, probably one of the most popular hymn tunes of all time. Composed by Edward Miller, it takes its name from the Marquis of Rockingham who was a patron and friend of Miller. The tune has been altered and reharmonised so many times since its appearance in Psalms of David 1790 by Dr. E. Miller, that the original is interesting.



The inscription this version bears³⁰ reads “Part of the melody taken from a hymn book” and is explained by the fact that Miller reworked it from a tune called Tunbridge. In its earliest appearances, Rockingham was not associated with any particular set of words and it was not until it was included in Mercer’s Church Psalter in 1854 that it became coupled with Isaac Watts’ words When I Survey the Wondrous Cross. The most significant difference between the handwritten and the printed forms

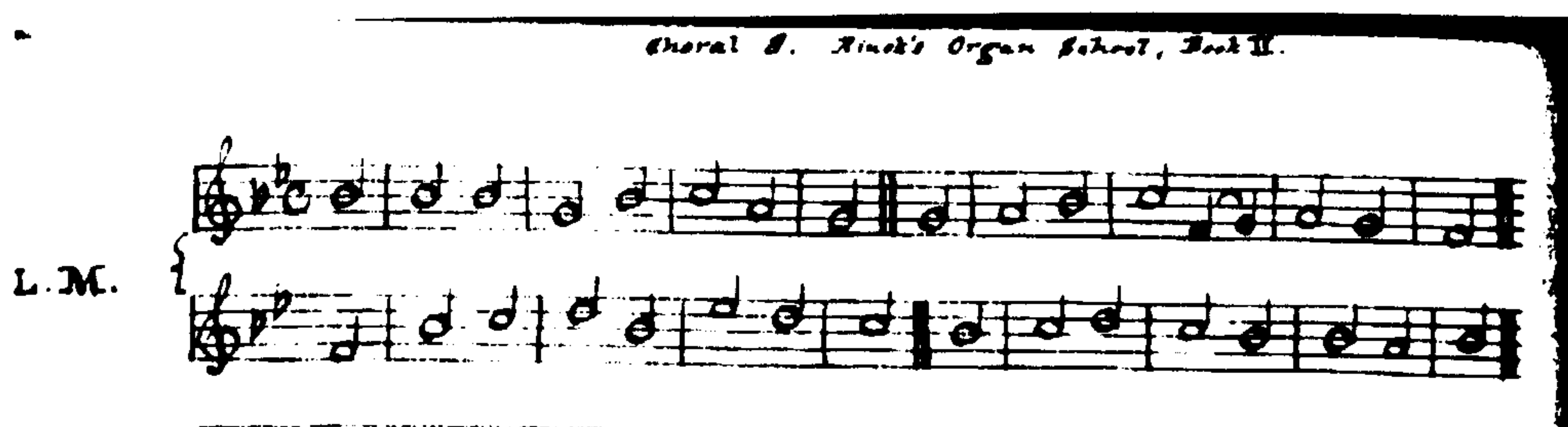
³⁰ Lightwood, 1906, p 270.

is the dotted rhythms that appear in the former. This gives this sedate tune a curiously light-hearted feel, although the time and key signatures are as they appear in many printed hymnbooks.



The key of the handwritten version is B flat major, a tone lower than that in the Primitive Methodist Hymnal, which in turn is a tone lower than the original key of the tune, D major. A similar lowering of pitch occurs in the following tune in the Green part-book, London New. This is from the Scottish Psalter (1635) and was originally called Newtown. The handwritten version is in the key of D major, whereas the Primitive Methodist Hymnal version is a semitone higher, in E flat major.

It seems possible that Alfred Bache was an organist, as some of the pieces are taken from organ tutors. Page two, for example, contains a tune taken from Rinck's Organ School, Book II. Johann Christian Heinrich Rinck (1770-1846) was a famous German organist who was the author of the Practical Organ School, a set of six graded books. This tune, in B flat major and in long metre, has a range of less than one octave and moves mostly by step in sedate minim beats.



The influence of classical composers seems to have inspired the owner of the Green part-book either to compose hymn tunes, or at least to transcribe a fragment for use as a hymn setting. On page 77 two such tunes appear. The first seems to have been directly inspired by the tunes entitled Sacred Wisdom and Relief by Weber and Mendelssohn respectively, which are written on page 76. Similarly taking an abstract noun for the title, Progress is in the same metre as the preceding tunes, which is described as 3½, the significance of which is not clear. Whereas Sacred Wisdom and Relief are four line tunes with the metre 7.7.7.7., Progress is an eight-line tune, the metre of which is 7.7.7.7.7.7.7. The tune has a range of one octave, and whilst the melodic movement is still largely by step, there is more movement in the piece than in others in the book.



The tune is in Eb major, and modulates to C minor at the beginning of the second half. This is in itself an interesting development within the book, as few of the other tunes contain obvious modulations. The long metre means that it is suitable for few hymn words, although Wesley's Jesu, Lover Of My Soul would be appropriate.

The tunes in the Green part-book appear as simplified versions of their originals and even the last few pages of the volume demonstrate this. On page 57 there is a version of Aylesbury, a tune more commonly known as Wirksworth in more recent collections.



It is interesting to note that even the version in Hymns Ancient and Modern (New Standard) contains a richer variety of rhythms,³¹ therefore suggesting that ease of performance and presentation was paramount to the owner of the Green part-book.

SECOND TUNE

Wirksworth S.M. (Aylesbury) Adapted from J. Chetham (Psalms, 1718)

The image displays two systems of musical notation. Each system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The music is written in a style typical of 17th-century church music, featuring block chords and simple melodic lines. The first system has four measures, and the second system has four measures. The piece ends with a double bar line. The number '340' is printed below the second system.

340

The influence of the classical composers, alongside the obvious use of organ tutors emphasises that the owner of the Green part-book was accustomed to the use of the organ as accompaniment for hymns. The analysis of the Blue part-book demonstrates further stages in the development of church singing as it progressed from psalmody to hymnody, as it includes chants, and canticles, as well as hymn tunes. The volume contains a much wider range of church music than either of the two older ones. It is

³¹ Ancient and Modern (New Standard), number 157.

carefully organised, with hymns at one end, chants and canticles at the other, and an anthem written on the middle pages. This volume is not dated inside either of the covers, but a few of the pieces have dates written on them, which range from 1882 to 1911. It is particularly significant that this book was used at this time, as by the late nineteenth century many published volumes of hymns and chants would have been available so it is surprising that the owner took such care in compiling the book.

The first section of the Blue part-book is devoted to chants, and because of this the book can be seen to represent another stage in the developments in church singing. Chants are a simple type of harmonised melody used for the singing of unmetrical texts, principally psalms and canticles. Up to the time of the Oxford Movement in the nineteenth century, chants were little used except in cathedral and other collegiate churches, because of the difficulties in learning to fit a psalm to a chant. Samuel Butler hints at the difficulty experienced by the congregation at Battersby, where chants were introduced during the 1870s, around the time of Mr Overton's second visit to Battersby. He writes:

And they changed the double chants for single ones, and altered them psalm by psalm, and in the middle of psalms, just where a cursory reader would see no reason why they should do so, they changed from major to minor and from minor back to major.³²

This quotation emphasises the desire for a "fully choral" service, deemed appropriate in all Anglican churches by the mid-nineteenth century. Further evidence exists that chants were used in both Anglican and Nonconformist churches, as they are printed in hymnbooks published in the late nineteenth century, such as The Bristol Tune Book.

³² Butler, p. 340.

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³² Butler, p. 340.

The chants collected in the Blue part-book are mostly “single” ones, which accommodate one verse of the psalm text. There is one “double” chant, which fits to two verses, and requires manipulation if there is an odd number of verses in the text. It is not noted anywhere in the Blue part-book which psalms these chants would accompany.

In the Blue part-book there are seven settings of the Kyrie – “Lord have mercy upon us”. This is the first of the five parts of the passages from the Ordinary of the Mass, and is included in the Book of Common Prayer. These settings reveal a breadth of musical style and are representative of changes in musical taste in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. For example, the first setting of the Kyrie is by Mendelssohn, and shows the influence of the classical composers already noted in the analysis of the Green part-book. This setting includes examples of chromatic movement indicative of the sentimental style popular during the late nineteenth century.

41

— Kyrie —

Mendelssohn.

Lord have mercy up-on us in-cline our hearts to thy help O Lord.

with all these thy gifts in our hearts we be-neath thee.

After the Fourth Commandment:

One of the few original compositions in the Blue part-book is in this section. This setting of the Kyrie, on page 44, is attributed to H. Bache. The title of the piece, Baptist, has been crossed out, and the composer’s name added. This is a much more unadventurous composition, containing no accidentals indicating chromatic movement, or passing notes.



Unlike the earlier two part-books of the current study, the Blue part-book mentions other hymnbooks by name. The hymn tune on page eleven is by H. Bache and is entitled Deum Regem.

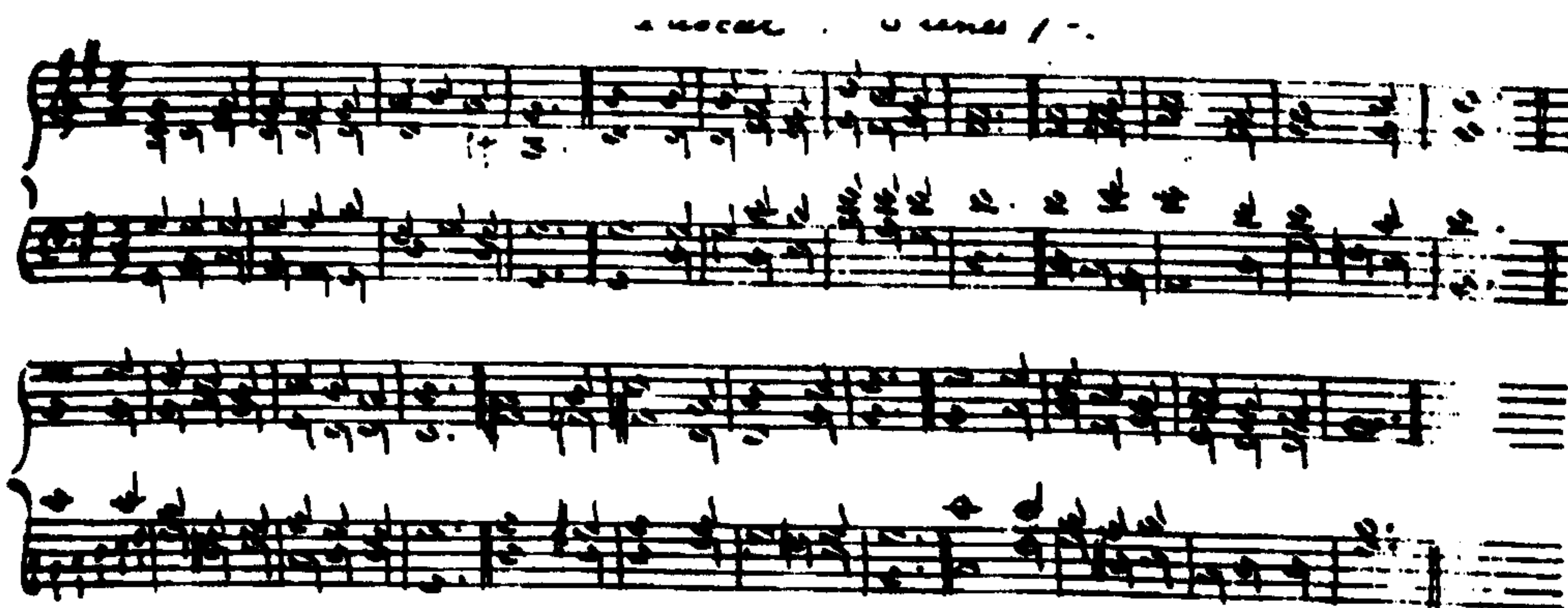


Only one set of words is used for the metre 10.4.6.6.6.6.10.4 and that is George Herbert's Let All The World In Every Corner Sing. Consequently, very few tunes exist to fit these words, the most popular tune being Luckington by Basil Harwood, which was first published in 1908, and was subsequently included in Hymns Ancient and Modern (Second Supplement, 1916) and The Methodist Hymnbook (1933). This hymn is also number 411 in Church Hymns,³³ and as can be seen from the illustration above, the composer clearly intends Deum Regem to be sung to these words. Although it is not dated, various notes are added in pencil underneath, including the date 4th December 1911. This suggests that the tune Deum Regem was composed around the same time as Luckington. The two tunes are both fine examples of how a

³³Church Hymns, London, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1912.

composer of a hymn tune has written the melody to illustrate the words. For example the word “high” falls on the highest note of the piece, whereas the word “low” is much lower in the melody.

It is the tune written on the last page of the hymn section of the Blue part-book that illustrates exactly the likelihood that the writer of this volume copied music from existing published hymnbooks from various Christian denominations. This piece is an example of high Anglican or Roman Catholic repertoire called Pascal, with the metre 7.7.7.7.7.7. Again it can be seen that the tune has been adapted to suit the requirements of the writer; whilst it is an old tune, this version is quite unlike any contained in more recent hymnbooks. A version appears in the New Catholic Hymnal³⁴ entitled Grosser Gott,³⁵ but this is metered 7.8.7.8.7.7. And the jauntier $\frac{3}{4}$ time to which it is set changes the characteristic of the piece making it much more lively. However, even in this recent hymnbook, the sources remain nineteenth century so could still have been used by the owner of the Blue part-book.



This final illustration serves as a reminder of the changes in the singing and writing of hymns which occurred over the chronological period covered by the three part-books. For the purposes of this study it can be seen that this version of Pascal contains little

³⁴Petti, A., and Lackock, G., eds., New Catholic Hymnal, London, Faber and Faber, 1971.

³⁵Melody in Katholisches Gesangbuch, Vienna c. 1774, number 90.

of the melodic interest evident in the inner parts of the last tune from the Williams part-book. It is written on two staves, clearly indicating that the volume is arranged for keyboard use, and the third line, the tenor line, is located in the bass clef. Generally, all of the parts move together, with the exception of a rising bass passage in the thirteenth bar. Unlike the example from the Williams part-book, there are no performance instructions.

As has been noted, an anthem is written on the middle pages of the Blue part-book. It seems entirely appropriate to end this consideration of the three handwritten books with a detailed study of this anthem that encapsulates the many changes that took place in church music during the last twenty years of the nineteenth century and the first twenty years of the twentieth. The version of the anthem High and Low which is written out in the Blue part-book is clearly annotated, which enables assumptions to be made about the sort of choir that would have performed it in 1880. It is indicated that the verse should be sung by trebles only. The term "trebles" suggests children singing and, with the organ accompaniment in this case, conjures up the images of the sweet sound of children singing, described by the novelists.

51 *Christmas Carol, "High and Low,"* *Supplied to Hagley Choir by Lady Tottelton, Christmas, 1880.*
by ALFRED STAFF ORFFY.

Trebles only.

High & low and rich & poor, Sit the latch & open the door, Open the way from dust of sin, Let the King of Glory in. Let the King of Glory in.
 But as King the corner not now, Piled the beams upon this brow, As when babe of home, despised, he shined a little child, As when babe a little child.
 One the love & great & small, One the homage due from all, Sweet & easy in your heart, 'Tis to take him to your heart, 'Tis to take him to your heart.

In contrast the chorus calls for a full four-part choir. The shift from the compound duple time signature of the verse to the simple quadruple time signature of the chorus provides an interesting element of surprise. Unlike the choirband music of the Williams part-book, the tenor line, whilst still the third line down, is written in the bass clef, leaving no doubt that it is a lower, man's, part. However, the repeated words and antiphonal style of the music are reminiscent of choirband music.

Chorus.

Verses 2. *He is so great, He is so great, Come no doubt in Kingly state, Would not our heart homage see, He is so great as little we.*

Verses 3. *Lo this do? Then open wide gates & doors on every side: yet to this our supplanting say what homage shall we bring?*

Verses 4. *When Christmas, when you bring Royal Child & child-like King, Grace be ours to do our part, Take Him, take Him to our heart.*

He is so great, He is so great, He is so great, He is so great, He is so great as little we.

Say what homage, Say what homage, Say what homage, Say what homage, Say what homage shall we bring?

Grace be ours, Grace be ours, Grace be ours, Grace be ours, Grace be ours to do our part.

Alfred Scott Gatty, a prolific composer better known for his secular music of all kinds, Plantation Songs being the most popular, composed the music for this anthem. He is, however, noted for having contributed two hymn tunes that have appeared in many collections, namely Welwyn and Bodmin.

This handwritten version of High and Low is clearly intended for use by a church choir, possibly a full surpliced choir with a secure complement of trebles to lead for the verses and a lusty full chorus to sing the imitative chorus. However, this contrasts starkly with a printed version of the carol, which has been discovered under the title Infant Christ. Research has revealed that the study of this carol serves as an excellent introduction to the analysis of Sunday School material that will follow in Chapter Six. The printed version attributes only the music to Alfred Scott Gatty, the words being by Mrs Alfred Gatty. The Gatty family made a significant contribution to the publication of children's religious music. Indeed, if Lady Lytton was given High and Low in 1880, it is possible that it was published in Mrs Alfred Gatty's magazine, Aunt Judy's Magazine, which she edited herself until 1873, and which thereafter was edited by her daughters, H.K.F. Gatty and J. H. Ewing. This is an early example of a "children's annual" and included a Gatty family carol most years. The printed version of the carol High and Low is vastly different from the handwritten version contained in the Blue part-book. The alternative title of Infant Christ has already been noted, and this change probably took place in the early years of the twentieth century

when the carol appeared in Little Songs for Little Voices.³⁶ In *this latter* collection another carol appears with the title High and Low, but in this instance the words are by R. A. Gatty, and the carol begins *When the winter day is done*.³⁷ Aside from the obvious difference of title between the printed and handwritten versions, Infant Christ,³⁸ as it is called in this collection, contains musical features which set it apart from Lady Lyttleton's version. Various adaptations have been made in the printed version to make it suitable for children's voices, either as a solo voice for the entire piece, or a unison choir. An attempt has been made to retain the character of the piece, as the key, A flat major, remains unchanged, as does the keyboard accompaniment. However, a short introduction is added, presumably to allow young voices to establish a sense of pitch before they start singing. As a *del segno* (♩) is also indicated to include the introduction, the difficult change of time can be more easily overcome. The following illustration details these aspects of the verse of Infant Christ.

³⁶ Gatty, Alfred Scott, Little Songs for Little Voices, London, Metzler, 1909.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

"Infant Christ."

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

Music by ALFRED SCOTT GATTY.

Andante.

High and low, and
rich and poor, Lift the latch, and open the door,
Clear the way from dust of sin, Let the King of
Glo - ry in, Let the King of Glo - ry in.

CHORUS.

However, it is the chorus that fully illustrates the changes that need to be made to a

four-part composition to make it suitable for performance by children. The changes in time signature remain the same, but the accompaniment consists of minim chords, thus making it much easier for the singers to sustain, supports it. The voices still have the triumphal dotted refrain of *He so great*, but this is echoed by flowing keyboard quavers, rather than a repetition of the words. The effect of this is that much of the drama of the chorus is removed.

The image displays two pages of a musical score. The left page is titled "Chorus" and contains three systems of music. Each system has a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "Nay, we dare not, He's too great; Comes, no doubt, in king-ly state; Would not our poor ho-mage see, He so great - so lit-tle we, He so great." The right page is titled "INFANT CHRIST" and contains two systems. The first system has a vocal line and piano accompaniment with the lyrics "He so great, . . .". The second system is marked "After last Verse" and includes the lyrics "He so great - so lit-tle we. A - men." The piano accompaniment on the right page features a prominent quaver pattern.

The addition of a static, perfect cadence (V-I) "Amen" to the printed version reminds listeners that this piece is intended for religious purposes and sums up the changes in church music which occurred during the second half of the nineteenth century as it is a long way from the florid "Amen" ending enjoyed by the choirbands and gallery musicians.

The study of the anthem known as both High and Low and Infant Christ concludes the analysis of the contents of the three handwritten part-books. It illustrates the changes in hymn singing that occurred from the early pieces in the Williams part-book to the early years of the twentieth century. The study of the three part-books has considered

the wide variety of repertoire available to hymn singers from the florid style of the choirband to the more sedate approach of the reformed church. Most significant are the changes undergone by hymn tunes as they metamorphose to suit the tastes of a congregation that was expected to participate in all musical parts of the services. The inclusion of an anthem adapted to suit the needs of children serves as an introduction to the following chapters, and to the discussion of how these developments affect the congregation of Bicester Methodist Church through the annual Sunday School Anniversary Service.

**CHAPTER SIX - HYMNODY FOR CHILDREN: AN EXAMINATION OF
HYMNS USED AT BICESTER METHODIST SUNDAY SCHOOL WITH
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE CONTRIBUTION OF MR. S. G. HEDGES
1897-1974.**

The previous chapters of this study have dealt with general changes in hymn singing and writing as they took place over the country as a whole. The aim of this chapter is both to analyse the wider use of hymns in the active Methodist Sunday School in the Oxfordshire town of Bicester during the first seventy five years of the twentieth century, and to consider how general trends in the traditional use of hymns countrywide are revealed in that Sunday School. The available material, consisting of service sheets, hymn books, and other local information will also be used to comment on changes in hymn writing for children as the education of young people developed. The central focus of the discussion will be the hymns used in the traditional Sunday School anniversary service, which has taken place during the summer months since the establishment of Bicester Methodist Sunday School (BMSS) in 1855. As well as musical developments, it will be observed that the social trends of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century can be identified through the examination of these hymns in much the same way that George Eliot's descriptions of hymn singing are linked to her comments on the Industrial Revolution. It is apparent that, through the choice of hymns and their performance, the Methodist congregation of this small market town reveals a growing awareness of global affairs in the modern world. In keeping with earlier sections of this study, issues such as the increasing availability of printed hymnbooks cannot be disregarded, nor can the contribution that the Sunday School movement made to the general knowledge of hymns among all sections of the population.

The extensive changes in hymn writing for children that took place between the early eighteenth century, as introduced, for example, in Isaac Watts' Divine and Moral Songs For Children¹ and the plethora of hymns books of the middle of the twentieth

¹ Watts, I., Divine and Moral Songs, London, T. Longman, 1715.

century have already been considered in detail in the Introduction. From this it is clear that the contributions of the branches of Methodism were important to the development of hymn writing for children. In particular, the published collections of such hymns, notably the Methodist School Hymnal² and the School Hymnbook of the Methodist Church,³ both of which are significant in the present discussion, make a valuable contribution to the genre. However, during the second half of the nineteenth century, hymns for anniversary services were frequently presented on flysheets, of which those of James Montgomery of Sheffield are fine examples. Other churches copied this model, and it is from such sheets that the earliest examples of the hymns used at BMSS Anniversary services can be examined. As hymn singing gained in popularity and importance in Sunday Schools, it is important to consider the role of those who lead the music, including band conductors and choirmasters. The study of novels and diaries considered in Chapter Four has revealed the power that certain individuals held within the congregation, with the clergy bowing to the authority imposed by choir members. This is no less true in the Sunday School, and the study of the use of hymns at BMSS reveals that the contribution SG, (Mr. S.G. Hedges), has resulted in a lasting musical legacy in the Sunday School. SG came from a family of staunch Methodists whose involvement with the Sunday School in Bicester from its earliest days will be discussed. Following in his grandfather and father's footsteps as Sunday School superintendent, he led BMSS to fame within Sunday School circles. The quasi-political implications of this will not be considered as they are not directly relevant to this study, but suffice to say that an altar cloth emblazoned with the embroidered initials S. G. H. is still used and revered in the Sunday School teaching rooms today. This shows that his contribution to Sunday School life is commemorated some considerable time after his death.

² The Methodist School Hymnal, London, Wesleyan Sunday School Department, 1910

³ The School Hymnbook of the Methodist Church, London, Methodist Conference Office, 1950.

Whilst the bulk of this study is concerned with the specific use of hymns for BMSS Anniversary services, sheets from other Methodist Sunday Schools⁴ have also been examined. These reveal that, especially at the very end of the nineteenth century, there is very little to differentiate BMSS from any other Methodist Sunday School in the country and because of this it can be considered representative. The two sets of hymn sheets that were considered in more detail were those from Brookland Church, Lower Ashley Road, Bristol, and The Primitive Methodist Church, Victoria Road, Norbiton. These were chosen because they spanned the period of time under consideration, and were available for study in the Wesley Library at Westminster College, Oxford. The three sets of hymn sheets are almost identical in layout, although the most striking difference is evident in those from Brookland Church, Lower Ashley Road, Bristol which make extensive use of Tonic Sol-fa, a system not used at the Methodist church in Bicester. The words of the hymns are written in full on all of the hymn sheets but, as many of them have no title nor acknowledge any author, it is extremely difficult to trace them to any specific published source. Whilst each sheet contains a different selection, many of the messages are the same: a triumphal end to another year, the joy of "Sabbath" school, and a hope of eternal salvation for the pious.

With the arrival of the twentieth century, BMSS seemed to acquire a more individual identity, and the start of the new century heralded the reign of the Hedges family. The first mention of the name of "Hedges" in any newspaper report was in 1901 when Mr. George Hedges, father of SG, took over as choirmaster. The two of them were to dominate the Sunday school for the next 68 years. Whilst SG was enthusiastic about

⁴ **These are from a selection held at the Wesleyan Library, Westminster College, Oxford.**

carrying the Sunday School forward with many innovations designed to occupy the young and maintain Sunday School numbers, his main concern appeared to be to make Bicester the hub of the world within the Sunday School movement. As a writer SG had great influence both over the local press, and newspapers dedicated to the Methodist church, for example the Sunday School Chronicle and the Methodist Recorder. He was a frequent contributor to all of these publications and through them he was able to advertise the anniversary services, including discussing his choice of hymns. This meant that BMSS was always in the limelight both locally and nationally and his musicians were therefore able to take part in radio broadcasts as early as 1937. However SG acknowledged that, as a small market town, Bicester had an appeal of its own. Indeed, in a newspaper interview towards the end of his life, when Bicester had started to develop:

He readily admits that he preferred the old Bicester. The idea of a 30,000 population appals him - "I don't believe that a bigger Bicester is bound to be better".⁵

With SG as Superintendent, the number of pupils on the Sunday School roll at BMSS increased considerably and the school enjoyed positive national interest and publicity in its heyday between 1935 and 1950. This enthusiasm with outreach and keeping young people busy within the church is entirely in keeping with what Alun Howkins describes as a "moralized version"⁶ of the real world that he remembers from his own Bicester youth. This lifestyle required that Nonconformists create a "separate social world"⁷ safe from the temptation of drink, enabling them to pursue their work ethic. With this in view, SG steadfastly sought to keep as many young people as possible in

⁵ Bicester Advertiser, October 28th, 1966.

⁶ Howkins, Alun, Dare to be Daniel, p. 86.

⁷ Ibid., p. 85.

Sunday School, creating positions of leadership for any that were likely to move on.⁸

It was with these ideals that SG formed a harmonica band, the Red Rhythmics, whose activities will be explored in Chapter Seven of this study.

The history of the Methodist church in Bicester has much in common with Methodist churches in other towns. Dominated by shop owners, most of whom had shops in the main street, Sheep Street, the chapel had a certain influence in the town. The social history of the chapel is complicated by the fact that there were two Methodist communities operating only a few hundred yards from one another. This meant that for the purposes of this study there were two Sunday Schools, each providing an Anniversary Service in the summer months. SG mentions that the division had come out of some friction, which was resolved after a relatively short time. He writes:

Much earlier, in about 1870 there had been a split in the church - the Wesleyans stayed put, and the others, led by a Mr. Rider (from the big grocers in the Causeway) separated and built an Independent Methodist Church in Sheep Street. The independence, however, did not last long, and the Wesleyans bought up the premises and renamed them Wesley Hall, for the Sunday School.⁹

In 1840 a Wesleyan church¹⁰ was built in North Street and BMSS was founded in 1855. It is the development of this Sunday School that is the central to this study.¹¹

In 1862 the United Methodist Free Church (UMFC) was erected in Sheep Street, its foundation stone being laid on Tuesday, June 23rd, 1863. The opening service took place on Tuesday October 20th, 1863. The last service was held on Sunday, September 28th, 1890. Although the Wesleyan Methodists had their own Sunday School accommodation, built in 1872, this proved insufficient for their needs, and in

⁸ Conversation with Mrs. C. Cole.

⁹ Hedges, S. G., Bicester Wuz A Little Town, Bicester Advertiser, Bicester, 1968, p. 111.

¹⁰ Now called The Weyland Hall.

¹¹ I have some hymn sheets from the UMFC, but there is little to link them with Methodist life in Bicester.

1911 the Wesleyans bought the old UMFC, as noted in the quotation above, and continued to use this building for Sunday School, calling it Wesley Hall. The church in North Street was sold in 1925. The stone-laying ceremony for the new church took place on September 3rd, 1926 and the church was opened on June 23rd, 1927. Wesley Hall was sold to Woolworth's in 1955, and in February 1956 the foundation stone of the present hall was laid and the building was opened in October 1956 at a cost of about £15,000.

Moving into the 1930s and the period immediately preceding and following the Second World War, the Sunday School continued to flourish, and BMSS was in its widely acknowledged heyday. Dr Anthony Hedges, SG's son, was at pains to write in some correspondence that many of the Sunday School activities, musical and otherwise, and certainly the Red Rhythmics, were "very much a product of the time".¹² Socially the Nonconformist small-town mentality held the belief that Anglicans were "snobs",¹³ and anyone with professional qualifications or any wealth belonged to an entirely different world.¹⁴ Because of this restricted attitude, the activities enjoyed by the Sunday school musicians and the Red Rhythmics seemed exciting, and without a doubt they contributed to the musical life of the town. SG remained committed to introducing new hymns on many occasions, and because of this an individual legacy remains with Bicester's own community songbook, The Youth Sing Book, edited by SG and published in 1950. Dr Anthony Hedges made his own contribution to hymn singing in Bicester as he ^{was} one of the musical editors of both
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¹² Personal letter to me from Dr A. Hedges, December 8th, 1997.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ This was not entirely true. There were various substantially wealthy members of the chapel, notably a Mr. G. Layton who gave financial support. However, he died intestate, so none of his estate went to the chapel.

the Youth Sing Book and Sunday School Praise,¹⁵ which was used extensively at BMSS, and his hymn tunes are included in these and other popular collections, including Hymns and Psalms.

Documentation that exists concerning the earliest anniversary services deals with the two Methodist Sunday Schools in Bicester. Numerous reports of these anniversary services were published in the Bicester Herald between 1872 and 1900, and it seems that the BMSS followed the trend of other Sunday Schools in the country towards the end of the nineteenth century and used hymn sheets that were sold to members of the congregation. Details reported in the local press include the mention of hymns, the earliest of these being on November 1st, 1872,¹⁶ when it was written that the UMFC Sunday School Scholars sang their marching song We are marching on with shield and banners bright.¹⁷ As the title suggests, the hymn is of the rousing kind in a brisk common time, with bars of regular crotchets interspersed with dotted passages. There is a refrain of an imitative nature, the altos and trebles starting with the words "Then awake", and the basses and tenors replying with the same words.

¹⁵Sunday School Praise, London, Cox and Wyman, 1958.

¹⁶Bucks Herald.

¹⁷The Halfpenny Hymnbook, London, Charles H. Kelly, n.d.

The message of the hymn is that if all Christian souls joyfully march onwards, even in the face of adversity, they will be rewarded with the glories of being with Christ.

We are marching on, and pressing towards the prize,
 To a glorious crown beyond the glowing skies,
 The radiant fields where pleasure never dies,
 And we'll work till Jesus calls.

This hymn is an exhortation to Christians to take up an active life for Christ, a theme that was also to be found in the service the next year. The anniversary service of 1873 was briefly mentioned in the Bicester Herald,¹⁸ which records the anniversary service, noting that the hymns sung included Rally round the cross, although no more details of this hymn are given. Also in 1873 the Bicester Herald includes details of the

¹⁸ September 28th, 1873.

Little drops of water,
Little grains of sand,
Make the mighty ocean,
Make the beauteous land.²³

It was subsequently altered and reappeared, according to Julian, in a slightly modified form in the American Juvenile Missionary Magazine.

Little drops of water,
Little grains of sand,
Make the mighty ocean
And the beauteous land.²⁴

From that magazine it was copied into Easy Hymns and Sacred Songs²⁵ in 1855 and from that collection found its way into numerous children's hymnals. However, the verse quoted in the Bicester Herald corresponds with neither of those quoted by Julian in his Dictionary nor in any published collection available for study.

Little drops of water,
Little grains of sand,
Filled the mighty ocean
And a pleasant land.

As the reporter does not quote any source, it could be that the hymn was misremembered.

The UMFC continued to hold anniversary services, and hymn sheets were prepared and sold for one penny as reported in the Bicester Herald.²⁶ The presentation of the 1885 hymn sheet is much clearer, emphasising that it contains all the hymns for the whole weekend, and is again priced at one penny. The design is simpler, and it gives no information about preachers and other events. Generally, information about the anniversary services is scanty, but what is there is interesting because it serves as a reminder that some of the hymns sung, such as Little drops of water, have always

²³ Julian, p. 679.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Easy Hymns and Sacred Songs, for young children, London, Burns and Lambert, 1855.

²⁶ Bicester Herald, July 24th, 1885.

been enduring in their popularity. An example of this is noted in the Bicester Herald of August 3rd, 1888 when it was reported that the UMFC Sunday School Anniversary on July 29th, 1888 included the singing of Jesus bids us shine with a clear pure light, which is included in many of today's volumes of hymns for children.

The early anniversary services were all conducted in the chapel itself, and whilst press coverage included a number of meetings open to public, no events took place outside of the church buildings. This changed in 1889 when, as reported in the Bicester Advertiser of Friday, July 14th, 1889, after "special singing which had been prepared for the occasion", a significant development occurred as the day's celebrations were "concluded by an assemblage on the Market Place in the evening where a number of anniversary hymns were sung, some of them containing solo parts which were creditably performed". These open-air singings were to become a regular feature of the anniversary celebrations and indeed are remembered by SG, who writes:

Among my happiest childhood memories are Anniversaries of the Methodist Sunday School. After a bright day in the North Street Church all we children went to the Market Square, about 7.30 and sang round a harmonium played by George Layton, with my father in charge. "The Six Girls", in special white dresses, were the star attraction, with solo items.²⁷

The regular inclusion of these "six girls" will be noted throughout the chapter. On Friday, July 6th, 1900, the Wesleyan Sunday School Anniversary is reported as containing "very successful services held on Sunday and Monday. The singing both in the church and on Market Hill was enjoyed by all."

As mentioned earlier, 1901 marks the beginning of the Hedges' reign. Mr. G. Hedges was choirmaster of the Wesleyan chapel, and SG remembered the time with affection.

²⁷ Hedges, 1968, p. 59.

It was certainly this early introduction to hymn singing that was to influence him in later years. The local newspaper merely reports that "after the evening service the choir and scholars, conducted by Mr. G. Hedges sang several of the anniversary hymns on the Market Square", but SG remembers the occasion more vividly, writing:

My father shared the organ with George Layton. Bill Jenkins behind the curtain pumped the long handle and watched the little weight on the end of a string which showed how full the bellows were - if the weight got to the top, in a moment's thoughtlessness of the blower, then the keys under the organist's fingers ceased to make any sound, and all eyes were to the curtained corner! That often happened if an inexperienced boy had been sent to deputise for Bill. Up in the gallery, folk at the front would sometimes feel giddy, so a brass rail was put round for protection. It was round here that Anniversary children were packed, and often bright-coloured²⁸ hymn sheets would flutter on to the heads below.²⁹

It was reported in the Bicester Advertiser on Friday, July 18th, 1902 that

Special hymns were sung at all three services by the children and the choir.... After the service on Sunday evening the hymns were sung on the Market place, concluding with the National Anthem.

The 1904 service, however, is covered in more detail, the chapel itself being described. We learn that it had "been closed for the past few weeks and thoroughly renovated by Messrs T Smith and Son".³⁰ The event was clearly well supported as "in the afternoon the congregation was so large that chairs had to be placed up the aisles" and a number of people could not gain admittance. "The children and choir afterwards assembled on the Market Place and sang their hymns". The short article also contains the name of another Hedges, Mr. J. Hedges; this is SG's grandfather. It

²⁸ It will be observed that, as SG took charge of the anniversary services, the coloured hymn sheets were of great importance and he mentions them in numerous articles. This is indicative both of his attention to detail, and his desire to capture the interest and attention of the young.

²⁹ Hedges, 1968, p. 36.

³⁰ Bicester Advertiser, Friday, July 15th, 1904.

is also noted that “a most successful anniversary terminated with the Doxology”.

The anniversary services were clearly becoming a more important part of Nonconformist life in Bicester, as the Bicester Advertiser started to carry advance notices of the forthcoming event. It seems that the anticipation was rewarded as the edition of Friday, July 19th 1907 has more extensive coverage than those of other years, and many of the participants are named. The quality of the singing is apparently still very high and it is clear that “a great deal of care had been taken by the choirmaster in the training of the choir”. As was usual, “the choir and children assembled on the Market Square later in the evening and sang their hymns”. A further use for the anniversary hymns was now found. They were regularly sung at the very end of the Sunday School treat, an annual event that normally seemed to be held in a field a short train journey away. In 1907, for example, we read that on Thursday of the same week the children enjoyed their usual Sunday School treat, and it is reported that they sang their anniversary hymns when they “were seated ready for the return journey”.³¹

In 1909 the same format was followed, with the press reporting the event in the July 23rd edition, and there is once again extensive coverage of the occasion itself. Clearly a most enjoyable occasion, it is heralded as “one of the most successful ever held”. It seems that the preparation of the church was more elaborate as “a raised platform was erected for six little girls [names] who sang prettily at each of the services”. The use of a raised platform became standard practice and was used by other Sunday Schools countrywide. Once again this year they sang their anniversary hymns at their treat. In 1910 the service was much admired, and warmly reported in the Bicester Advertiser.

³¹ Bicester Advertiser, Friday, July 12th, 1907.

For the first time in 1911 there is mention of financial considerations in the context of a Sunday School event. The report in the Bicester Advertiser on Friday, July 14th, suggests that this anniversary

may be looked upon as among the most successful of its history, both as regards attendance and also from a financial point of view.

However, the singing does not go unnoticed, the "six girls" again being given special mention.

The history of the anniversary service becomes hazier in the years immediately preceding the First World War. At that time the Methodist chapel seemed to have very strong links with the Congregational Church.³² This is to some extent substantiated by SG, who writes:

How we Methodist youngsters loved visiting the Congregational church for their own Anniversaries. We would march down Sheep Street and across the Square in the afternoon, fairly sedately. Then dashed off madly, hoping to get up into the gallery. Albert Lambourne used to stand there, conducting the school and choir below.³³

In 1914 a special Children's Day at the Chapel is reported in some detail. It is noted that the choir "rendered special anniversary hymns, and their singing reflected great credit on their instructor, Mr. George Hedges".³⁴ The afternoon service also contained singing, and there is plenty of detail about performance practice.

Mr. G. Layton presided at the organ and Miss M. White at the piano. Special hymns were sung, the soloists in "*We thank the Lord, for this fair earth*" being [names]. There were several solos, all prettily rendered by various children, in "*I am God's little messenger, and I will be*". Other

³² Now, sadly, used as a snooker club, but a beautiful building, nevertheless.

³³ Hedges, 1968, p. 36.

³⁴ Bicester Advertiser, Friday, July 17th, 1914.

hymns sung were "*If any little word of mine*", "*Over life's sea we are sailing*" and "*Rejoice, rejoice*", the choir also rendering one of the anniversary hymns at the close of this and each other service.³⁵

A significant development in the use of hymns in this service is that some of them can be found in the Methodist School Hymnal. In the 1915 report it is noted, "Bright hymns were sung by the children and every thing went off well". There is much more detail about the event and the names of the hymns are recorded, including the fact that "as the congregation left the chapel the children sang We are passing on, they tell us".³⁶

The mid 1930s saw a great revival in the Sunday School movement, which seems to have been typical countrywide. Significantly SG held his first office as a Sunday School leader in 1931, that of Senior Leader.³⁷ Mr. G. W. Hedges was still Sunday School Superintendent in 1935, and the anniversary of that year had an enthusiastic reception, being reported thus:

Enthusiastic and tuneful singing by the scholars with orchestral accompaniment, items of songs and recitations, interspersed with interesting addresses, made the Methodist Sunday School anniversary a joyous festival on Sunday and Monday...The children had been well trained by their teachers in the singing of special hymns. Mr. G. W. Hedges, the Sunday School superintendent, conducting.³⁸

The visiting minister, Mr. Allsopp, had some interesting comments to make about the proceedings. He mentioned that:

It was the first occasion that he had visited their new church,³⁹ although he

³⁵ Bicester Advertiser, Friday, July 17th, 1914.

³⁶ Bicester Advertiser, Friday, July 16th, 1915.

³⁷ Statistical Returns of Bicester Wesleyan Methodist Church.

³⁸ Bicester Advertiser, Friday, July 12th, 1935.

³⁹ This is the present church called the Grainger Hargreave Memorial Church, but never referred to by this name, built in 1927.

had been in their old one. He complimented them upon having such a fine building for worship and he was delighted by the singing and orchestra. Seeing the musicians grouped in the chancel reminded him forcibly of the old days when fiddlers used to sit there, and in some churches the old custom was still carried out.⁴⁰

This is not the only occasion that the musical efforts of SG are likened to the choirbands of the nineteenth century. Certainly his idea of grouping musicians and singers together at various places in the church both suggest the arrangement of the earlier choirbands. SG's use of diverse instruments during services also suggests the beginnings of the modern church band such as those popular in churches today.

It is in 1936 that the real musical innovation starts for BMSS with the introduction of a twentieth century version of the choirband, a harmonica band call the Red Rhythmics, the first appearance of which is reported in the Bicester Advertiser.⁴¹ In this instance the band is given only a passing mention with little indication of the importance the group was to assume over the next twenty years.

The children under their superintendent Mr. G. W. Hedges sang beautifully throughout the festival, the singing accompanied by the orchestra, and certain hymns by the harmonica band.⁴²

Not only was SG developing the musical side of activities in BMSS, but he was also carving a niche for himself in the leadership, and according to the statistical returns for Bicester Wesleyan Methodist Church, he was appointed as superintendent of the Sunday School in 1937. The anniversary service of that year was a large event, and it was reported that,

bright and tuneful singing by the scholars and the choir, and an exceptionally large congregation were features of the Sunday School

⁴⁰ Bicester Advertiser, Friday, July 12th, 1935.

⁴¹ Bicester Advertiser, Friday, July 17th, 1936.

⁴² Bicester Advertiser, Friday, July 17th, 1936.

anniversary at Bicester Methodist Church on Sunday⁴³

Later in the same article, his ability as choirmaster and trainer of young musicians is noted:

The training of the children over a long period had necessitated considerable patience and forethought on the part of SG, the superintendent of the Sunday School, who had most of the responsibility resting upon him.⁴⁴

From this time it is possible to see how SG stamped his very individual mark on the use of hymns in BMSSS. The article continues:

The successful singing of the beautiful, well chosen tunes and the satisfactory manner in which the anniversary went off must have been a source of gratification to Mr. Hedges and to the teachers. An orchestra accompaniment added a pleasing effect to the singing as did the music by the Red Rhythmics who played for some of the hymns and rendered with tone and effect voluntaries during the collection, made by several members of the Sunday School.

The inclusion of the Red Rhythmics introduced a point of conflict between SG and members of the congregation as will be discussed more fully in Chapter Seven. However, SG pressed ahead with the appearance of the Red Rhythmics, as was reported in the press.

There was another large congregation in the evening, when, prior to the commencement of the service, community hymn singing was enjoyed, the Red Rhythmics, conducted by Mr. J. Leach, accompanying.⁴⁵

This is the first mention of "community hymn singing", an indication that the Methodist congregation openly sought to obtain their entertainment from sacred sources. It is also significant that even in his first year as superintendent, SG was prepared to demonstrate his commitment to overseas work and world peace. This

⁴³ **Bicester Advertiser, July 9th, 1937.**

⁴⁴ **Ibid.**

⁴⁵ **Ibid.**

aspect of his vision is reflected in both his choice of hymns and his writing. Whilst the money raised from Sunday School events contributed to providing necessities for needy groups, SG commitment to musical education is also in evidence it is reported that a grant had been made available "for the forming of a harmonica band in India".⁴⁶

The Red Rhythmics were now a feature of the Anniversary services, as was reported in 1938, when

The Anniversary services of the Methodist Sunday School on Sunday and Monday were characterised by special singing with Red Rhythmics accompaniment...There was also special singing by the choir...For quarter-of-an-hour prior to the evening service the Red Rhythmics led community singing of hymns and there was a large congregation.⁴⁷

Other events for the weekend also included entertainment by the Red Rhythmics. From this time onwards the hymn sheets are much more informative, as, in addition to the words, they contain references to hymn books, and the hymn numbers themselves. The church used the Methodist Hymnbook, presumably the 1933 edition, and the Methodist School Hymnal. Of the hymn sheets available for examination, one is SG's personal copy, and is closely annotated, and gives information about performance practice and clearly indicating his attention to detail. The sheet itself can be seen as a "working copy", with numerous changes to texture and instrumentation added in a variety of different pens and pencils, as can be seen in the following illustration. SG's knowledge of string playing is indicated on this hymn sheet as the violins are instructed to play pizzicato in the second hymn, to use a mute (sordino) in the fourth hymn and to play an octave higher in the third hymn. Further adjustments are made to the instrumentation with the use of piano solo, although an attempt to sing

⁴⁶ Bicester Advertiser, July 9th, 1937.

⁴⁷ Bicester Advertiser, Friday, July 8th, 1938.

an unaccompanied verse appears to have been abandoned as the instruction is crossed out in SG's hymn sheet. Changes of tone quality are suggested in the singing with the instruction for groups of singers to perform separated verses. Examples of this can be seen in the second hymn where "girls" and "boys" sing alternating verses, and in the third hymn, "men" and "juniors" take their turn. It is important to the format of the anniversary services to note the use of the "6 girls" who contribute to the sixth and eighth hymns. It seems that the band and orchestra rarely played simultaneously, but SG shows that he was aware of the limitations of the harmonicas by writing that the fourth hymn is in the key of C major, the only key suitable for all instruments.

Ed 4
lat 6

1
CORONATION HYMN.
O happy home where Jesus has loved the
dearest,
Thou loving Friend, and Saviour of our
race,
And where among the guests there never
cometh
One who can hold such high and
honoured place!

1
We are praising on, they tell us,
That will stay our early passions,
That will all our misdeeds
We hear them, but we heed them not
For to play our days away
Or our God's vast mercy
We are praising on, they tell us,
To the hearing of the land,
To the staining in the banner,
To the pricking of the good,
But burdens steady those who bear,
And the straining makes us strong
That urge us along.

5
Lead, give us thoughtful, loving hearts,
Shine on blind souls which may be done
By us, for Jesus' sake, to help
Home and or suffering little ones
Amen

Down the generous headed
Provision is the Truth to-day,
And the children gathered round us,
All the blessed truth obey;
So the whole wide world rejoices
In the changeless vest of Jesus,
And nations with voices unceasing
"Jesus is the Truth Divine."

Piano
Solo

O happy home: whose little ones are given
Early to Thee, in humble faith and
prayer,
To Thee, their Friend, who from the
heights of heaven
Guides them, and guards with more
than mother's care!

2
O happy home where each one serves Thee
lowly,
Whatever his appointed work may be,
Till every common task seems great and
body,
When it is done, O Lord, as unto Thee!

Great is Truth! the kingdoms rise and
fall,
Jesus is the Truth Divine and mighty over
all.

6
I F I had lived when Jesus did
In far-off Galilee,
I would have minded every word
His kind lips spoke to me.

Pizz

O happy home where Thou art not
suspicious
When joy is overflowing, full and free;
O happy home where every wounded spirit
Is brought, Physician, Comforter, to
Thee.

3
Until at last, when earth's day's work is
done,
All meet Thee in the blessed home above,
From whence Thou comest, whence Thou
hast succeeded,
Thy everlasting home of peace and love!

Great is Truth! the kingdoms rise and
fall,
Jesus is the Truth Divine and mighty over
all.

7
I F I had lived when Jesus did
In far-off Galilee,
I would have minded every word
His kind lips spoke to me.

Ed 4
lat 6

2
W E are praising on, they tell us,
We are borne upon the tide,
From the merry land of childhood
To the land where Jesus abide,
We know that Jesus never grows old,
That the morning never grows old;
And the noon is God's own gold.

4
We lift high the Cross of Christ!
We tread where His feet have trod;
As brethren of the Son of Man
Rise up, O men of God!

Many, many seasons
Passed o'er the holy land;
Then came a night when a star shone
bright,
Even as God had planned,
When there came the dawning,
Showerly the star grew dim;
All that adorned Jesus Christ the Lord—
Truth came to earth with Him.

7
HILLS of the North, rejoice,
River and mountain-spring,
Hark to the advent voice,
Valley and levelled, sing:
Through almost long, year Lead is nigh;
His judgment brings and victory.

Ed 4
lat 6

2
W E are praising on, they tell us,
We are borne upon the tide,
From the merry land of childhood
To the land where Jesus abide,
We know that Jesus never grows old,
That the morning never grows old;
And the noon is God's own gold.

4
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7
HILLS of the North, rejoice,
River and mountain-spring,
Hark to the advent voice,
Valley and levelled, sing:
Through almost long, year Lead is nigh;
His judgment brings and victory.

There are indications that SG used his hymn sheet throughout the service as the time signatures are noted, as is the type of introduction, the starting note, and the beat of the bar on which the melody starts. For example in hymn number four, there is a “pianist’s chord introduction”, and his notes remind him that the melody begins on the fifth beat of the bar, on the note D. This accords exactly with the version of the hymn in The Methodist School Hymnal.

454 The Christian Life.
 PILGRIM. 6.7A.7.3.7A.7, Irreg., with Refrain. **ARTHUR B. VAN**
 Words by **WALTER HAWKINS**
 With a gentle swing. Solo (on Organ)

mp 1. We are pass-ing on, they tell us We are borne up-on the
 mp 2. We are pass-ing on, they tell us We are near-ing days of
 mp 3. We are pass-ing on, they tell us To the bear-ing of the
 mp 4. We are pass-ing on, they tell us On the hill and down the

And from the mer-ry land of childhood To the land where cross- ing We
 will, That will stay our ear-ly pleas-ure, That will all our earth-ly de-sires
 end, To the strain-ing in the bur-den, To the prock-ing of the good-ly
 toll, And our own must pass the sun-der, And at last the day-light fail.

How the dawn most of - ways melt, That the morning most grow old: (or, How
 low they, but we had them not; For to play our days a - way. Were
 low-ly stand - y those who bear, And the strain-ing makes us strong: How
 through one day we reach the sun, And our life is but one stage: Who

* For use in a place of worship the notes in small type should be played instead of
 those in the upper stave. C. E. S.

Pilgrimage and Guidance.

And we will meet in - to the day, And the pass is God's own gold...
 And we will meet in - to the day, And the pass is God's own gold...
 And we will meet in - to the day, And the pass is God's own gold...

Swift - ly how the moments of youth, Oh - ding, or - or Oh - ding!

How far we know, as on we go, In the course that God is guid - ing.

Swift - ly how the moments of youth, Oh - ding, or - or Oh - ding!

How far we know, as on we go, In the course that God is guid - ing.

Printed by permission, from the *Church Hymn Book*, No. 11, published by Walter and Sonnet,
 The Methodist Church, Wash.

Another service of importance took place in 1938, a jubilee celebration of fifty years of the Wesleyan Sunday School. The event lasted some three days and was punctuated by hymns and music led by the Red Rhythmics. It is reported “that they were celebrating fifty years of Sunday School work in the Wesley Hall, not actually

the jubilee of the BMSS which commenced in 1855".⁴⁸ The event continued with references to past and present glories of the Sunday School. There was "the singing of hymns by scholars of prior to 1900, also by pre-war scholars".⁴⁹ After this there was the singing of "more hymns, the Benedictions and Doxology were followed by the playing of the Belphegor March⁵⁰ by the Red Rhythmics".⁵¹ A further meeting later in the week took place in much the same vein, this time ending with the hymn Jesus shall reign and the doxology. Another hymn sung at the function was These things shall be.

Having used his first two years as Superintendent to shape the anniversary service to his liking, SG proceeded to stress the importance of hymn singing as both a community activity, and a means of learning Christian teaching. In one of his notebooks containing notes for talks he writes a little about this.⁵² He states that he is preoccupied with how to teach hymns, and disagrees with the instruction not "to teach line by line." He writes,

I think this is satisfactory [to teach hymns line by line] if we are careful not to tire the children.⁵³

He also goes on to demonstrate the need for children to understand what they are singing about.

Explain words by questions.... drawings and talking about hymn a little child may know.⁵⁴

⁴⁸ Bicester Advertiser, Friday, October 12th, 1938.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ This was a favourite in the Red Rhythmic's repertoire and frequently included in their programmes.

⁵¹ Bicester Advertiser, Friday, October 12th, 1938.

⁵² Source – Fiona Hedges' papers.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

The music is not neglected in the notes for this talk, as SG writes,

Make sure the tune is within their range – with a good pianist tunes have rarely been any difficulty.⁵⁵

The role of the teacher is significant, as SG adds with regard to the music: “train them to listen”.

In 1939 the Sunday School Anniversary took place on Sunday July 2nd, and followed much the same format as the previous year. However, SG continued to demonstrate his desire to make the service emphatically his own. For the first time the BMSS Anthem was sung, a two-verse hymn of SG’s own writing, glorying in the Sunday School and its work. Although the Christian ethos is central to SG’s ministry, clearly a certain amount of empire building is apparent with the “fame” of the Sunday School noted at the end of the first verse. The Methodist work ethic, too, is pivotal to his work at BMSS as can be seen from the line “From sloth and ease preserve our Sunday School”.

**We all unite and hail
Our Sunday School;
'Gain st time it does prevail
Our Sunday School,
Striving with steadfast aim,
Bearing their Master’s name,
Great should have built its fame –
Our Sunday School.**

**We in our turn will serve
Our Sunday School;
From sloth and ease preserve
Our Sunday School;
Bicester’s most happy throng,
Its great work shall be our song –
Our Sunday School.**

⁵⁵ Source - Fiona Hedges’ papers.

The tune selected for the anthem was Clarion by M. B. Foster.⁵⁶ The C major key of the tune would have made it possible for performance on all instruments, including harmonicas, and the fanfare of the opening arpeggio sets a suitable triumphant mood.

Temptation and Conflict

482
CLARION. 8.4.6.4.6 7 6.4. M. B. FOSTER, 1861-1922.



The anthem was to become a regular feature of the Sunday School Anniversary services until the mid-1980s, when, with its references to the glories of BMSS, it was dropped on the grounds that it was more worshipful of BMSS than God himself!

SG continued his work for BMSS throughout the Second World War, although he was clearly affected by it. His service in the First World War had a lasting impression on him and his wife, Mary, remembered how he had been “horrified by carrying corpses, by the mad screaming of eighteen year olds who had been gassed, and by the streets of prostitutes deliberately set up for the soldiers.”⁵⁷ During the Second World War he became a Conscientious Objector, which made him “very unpopular and caused his

⁵⁶ Methodist Hymn Book (1933), number 482.

⁵⁷ Source – Fiona Hedges’ papers.

son, Toni, to be ostracized at school.”⁵⁸ One of his responses to the war was to increase his work with young people, and this he did by discussing the formation of a Christian Youth Movement. This he saw “as one way out from race suicide and perdition”.⁵⁹ During the War, SG continued to be active in BMSS, developing the music in various ways, although for a variety of reasons the Red Rhythmics ceased to function, as will be discussed in Chapter Seven. In 1940 the anniversary service is noted in the Bicester Advertiser.

The singing of the scholars was favourably commented upon, the boys especially and the singing of the ladies of the staff in the choir descants added to the enjoyment. SG, superintendent, conducted the singing and the orchestra. The Red Rhythmics were much missed this year.⁶⁰

Both SG and his wife, who ran the Primaries class, were always on the lookout for something new. One of their innovations was a percussion band, yet another activity designed to include children and young people alike, and this was included alongside the violins and harmonicas in the anniversary service in 1941. Whilst SG’s main interest was concerned with older children and young adults, he shows that he was also interested in the musical and spiritual development of the very young. He advocated the importance of musical activity within worship, writing “Our Sunday School Percussion Band must stand for worship which can be happy, beautiful and fitting for the little child.”⁶¹ By way of supporting his wife in the management of the percussion band he writes, “Don’t leave everything to the leader. If you do your share you should arrive home almost as tired as she is”.⁶²

⁵⁸ Source - Fiona Hedges’ papers.

⁵⁹ Hedges. S. G., Christian Youth, the alternative to Hitler Youth, London, National Sunday School Union, 1942.

⁶⁰ Bicester Advertiser, Friday, July 12th, 1940.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Source – Fiona Hedges’ papers.

In 1943, even with the Red Rhythmics still away at war, more innovations were introduced to the musical proceedings. The harmonica was still very much in evidence as at the parents' hour, "a short attractive programme"⁶³ included items by the harmonica octet. Later on during the weekend "the singing of the school was, as always, much appreciated"⁶⁴ and was accompanied by a small orchestra. The percussion band played again and the Primaries also performed some action songs. An innovation appeared in that performers wore different national costumes and sang missionary hymns. There are details about soloists and costumes in the edition of the Bicester Advertiser for Friday, July 9th, 1943. It was reported on Friday, July 7th, 1944, that "at the anniversary service there was a larger attendance of school members than for many years".⁶⁵ Organ, piano and strings accompanied the singing.

After the war, the Red Rhythmics quickly restarted, although with new members, many of the old ones still being away. In 1945 a Thursday Rally was introduced to the proceedings, and it was warmly reported in the Bicester Advertiser that: "This year on its birthday the school was able to look back for a moment on another splendid year of achievement - concerts, outings, winter tea, Eisteddfod-Exhibition, Red Rhythmic successes..."⁶⁶ The Red Rhythmics had now become a successful group and had already performed at the Albert Hall. They were to play at the 1945 rally in their "strikingly smart uniform".⁶⁷ The following Sunday the anniversary services took place and it was reported that, "grouped in the centre was a small

⁶³ Bicester Advertiser, Friday, July 9th, 1943.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Bicester Advertiser, Friday, July 7th, 1944.

⁶⁶ Bicester Advertiser, Friday, July 6th, 1945.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

orchestra which accompanied the singing throughout the day”.⁶⁸ The Primary percussion band repeated items from Thursday. June Leach sang Jesus wants me for a sunbeam and to close the service the children “very fittingly” sang the hymn Lord and Saviour, true and kind.

By 1946 most of the hymns used for the anniversary services can be found in various hymnbooks, including The Methodist Hymnbook (1933), The Methodist School Hymnal and The Sunday School Hymnary.⁶⁹ The actual programme is much simpler and does not have the name of Pankhurst Publishing on it, suggesting that it was reproduced in-house. As SG enjoyed an elevated position within the Methodist Sunday School hierarchy, he was able to use his literary skills by contributing a regular column to the Methodist Recorder from 1946, and frequently used this space to advertise and enthuse about the activities of BMSS. In these columns he adopts a “shorthand” style of writing, leaving out all unnecessary words. This gives a brisk and business-like effect, which adds to the image of him being totally in control of events. Through the Super’s Diary SG was able to discuss the anniversary service well before the event. In 1946, for examples, he notes that when the newly printed hymn sheets arrived, “pianist Timothy gave a recital of all tunes...a good selection”.⁷⁰ The Red Rhythmics seem to have performed at the Thursday Rally, but are not mentioned in connection with the Sunday services.

Accounts of anniversary services of the late 1940s come from SG’s own accounts in the Super’s Diary. There is plenty of attention to detail, including a seating plan for

⁶⁸ Bicester Advertiser, Friday, July 6th, 1945.

⁶⁹ Bonner, Carey, ed., The Sunday School Hymnary, London, The National Sunday School Union, 1905.

⁷⁰ Super’s Diary, June 1946.

all the performers, and his shorthand style of writing suggests military precision.

All sat facing the congregation. School choir at centre with rest round them. Orchestra behind piano on left, Hammond organ on right. In all singing gave splendid mass choir effect.⁷¹

Although SG took personal pleasure in his Sunday School, he did not ignore the reception it received from other members of the congregation, especially if it was favourable. Once more a direct comparison is made between SG's musical accompaniments to the services and the choirbands of the nineteenth century, as the following comment shows.

Then organ, piano and orchestra crashed in with *Thine be the Glory*, with 200 of school and great congregation. "That is how we always sang", said octogenarian afterwards, "but we didn't have trumpet and clarionets with violins in my day. We had two people who played bass fiddles though – you don't grow them today!"⁷²

SG in his Super's Diary warmly reported the anniversary service in 1950. He was delighted with the attendance at the afternoon and evening services, and as well as detailing how he arranged the performers, he shows that he was clearly moved by the singing. It is also apparent that SG had convinced the congregation of the pleasures of community hymn singing, and indeed they had come to expect it, as the following quotation demonstrates.

And how we sang! We finished with *The Beauteous Day Now Closeth* – though after benediction we stayed and had one or two other [hymns] in our traditional fashion, for neither we nor congregation wanted to feel anniversary over.⁷³

By 1950 the selection of hymnbooks available has made it possible to trace very many more of the hymns used at BMSS. The School Hymnbook of the Methodist Church appeared in 1950, and SG shows his usual ability to incorporate new publications

⁷¹ **Ibid.**, June 1948.

⁷² **Ibid.**, July 1949.

⁷³ **Super's Diary**, July 1950.

almost at once into his services, using it extensively from the year of its publication. Hymn sheets continued to be used for anniversary services and a bible verse is included on the front of each. SG starts to discuss the forthcoming anniversary services in his column in the Bicester Advertiser, Youth News. In June 1951 he emphasises the range of hymns that will be sung in the forthcoming service and is proud of his ability to combine ancient and modern to suit all tastes.

Four Weeks to Anniversary - Anniversary hymns are certainly as good as ever this year, with poets as wide apart as William Bland and Jan Struther, and music ranging from 14th century to 1951.⁷⁴

However, in the Super's Diary for the same month there is a suggestion that in choosing hymns SG did not always earn the full support of his team. He talks of the "criticism" of his selection, but appears to have come through with his own choices, as in a subsequent issue of Super's Diary he talks of the "wonderful addition of fine hymns to the school repertory."⁷⁵ Not quite so smooth was the selection of hymns for the 1953 service. According to his own report, SG announced his recommendations in May 1953. However, after finding the first hymns on his lists well received,

a storm blue up over two Negro spirituals and Matheson's Gather Us In, ...In Mrs. H's and J's strongly expressed view Lord I want to be a Christian and Didn't my Lord Deliver Daniel were entirely inappropriate.⁷⁶

Further more, SG goes against popular opinion even for the 1950s by suggesting that he thought that they would "introduce a fresh masculine note". During the following heated exchange, it is possible to witness opposition to SG's attempts to update the anniversary service.

⁷⁴ Bicester Advertiser, June 1951.

⁷⁵ Super's Diary, 1950.

⁷⁶ Super's Diary, May 1953.

Gather Us In proved still more disrupting. Mrs. Henderson⁷⁷ and Jane challenged anyone to explain those pagan verses about Greek graves and Parsees. Bill North, unexpectedly, declared the hymn with Keble tune to be perhaps finest of century. Miss Hannam wanted proper doctrinal finish with Methodists added verse. Miss Avery said no-one in church would know what it was all about. John Bainton said seniors ought to. Finally we agreed to cut the two Greek and Parsee verses and add the “theological” ending. So we had eleven hymns at last.⁷⁸

Traditionalists on the Sunday School staff were clearly in favour of maintaining established Methodist doctrine, and were not prepared to introduce any suspect “pagan” elements. The suggestion that the hymn should be used with the tune Keble is of significance, as it is composed by Anthony (Toni) Hedges, and it is possible that this local interest would soften any opposition. It is interesting to note that the offending two verses do not appear in either The Youth Sing Book, or Sunday School Praise, the two volumes most used by BMSS at this time, and so SG must have used another source. They read, however,

Thine is the mystic life great India craves
Thine is the Parsee’s sin-destroying beam
Thine is the Buddhists rest from tossing waves
Thine is the empire of vast China’s dream;
Gather us in.

Thine is the Roman’s strength without his pride
Thine is the Greek’s glad worth without its graves
Thine is Judea’s law with love beside
The truth that censures and the grace that saves,
Gather us in.⁷⁹

Whilst the opposition to this text was on the grounds of “paganism” and misunderstanding, the omission of the words in more recent hymnbooks is in keeping with the twentieth century trend against global differentiation. Other examples of

⁷⁷ SG had a policy of making all the names in his articles fictional

⁷⁸ Super’s Diary, May 1953.

⁷⁹ HymnQuest 2000, C.D. Rom., London, Stainer and Bell, 2000.

hymns that have been curtailed for the same reason in more recent years are Hills of the North Rejoice⁸⁰ and Far round the world, thy children sing thy song.⁸¹ Instead, an all-inclusive vocabulary has emerged embracing all traditions, with the intention of spreading the Gospel. The fifth verse of Gather us in under discussion at BMSS is an example of twentieth century adaptation:

In Thee, O Christ, all nations find their goal;
To Thee all faiths and codes unknowing tend;
In thee is rest for every human soul;
Of truth revealed beginning thou and end;
Gather us in.⁸²

Reports of the anniversary services for 1950, 1951, and 1952 in the Super's Diary all contain mentions of Bicester's own song/hymnbook, The Youth Sing Book. This book is significant because it reveals much both about SG's attitude to community singing, and the Nonconformist ideal of providing suitable entertainment for church members. SG was committed to maintaining the interest of young people in the church and keeping them occupied and entertained, a detail illustrated in his passion for organising parties and outings, and his interest in popular and light music. SG clearly felt that, if his young people were to enjoy singing, then a suitable collection of well-known hymns and enjoyable popular songs was needed in one volume. This would be of benefit to SG's own work, as he would be able to use this at all his concerts and parties. To this end, The Youth Sing Book was published in 1953, and was quickly absorbed into church life.

It was typical of SG that he wanted to involve his young people in the production of the book. Mrs. Christine Cole remembers how she and a group of other young women

⁸⁰ Charles Oakley, 1832 – 65.

⁸¹ Basil Joseph Mathews, 1879 – 1951.

⁸² Sunday School Praise, number 493.

were occupied with the collecting and editing of the material.⁸³ She explained that SG provided a large sheet on which a great many hymns and songs were listed. The young people had to go through the list and tick the hymns and songs that they felt should be included. Christine and her group then later met to collate this information. Christine's personal favourite was Come let us remember the joys of the town.⁸⁴ Thus The Youth Sing Book was a young people's songbook, chosen by young people. SG's son, Dr Anthony Hedges, was the key to the musical arrangements. Although he admits to having "small influence on the hymn side",⁸⁵ he altered a few of the harmonisations that he "regarded as particularly poor".⁸⁶ For the second section of the book, divided between "songs" and "fun songs", Dr Hedges, (then Toni, an undergraduate at Oxford) was paid a "nominal sum"⁸⁷ to arrange the songs for piano. The contribution of the BMSS did not stop here, for a number of original compositions are included which members of the Red Rhythmics wrote.

In The Youth Sing Book SG not only demonstrates his enjoyment of musicmaking, and more particularly singing, but he also suggests that singing can, in some small way, contribute to solving many of the divisions in the world. In his own preface to The Youth Sing Book he explains a little of this philosophy. He remarks that the postwar youth "want music" and "like music", and to this end "singing offers the pleasantest and most natural way".⁸⁸ He goes on to explain that the task of selecting material was extremely lengthy, taking some five years. He also remarks on his involvement with the Methodist Association of Youth Clubs. The foreword, by

⁸³ Personal remembrances of Christine Cole.

⁸⁴ Christine claims that this is included, but I have not been able to find it.

⁸⁵ Letter - December 8th, 1997.

⁸⁶ Personal letter, December 8th, 1997.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Hedges, 1953, p. iv.

Thomas Armstrong, makes some interesting comments on a volume that contains both sacred and secular music. Armstrong's comment that "Popular song is specially revealing because it tells not only what people think, but also what they feel and are"⁸⁹ is particularly significant to this study, as much of SG's work with BMSS concerned the wellbeing of his students, both in and outside Sunday School. Thomas Armstrong emphasises that SG has made wise choices in his selection, "including in his songbook many poems that are partly religious, and hymns, together with love songs, work songs, ballads, dancing songs, and songs of revelry...songs of travel and songs of war, and always songs of mourning side by side with those of triumph."⁹⁰ It should also not go unnoticed that SG included songs in foreign languages in an attempt to "help toward the unifying of the World Family."⁹¹

The first section of The Youth Sing Book contains 150 hymns, most of which can be considered popular by today's standards. The hymns are not, or do not appear to be, in any particular order, either thematic or alphabetical, the first one being O worship the King. Carol singing was clearly important to SG, as Christmas concerts and services featured significantly in the concerts and services he organised. The selection of carols, which are grouped together, contains some interesting surprises. For the most part these could be considered to be popular carols with their most familiar tunes, including the nineteenth century examples that have come to be recognisable by present generations of carol singers. It is this section of the hymn book which places it firmly in the 1950s, as there is no consideration of the many tunes which have now become considered "traditional" to the popular words of, say, While Shepherds Watch

⁸⁹ Hedges, 1953, p. iv.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. iii.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. iv.

Their Flocks by Night, and The First Nowell. The roots of some carols are not ignored, Silent Night appears in German, and In that poor stable is written with the French text appearing before the English translation. There are, however, some carols which do not often find their way into hymn books, including I saw three ships come sailing in and Masters in this hall. It is particularly apparent that this is a young people's book, rather than a children's collection, as the only specifically "children's" carol is to the tune Rocking, that is set to the words Little Jesus sweetly sleep. Familiar so-called children's favourites such as Away in a manger are notable by their absence.

Whilst many of the hymns can be found in hymnbooks of the day, mostly The Methodist Hymn Book (1933), other sources are frequently represented, and books such as The Canadian Youth Hymn Book have an airing. The hymns in foreign languages are not in a separate section, but are included in the main body of the selection. There are some interesting inclusions here such as a French version of the well known All creatures of our God and King.⁹² The influence of Toni Hedges is clear as he added a number of tunes of his own composition, all with local names such as Bicester, Kidlington and Keble – the name of the Oxford College Toni attended.⁹³ Harmonically the arrangements hold little interest as many of them have very static bass lines, beloved of many hymnbooks, especially Anglican. Number 77, which uses the tune Richmond, is a particular example of this.

The second part of the book comprises the "song" section, and again these do not appear to be in any particular order. Once again the songs in foreign languages occupy no separate section, but appear amongst the English ones. A considerable variety of styles, themes and sources are represented in this section and it perhaps

⁹² No 4, Vous, créatures du grand Dieu - translated by L. Monatier Schroeder, 1929

⁹³ In his correspondence to me, Dr Hedges did not mention that the book contained any of his own original work.

bears some resemblance to other collections of so called "community" songbooks.⁹⁴ Whilst the subject of many of the songs could be considered sacred, many with a religious theme are included. Negro spirituals such as Didn't my Lord deliver Daniel and Nobody knows the trouble I've seen appear in this section when one feels they would have been equally at home in the "hymn" section.

Toni Hedges made most of the musical arrangements. He writes in his Musical Preface that they have been "arranged with the intention that even the least competent of pianists should be able to play them."⁹⁵ He also goes on to suggest to the "less expert pianist" that they "give a little time beforehand to practicing each piece".⁹⁶ Certainly the majority of the songs are arranged in simple keys with only a few accidentals, but there is occasionally a thickness in the arrangements, which belie Toni Hedges' assertion that "maximum simplicity" has been achieved. The last few pages of this section are devoted to a charming selection of rounds. Once again a variety of themes and styles are embraced, the very old being represented by Summer is a coming in (sic - Number 280) as well as a number of others.

The last section of The Youth Sing Book is devoted to "fun songs". The title is given to songs that have a nonsense element. The first one in the selection, called Woad, is set to the tune of Men of Harlech and is a humorous comment on fashionable dressing of the time, suggesting that "Woad's the stuff to show men". There are also songs with a "fiddle-dee-dee" type refrain, and those where the addition of words makes the songs longer and longer, for example One Man Went To Mow.

⁹⁴ Examples of this could include such books as The Daily Express Community Song Book, London, Daily Express, 1927.

⁹⁵ Hedges, 1953, p. v.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. v.

The Youth Sing Book was used in the 65th Anniversary service on Sunday, June 28th 1953, the year of its publication. On this occasion two homegrown tunes were used from the collection, both by Toni Hedges. These were number 61, **Gather us in, Thou Love that fillest all!** By George Matheson, (1842-1906), set to the tune **Keble**, and **See the gold upon the hills** by James Hutchinson Saxton (1865 - 1929), set to the tune **Kidlington**. The only other hymn used from **The Youth Sing Book** in the 1953 service was **Sing we of the Golden city** by Felix Adler.

In 1954 the layout of the sheet is quite different from that of previous years, and contains more information about the BMSS. The printed sheet contains little information about the hymns, except the words and the writers. However, I have been able to examine SG's own copy from the collection held by the church archivist, which is carefully annotated, and has a substantial amount of performance detail. Again SG notes all the tunes for the hymns, and shows that he searches around for the most suitable arrangements. This can be seen in his alterations concerning hymn number 7, where he changes his original choice for **Jesu meine Freude** from number 518 in the **BBC Hymn Book** to number 423 in **The Public School Hymn Book**.⁹⁷ Dynamic ranges are carefully explored and suggestions written for many of the hymns. Although it is known from the reports of the services that SG had many instruments at his disposal, their use is not noted on this sheet, and there is no indication to suggest particular instrumentation for any of the hymns. However, in keeping with his earlier sheets, SG's attention to detail is evident, as he alters the texture to suit the words of the hymns as the extract below demonstrates.

⁹⁷ **The Public School Hymn Book**, London, Novello, 1949.

Willy

CP 119

I see the shadow of Sam
I have to hear?
Things I would not like to tell me
If he were here:
Banned by the weapons,
Tales of the sea,
Shadows of Sam,
Tell them to me.

2 First let me hear how the children
Blood round His knee;
And I shall fancy His blessing

Thinking on me:
Words full of blessing,
Deeds full of grace,
All in the love-light
Of Sam's eyes.

3 Tell how the sparrow that twitters
On yonder tree
And the sweet meadow-side lily
May speak to me:
Give me their message,
For I would hear
How Jesus taught us
Our Father's care.

4 Tell me, in accents of wonder,
How rolled the sea,
Tossing the boat in a tempest
On Galilee
And how the Master,
Ready and kind,
Obed the billows
And hushed the wind.

5 Into the city I'd follow
The children's band
Wearing a branch of the palm-tree
High in my hand:
One of His disciples,
Yes, I would sing
Lowest hymns:
'Jesus is King'

There are that scenes in the garden
Of those pain:
And of the Cross where my Saviour
For me was slain.
And even so bright eyes,
So that they be
Shades of Sam,
Till dawn to me.

William Henry Fisher

Willy

AM 411

All things praise Thee, Lord, most high,
Magnificent earth, and sea and sky,
All were for Thy glory made.
Thou Thy greatness, thou displayed,
Should all worship bring to Thee:
All things praise Thee: Lord, may we!

2 All things praise Thee: night to night
Sing in their hymns of light:
All things praise Thee: day to day
Chorus Thy power to harkening say:
Thou and again are praising Thee:
All things praise Thee: Lord, may we!

f
All things praise Thee: round her seas
Earth, with her ten thousand shores,
Rolls a ceaseless choral strain:
Pouring wind and deep-voiced main,
Rustling leaf and humming bee,
All things praise Thee: Lord, may we!

f
All things praise Thee: high and low,
Heaven, and here, and underneath here,
Omniscient, Omnipotent, Omnipresent,
Thou art all things:
Lift our hearts in praise to Thee:
All things praise Thee: Lord, may we!

George William Gorder

Shine
BCC 25
Praise up, O man of God,
Have done with lower things:
Give heart and soul and mind and strength
To serve the King of Kings.

2 Praise up, O man of God,
His kingdom lasts long:
Bring in the day of breakthrough,
And end the night of wrong.

3 Praise up, O man of God,
The Church for you each with,
Her strength wrought in her work:
Rise up and make her great.

4 Lift high the Cross of Christ,
Tread where His feet have trod:
As heralds of the Son of Man
Rise up, O man of God!

William Francis Stewart

Just boys

CH 468

Jesus, of whom infants first
Thought, crying Thee to greet,
Knew to pay their worship due:
Rise up, Holy Jesus.

2 Jesus, who whom of you
With us, harkening to others,
Gave and sought and broken bread:
Rise up, Holy Jesus.

3 From all praise and vain boasts,
From all pride and angry boast,
From all lying and deceit,
Rise up, Holy Jesus.

4 From all shock and shame,
From all sorrow and distress,
From all loss and grievance,
Rise up, Holy Jesus.

5 From the love of our own way,
From forgetfulness to pray,
Rise up, Holy Jesus.

6 By Thy praise, bright and pure,
By the praise Thou dost endure,
Save us, Holy Jesus,
From our weakness to progress.
Amen

Accountable

I LOVE to hear the story
Which angel voices tell,
How came the King of Glory
Down from an earth to dwell:
So often I am brought to,
But who I surely know:
The Lord who came to save us,
Banning He spread the no.

2 I'm glad my blessed Saviour
Was once a child like me,
To show how kind and true
He began and ends
And if I try to follow
His footsteps here,
My prayer will surely
Because He loves me.

3 To sing His love and
My weakness sing:
And strength I receive
I hope He loves me
For He has truly proved
That even I may
To spend His love,
Because He loves me.

4 To sing His love and
My weakness sing:
And strength I receive
I hope He loves me
For He has truly proved
That even I may
To spend His love,
Because He loves me.

Judy Rose

YSB 3

O WARRIOR the Lord in the beauty of holiness!
How down before Him, His glory proclaiming!
With gold of splendour and images of holiness,
Knew and adore Him, the Lord in His name.

2 Lay at His feet lay thy burden of weakness,
High on His heart: He will bear it for thee,
Ourselves thy sorrow and answer thy forgetfulness,
Quelling thy steps as they lead for thee.

3 Fear not to enter His courts in the darkness
Of the poor weak things which make us sinners:
Truth in His beauty and love in His splendour:
There are the passages to lay on His altar.

4 Though through my being them in suffering and weakness
He will accept for the many who do:
Worship of joy give for symbols of holiness,
Tread for our weakness: and hope for our love.

5 O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness!
How down before Him, His glory proclaiming!
With gold of splendour and images of holiness,
Knew and adore Him, the Lord in His name.

John Samuel Hawley Bennett

you are Jack
PSM 423

JESUS, precious beyond
Scenes of purple passion,
Tread I should be me:
Ah! how long I've waited,
And my heart hath failed,
Endering Lord, for Thee:
Thine I am, O saviour Lamb:
I will make noight to hide Thee,
Thoughts I out leaders Thee.

2 In Thy arms I rest me;
Face who would receive me
Ourselves reach me here:
Be quickening
By fear:
Laid fall
Ourselves speak me:
Fill me.

3 In Thy arms I rest me;
Face who would receive me
Ourselves reach me here:
Be quickening
By fear:
Laid fall
Ourselves speak me:
Fill me.

4 In Thy arms I rest me;
Face who would receive me
Ourselves reach me here:
Be quickening
By fear:
Laid fall
Ourselves speak me:
Fill me.

John Samuel

The hymns for 1954 are drawn from a variety of sources, including Congregational Praise,⁹⁸ a relatively new hymnbook at that time, being first published in 1951, Hymns Ancient and Modern, The Youth Sing Book, and The Anglican Hymn Book. Although SG chose hymns from a wide variety of books, it is apparent that BMSS did not have multiple copies of them. SG was evidently proud of his own Youth Sing Book, but the volume was not extensively used, and it is clear that he intended to use Sunday School Praise, a volume with which he had close connections, as soon as it became available. This later collection had a much wider circulation than the Youth Sing Book and was used in Sunday Schools throughout the country. Its introduction was seen as necessary as its predecessor, The Sunday School Hymnary was considered to “no longer fully meet present-day needs.”⁹⁹ SG was himself on the committee and contributed one hymn. His son, Anthony, was, with Mr. K. D. Smith, “responsible for the preparation and presentation of the music”.¹⁰⁰ He contributed eighteen tunes, and ten arrangements. Thus, whilst it was not a truly Bicester publication, SG certainly felt that it was his own. He made use of this hymnbook prior to its publication, whilst organising funds to purchase it as soon as possible. As early as 1956 he set up a special fund to provide the new hymnbooks, as soon as they became available. This finally happened on March 28th, 1958, when it was reported in Youth News that

On Sunday the newly published Hymnary Sunday School Praise was introduced throughout the school. It stands for young people worthily alongside the most notable modern adult hymnaries...the £20.00 cost of discarding shabby old books to make way for the new has been cheerfully

⁹⁸ Congregational Praise, London, Independent Press, 1951.

⁹⁹ Sunday School Praise, p. iii.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, p. iv.

met.

The effect of the use of Sunday School Praise on the anniversary service sheets was that number, rather than title, identifies each hymn. SG remained convinced that he was a forerunner, as the front of the sheet, exhorts worshippers to “come to these Services that are Inspiring and Different”.

As BMSS moved into the 1960s it quickly became apparent that SG was keen to maintain momentum. One of his main concerns was that all scholars should be kept occupied throughout the anniversary service, a point commented on by Mrs. Christine Cole, who remembers the last ten years of SG’s reign as superintendent very clearly. The 1960 service is well covered in the Bicester Advertiser,¹⁰¹ and this includes a description of a procession of banners in which the whole school took part, an innovation, according to Mrs. Cole. The local paper also comments on the quality of the singing, especially the rendering of the first hymn, Dear Lord, here in Thy house of prayer,¹⁰² which “was a hymn of prayer, and was rendered in a subdued tone which befitted the words”.¹⁰³ The article goes on to praise the singing of all the hymns for the “due attention given to the meaning of the words contained in them”.¹⁰⁴ Full credit is given to the “excellent coaching they had received from their conductor, Mr. Hedges”.¹⁰⁵ The re-emergence of the “six girls” is also in evidence in this service.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ June 30th, 1960.

¹⁰² Sunday School Praise, number 2.

¹⁰³ Bicester Advertiser, June 30th, 1960

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ Christine Cole remembers that this was a feature of Anniversary services and told me, “A group of older girls would sing, usually six of them.” Christine was herself once selected for this honour, but had a very low singing voice and so was considered unsuitable!

Once again Sunday School Praise is also used in 1960, as indicated by the numbers that are used in the hymn sheet, and any changes in tune are noted accurately. For example hymn number 2, which is Where ancient forests round us spread, number 508 in Sunday School Praise, was to be sung to the tune of number 320. Similarly, hymn 3, O Lord our God arise, number 164, was to be sung to the tune of 408. These details are also included in the 1961 hymn sheet. The week before the 1962 anniversary was to take place, in his column in the Bicester Advertiser, SG quotes the words of the hymnist Percy Dearmer who wrote of Sunday itself: "Day for worship of God, in fellowship sacred and joyful".¹⁰⁷ He also notes in his Super's Diary that the hymns have been chosen.

We have settled on Anniversary hymns, numbers 2, 387, 104, 162, 166(?) 115, 301, 128 from Sunday School Praise.

It is important to note that, now a hymnbook is universally accepted within the Sunday School, numbers can be used to refer to all hymns if the relevant volume is identified. The overseas missionary work carried out by BMSS is highlighted on the service sheet with an illustration of the refugee children supported by BMSS. The sponsoring of overseas schoolchildren was an important part of the work of BMSS, and the choice of hymns in the Anniversary Services begins to reflect this.

In 1963 the front of the hymn sheet carries the following statement:

"BMSS is experimenting with new types of music this year hoping to enrich the worship, especially for the younger people. Let us know whether you enjoy Numbers 6, 7, 8, 10."

These are O God of Bethel by whose hand, Who would true valour see, Now Thank we all our God and Let us with a gladsome mind. Although these had been included in children's collections, they were new to BMSS. A partial explanation of the use of

¹⁰⁷ Bicester Advertiser, June 24th, 1961.

these “new” hymns is to be found in the report of the event found in the Bicester Advertiser.¹⁰⁸ Whilst a cursory glance at the hymn sheet might lead one to suppose that the choice of hymns could be considered somewhat conservative, we read that

An unusual part of the day’s celebration was the guitar group who accompanied the seniors in a version of Let us with a gladsome mind with the air of Michael row the boat ashore.¹⁰⁹

Obviously this was well received by the congregation. The leading section of the newspaper article repeats the hymn sheet promise that “the Sunday School proclaims that they were experimenting with the new types of music especially for the young people”.¹¹⁰ Although the congregation was described as “surprised”, it was noted that members “stayed in after the service to learn one of the new hymns”.¹¹¹ It is also interesting to note that the hymns would be considered innovative in this context. However, they have clearly entered the hymn “canon” in the last 35 years, and now almost no service would be complete without at least one of them. It seems to me that this is a definite step away from the hitherto accepted form of children’s hymn, introducing instead a more universal type of hymn singing. All of the hymns come from Sunday School Praise. SG again shows that he is prepared to keep abreast of changes in musical trends, as he comments on the “throbbing guitar harmony in sung spiritual”.¹¹²

In 1964 attention is drawn on the front of the hymn sheet to numbers 3, Servants of the great adventure, 4, Lord, thy word abideth, both of which come from Sunday

¹⁰⁸ June 28th, 1963.

¹⁰⁹ I have tried this and it seems not to “fit”, but the hymn sheet does not make it clear that it is necessary to put in the “Alleluias” after each couplet.

¹¹⁰ Bicester Advertiser, Friday, June 28th, 1963.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Super’s Diary, August 1963.

School Praise, and numbers 9, We have a song to sing you, the source of which cannot be found, and 10, Jesus the name that brings salvation, which comes from the School Hymnbook of the Methodist Church. This anniversary was covered in the Bicester Advertiser, under the headline “What A Day It Was!!”.¹¹³ All the participants are mentioned by name, but no hymns are quoted.

As he wrote a regular column in the Bicester Advertiser, SG was now largely responsible for his own publicity, as can be seen in 1965 when the Anniversary service was enthusiastically anticipated. For three weeks in advance SG had a countdown in his column in the Bicester Advertiser.¹¹⁴ Whilst there does not seem to be any coverage of the actual event, great richness is promised as “there will be the organ and the two pianos, and guitars, and the massive music (sic), in which the packed congregation join with all the boys and girls in hymns that, by all the critical standards of today, are splendidly worth singing”.¹¹⁵ Potential congregations are further tempted to attend, with the question “Do you like drums in a church?” and the answer, “well, the Anniversary drummer is coming 50 miles for the occasion”.¹¹⁶ SG justifies his use of these modern innovations by quoting scripture, as he so often did in defence of the Red Rhythmics. “If you query propriety look up Psalm 150”.¹¹⁷ SG then goes on to make this wellknown passage apply to BMSS.

Praise God upon the loud cymbals and upon the high-sounding cymbals: (they will be in the drum kit); Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet: (BMSS has its trumpeter); Praise Him with the psaltery: (guitar); with stringed instruments and organ: these, of course, will be there - a piano is

¹¹³ June 3rd, 1964.

¹¹⁴ May 28th, June 4th, June 18th.

¹¹⁵ Bicester Advertiser, Friday May 28th, 1965.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Bicester Advertiser, Friday May 28th, 1965.

stringed.¹¹⁸

This hymn sheet starts to reveal some of the cultural changes of the 1960s. Once more photographs of the Korean orphans “adopted” by BMSS are shown on the front of the hymn sheet. Most of the hymns come from Sunday School Praise. The second “hymn”, however, is We shall overcome which, whilst it could be considered to be a modern hymn, contains a direct reference to “God” only in the fourth verse, and the other verses could be considered to be merely thought-provoking, rather than overtly religious. This song does not seem to have been included in any hymnbook published at this time. The School Hymnbook of the Methodist Church is still in evidence with In summer field are grasses green¹¹⁹ being sung.

In 1966 a wide variety of hymns was used on this occasion, and the “delightful singing” was commented upon in the Bicester Advertiser.¹²⁰ The numbers used on the hymn sheets indicate that the hymns come from Congregational Praise, Sunday School Praise and the Methodist Hymnbook (1933). Several other hymns appear which are not attributed to any particular book. I’ve a million songs in my heart is by Joy Webb and the Joy Strings. Another hymn, God is love: let heaven adore him can be found in the BBC Hymnbook,¹²¹ which SG had used in previous years. One of the most innovative introductions of the 1966 service was the inclusion of a hymn clearly written by SG himself. Called All children of far distant lands, it is an exhortation to Christians everywhere to join with all nations in unity. More specifically, the fifth verse mentions the names of the Korean orphans “adopted” by BMSS. The last verse

¹¹⁸ Bicester Advertiser, Friday May 28th, 1965.

¹¹⁹ Methodist Hymnbook (1933), Number 541.

¹²⁰ June 1966, undated.

¹²¹ The BBC Hymnbook, London, British Broadcasting Corporation/Oxford University Press, 1951.

particularly emphasises SG's commitment to world peace and unity:

God made us all one family
In all the earth to dwell
That everyone may helpful be
And so his goodness tells.

The suggested tune for this hymn is Petrus.

Emboldened by the inclusion of his own hymn in 1966, SG makes a more significant addition to the 1967 service. Hymn number 2 is At the name of Jesus, a hymn that is now considered to be well known and often sung. However, the version in the 1967 BMSS service sheet is much altered by SG himself. On the left of the following illustration the published words of At the name of Jesus¹²² are presented. On the right are shown the alterations made by SG for the 1967 service. It can be seen that there are several places where SG introduces the ideals he held so strongly. For example, in both verses two and three he mentions the "selfless service" of the Methodist work ethic. Christ's victory is much in evidence, especially in the last verse.

¹²² Caroline M. Noel, 1817-1877.

- 1 At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow,
every tongue confess him king of glory now;
this the Father's pleasure, that we call him Lord,
who from the beginning was the mighty word.
- 2 At his voice creation sprang at once to sight,
all the angel faces, all the hosts of light;
thrones and dominations, stars upon their way,
all the heavenly orders, in their great array
- 3 Humbled for a season, to receive a name
from the lips of sinners unto whom he came;
faithfully he bore it spotless to the last,
brought it back victorious when from death he passed.

Rise it up triumphant with its human light,
through all ranks of creatures to the central height,
to the eternal Godhead, to the Father's throne,
filled it with the glory of his triumph won.

Name him, Christians, name him, with love strong as death,
but with awe and wonder, and with bated breath;
he is God the saviour, he is Christ the Lord,
ever to be worshipped, trusted and adored.

In your hearts enthrone him; there let him subdue
all that is not holy, all that is not true;
crown him as your captain in temptation's hour,
let his will enfold you in its light and power.

With his Father's glory Jesus comes again,
angel hosts attend him and announce his reign;
for all wreaths of empire meet upon his brow,
and our hearts confess him king of glory now.

AT the name of Jesus
All our heads we bow,
All our tongues confess him
High in glory now;
Tis the Father's pleasure
We should call him Lord,
Who, in all his living,
Was God's mighty Word.

2 He, for others' service,
Sweat received, and shame
From the lips of sinners
Unto whom he came;
Faithfully he bore it,
Loving to the last,
Fearless and victorious
Right through death he passed.

3 Praise him, children, praise him,
Serve him day by day,
Gaze with awe and wonder,
All his words obey.
Praise God for our Jesus,
Jesus Christ our Lord,
Ever to be followed,
Trusted and adored.

4 In your hearts enthrone him;
There let him subdue
All that is not holy,
All that is not true;
Let him be your Master
In temptation's hour;
Let his will enfold you
In its light and power.

5 Praise God all creatures,
Praise him with our might,
All the farthest parts,
All the hosts of light,
Jesus, lead us onward,
Till God's will be done,
Till this earth is heaven,
And your victory won.

C.M.N. &

In both this hymn, and the other hymn he alters for the 1967 service, Thank you for giving me the morning, the changes that SG makes simplify the language and add a personal dimension to each. The difficulties of the mid-1950s seem to be forgotten as Gather us in, Thou love that fillest all, to the tune Keble, is included. The hymn All children of far distant lands is repeated this year.

This is the last year in which SG was involved in the anniversary services as Superintendent. In fact, an article appeared in the Bicester Advertiser only two weeks later announcing his intention to step down from the post.¹²³ A detailed study of this service reveals the many changes in the use of hymns in anniversary services. Some of the hymns used in this service show how much attitudes have changed in the last

¹²³ June 21st, 1968.

hundred years. For the first time the hymn The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want appears. Whilst there is no indication (unusually for SG) of tune, the words are certainly those used for the now frequently sung Crimond. In this hymn sheet, it could be argued, there is none of the more standard repertoire of the Anniversary service; instead the modern classics emerge in the freshness of a changing world. Sydney Carter's popular When I needed a neighbour were you there¹²⁴ gets its first airing at a Bicester anniversary service, as does his Lord of the dance.¹²⁵ Both hymns were published by Galliard in 1968. It would be difficult to present any argument that does not include these hymns as central to the hymn singing traditions of the second half of the twentieth century. Perhaps the most significant inclusion in the 1968 service is We shall overcome. This time it appears exactly in the version printed in Faith, Folk and Clarity, where it is described as "now probably the best-known and most sung freedom song in the world".¹²⁶ SG shows again that he is committed to world events, as he includes this song "In memory of Dr Martin Luther King", who was assassinated on April 4th, 1968. Both nearer to home and in "distant lands", SG includes All children of far distant lands as he has done for the past few years. As usual the service ended with The School Anthem.

SG died on July 18th, 1974 at the age of 77. The cause of death was given as an overdose of aspirin. His funeral service was led by a number of Nonconformist ministers from the town, and one of his own hymns was sung. SG's other significant contribution to music in Bicester, the formation of the Red Rhythmics Harmonica Band will be discussed in Chapter Seven, but it should be noted that his influence on

¹²⁴ Carter, Sydney, 1965.

¹²⁵ Carter, Sydney, 1963.

¹²⁶ Smith, p.25.

hymn singing in BMSS continues to be felt both by those who remember him, and those who have followed him into Sunday School leadership. Obituaries for him are warm and pay tribute to his work in the locality. The tribute in the Methodist Recorder ends: "We shall miss his ebullient personality very much".¹²⁷

SG's contribution to the Anniversary Service, with its extensive local press coverage, emphasis on community hymn singing and enjoyment, must surely be seen as a vital contribution to life within a community that was "pushed out from the areas of [usual] socializing by their own temperance beliefs".¹²⁸ His clear commitment to "great and clean and good-fun sport"¹²⁹ spread to his innovative teaching of hymns. Furthermore his ability to extend existing repertoire and experiment with performance techniques provides evidence of the many changes seen in the development of hymn singing.

¹²⁷ Source – Fiona Hedges' papers, undated.

¹²⁸ Howkins, p. 85.

¹²⁹ Nicholson, Mavis, Martha Jane and Me, London, Chatto and Windus, 1991.

CHAPTER SEVEN - BEYOND THE CHURCH: HYMNODY AND SECULAR MUSICMAKING IN THE COMMUNITY.

The importance of hymn singing to children has been established in Chapter Five and it has been noted that, under instruction, children will participate in elaborate performances of church music within the confines of a church service, especially for a special occasions such as a Sunday School anniversary. With BMSS as an example, it has also been noted that children are willing to sing hymns in settings outside church services, as has been discussed with reference to the regular performances of anniversary hymns on the Market Square. It has also been illustrated that the young people of Bicester were not averse to singing hymns on other occasions, as has been seen by the fact that they sang their special anniversary hymns to entertain themselves on their annual Sunday School treat. The aim of this chapter is to examine the ways in which hymn singing, under the leadership of Mr. S. G. Hedges, was blended with secular entertainment in Bicester to contribute to the social lives of young people already associated with a church in the middle years of the twentieth century. The data for this section is drawn from source material held by the archivists at Bicester Methodist church, and in the family papers of Fiona Hedges, SG's granddaughter. It will be revealed that through SG's manipulation of community hymn singing, he was able to expound his own views on leisure activities for youth, pacifism and evangelism, as well as providing a certain market for his own writing.

SG was determined that the teenagers in his Sunday School should be appropriately occupied throughout the year, and with this in mind he formed what was to become a highly successful harmonica band, at a time when such musicmaking was extremely popular. This band was able to contribute to the music in services, especially the anniversary services, and provide entertainment on secular occasions in much the same way as the musicians of Mellstock provided both sacred and secular music for their community. The Red Rhythmics is described in SG's own words as "A Christian Youth harmonica band" and was the pioneer of what, in 1939, was the fast-

spreading band movement. It was the first all-harmonica band to broadcast in this country, playing in many famous venues such as the Royal Albert Hall and Westminster Central Hall. The band existed from 1936 to 1956, with a break for most of the duration of the Second World War. This was both because many of the members were occupied either in the services or the war effort and suitable playing instruments were impossible to obtain. The band restarted promptly in 1945.

The idea of a Nonconformist band was certainly not unique to SG, and Alun Howkins sets the scene in his article Dare to be Daniel where he draws attention to,

The Lewes Wesleyan Gospel Temperance Mission Brass Band, founded in 1896, was composed only of 'total abstainers and Christians and play only 'sacred music'.¹

He remarks that the activities of groups such as this were "religious only in the broadest possible sense"² and as the performances of the Red Rhythmics are examined it will be seen that this is also the case in Bicester, with the exception of the regular community hymn singing sessions. SG's son, Dr Anthony Hedges, who is referred to as "Toni" in all written sources, described the Red Rhythmics, in a personal letter to me, as "very much a product of the time",³ and aside from the unusual choice of instruments, the group certainly appealed to the Nonconformist mentality which, as well as supplying all spiritual needs, sought to provide entertainment for its own chapel members. With regard to the Red Rhythmics, Dr Hedges writes that harmonicas were his father's "latest enthusiasm when he started the band.... and an ideal way to introduce young people to music".⁴ He suggests that musically the band seemed bound to succeed with its captive audience of the village communities who were entertained by the Red Rhythmics for a period of over thirty years. However, SG's vision was more concerned with maintaining Sunday School

¹ Howkins, p.87.

² Ibid. p. 87.

³ Personal from Dr A. Hedges, December 8th, 1997.

⁴ Ibid.

attendance, and whilst Dr Hedges stresses that the hymns and sacred pieces did not form part of the concerts, the band's contribution to the Methodist church should be noted. Dr. Hedges suggests that the Red Rhythmics were no more than a particular social phenomenon, and certainly the band allowed for evident Nonconformist pride from its leader and members. Alun Howkins remarks on the necessity for "any successful entertainment to be carted around to neighbouring chapels as a sign of superior skill and ability". However, there can be no doubt that membership of the Red Rhythmics provided a wealth of experience and musical opportunity in a time of change. In spite of the restriction imposed by the limitation of the instruments, and the fact that some of the items included in their programmes have not been enduring in their popularity, this music must surely be seen against the backdrop of the changing world of the mid-twentieth century. The Red Rhythmics also appeared on radio and television, and cut a record, at a time when such things were unusual, and possibly even unheard of for a group of this kind.

The idea of a harmonica band was suggested in the autumn of 1936 when the senior boys of the Sunday School, aged between 15 and 20 years, were wondering how to occupy themselves over the winter months. Later SG wrote about this experience in The Hohner Harmonica Handbook,⁵ and suggests that:

The jaded youth leader, at wits' end to know how new vigour and interest can be put into leisure-time activities that have grown stale, has only to start a harmonica band.⁶

Although surprised, SG soon realised that these seemingly limited instruments already formed the backbone of various groups on the continent. He writes that the harmonica is an instrument that is extremely easy to learn to play in a group, and comments that this contrasts starkly with a regular orchestra, which might take several years to establish. He writes:

⁵ Hedges, S. G. The Hohner Harmonica Handbook, London, Pilgrim Press, 1938.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

With harmonicas and vinetas a week of preparation will suffice. If you play yourself, and can persuade a few friends to get instruments, then your band can begin straight away.⁷

Initial membership of the band was only ten players who purchased their own instruments for about three shillings, contributing a further two shillings for the more expensive vinetas. SG was most particular when discussing the finances of the band, and always suggested that players bought their own instruments, and contributed to the costs of the soloists and bass players. A piano accordion was required to complete the harmonic structure.

SG was very keen that his band should appear in public as soon as possible, and his motives for this are described in his handbook. He writes:

They [the young people] like the glamour of bright lights and applause, and will work all the more eagerly with the prospect of such glamour near ahead.⁸

The first public appearance of the band was for an occasion that linked the sacred and social - the annual concert of the Sunday School. They performed only two items, but already wore the distinctive red berets of their concert uniform. The addition of a uniform was entirely in keeping with SG's philosophy of discipline and corporate identity. Both these aspects will be discussed more fully later in the chapter, when the effect of the Second World War is noted. However, SG was determined to run his band with precision.

Slackness or disloyalty in the band should be promptly dealt with, and disciplinary measures taken if necessary. Troublesome elements should not be allowed to remain. A band lacking in unity cannot be successful.⁹

Both the pieces performed on this first occasion were arrangements of the popular tunes, Daisy Bell and Pack Up Your Troubles. It seems that SG was aware of the sources available and versions of these tunes were available in the Hohner Harmonica

⁷ Harmonica News, undated article.

⁸ Hedges, 1938, p. 34.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

Song Book.¹⁰ The early performance was quickly followed by a request from the **Salvation Army** for a repeat, and the band was launched on its visiting musical career. **SG** increased the instrumentation to include drums and the programme was extended. For these early performances the band did not have a name, although the **Bicester Advertiser** reports their early activities, stating on Friday, July 17th, 1936 of the anniversary service that

The children, under their superintendent Mr. G. S. Hedges, sang beautifully throughout the festival, the singing accompanied by the orchestra, and certain hymns by the harmonica band.

More bookings followed and a really “snappy” (SG’s word) red uniform matched the new name, The Red Rhythmics.

Scores of concerts followed, with new harmonica bands being set up across the county in the wake of a visit from the Red Rhythmics, and Alun Howkins writes that this is typical of the role fulfilled by the temperance bands of the late nineteenth century when such groups would provide instruments and tuition.¹¹ The organisation of the band’s finances was of great concern to SG, as he was clearly anxious that it should be run, if not at a profit, certainly not at a loss. He sent the following advice on a typed sheet to prospective venues.¹²

Cost of bus is usually £3. We ask besides £1 for band expenses, & light refreshments after the show.

Programmes supplied at 8/6 a hundred (four colours available). These are for admission instead of tickets.

Cost of printing local particulars on blank programme space, 9/- a hundred.

Poster blanks, in yellow, red black, with band photo, 5d each.

All post free

General hints - Best admission prices are 2/6 & 1/6 or 2/- and 1/- (Highest prices attract more)

¹⁰ Despite a wide-ranging search, it has not been possible to obtain a copy of this book for study in any library or resource centre.

¹¹ Howkins, p. 87.

¹² Source: Mrs. Hedges’ collection - hardback notebook titled “Red Rhythmics”.

Get adequate publicity, & aim at selling out before the show.

SG made it clear that any place within a radius of thirty miles could invite the band, **and** his notebooks contain the details of many concerts held in the villages that surround Bicester. He suggested that what remained from the profits should be used to buy instruments and equipment to start up a band among the local young people **and** a member of the Red Rhythmics offered coaching to these fledgling bands. **SG** also provided a list of essential equipment needed to set up a band and among the list it was stated that six copies of his own book, The Hohner Harmonica Band Book, were required. This clearly ensured good sales.

The band quickly enjoyed a certain amount of local fame and was invited by the Town Council to give an evening concert on the Market Square at the celebration of King George V's Jubilee. The entirely secular programme was as follows.¹³

Signature

Here's a health

Saddle your blues

Laughing Irish Eyes

Chocolate Soldier

Scottish selection

Daisy Bell

Les. Solo ~ San Marino

Waltz medley

Swing Low

Golden Slippers

Sweetheart let's grow old

Patrol

Springtime in the Rockies

Stein song

Singsong

Oh Susannah

Huntsmen's chorus

S. Am Joe

When I grow too old

The King

It was an exacting business to organise a full programme, as harmonica pieces are restricted by key and are of necessity very short. Sid Hedges kept detailed notes of the pieces played, including their keys and the arrangement of the players on the stage.¹⁴

¹³ Source: Mrs. Hedges' collection.

¹⁴ Ibid.

The "Harmonica Song Band League" showed interest. One night Donald Mackenzie, editor of The Teacher's World, along with E. Charles Millard, visited The Red Rhythmics. Millard was to write in the Accordion Times:

High spot in my travels around the country. Sid Hedges' band at Bicester. Those fellows didn't need to be told a thing about playing. Solos, duets, quartet, band part-playing - every type of music - comedy and variety in a two hour programme.¹⁵

By the time the third annual concert was given in Bicester, a settled programme was established. Whilst all sorts of acts are included such as tap dancing and club swinging, Christianity is not forgotten as the evenings always ended with the Doxology.

Although the Red Rhythmics had established a reputation based on a secular programme, SG clearly felt that they had a role to play as leaders of worship and a representation of Christian Youth. With this in mind he was anxious to display a mix of secular and music, and in 1937 the first such event came in the form of the National Sunday School Union Annual Secretaries' conference, which was held in Aylesbury and the Red Rhythmics performed a varied programme. This was the first time that the band performed sacred and secular music in the same programme at a Sunday School event and SG felt that it was necessary to comment on this, as his programme for the evening includes the direction to "explain varied programme".¹⁶ The event was divided into several parts, the bulk of the event including many of the items used at the Jubilee Concert. This is the first occasion that SG includes his hymn "singsong", for which he later became famous in Bicester. At this event he included the following hymns:

Rock of ages; Lead kindly Light; These things shall be; Guide me oh

¹⁵ Source: Mrs. Hedges' collection, undated article.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Thou great Jehovah; Abide with me; The Day thou gavest;¹⁷

This was followed by the teaching of two new hymns by the band, Come thou fount and Behold the mount. A talk came next, which was followed by a secular selection taken from the band's standard repertoire. The evening again ended with the Doxology.

There is evidence to suggest that SG had been keen to include hymns in the Red Rhythmics repertoire from the earliest days, as he writes extensively on the subject in his Hohner Harmonica Handbook, the first book he wrote about harmonica playing. In this volume, as well as illustrating exercises to improve technique, he also writes out the full bass parts, which would be played on vinetas, for over forty hymns. These demonstrate simple tonic/dominant/sub-dominant harmonisations as the following example shows.

Oxford:

G-g-: C-g-: G-c-: D-d-: G-g-:
C-g-: G-c-: DdGg: dgDg: GgGg:
DgDd: G-g-: C-g-: G-c-: DdGg:

Full details of the "blow and draw" are included in chapter thirteen which is dedicated to the bass instruments.

An invitation to play at Whitefield's Tabernacle, London, followed this, and this particular event is still talked about to day by former members of BMSS. Apparently transport floundered in snow, and the few members that managed to arrive at the venue on time were forced to entertain the audience for 45 minutes. All was happily resolved, as the others arrived to a warm reception, changed into their concert uniform and performed. As well as the usual secular favourites, carols were included in the programme: Once in Royal; Away in Manger; Fairy on ice; Wenceslas (men; girls);

¹⁷ Programme of the event.

Midnight Clear”,¹⁸ The evening ended with the Doxology.

By this time the Red Rhythmics enjoyed an excellent reputation within harmonica circles. Their next significant London appearance was a demonstration at Westminster Central Hall. On this occasion the “National Harmonica Song Band League” selected the band from bands across the entire country. Although it was clear, even so early in the band’s development, that it was destined for success, SG remembers that the group was primarily associated with the Methodist church. On the Sunday before this prestigious event, SG refers to Psalm 150, as he did so many times to justify his musical activities. He writes: “The Sunday before, at our service, we read Psalm 150 - it seemed rather to belong to us”.¹⁹ This emphasise that SG felt it necessary to support his actions by turning to scripture, thus he was able to counter any potential criticism from chapel members.

On July 12th, 1937 the Red Rhythmics attended their first BBC audition. SG was once again meticulous in his planning of the event, which was to last a precise 24 minutes, and the audition was successful and an engagement was secured. The fee was to be a mere five guineas, sufficient for the bus fare, but the event was considered by all who took part to be a triumph for Christian youth, even though the programme was entirely secular. This early accomplishment added to SG’s view that any harmonica band was bound to thrive. He wrote about it in The Hohner Harmonica Band Book,

The Red Rhythmics is only eighteen months old and has already broadcast for BBC, the first amateur band in this country, consisting solely of part-playing harmonicas, to be on air.²⁰

This first audition was reported in the Bicester Advertiser on Friday, July 16th, 1937:

¹⁸ Source: Mrs. Hedges’ collection. All titles are as SG wrote them.

¹⁹ Hedges, n.d., p. 23.

²⁰ Hedges, 1938, p. 8.

The Red Rhythmics - The members of this band went to Birmingham on Monday for an audition by the BBC, and the result of the visit, made known yesterday, was that the BBC will place the band on their waiting list, and may be able to offer them an engagement in the near future. The Rhythmics played four tunes, Huntsman's Chorus, Belphegor March, Daisy Bell and Orynthia, Mr. S G Hedges conducting.

This first broadcast was transmitted on September 14th, 1937,²¹ and SG noted that it was to be of six to eight minutes duration. He records details of the length of each item and notes the composers, presumably for accuracy in the transmission. The band played

		Mins	secs
Huntsman's chorus	Weber	1	20
Orynthia Intermezzo	J Ord Hume	2	20
Oh Susannah			40
When I grow too old to dream,	Romberg	2	00
Belphegor March		1	40 ²²

This first broadcast was followed by two more, and the band now boasted the title "The Red Rhythmics Broadcasting Band".²³

In spite of the apparent fame, playing at home was a priority. Sunday School Anniversaries come round and the band took its share, accompanying some hymns in the services as well as some community hymn singing prior to the service. It has already been noted in Chapter Six that there was some opposition, but SG called upon his favourite psalm for authority.

²¹ Source: Mrs. Hedges' collection.

²² A number of alternatives are also noted, but there is no record as to whether any of these were played or not.

²³ The second BBC engagement was on November 18th, 1938 and was of 8 minutes duration. SG kept careful notes, and there is a suggestion that one of the alternative items was chosen from the list. The third BBC engagement, on May 30th 1939, lasted for eight to ten minutes, and was broadcast at 5.30 pm. From the listed items, the ones played have been marked with a cross in the notebook. These were

Meltonian March

In the moonbeams Andantino

Three country dances

Down in the Cane Brake - this from the alternative list.

We did not easily get permission for that, for some elders very naturally questioned such an innovation and wondered if God could possibly approve of mouth-organs. I claimed authority from Psalm 150.²⁴

The opposition held in church towards such informal hymn singing seems to have evaporated before the event was reported in the local press and the proceedings were favourably commented upon:

There was another large congregation in the evening, when, prior to the commencement of the service, community hymn singing was enjoyed, the Red Rhythmics, conducted by Mr. J Leach, accompanying.²⁵

SG was careful to list the hymns chosen for this occasion and they were

Rock of Ages
Lead Kindly Light
These things shall be
Guide me oh thou great Jehovah
Abide with me
The day thou gavest
Behold the mountain of the Lord
Come thou fount of every blessing
Jesus stands among us

The numbers from the Methodist Hymnbook (1933) are noted, as are the verses to be sung. SG was careful in his choosing his hymns for these occasions as is shown by a similar list provided in The Hohner Harmonica Hand Book. Here he emphasises the need for careful planning before using harmonicas to accompany singing because of the limitations imposed by the instruments themselves. Of the above list, he writes, most can be played in the key of G major.

In the early years of their existence the Red Rhythmics continued to fulfil the same role of their predecessors in the Wesleyan Temperance bands. They contributed to

²⁴ Bicester Advertiser on Friday, July 2nd, 1937.

²⁵ Friday, July 9th, 1937. Hedges, n.d., p. 56.

what Alun Howkins describes as the “separate social world”²⁶ by playing at church garden parties and bazaars, presented homely items at Parents’ Rallies and Church Workers’ Conferences, and accompanying carol parties. Whilst these events were not in themselves religious, the Red Rhythmics continued to profess essentially Christian ideals with fundraising for charity remaining a priority. On one occasion the band was able to send a parcel of instruments, with greetings to the Wesley Sunday School of Secuderabad, India. This not only allowed for the development of music in the Christian world, but also contributed to the spread of the Gospel, thus fulfilling SG’s two main ideals. This significant development was reported in the Bicester Advertiser on Friday, July 9th, 1937 when, as part of the annual report, it was noted that part of the expenditure for the Sunday School included “a grant for the forming of a harmonica band in India”.

1938 saw the jubilee celebration of fifty years of the Wesleyan Sunday School. This event is covered extensively in the Bicester Advertiser and the Mid-Oxon Chronicle on Friday, October 21st, 1938. Just before the war the band took a fresh step, and started a junior band. A few girls were allowed to join and made what SG grudgingly described as “fair progress”.²⁷ Although the popularity of the Red Rhythmics was growing, SG did not lose sight of the band’s ethos and a request to join a cinema circuit was rejected on the grounds that it had little or no religious connection.

The period of the Second World War was a difficult time for the Red Rhythmics. However, as has been noted in Chapter Six, although a Conscientious Objector, SG made a personal response to the War Effort. In his Christian Youth – the alternative to Hitler Youth he recognises the appeal of the Fascist movement to young people, writing that the Hitler Youth movement was

Based on the elemental physical need of growing boys and girls, to whom

²⁶ Howkins, p. 85.

²⁷ Hedges, n.d., p. 56.

its programme of sports and activity makes a natural tremendous appeal.²⁸

SG clearly felt the need to establish a similar movement and his idea is that all youth groups should come together under one title. He also notes that the "Sunday School is the biggest [young people's organization] at the time of writing."²⁹ Whilst the Red Rhythmics were not actually functioning as a band for the duration of the war, it is clear that many of the ideas SG had put into practice since its formation is in accordance with his aims for a Christian Youth Movement. For example, he was strict about the adherence to a uniform, and one of the members, Joe Leach, notes this in a pamphlet written in celebration of Bicester Methodist Church Golden Jubilee:

We wore red berets, white shirts and grey flannels. Sid was the founder and conductor and sometimes he appeared before our audiences in an evening suit.

Furthermore, SG realised that the Sunday School could have a real effect on the lives of young people, although he is at pains to stress the need for the suitable leader.

A movement can be planned, but only a personality can bring it to life.³⁰

In this instance, although the leadership qualities of SG cannot go unnoticed, he is under no illusions as to a suitable candidate, stating quite clearly "Christ is the leader".³¹ SG's vision for both BMSS and the Red Rhythmics is very much in evidence as he lists the suitability of the Sunday School movement to take on the Christian Youth philosophy. He sets out a list of aims, which, having ten points, is almost reminiscent of the Ten Commandments.

1. We cater for all ages - [SG was always enthusiastic to maintain Sunday School membership and devised jobs and quasi-official positions for teenagers.]³²
2. Our membership is increasing

²⁸ Hedges, 1942, p. 10.

²⁹ Hedges, 1942, p. 14.

³⁰ Hedges, 1942, p. 10.

³¹ Ibid., p. 11.

³² Personal remembrances of Mrs. C. Cole.

3. Our teachers train.
4. Christian Youth is for all the week - [BMSS held many groups of which the Red Rhythmics was just one, which filled every weekday evening.]
5. We have the right premises. - [BMSS had separate buildings for the sole use of the Sunday School.]
6. We co-operate with the home - [Parents were invited and encouraged to attend all groups. If children did not attend Sunday School, they were sent a telegramme, noting their absence and hoping to see them the following week.]
7. Our Church wants youth.
8. We believe in Bible reading and Bible help.
9. We have a world outlook.
10. We serve the community.³³

In view of SG's continuing commitment to young people, it was disappointing that the Red Rhythmics were not able to function as a band during the War. This was partly due to the fact that many of the original members were in the services, or occupied with the war effort, but mostly because instruments were difficult to obtain, and very expensive. It is documented that some of the band members were taken as prisoners of war.³⁴ However, harmonicas were still very much in evidence at BMSS, especially in the anniversary services. SG was clearly not prepared to let all his hard work go to waste, and instruments were used whenever possible. Although on Friday, July 12th, 1940 it was reported in the Bicester Advertiser that although "the singing of the scholars was favourably commented upon... The Red Rhythmics was much missed this year", it can be seen that in 1941 there "was an orchestra with a variety of instruments including violins with some harmonicas and "excellent singing".³⁵ SG was anxious that harmonicas should not disappear completely, and clearly continued to work with younger players. This work appears to have been rewarded, and in 1943 the presence of the harmonica was still very much in evidence as at the parents' hour "a short attractive programme"³⁶ included items by the harmonica octet. However, in 1944 no mention is made of harmonicas in the Bicester

³³ Hedges, 1942, p. 22.

³⁴ Amongst Mrs. Hedges' papers are copies of letters to and from those men away. They were never forgotten.

³⁵ Bicester Advertiser, Friday July 11th, 1941.

³⁶ Bicester Advertiser, Friday July 9th, 1943.

Advertiser.³⁷

Many members were still absent at the end of 1945. This meant that, of the former group, only the younger ones could be included. SG was now forced to include girls regularly, although he was very opposed to the idea, believing that they would prove to be a distraction to the boys. A new programme was developed and new members added, notably Wilf Smith who was a "brilliant drummer".³⁸ The main problem, at the end of the war however, was the scarcity of instruments. The Hohner instrument factories were in the American zone of occupation and those that were available were far too costly for the Red Rhythmics. One instrument was obtained from Paris, costing sixty-eight shillings, instead of the former twelve shillings. It seems that the girls served their probation well and SG's reservations were unfounded as he wrote:

Judging by the reception accorded by audiences the advent of the girls was a good thing. The Sunday School, of course, was "co-ed"; we had a mixed youth club; it really seemed natural and proper that the bands should be mixed too. It certainly added to the general gaiety.³⁹

Even during the last months of the war Sid Hedges had been planning a comeback for the band. It was difficult to secure an audition because of restrictions on the radio and because bombing made a trip to London impossible. In the meantime a gramophone record was made at a private recording studio. Details of this are noted,⁴⁰ the recording being made in February, 1945 and lasting for three minutes and 50 seconds.

The band played:

Huntsmen's chorus
Camptown Races
Butterfly
Belphegor

³⁷ The 1944 anniversary is reported on Friday, July 7th.

³⁸ This is the opinion of everyone who remembers the band.

³⁹ Hedges, n. d., p. 38.

⁴⁰ Source: Mrs. Hedges' papers.

It was hoped that the BBC would include this contribution from The Red Rhythmics in the “Music While You Work” type programmes. The forward planning was rewarded, and the band was asked to perform at short notice by the BBC. Norman Coward, today an active member of the congregation, contributed a column to the Bicester Advertiser, which appeared on September 15th, 1945.⁴¹ Sadly, no notes for this event appear amongst SG’s papers. His book, The Romance Of The Red Rhythmics, tells of how the band had only a few hours’ notice of the transmission, so presumably he had no time to plan a programme. According to the newspaper cutting, the old favourites such a Belphegor March, Camptown Races, Old folks at home and Oh! Susannah were trotted out. The band received all the accolades to which they had become accustomed, including “comments about their smart appearance”, and the “most pleasant tribute” of all

...From Harry Engleman, a famous and most experienced musician; “I didn’t think it was possible to make music with those things”, he said, “I thought they were toys”.⁴²

Although SG was extremely interested in popular light music, and was keen to give displays of his band’s prowess in this area, it should not be forgotten that the Red Rhythmics were first and foremost the BMSS harmonica band. SG himself held high offices within the Sunday School Association hierarchy, and this meant that the Red Rhythmics were to be included in a number of exciting ventures shortly after the war. This included playing at the Albert Hall for the inauguration of the newly formed Methodist Association of Youth Clubs. This took place on June 2nd, 1945. The Red Rhythmics contributed a short programme of some seven minutes.⁴³ The programme was as follows:

⁴¹ Source: Wilf Smith’s papers.

⁴² Hedges, n.d. p. 96.

⁴³ Source: Mrs. Hedges’ papers.

Marches - anchors away, shores of Tripoli
Aloka
Dixie
Huntsmen's Chorus
When I grow too old to Dream
Belphegor

It is interesting to note that no sacred music was contained in the programme, in keeping with what was considered to be a celebration of youth, as the evening entertainment included many other performers, including gym displays and a Highland band. The Red Rhythmics was the smallest group taking part, numbering only thirteen players. Photographs of the event show that this performing band was made up of many of the new players, including the girls, who were clearly worthy of the occasion. The drummer is Wilf Smith, even though he does not remember playing in the band in the 1940s. Norman Coward wrote for the Bicester Advertiser on June 8th, 1945:

The Red Rhythmics added yet another colourful page to their history when they took part in the public inauguration of the Methodist Association of Youth Clubs in the Royal Albert Hall last Saturday. The Bicester band members were only thirteen of six hundred young Methodists who took part in the evening.⁴⁴

He goes on to describe the day, and the other events. Then it came to the turn of the Red Rhythmics.

The Red Rhythmics, waiting amidst the noise and confusion backstage, and in the interminable dressing room corridors, became, shall we say, a little more keyed up. Then, from the pageant-master, came the word: "Red Rhythmics next!" and on came Bicester's harmonica band. Long weeks of training, and the pageant-master's reiterated advice, subconsciously controlled each movement as the band marched brightly into the centre of the arena, and watched the conductor for the "instruments up" signal. The baton fell, and out crashed "Anchors Away"...All had gone splendidly; the band had never put on a better show.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Source: Wilf Smith's papers.

⁴⁵ Bicester Advertiser June 8th, 1945.

Even though the band enjoyed huge success around the country, playing at home was still very important to them. They did not neglect their duties as performers of hymns and sacred music. Even though instruments were still scarce, as early as November 1945 the band was back playing in the locality. On Thursday, November 8th, they took part in what they called A Grand Musical Festival at the Congregational Church in Thame. The event was reported in the Thame Gazette on Tuesday, November 13th, 1945.⁴⁶ This particular concert is a fine example of the mix between secular and sacred entertainment - a divide the Red Rhythmics were more than capable of crossing. The programme opened with a bible reading and the singing of the hymn The Church's one foundation before the concert proper started. Once again, the evening ended with the singing of the Doxology.

There is no record in SG's notebooks of the Thame concert, in spite of the obvious interest it attracted. According to him, more significant was The Fourth Annual Concert, a two-night affair, which took place in March 1946 and was the first post-war occasion that the band performed in Bicester. Although the group was nervous, afraid that they would have lost popularity, they were successful as ever. The Bicester Advertiser recorded the event thus:

The Red Rhythmics Broadcasting harmonica band is back to its pre-war standard of skill and popularity. The war suspended work, and now their personnel has much changed. But the new combination, with its seven girls, has got into its stride and was again welcomed in unmistakable manner by the large audience. There was excellent ensemble playing, with a little of comedy and burlesque and community singing.⁴⁷

Later the same year the band played as they had done in the pre-war years for the Sunday School Anniversary in Bicester.

⁴⁶ Source: Norman Coward's papers.

⁴⁷ Bicester Advertiser, Friday, March 25th, 1948.

SG's own chronicle of the Red Rhythmics ends here with the final chapters of his book The Romance of the Red Rhythmics, recording SG's own feelings about leading the band, and suggestions for starting a band oneself. It seemed that the lack of instruments was to be the end of the band. In March 1948 The Red Rhythmics actually gave a "Farewell Concert" in Wesley Hall. On the front of the programme it emphasised that this was "because of the impossibility of obtaining further instruments". The back of the programme gives some hope for the future with the postscript, "It is hoped that when harmonicas are once more available in England the Red Rhythmics will be revived".⁴⁸ It was thought that this was to be the last public appearance of the Red Rhythmics, at least until harmonicas were more easy to find in England.⁴⁹ However, the Red Rhythmics managed to continue to function, especially as SG was inducted as president of the Methodist Association of Youth Clubs for the year 1948/49 and the band received an invitation to take part in the annual rally again at the Royal Albert Hall. Once again Norman Coward was to add his thoughts on the occasion in the Bicester Advertiser of June 4th, 1948. Again, the band was part of a huge line-up of performers for an event entitled "Time Marches On".

Little is published about the Red Rhythmics at the very end of the 1940s, and it seems that the band ceased to function for a few years at least. Indeed SG's own notebooks contain no concert plans between 1947 and 1951. However, it seems that the band was to re-emerge in 1950, and to continue to be very active, so the problem of the instruments must have been solved. On the 14th October, 1950 an extensive article appeared in Picture Post⁵⁰ eulogising the many wonderful facets of BMSS. This article stresses that the emphasis of a good Sunday School is that it encourages young

⁴⁸ The chronology is difficult to follow here. It seems to me that the band played at the inaugural meeting of the Methodist Association of Youth Clubs as early as 1945.

⁴⁹ The book concluded its chronicle of the Red Rhythmics straight after the war. Subsequent information has been obtained through conversations, letters and newspaper articles.

⁵⁰ Source: Mrs. Christine Cole's papers.

people in self-improvement in all areas of their lives and is not simply a place for parents to leave their children for an hour on Sundays.⁵¹ A fine photograph of two keen harmonica players is shown in this article with the caption

The school's Red Rhythmics Band has played on the air and in the Albert Hall. It is one of the follow-through mid-week activities.

Members of the band produced a magazine with the title BMSS Chronicle, which details their own opinion of their playing. The first edition of this was distributed in October 1951, cost fourpence and was edited by a Patrick Smith. It was typed, with hand-drawn illustrations, and the following article offers some insight into one of the player's attitude. The quotation is exactly as it appears in the homemade publication.

My opinion of the Band is this. It is coming on very slowly - this is because the players do not practice enough at home. There are practices on Tuesday and Friday nights, lasting an hour. But the girls talk a bit too much and many of the players are constantly dropping their instruments; especially one boy - and that makes SG very annoyed. On Sept 5,⁵² the Band are broadcasting and having an audition for television, both of which, all players are looking forward to. The Band has had three concerts so far: - at Wooton, which was good for a first show; then Adderbury, which was not too good; Then Graven Hill, in the Festival concert, which was moderate. At the last we had an audience of about eight hundred. The harmonicas we use are Hohner's, a German make, and the best in the world. The Band consists now of 20 players - 1 string bass, 3 vinettas, 1 piano accordion, 2 drummers, 10 harmonicas - and not forgetting the conductor Mr. S G Hedges, who is known far and wide as an author and broadcaster. This is not the first School band. The first band started 13 years ago. That Broadcast three times. Well, with another year of hard work and practicing at home, I think the Band will be a great Success.⁵³

A further edition of the BMSS Chronicle (Christmas 1951) fills in a few more details.

⁵¹ It has hitherto gone unmentioned that SG undertook all sorts of other work among young people, including an excellent swimming programme.

⁵² SG's notebook contains details of this programme, which was for "Hullo There", with Lionel Gamlin, in London for the Light Programme. The same programme was played for the television audition later the same day.

⁵³ Source: Mrs. Hedges' papers.

Band practice has been going on as usual on Tuesday nights, getting ready for the concerts to come... On Monday we had a concert at Ludgershall [a village about four miles from Bicester] which went very well, although there were five away and the programme was changed around. Well, readers there is still no news about going on the television. That is because there are so many on the waiting list, but never mind that, we will be in our turn. We have bought some new stands, new books, new harmonicas and have had the wooden stands mended and the drum painted. Many thanks to Wilf Smith for coming and teaching Frank on the drums, helping us with the concerts etc. On September 20th and 21st⁵⁴ we gave our Come Back Concert at Bicester which went very well. It was in fact the best we have ever given.

During the 1950s the Red Rhythmics continued to function successfully both at home in church, and in the limelight of the media. Another broadcast was to come on October 18th, 1952 for "Hello There", introduced by Lionel Gamlin for the Light Programme. The recording was made in London.⁵⁵ It seems to have been a short contribution to a long programme, with only three items offered.⁵⁶ In spite of becoming famous, the Red Rhythmics continued to tour locally for both concerts and church services. SG planned as meticulously for these small services as for more high-profile occasions. For example, in 1953 in Islip, Oxfordshire they contributed to a service and concert. SG's notebook contains an order of service, but it is not clear whether or not the Red Rhythmics took part in that, as the hymns are mentioned only by number. The psalms, however, include number 150, which SG had so often used for his justification for the Red Rhythmics accompanying hymns. The concert, as well as including the Coronation selection, also included a "hymn singsong" as follows:

6 (words 48), 234 (words 585), 517, 618, 811.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Details of this extensive programme are included in SG's notebook.

⁵⁵ Programme: *Vaughan Williams March, Flowers in the Valley, En avant march.*

⁵⁶ Source: Mrs. Hedges' papers.

⁵⁷ Source: Mrs. Hedges' papers.

No hymnbook is suggested for these hymns, but the high numbers indicate that it was the Methodist Hymn Book (1933). Furthermore, in that volume, all the tunes are in G major, SG's preferred key for the harmonica.

1954 was to be a very active year for the Red Rhythmics as once again they were to attend the Methodist Association of Youth Clubs annual event at the Royal Albert Hall in May. The long wait for a television appearance was rewarded on June 19th. The Red Rhythmics participated in the programme "Sugar and Spice", produced by Kevin Sheldon, and they played for six minutes.⁵⁸ The programme was as follows:

The Little Shoemaker
100 Pipers
The Happy Wanderer
En avant

Short radio broadcasts were to follow in December, 1954. The eighth broadcast was for the Light Programme's "Under-20" parade and the Red Rhythmics played two short pieces. The ninth broadcast was on December 12th, also for the Light Programme, in a "High Spots of the Week" feature.

In December 1956 the Red Rhythmics came of age and a large birthday party concert was held "in the fine new Methodist Hall at Bicester".⁵⁹ Many tributes were paid to SG on this occasion, but surely the finest of all must have been that the band was still in existence! The event was also reported in the Bicester Advertiser on December 21st. In spite of the wealth of information gleaned from SG's and Mrs. Hedges' own papers, very little more is written about the Red Rhythmics. In his book Bicester Wuz A Little Town SG makes no mention of the band after 1956. In 1966 a newspaper article that appeared in the Bicester Advertiser mentions that SG led the band for

⁵⁸ Source: Mrs. Hedges' papers.

⁵⁹ The Methodist Recorder December 20th, 1956.

twenty-one years.⁶⁰ There is no mention of a farewell concert so it must be assumed that the members finally left the youth club, and moved on to other things.⁶¹

Although it appears that the Red Rhythmics ceased to function in the middle of the 1950s, SG's interest in the harmonica remained strong for many years after this. His own collections of harmonica music were published and the titles suggest that he hoped to use them in Bicester alongside his own Youth Sing Book. Two volumes, The Harmonica and Accordion Sing Book, and The Harmonica and Accordion Hymn Book⁶² both contain arrangements of his favourite choices for Red Rhythmics concerts and services. It seems that SG remained convinced that the musical and social benefits of playing in a harmonica band were inextricably linked to any moral and spiritual aspects. He continued to extol the virtues of being part of a highly disciplined group, emphasising the many benefits both musical and educational. Indeed in 1958, as chairman of the National Harmonic League of Great Britain, he made the following address.

The greatest scope of all remains with the young who play for pleasure. Jazz groups and skiffle bands give evidence of their ever-exuberant enthusiasm. And just as the young guitarist soon learns that enthusiasm alone is not enough, so the young harmonica player quickly discovers that in order to get real fun he must learn to play properly. The youth clubs, the uniformed organizations, the Sunday Schools, team with millions of boys and girls - but hardly to any of them are the means of learning the mans of learning the harmonica available. Here is room for teachers, schools, festivals, and especially the right sort of literature, popular. Simple, musically sound. The Brass Band world achieved it for youth and age half-a-century back, the Harmonica Band world could begin to achieve it today.⁶³

⁶⁰ October 28th, 1966.

⁶¹ A few of the former members of the Red Rhythmics still live in Bicester and I am particularly indebted to Les Smith, Norman Coward, Wilf Smith and Christine Cole for their help in this study.

⁶² Both published London, Pilgrim Press, 1957.

⁶³ Source: Fiona Hedges' papers.

It was not until towards the end of his life that SG finally admitted that the time for harmonica bands had passed. He remained president of the National Harmonica Society until after 1959, as during this year he tried to resign but this was rejected.⁶⁴ In 1968, he once more addressed the annual conference, outlining his early interest in the harmonica. In this speech he accepts that the vogue for harmonica playing has passed, suggesting that it has been replaced by more modern popular music.

My harmonica enthusiasm began in 1935, when Britain was bursting into a vogue of harmonica playing - just as it experienced nation frenzies of roller skating and yo-yo spinning. All three crazes were swallowed up in the world war. In the late 1940s, with harmonicas again available, we in England assumed, unwisely, that we could carry on where we had left off. We could not. The vogue had passed, the enthusiasm evaporated - skiffle, rock-and-roll, television had arrived. Or so had famous harmonica stars, and some tentative openings for harmonica music in schools. Neither development will, or seems likely to, bring back the harmonica into wide popularity. The real test, the thing at the back of our minds, our constant deep longing is that our little instrument shall be loved and played by the masses.⁶⁵

This final acceptance that the harmonica craze was over was written only seven years before SG's death in 1974. Significantly it also coincided with his resignation as Sunday School Superintendent and this suggests that he recognised the arrival of a new generation of musicians over which he could have no control. However, it remains certain that SG had considerable influence over the musical life at BMSS, developing the hymn singing both in church and in the community. His legacy is still much in evidence today as has been seen by the warmth of the response to my study.

⁶⁴ Source, Fiona Hedges' papers.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

CHAPTER EIGHT - THE RELEVANCE AND IMPORTANCE OF HYMN SINGING IN BICESTER TODAY: ANALYSIS OF FIELDWORK DATA.

The aim of this chapter is to consider how hymn singers today have experienced the changes in congregational and community hymn singing that took place during the twentieth century. A questionnaire* was devised aimed at a cross-section of the hymn singing community in Bicester, asking both about their current hymn singing practices, and their childhood memories of hymn singing. The intention was to discover if it was possible, through the recent experience of individuals, to corroborate the evident trends and developments in hymn singing discussed in the previous sections of the study. The questionnaire itself developed from many informal conversations held with local people with first-hand knowledge of hymn singing, especially in Bicester. It aimed to formalize these conversations, and further sought to draw some conclusions from them. As much of the research has considered changes and developments in the hymn singing community in Bicester two pilot fieldwork surveys were undertaken which will be discussed later in the chapter, and a third and final questionnaire was distributed amongst the six largest and oldest churches in Bicester, namely the Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, Elim Pentecostal, Roman Catholic and Salvation Army.¹ In each case a minister, or leader, from each church was asked to distribute ten copies to a random group in the congregation. The responses were returned directly by post. Initially it was hoped that by targeting different Christian denominations it would be possible to discover varying sectarian trends of hymn singing in Bicester. However, although the questionnaire provoked a reasonable response, well in excess of the expected twenty percent returned overall, the number of responses within in each church was uneven, as will be revealed later in the chapter. This meant that rather than drawing significant conclusions with regard

* A blank version of the questionnaire is included at the end of this chapter.

¹ In recent years there has been much development and building in Bicester. This has led to the establishment of several new community churches. As the history of these is recent, their hymn singing preferences have not been considered in this field research.

to denominational differences, analysis of the data reveals a growing ecumenical feeling within the denominations questioned. Furthermore, the fieldwork survey proved to be an interesting exercise, revealing first-hand examples of the changes in hymn singing experienced by regular churchgoers throughout the twentieth century.

The final questionnaire consists of four short sections reflecting the aspects of hymn singing considered in the research. The first section deals with personal details, including the age and sex of the respondent, whether they attend church regularly, and which denomination they consider themselves to be a member. This information was considered vital to obtain a clear picture of how the use of hymnbooks developed throughout the twentieth century including the shared remembrance of school and Sunday School volumes, singing by heart at home, and the shift away from the use of printed hymnbooks with the advent of the overhead projector. In the early stages of the research, it was assumed that worshippers would be loyal to a hymnbook linked to their own denomination. However it will be revealed that the differences between the denominations are not as clearly marked as had been first thought. For example, the second section of the questionnaire asked about favourite hymns and tunes, hymnbooks used, and about hymn singing in environments other than church. The answers suggest that whilst hymn singers are frequently familiar with the books only of their own denomination, many respondents are equally at home with volumes used in other denominations. As hymn singing in environments other than church was considered, a pattern quickly emerged in those denominations with a tradition of hymn singing, such as that of the Methodists, clearly demonstrating that hymns are very much a part of everyday life. The third group of questions deals with the words of hymns and the altering of them by parody, the misunderstanding of hymn words, and changes of the understanding of words by the listener as a result of local dialects. Section four considers childhood memories and the personal and spiritual message of hymns experienced by individuals. As will be seen, the responses from many refer to childhood memories of school, Sunday School and home. This bears out the claims

of novelists such as Laura Ingalls Wilder, who frequently describe intimate hymn singing moments around a family piano, and the use of a shared hymnbook, as discussed in Chapter Three.

In order to test the effectiveness of the questions, two small-scale trials were undertaken, as noted above. In the first of these, two sets of specimen questions were given to two regular churchgoers, Rev. Edward² and Marion Houghton. This couple was chosen because of their active involvement with worship for over seventy-five years, making them experts in the changes in hymn singing that have occurred throughout the twentieth century. They referred to their lengthy participation in hymn singing throughout their answers, and this revealed the importance of ascertaining the age of respondents. Although the first pilot survey did not include a question directly relating to age, it was decided to include this information in future versions of the questionnaire. Rev. Houghton has written a number of articles on the subject of Wesley's hymns, and was involved in the 1984 edition of Hymns and Psalms, whereas Marion Houghton has been a Sunday School teacher and church organist for many years. Their specialist knowledge is reflected in their responses and was useful because it helped to test the effectiveness of the questions. This pilot investigation included only eight questions concerning hymnbooks used, the words of hymns, and childhood remembrances. Both Rev. and Mrs. Houghton responded well, most of the questions being answered fully and in considerable detail. As was to be expected, the hymnbooks with which they were most familiar were the Methodist Hymnbook (1907, 1933) and Hymns and Psalms, and their answers clearly reflect their ages of over eighty and demonstrate their extensive knowledge of Methodist hymns. One of the most interesting answers concerned their favourite hymns. This showed that, whilst they both had many "favourites", those that they listed, for example When I Survey The Wondrous Cross, reappeared many times throughout both the second

² Sadly Rev E Houghton died in April 1999. Consequently a number of issues I had hoped to discuss with him further could not be pursued.

pilot survey and the final questionnaire demonstrating the popularity and enduring quality of certain hymns to worshippers of all denominations.

The answers provided by Rev. and Mrs. Houghton to the second group of questions, those dealing with the words of hymns and changes in the wording, revealed a number of interesting points. In a covering letter, Rev. Houghton noted the “rather light-hearted” content of questions 5 and 6. He was scandalised that hymn words should be changed simply for amusement, and failed to recognise the possibility that there may be some unconscious humour in the wording, However, he noted the “interest in hymns as a social phenomenon” and with regard to the changing of hymn words between editions of hymnbooks he was keen that I should be aware of the “serious work of editing”, and provided a useful sheet detailing hymn words that have undergone changes and modifications between the Methodist Hymnbook (1933) and Hymns and Psalms. The serious nature of hymn singing is a recurrent theme in both the results of the second pilot survey and those of the final questionnaire, as most worshippers from all denominations clearly felt that hymn singing was a serious matter, and should never be used as a source of humour. Both Rev. and Mrs. Houghton recognised the emotional impact of hymns as enquired about in the third section of the questionnaire. Mrs. Houghton had many childhood memories of hymn singing, especially of having hymns sung to her by her mother. Rev. Houghton recognised the importance of them in his own spiritual life.

As a result of analysing the responses from the first pilot investigation, the questionnaire was modified and the number of questions increased to provide opportunities for clarification and enlargement. The result was a second pilot, using a revised questionnaire consisting of eighteen questions divided into four sections. As well as additional questions regarding personal details, other sections of the questionnaire were also slightly enlarged. This second pilot questionnaire was given to a further 14 people chosen at random from regular church attenders and people of

“no religion”, and thirteen replies were received. Initially it was hoped that a response from people who did not attend church might provide interesting additional details. However, the responses from those who had no interest in church were sparse in detail, suggesting that such answers would not be significant enough to incorporate in further discussion and analysis. The non-churchgoers included spoof answers with a strongly anti-Christian element. For example, in answer to the request to state one’s religion, one reply was “Born-again satanic evangelical” and the “favourite hymn” was suggested with the made-up title “Your God is dead, and no-one cares, If there is a hell, I’ll see you there.” This provided further evidence that such answers could add nothing useful to this study except to note that those with minimal Christian beliefs, or none, are obviously not particularly interested in singing hymns. In contrast, the churchgoing respondents were willing to answer the questions in considerable detail and many took the trouble to include additional sheets of paper with their answers fully explained.

The analysis of the responses from the second survey started to indicate the similarity of answers across each of the denominations. For example, responses to the first question, asking for “favourite” hymns, quickly illustrated that there are as many favourites as there are respondents, with both traditional and modern hymns being listed. It was noted that those who considered themselves to be “born-again Christians”, regardless of denomination, favoured newer hymns. The spiritual importance of hymns was clear, as was the fact that “favourite” hymns are often associated with another person or a particular event.

Although these respondents were chosen at random through social, business and professional contacts, many of them attend Bicester Methodist Church, which currently uses its own songbook, as well as Hymns and Psalms. It is interesting to note that in the light of this knowledge, the respondents revealed that they were not always aware of the hymnbook they sing from. For example, some answered that

they sang from the Methodist Hymnbook when they clearly meant Hymns and Psalms. This contrasts starkly with the information already known about Bicester Methodist Church in the mid-twentieth century when, with SG in charge of the music, the congregation were certainly aware which hymnbook they were using. Of the sample, the most reliable and carefully annotated answer to this question came from one of the organists at the Methodist Church. The uncertainty in the answer to this question also serves to illustrate that, whilst the use of a hymnbook is enjoyed and expected by many congregations, details of the volume itself are of little importance. This aspect of the use of hymnbooks, that is the familiarity with titles, editions and so forth, emphasises the detailed knowledge required by novelists who are prepared to name and number a hymn from a specific hymnbook. In this second pilot survey, it also became clear that it is difficult to make assumptions about the denominational background and upbringing of the respondents simply by considering the hymnbooks from which they have sung. For example, although many hymnbooks are mentioned, even in this sample of thirteen from the second pilot survey, Hymns Ancient and Modern was listed four times by people of all denominations, including the “non-believer”. The Methodist Hymnbook was also mentioned several times. The thirteen respondents mentioned between them thirteen different hymnbooks, although many had several in their lists. The questions dealing with childhood remembrances elicited a more reserved response, although most answers contained some comment. From this small sample, it was revealed that the respondents falling into an older age group had more childhood memories of hymns.

The section dealing with places other than church for singing hymns yielded some interesting results. The following chart shows the proportion of respondents who have participated in hymn singing outside of normal church services.

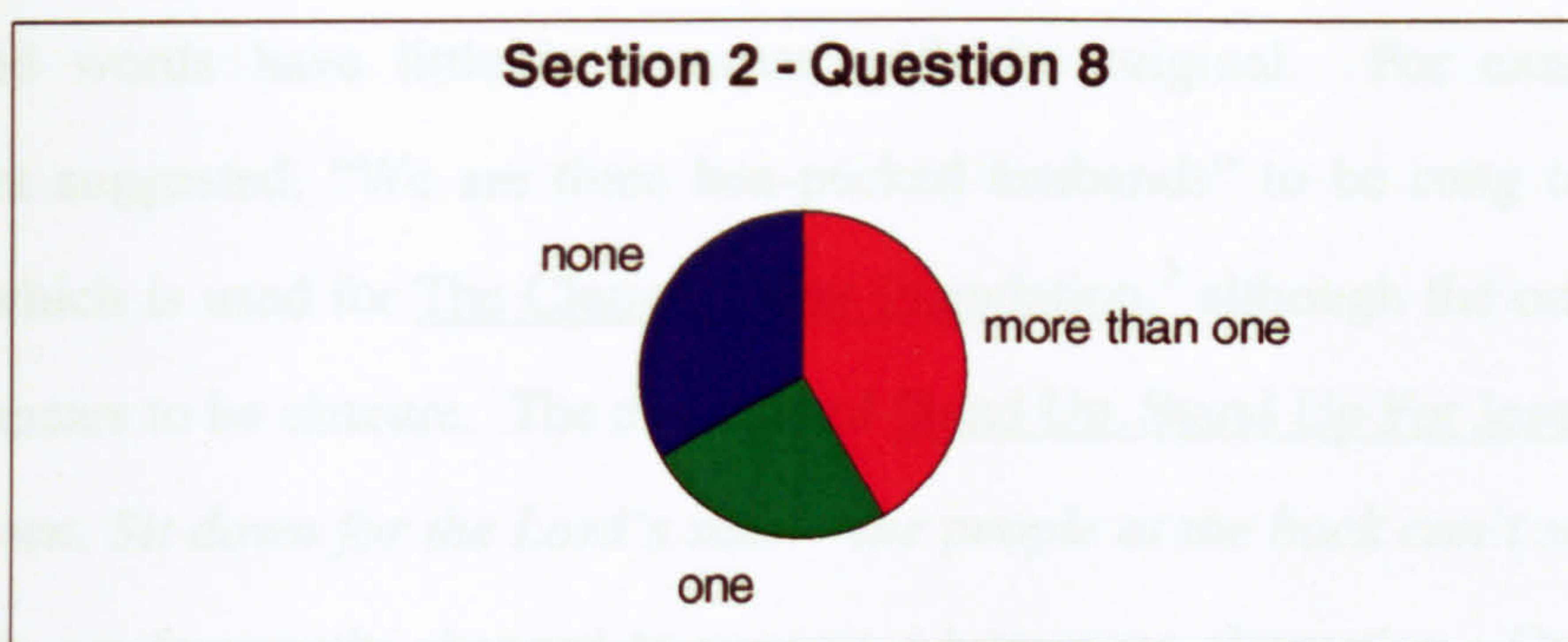


Fig. 1. – Proportion of respondents who sang hymns in environments other than church.

Most respondents ticked more than one category, and suggested one or two variations such as singing “on a bike” rather than “in a car”. Although some had experience of hymn singing in public places other than church, for example at a concert, it is clear from the results of this investigation that most hymn singing takes place in familiar and private surroundings such as work, the home, in the bath and in the car. This can be seen from the following chart.

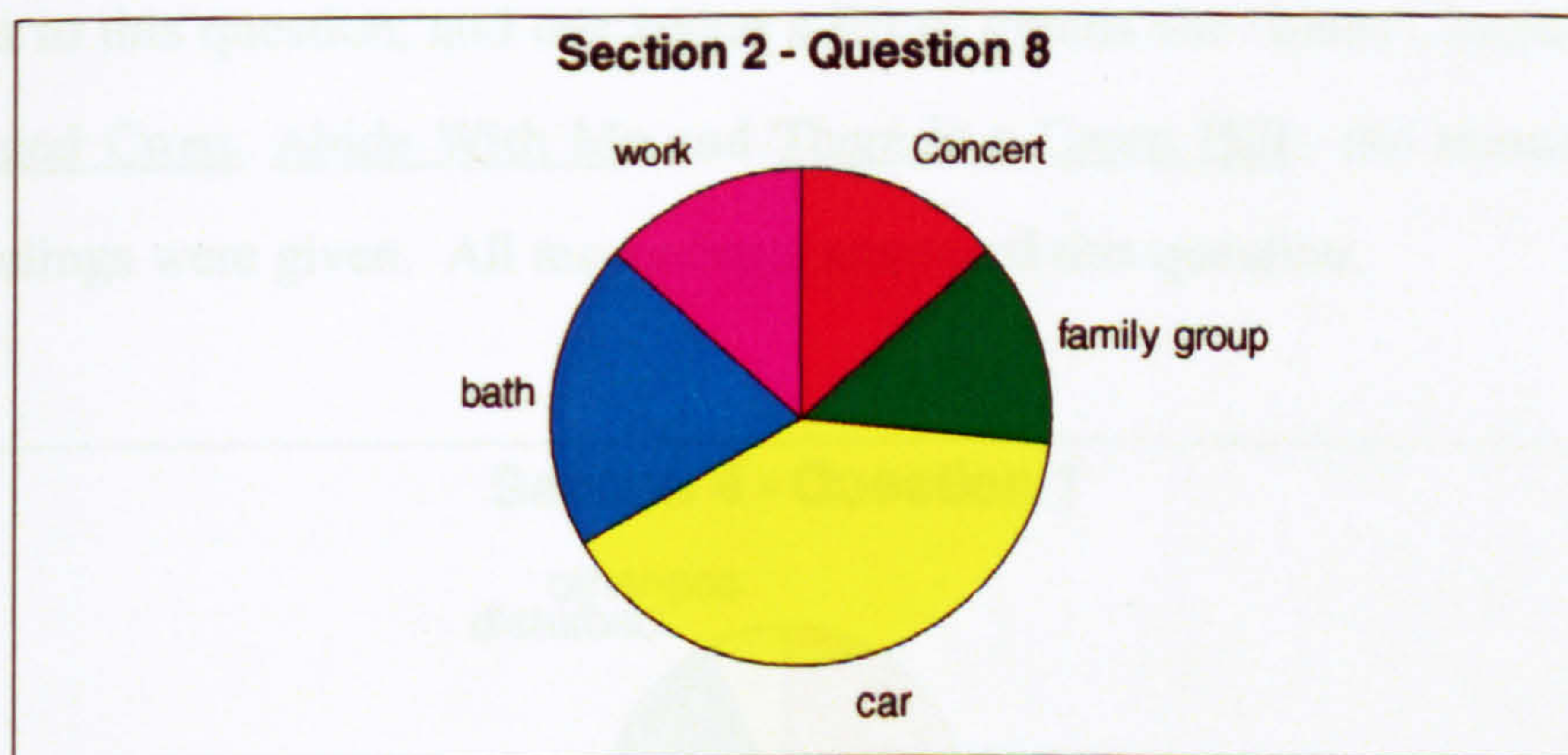


Fig. 2. – Situations where hymns are sung other than in church.

Section 3 of the second pilot survey dealt with the changing and misunderstanding of hymn words and was answered by most respondents, with humorous and facetious Christmas carols receiving frequent mention. This section was to prove useful in the consideration of parodies with reference to the inclusions of hymn parodies in the works of novelists. Clearly the original hymn needs to be well known for the parody to be effective, and firm favourites emerged, variations in the words of While Shepherd Watched Their Flocks By Night appearing with every answer. Occasionally

the altered words have little in common with the original. For example, one respondent suggested, “We are three hen-pecked husbands” to be sung to the tune Aurelia, which is used for The Church’s One Foundation,³ although the origin of the parody appears to be obscure. The example of Stand Up, Stand Up For Jesus changed to “*Sit down, Sit down for the Lord’s sake – the people at the back can’t see*” shows how words are frequently changed to suggest a humorous alternative. One Change was noted to a new hymn, this being “*Selotape and string*”, for “*Celebrate and sing*”⁴.

Most respondents from the second pilot survey answered the questions in Section 4, which dealt with emotional responses to hymn singing. Some seemed happy to admit that they felt both “secure” and “pleased” when hearing a hymn from their childhood, indicated by the circling of both words. Non-churchgoers gave the most negative responses to this question, and one added a list of hymns she “hates”, including, The Old Rugged Cross, Abide With Me and There is a Green Hill. No reasons for the strong feelings were given. All respondents answered this question.

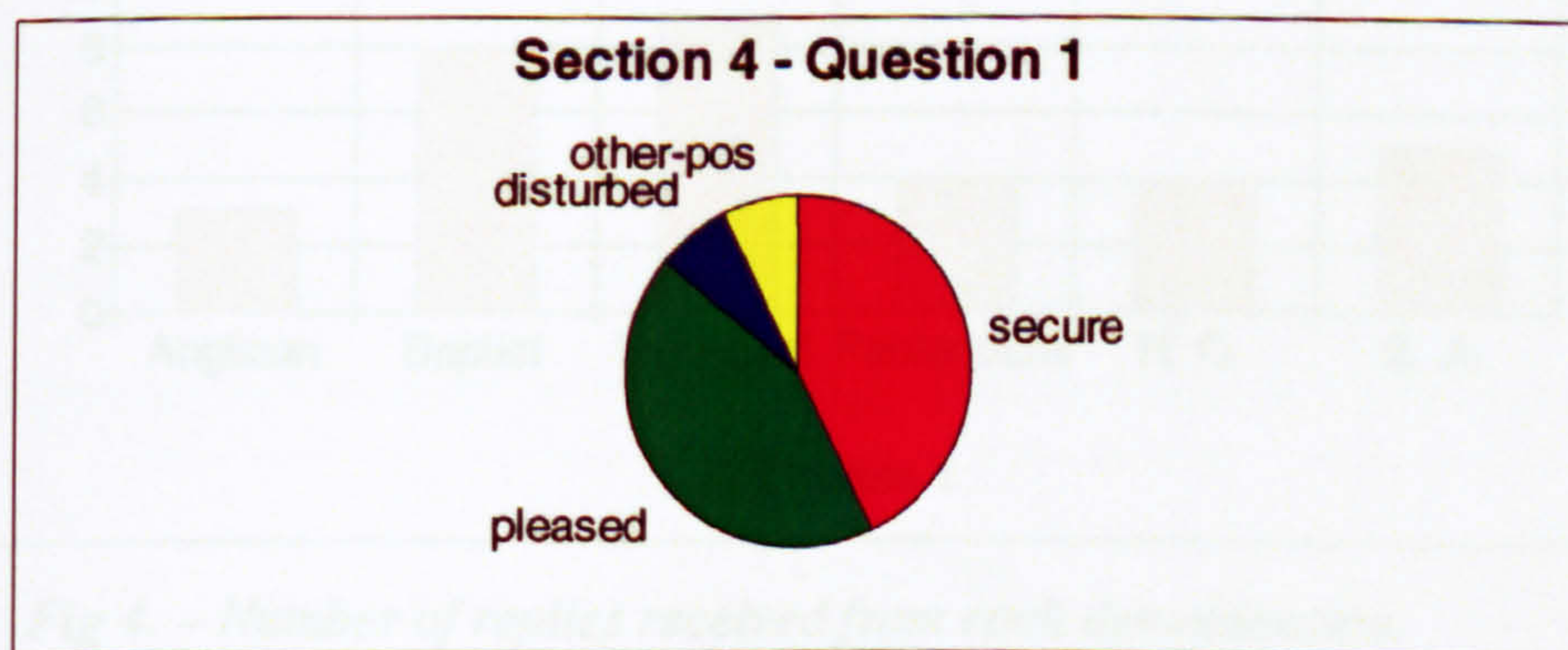


Fig. 3. – Emotional responses to hearing hymns learned in childhood.

³ Samuel John Stone, 1839-1900.

⁴ Come on and celebrate by Patricia Morgan and Dave Bankhead can be found in Songs of Fellowship, number 73.

The results from the second pilot survey proved interesting and satisfactory, and this, coupled with the full answers to the first pilot questionnaire received from Rev. and Mrs. Houghton, suggested that the final fieldwork survey would be well answered by those who took the trouble to reply. It was therefore decided to proceed from the second pilot survey to the final survey without further revisions to the questionnaire. However, the excellent responses from the two pilot surveys proved not to be representative answers received for the final questionnaire. Although a total of thirty-three completed questionnaires out of the sixty distributed were received, well in excess of the expected twenty percent, the results of the final survey remain inconclusive for the following reasons. The first is that the number of responses received from the individual churches varied considerably, again making it difficult to make assumptions about the different denominations. However, the fact that members of the Methodist Church provided the greatest contribution to the survey, closely followed by the Baptists, suggesting the importance of hymn singing in these sections of the community, as can be seen from the following chart.

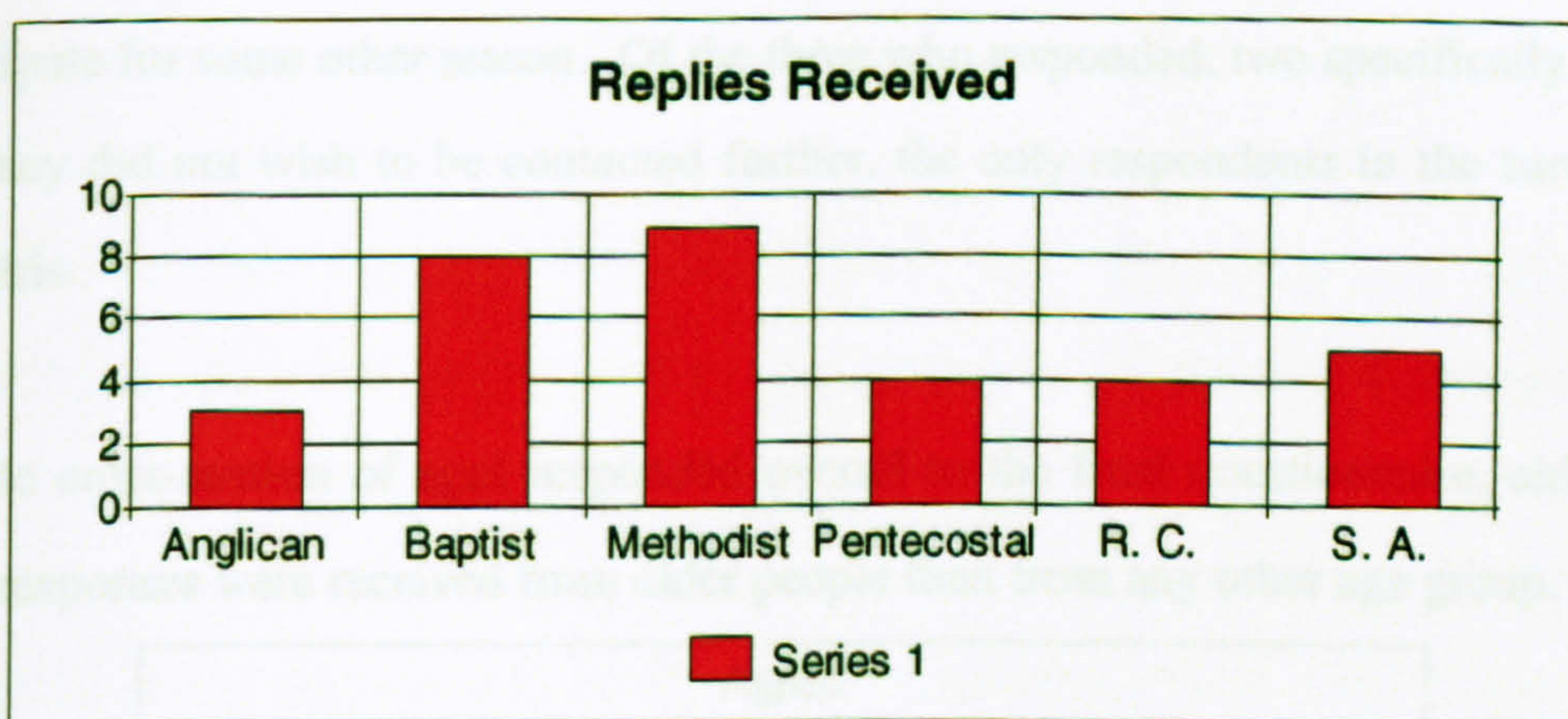


Fig 4. – Number of replies received from each denomination.

The Methodists returned nine out of ten questionnaires,⁵ an early indication that hymns and hymn singing are very important to this group of people, bearing out the commonly held belief that hymns, particularly those by the Wesleys, are the liturgy of the Methodist church. On the whole the answers from this group were very full, and

⁵ The tenth person spoke to me about it, but sadly had a stroke before he was able to complete the responses.

included very personal and individual comments which made the fieldwork exercise very interesting and worthwhile. The Baptists returned eight out of ten completed questionnaires, many with extremely informative answers. The large number of replies received from the Methodists and Baptists made it possible to study a range of attitudes and approaches to hymn singing within these congregations in some detail. Unfortunately this was not repeated for other denominations, as not only were fewer answers received, but also the questions were answered less fully. The Salvation Army congregation returned five out of ten, and in this group the Captain responded, the only "leader" of any group to do so. Both the Pentecostal Church and the Roman Catholic Church returned four out of ten completed questionnaires, and contributed a mixed set of replies both in quality and quantity. The members of the Anglican Church returned the fewest number; only three sets of responses were received and the answers were less full than many of those from other denominations. It might therefore be concluded that hymns themselves are not sufficiently important to these worshippers for them to take part in this investigation, or that they did not wish to participate for some other reason. Of the three who responded, two specifically wrote that they did not wish to be contacted further, the only respondents in the survey to state this.

A wide cross-section of ages responded overall to the final questionnaire, although more responses were received from older people than from any other age group.

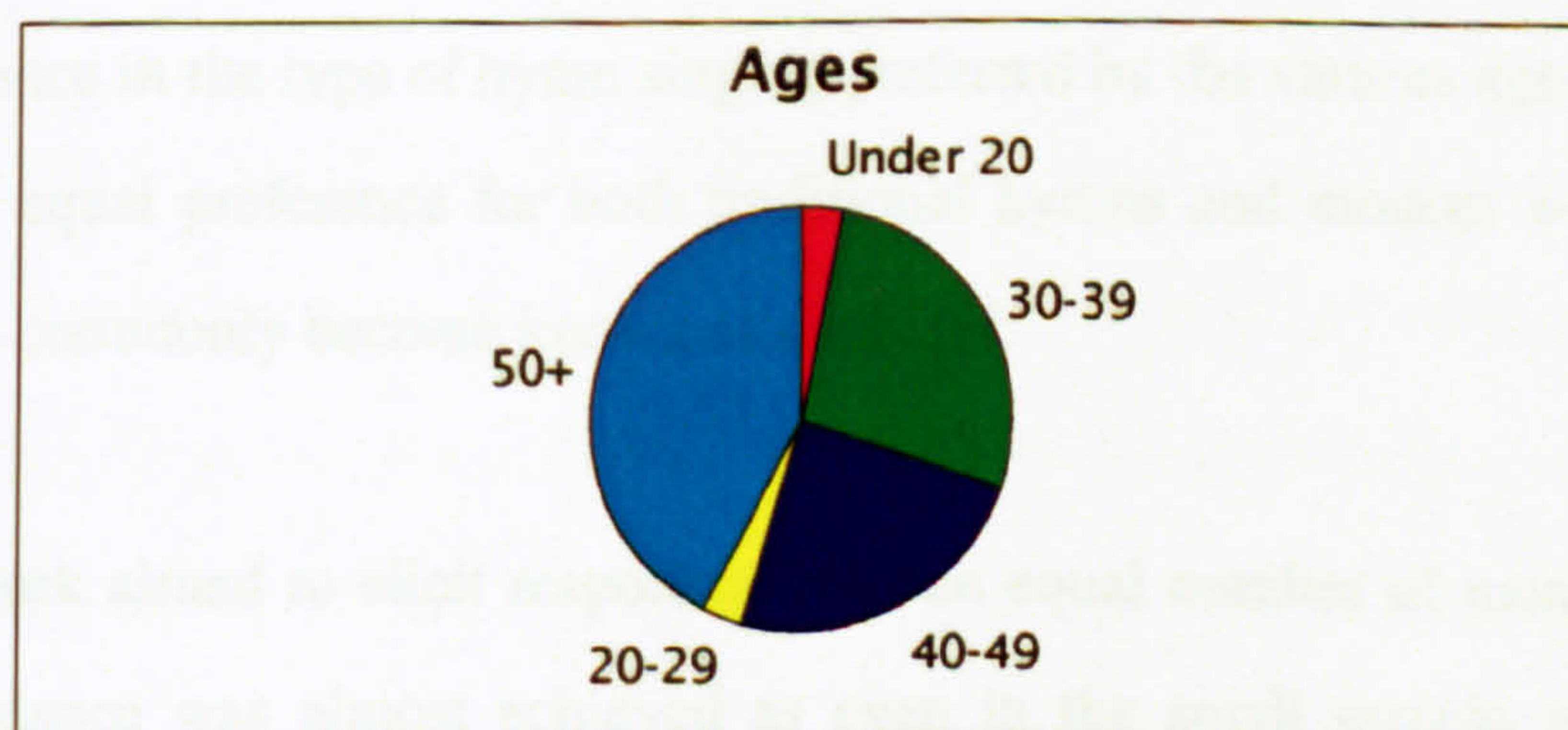


Fig. 5. Spread of replies received from each age group.

Although the ages of the respondents from each church varied considerably, many

similarities emerged concerning hymn singing in each age group, regardless of denomination. Analysis of the responses reveals that older people generally link hymn singing to childhood memories, and that younger people are less familiar with hymnbooks. It is also interesting to note that there is little difference in the style of hymns enjoyed between the age groups, older and younger people expressing preferences for both traditional and modern hymns. The responses from each denomination were returned from different age groups. The Salvation Army, for example, had representation from all age groups, whereas the Roman Catholic group was represented by younger individuals, three answers coming from the 30-39 age group and one from the 40-49 age group. The responses from the Methodists, Baptists and Pentecostals tended to come from older age groups. Analysis revealed some interesting differences in the ways that the various age groups answered the questions. Without doubt the older groups gave fuller answers, linking their responses to a particular hymn or occasion, with ample examples to illustrate their point of view. A large number of older respondents had many childhood memories that they were prepared to share, and they were familiar with various hymnbooks, whereas those under twenty years old seemed to have few childhood recollections and were not familiar with any hymnbooks other than those they currently used. Furthermore, the older groups linked their answers to events of national and international importance, such as the First and Second World Wars, whereas younger respondents linked their answers to their personal circumstances. However, there was little difference in the type of hymn singing preferred by the various age groups, as all ages stated equal preference for both traditional hymns and modern worship songs, which have commonly become known as choruses.

This fieldwork aimed to elicit responses from an equal number of men and women, and this balance was almost achieved as even in the small sample returned, only slightly more than half were women, as can be seen from the following chart. In fact, had the male Methodist who was ill responded, the division would have been exactly

fifty/fifty. It can be concluded from this that an interest in hymn singing is not a concept that can be readily attributed to one gender group.

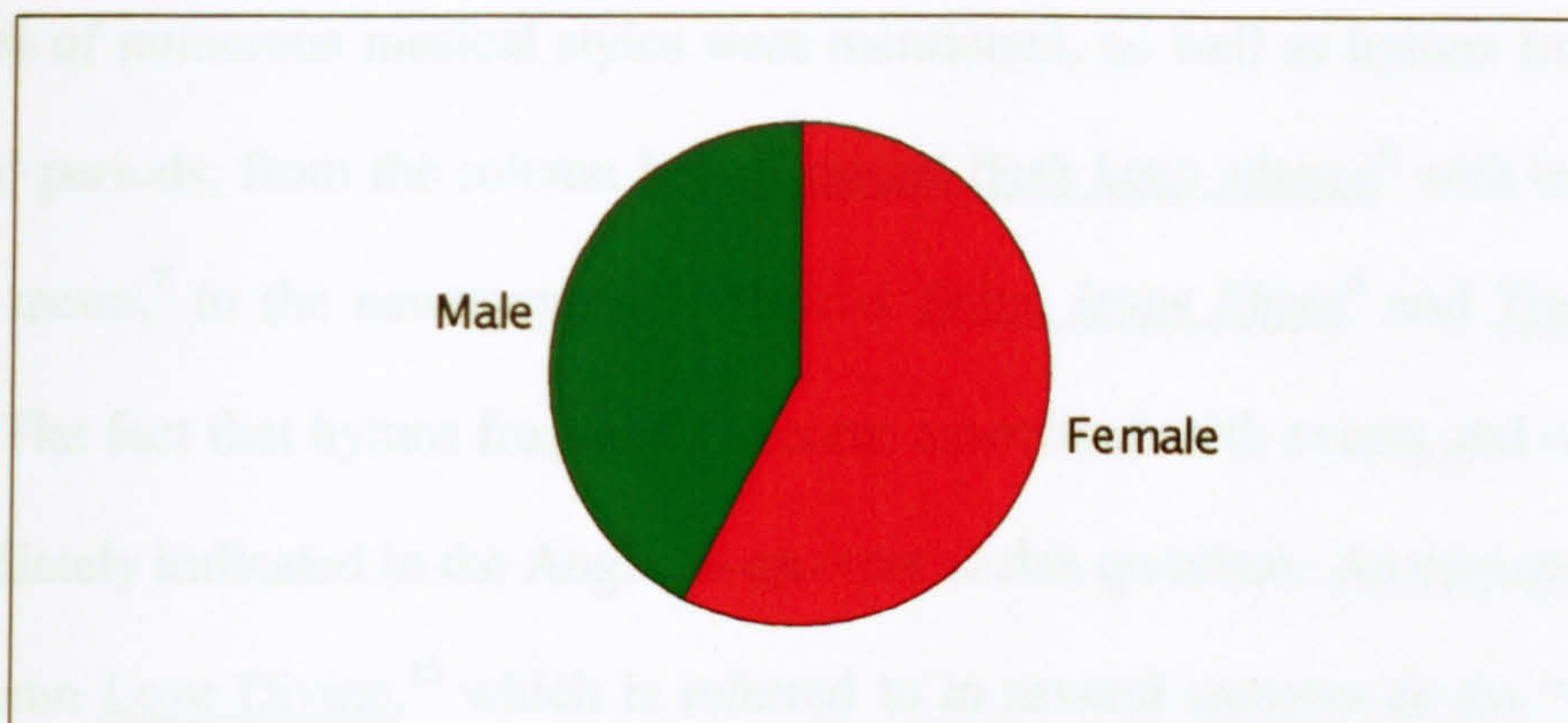


Fig. 6. – Proportion of male and female respondents to the questionnaire.

The rest of the chapter will present an analysis of the data from the questionnaire responses in considerable depth, and each question will be discussed sequentially. The results will be analysed largely in alphabetical order of the six denominations: Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, Pentecostal, Roman Catholic and Salvation Army. Marked similarities between sets of answers will be considered together and, after comparison, appropriate conclusions will be drawn.

Section 2. Question 1. What is your favourite hymn?

As has been noted, there were many similarities in the answers given to this question. Replies from different denominations frequently mention the same hymns, regardless of provenance, and a mix of musical styles was clearly enjoyed across all groups. Another emergent factor was the evidence that a certain universal comfort can be found in a number of hymns, as will be explained when the answers are analysed in detail below. However, some differences between the denominations emerge. For example, with the Anglicans express a preference for “singability”, with apparently little regard for the words of the hymn. This contrasts with the answers from the Nonconformist and other groups, which emphasise the importance of a spiritual

message. Although only three responses were received from members of the Anglican Church, the answers to this question were informative and interesting. Examples of numerous musical styles were mentioned, as well as hymns from many historical periods, from the solemn Let all mortal flesh keep silence⁶ with its tune of unusual metre,⁷ to the newer spiritual classics Shine Jesus Shine⁸ and The servant king.⁹ The fact that hymns frequently become associated with events and occasions is immediately indicated in the Anglican answers to this question. An example of this is the hymn Love Divine,¹⁰ which is referred to in several answers as the “wedding hymn”. Whilst undoubtedly this hymn is frequently sung at weddings, it is not actually included in the “Marriage” section of any of the larger hymnbooks. Further evidence that hymns are linked to an event can be seen with the choices of Now thank we all our God,¹¹ and At the name of Jesus,¹² both of these being associated with school and civic occasions. It is apparent from the answers received from the Anglican Church members that preference is given to a particular rendering of a hymn, usually with the emphasis being placed on a well-known tune. For example, one respondent mentions a fondness for the “Modern Version” (her words) of At the name of Jesus. The tune this comment refers to is Camberwell by John Michael Brierley (b.1932), a unison tune, commonly used on civic and public occasions. The steady movement of the octave bass accompaniment makes this a popular choice at such events. This rousing, unison tune contrasts with the heavily harmonized, sedate and typically Victorian Evelyns by William Henry Monk (1823-1889), which is also

⁶ Percy Dearmer, 1867-1936.

⁷ Picardy, metered 87,87,87, from Chansons Populaires des Provinces de France, 1860.

⁸ Graham Kendrick, born 1950.

⁹ Graham Kendrick.

¹⁰ Charles Wesley, 1707-1788.

¹¹ Catharine Winkworth, 1827-1878.

¹² Caroline Maria Noel, 1817-1877.

frequently used for At the name of Jesus. Other replies received from the Anglican Church respondents were less specific, although the emphasis was clearly on the “singability” of a hymn, one person writing that he liked “anything that was easy to sing”. The responses from the Anglican congregation suggest that pure enjoyment is an important factor when singing hymns.

In contrast to the responses from the Anglican Church, the “favourite hymns” of the Baptist church members reveal that this group of worshippers is much more moved by the spiritual content of a hymn. For example, rather than simply providing a long list of favourite hymns, these respondents gave detailed reasons for the hymns chosen. The same hymns appeared in several of the answers received, but with different reasons for being favourites. For example, Amazing Grace¹³ was listed for the following reasons, both: “Because it speaks to me about who/where I was and what Jesus did for me” and “In praise of God and in appreciation for the fact that he died on the cross to redeem all sinners and for the pain and suffering he endured to save us from sin”. Similarly the respondents from the Methodist Church were also intent on revealing the spiritual content in a “favourite hymn”. The hymn Dear Lord and Father of Mankind¹⁴ was cited twice, with the remarks that “It says God is always there - always”, and “I find this a meditative hymn which always gives me an opportunity to renew my faith and confidence in God”. In the same way, the more contemporary Living Lord¹⁵ had written of it, “somehow this strikes straight to the heart. As often as poss” (sic). Other favourites included Now thank we all our God

¹³ John Newton, 1725-1807.

¹⁴ John Greenleaf Whittier, 1807-1892.

¹⁵ Patrick Appleford, born 1925.

and Great is thy faithfulness.¹⁶

The favourite hymns chosen by the respondents from the Pentecostal Church were also very varied. These included popular hymns such as Guide me O thou Great Jehovah¹⁷ and How Great Thou Art.¹⁸ This group also noted seasonal favourites, especially an Easter choice of Christ the Lord is Risen Today¹⁹ and Joy to the World²⁰ as a Christmas hymn. A more personal response came in the choice of I cannot tell why he who angels worship,²¹ with the explanation “It sums up my faith in God and I would like to hear it regularly on any occasion”. The respondent also adds, “I hope it will be sung at my funeral”, and this is the only time a hymn is mentioned in this context.

The respondents from the Roman Catholic Church mentioned seasonal favourites in their lists of “favourite hymns”, especially Christmas carols such as In the Bleak Midwinter.²² It is the lists of the favourite hymns of this group that show the greatest denominational difference, as alongside hymns sung in the context of social and community occasions, such as At the name of Jesus, which can be found in any Protestant collection, other hymns are mentioned which can only be found in Catholic volumes. Two examples of these are One bread, one body,²³ which was listed in two

¹⁶ Thomas Obadiah Chisholm, 1866-1960.

¹⁷ Peter Williams, 1722-1796.

¹⁸ The first line is “O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder” – Stuart Wesley Keene Hine, 1899-1989.

¹⁹ Charles Wesley.

²⁰ Isaac Watts, 1674-1748.

²¹ Fullerton, William Young 1857-1932.

²² Christina Rossetti, 1830-1894.

²³ John B. Foley, born 1939.

of the four answers, and Bread and Fishes.²⁴

The responses from the Salvation Army members all contained long lists of “favourite hymns”, perhaps reinforcing the traditional image of this denomination’s association with singing and musicmaking. Many of the hymns listed appeared in more than one answer from this group. As has been seen in the example of At the name of Jesus, these answers show that popular hymns do not always have their roots within the tradition where they are sung. Other hymns included by the Salvation Army respondents that fall into this category are the frequently sung Praise to the Lord the Almighty²⁵ and Eternal Father Strong to Save.²⁶ These choices reflect the ways in which hymns can be used to strengthen a common bond within a community, as the second of these hymns is chosen by the respondent for the words, which are helpful in “times of sorrow”. Eternal Father strong to save is the only hymn in common use that deals particularly with the plight of sailors. Indeed, Percy Dearmer, in Songs of Praise Discussed, emphasises that this hymn “filled a conspicuous gap; for, curiously enough, seafarers were forgotten in the old books”.²⁷ This hymn is mentioned by novelists such as L. M. Montgomery who, in Rilla of Ingleside,²⁸ quotes it in relationship to those travelling to France in the First World War.²⁹ Although traditionally associated with those on long and difficult voyages, the powerful connection of the words of this hymn with historical events has come to be a source of inspiration and comfort in time of general suffering. The choices of these hymns emphasises the common bond that can be felt amongst all hymn singers, regardless of

²⁴ Words and music by Alan Bell.

²⁵ Catharine Winkworth.

²⁶ William Whiting, 1825-1878.

²⁷ Dearmer, 1933, p. 188.

²⁸ Montgomery, L.M., Rilla of Ingleside, London, George Harrap, 1928.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

denominational differences. However, further analysis of the “favourite hymns” of the respondents from the Salvation Army reveals that it is possible to make certain assumptions about the denomination of the chooser. For example, How Great Thou Art is the first title on three of the five lists from the Salvation Army. This hymn is mentioned several times throughout the final survey exclusively within the Nonconformist answers, notably those from the Methodist and Pentecostal Churches. However, it is not mentioned at all in the Roman Catholic and Anglican responses. Also included in the list of favourite hymns amongst the Salvation Army is The Servant King,³⁰ which appears elsewhere in responses to later questions. There is only once mention of a hymn that has a specifically Salvationist purpose and that is Come roll over me.³¹

The following table lists all the hymns selected by respondents to the first question and serves to illustrate the range of hymns chosen. Although it is difficult to draw any definitive conclusions from a comparatively small survey, the range of answers reveals that hymns and hymn singing are important to certain sections of the community for a variety of reasons which become clearer as analysis of the responses of the fieldwork survey continues.

³⁰ Graham Kendrick.

³¹ Hymn not identified in any of the published sources consulted.

Abide with me			Morning has broken	2
All things bright and beautiful	2		My Jesus my Saviour	2
Amazing Grace	4		Now thank we all our god	3
And can it be			O come all ye faithful	2
At the name of Jesus	3		One bread one body	2
Bread and Fishes			Praise my soul	2
Christ the lord is risen today			Praise the lord	2
Come roll over me			Raise Him up on eagle's wings	
Come we that love the lord			Servant King	
Dear Lord and Father	4		Shine Jesus shine	
Eternal father strong to save	2		Soul of my saviour	
Fairest Lord Jesus			St Patrick's breastplate	
Give me joy in my heart			The day thou gavest	
Gilroy			The Lord's my shepherd	
Great is thy faithfulness			The old rugged cross	2
Guide me o thou great Jehovah			The servant king	
Hail redeemer King Divine			There is a message	
Hark the Herald			Thine be the glory	2
Holy Holy Holy	2		To God be the glory	2
How great thou art	5		To god be the glory	
How lovely of the mountains			We plough the fields	
I cannot tell	3		What a friend we have in Jesus	
I vow to thee my country			When I survey the wondrous cross	2
I'll go in strength			Will your anchor hold	
In the bleak mid-winter	2			
Joy to the world				
Lead us heavenly father				
Let all mortal flesh				
Let the High praise of God				
Living lord				
Majesty				

Fig. 7. – List of favourite hymns and number of times each was chosen.

Section 2. Question 2. If you attend a regular place of worship, do you sing hymns regularly from a hymnbook? If so which one do you NORMALLY use? Please give the edition if possible.

The answers to this question revealed that there was a general ignorance amongst all of the denominations concerning the hymnbooks that they used each week. The term "hymnbook" was itself challenged by some groups, notably the responses from the Salvation Army and the Pentecostal Church. It emerged that whilst hymn singing was invariably an integral part of the worship of these groups, hymns were frequently presented on a leaflet or an overhead projector. Although some respondents said that they use a hymnbook, the apparent ignorance of the exact title suggests that there is less loyalty to the hymnbooks of their own sect than might have first been thought. The respondents from the Anglican Church were one of the few groups of people who were in agreement as to which hymn books they used, noting Hymns Ancient and Modern (revised), and 100 Hymns for Today. One respondent added that additional hymns were sung from a sheet printed each week, and as answers from other denominations were analysed it emerged that this has become an accepted means of presenting new hymns to the congregation. This is a significant development in the use of hymns and their presentation in church services, and is indicative of the ease with which unfamiliar words can now be offered to congregations. The changes in the presentation of hymns were emphasised by the respondents from the Baptist Church and, as mentioned above, the definition of the term "hymnbook" itself was challenged, demonstrated in the response, "we do not use a hymnbook as such, we use Songs of Fellowship." This recent collection of traditional and modern hymns and worship songs is a colourfully bound volume in which the hymns are grouped in alphabetical order. This contrasts with the hitherto usual means of grouping hymns by thematic or spiritual content, such as in Wesley's Hymns for the use of the People

called the Methodists. The ordering of hymns in this way means that the book is extremely easy to use by groups of singers, as hymns can be found by identifying their first line alone. Although books such as Songs of Fellowship contain many traditional hymns, they are more commonly associated with modern worship songs and choruses, and it could be for that reason that Songs of Fellowship is not recognised by the Baptist respondent as a hymnbook, falling instead into the category that has become popularly known as “praise books”. Many of these have their origins in Christian holidays, and one respondent who lists Spring Harvest and Best of Stoneleigh, comments upon this.³² The absence of a formal hymnbook in the local Baptist church is more apparent in the answers of two Baptist respondents who wrote that an overhead projector was used, and not “normally” a book at all. There are many reasons why a congregation would choose to display hymns in this way, including its cost effectiveness, enabling the entire congregation to be able to see the hymns without the expense of purchasing individual hymnbooks, and the fact that collections can be updated and revised quickly and easily.

In contrast with the response from the Baptist Church, and perhaps in accordance with their cultural heritage, the respondents from the Methodist Church were much more certain of their hymnbooks. All agree that they sang from Hymns and Psalms, and some included the Methodist Hymn Book (1933), which is still used at some weekday services, and the other church song books, including the local church’s own printed collection, which are used at evening services and less formal services. These answers suggest that Methodists are quite clear about the importance of their hymnbooks.

³² These books are re-issued annually, or as often as required.

The respondents from the Pentecostal Church had more in common with those from the Baptist Church, as all agreed that a hymnbook was rarely used, one going so far as to say that this question was “N/A”. This is perhaps an indication that the ownership of a particular hymnbook is not an important part of the cultural heritage of this section of the hymn singing community. An awareness of the changing attitudes to hymn singing emerged from the Pentecostal church respondents, one of whom suggested that the use of a hymnbook is outdated. Certain tensions are evident as another respondent writes, “we sing choruses from an overhead projector. I would like to have at least 1 hymn each week, but maybe I am old fashioned”. The suggestion here is that that hymns of a traditional nature are old, and should therefore be sung from a hymnbook, and that choruses are modern, and can be presented by other means. The Roman Catholics who replied to this question were vague as to which hymnbook was used, giving the same book a variety of names, which suggests that it is of less importance to them. The respondents from the Salvation Army wrote that they did not always use a hymnbook, although the Salvation Army Hymn Book was mentioned.

The answers to this question illustrate a range of attitudes towards singing hymns from a hymnbook, from regular selecting of hymns from a denominational based book, as seen in the responses from the Methodist church, to the general use of overhead projectors discussed by the Baptist and Pentecostal churches. Rather than as a development in the use of the hymnbook, these changes can perhaps be seen as a return to the nineteenth century methods, making hymns available to the masses with the use of flysheets for services being an example.

Section 2. Question 3. If you do not use a hymnbook in your place of worship, are the hymns presented in other ways?

The responses to the previous question have also largely covered the substance of this question, which is perhaps the reason why the respondents from the Anglican Church did not answer it. Question 2 had already elicited the information that in this church additional hymns were sometimes printed on the weekly service sheet. The respondents from the Baptist and Pentecostal churches, and from the Salvation Army all stated that hymns were displayed from an overhead projector. This was occasionally the case in the Methodist Church, where hymns were also sometimes printed on the service sheet, which was also the experience of the Roman Catholic respondents.

Section 2. Question 4. Have you ever sung hymns from a hymnbook in the past?

The purpose of the question was to elicit information on whether adult hymn singers could remember singing from a hymnbook in their younger days, and if so whether they could remember which one. As can be seen from the following chart, many books were mentioned, frequently demonstrating that these were not from the respondents' own denomination. This suggests a subconscious cultural exchange, and perhaps in part explains a common ownership of hymns felt by regular hymn singers of all denominations.

Anglican	30-39	School Hymn Book
Anglican	30-39	n/a
Anglican	50+	Hymns Ancient and Modern
Baptist	30-39	n/a
Baptist	40-49	Songs of Praise, Hymns for Church and School, Redemption Hymnal
Baptist	40-49	Hymns Ancient and Modern
Baptist	40-49	n/a
Baptist	40-49	School Hymn Book
Baptist	50+	Hymns Of Praise, Hymns Of Faith
Baptist	50+	Sunday School Hymn Book, School Hymn Book
Baptist	50+	n/a
Methodist	30-39	The Methodist Hymnal
Methodist	40-49	n/a
Methodist	40-49	Sunday School Hymn Book, School Hymn Book, Methodist Hymn Book
Methodist	50+	Sunday School Hymn Book
Methodist	50+	Methodist Hymn Book, Sunday School Praise
Methodist	50+	School Hymn Book, Sunday School Hymn Book
Methodist	50+	Hymns Ancient and Modern
Methodist	50+	Sunday School Hymn Book, School Hymn Book
Methodist	50+	Sunday School Hymn Book, School Hymn Book
Presbyterian	40-49	Hymns Ancient and Modern
Presbyterian	40-49	School Hymn Book, Baptist Hymnbook
Presbyterian	50+	Hymns Ancient and Modern
Presbyterian	50+	Hymns Ancient and Modern, Redemption Hymnal
Roman Catholic	30-39	n/a
Roman Catholic	30-39	Songs Of The Spirit (1, 2 & 3), Peoples Hymnal, Hymns Old and New, Celebration Hymnal
Roman Catholic	30-39	n/a
Roman Catholic	40-49	School Hymn Book
Salvation Army	30-39	n/a
Salvation Army	20-29	Making Melody
Salvation Army	50+	Hymns Ancient and Modern
Salvation Army	50+	Hymns Ancient and Modern, School Hymn Book
Salvation Army	Under 20	Salvation Army Hymn Book

Fig. 8. – List of hymnbooks used by respondents in their past.

The answers to this question illustrate the difficulties in trying to make assumptions about the denomination of the respondents from the details given regarding the hymnbooks sung from in the past. There was little variety in the volumes used, with

Hymns Ancient and Modern being referred to in eight of the answers, again from all denominations and age groups. Respondents from all denominations and age groups mentioned a “School Hymn Book” and “Sunday School Hymn Book”, although an exact volume was not identified. As many answers note the specific use of a hymnbook during morning assembly at school, it is clear that hymn singing can play a significant part in the memories of school days. One Baptist respondent mentions several hymnbooks in connection with her work as a teacher, and this further indicates the importance of the role of singing hymns at school, although she does not state how she used hymns and hymnbooks. While many of the respondents did not remember the exact title of the hymnbooks they used in the past, one exception was an individual from the Methodist Church who emphasised the effect that a charismatic music teacher can have on young hymn singers. This answer was most informative, and was indeed a credit to the teaching of SG, as it listed The Methodist Hymn Book, The School Hymn Book of the Methodist Church, but also Sunday School Praise. The addition of the comment, “SG, our SS superintendent helped to collect hymns for this book” emphasises that where importance is attached to hymn singing during childhood and adolescence, a hymnbook will be remembered into adulthood. Only slight denominational preferences can be seen in the answers overall. In the Methodist responses, The Methodist Hymn Book is listed in only two answers, and it is apparent that hymnbooks used in childhood are a mix of those from various traditions, as can be seen from the answers of a Pentecostal respondent who used the Baptist Hymnbook. The response from the members of the Salvation Army best illustrates the changes in the use of hymnbooks during the last quarter of the twentieth century. The older respondents remember singing from Ancient and Modern, and one adds a reference to the “school hymn book”. A respondent from the 30-39 age group

remembers singing at Sunday School, but cannot recall which book was used. Younger respondents mention a book entitled Making Melody,³³ and the youngest person mentions only the Salvation Army book³⁴, which possibly means that she has no experience of hymn singing outside church. As she is under twenty, she would certainly clearly remember her schooldays, which suggests that hymn singing had no impact on her at school.

Section 2. Question 5. Do you remember hymns mostly by words, tune, number in the hymnbook, situation when you most sang that hymn?

All three respondents from the Anglican Church said that they remembered hymns by the words, two saying that the tune was of equal importance, although one remembered hymns because of the places in which they had been sung. This suggests that for this group of singers the hymn tune is inextricably linked to the words with which it is normally associated. This was suggested earlier in the answers to Section 2, question 1, with the stated preference for the “modern version” of At the name of Jesus. The responses from the Baptist Church members suggest that words are more important than the tune to this group of singers. This is significant because it emphasises the fact that the Nonconformists rely heavily on the words of hymns for their liturgy, with preachers choosing hymns with great care to illustrate both sermon and texts. It is perhaps surprising to note that, although the Methodists have arguably the most influential collection of hymn texts through the traditions of the Methodist hymnbooks, the responses to this fieldwork survey revealed that the respondents from Bicester Methodist Church attached more significance to the tune than to the words. Like the Anglicans, the Methodists also remember hymns for the situation in which

³³ Making Melody Hymn Book, London, Assemblies of God Publishing House, n.d.

³⁴ The Song Book of the Salvation Army, London, International Headquarters of the Salvation Army, 1986.

they are sung. The respondents from the Pentecostal Church revealed that words and tune were of equal importance to them, and of course, as the hymns were sung from an overhead projector, the number of an individual hymn was of no importance at all. Most of the respondents from the Salvation Army remembered hymns both by tune and word. One remembered hymns by the tune only, stating that he “preferred hymns with rhythm” and that they “should be jolly”. He also notes that he does not take “a lot of notice of hymn names” but writes, “if I know it I like it”. This is an important comment because it suggests that memory, and the early learning of hymns, have much to do with the shaping of later musical tastes. The respondents from the Roman Catholic Church answered that they remembered hymns both by tune and words, the tune being slightly more important. In analysing the answers to this question it can be seen that the Salvation Army responses were identical to those received from the Anglican Church. The following charts illustrate the answers to this question.

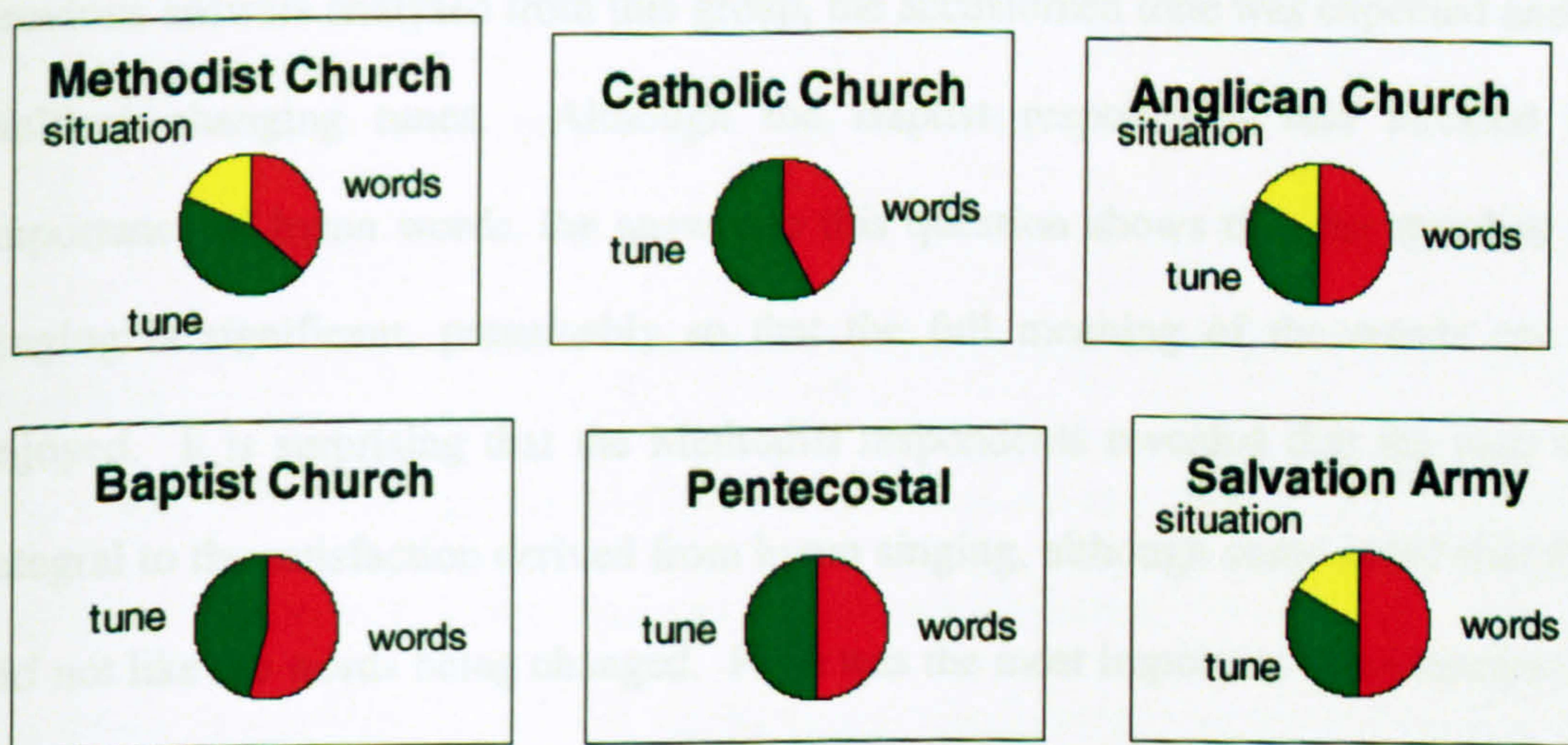


Fig. 9. – Ways in which respondents remembered hymns.

Section 2. Question 6. When you sing hymns, do you get most annoyed when they are sung, too high/low for you to join in, they are at a different speed for your preference, the tune is not the one you are accustomed to, the words have been altered.

The aim of this question was to establish whether familiarity is essential part of enjoyable and meaningful hymn singing. It has already been established in the answers to earlier questions that the linking of a particular tune to a hymn text is important, but it is possible that other factors need to be present for worshippers to gain the full benefit of hymn singing. The setting of a hymn at an unsuitable pitch for the singer makes it impossible to participate. Similarly the singing of a hymn at a tempo, which is either too fast or too slow for the worshipper's preference, could render it meaningless. The question provoked a variety of answers from the members of the Anglican Church, even from so small a sample. The clear preference for the tune of a hymn revealed in the last answer is evident, respondents disliking hymns being sung at a different speed or pitch from their preference. In keeping with the previous answers analysed from this group, the accustomed tune was expected and all disliked changing tunes. Although the Baptist respondents had stressed the importance of hymn words, the answer to this question shows that the speed of the singing is significant, presumably so that the full meaning of the words can be enjoyed. It is surprising that the Methodist respondents revealed that the tune was integral to the satisfaction derived from hymn singing, although some noted that they did not like the words being changed. Pitch was the most important consideration for the respondents from the Pentecostal Church, and this suggests that congregational singing is significant to this group, especially as changes in tune are also disliked. The Roman Catholic respondents considered speed, words and tune to be important, whereas pitch was not mentioned at all. This was also the case for the Salvation Army respondents, although the speed of the singing was clearly more important than

changes in the tune itself. The following charts illustrate the answers to this question.

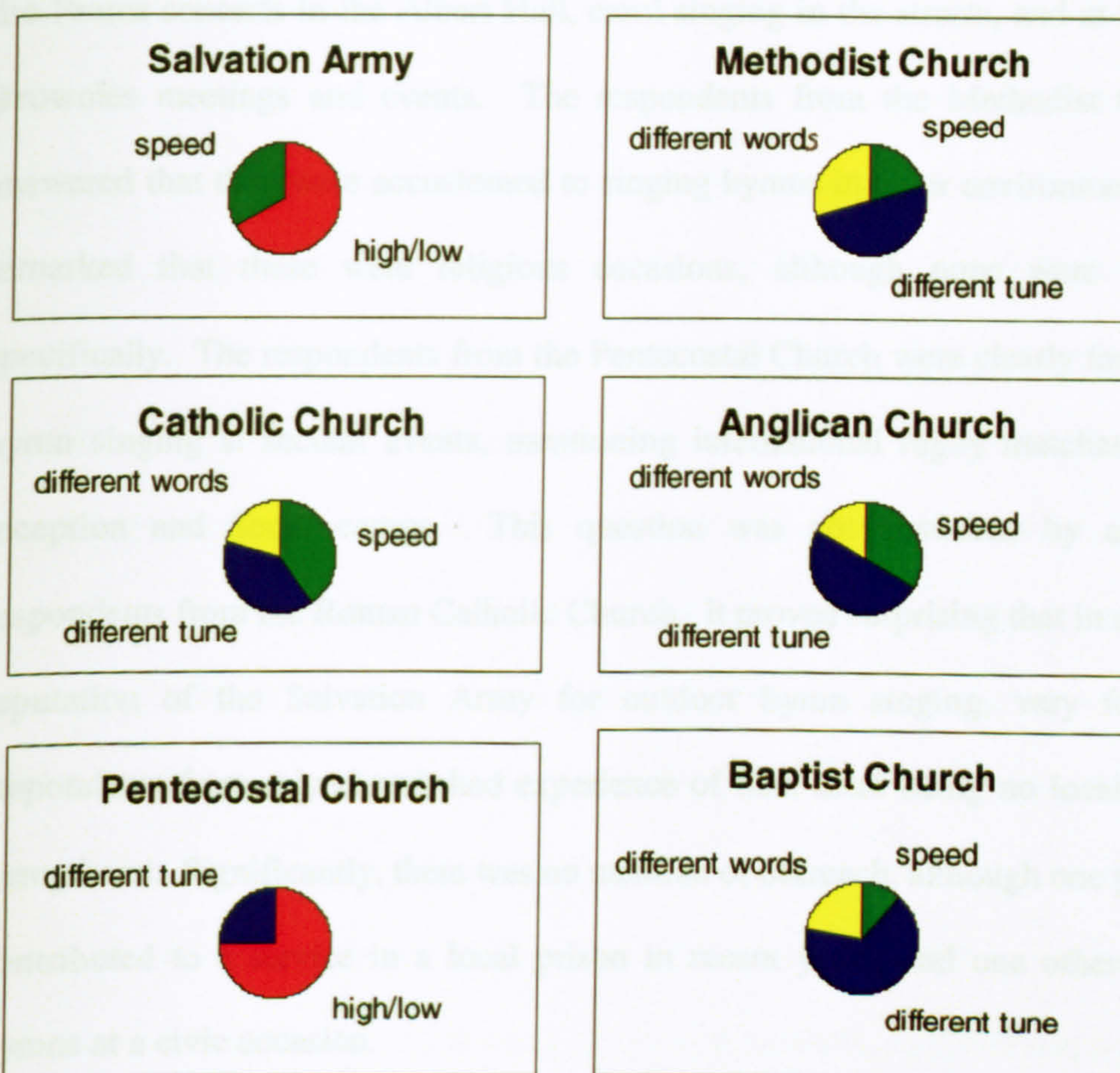


Fig. 10. – Common dislikes in congregational hymn singing.

Section 2. Question 7 Have you ever sung a hymn in a public place other than in church or school?

The wide variety in the answers to this question reveals the experiences of the individual respondents, rather than any denominational trends. For example, only one Anglican respondent, clearly an enthusiastic hymn singer wrote “wherever and whenever!” However, the other two respondents from the Anglican Church did not answer this question. All of the Baptist respondents noted that they had sung hymns at various times outside the church environment. One mentioned specifically, “At a social. Hymns sung by special request in church and at a home for the handicapped people in America, whilst on holiday there”. The “secular” aspect of hymn singing

was also revealed in the Baptist answers, with remembrance of singing Jerusalem at the Proms concerts in the Albert Hall, carol singing in the streets, and at Scouts and Brownies meetings and events. The respondents from the Methodist Church all answered that they were accustomed to singing hymns in other environments, but all remarked that these were religious occasions, although none were mentioned specifically. The respondents from the Pentecostal Church were clearly familiar with hymn singing at secular events, mentioning international rugby matches, wedding reception and Scout camps. This question was not answered by any of the respondents from the Roman Catholic Church. It proved surprising that in spite of the reputation of the Salvation Army for outdoor hymn singing, very few of the respondents from this church had experience of this, there being no local Salvation Army band. Significantly, there was no mention of outreach, although one person had contributed to a service in a local prison in recent years, and one other had sung hymns at a civic occasion.

Section 2. Question 8. Do you sing hymns in private at any time other than in church?

In contrast with the answers to other questions, many of the replies contained full and detailed answers to this question. This suggests that hymns, having once been learned in childhood, as indicated in the answer to Section 2, Question 4, are rarely, if ever, forgotten. This is also indicated by the fact that although many respondents stated that they sang hymns at work, adding that this was in a teaching environment, it was also admitted that hymns were sung spontaneously in everyday situations, such as in the bath or car. Some respondents from the Baptist and Methodist churches ticked all of the options, including private situations such as in the car and bath, and the more public environments such as at concerts, in family groups and at social events. The

Baptist respondents added more information about the kinds of places where they sang hymns, and these ranged from large gatherings such as open-air services and Christian holidays, to singing whilst going about household chores, especially the ironing. Apart from these informal opportunities to sing, it was revealed that hymns form an integral part of personal devotions, one Baptist respondent stating that he sang hymns when he prayed. Collectively the Methodists ticked the greatest range of answers, indicating that they sang hymns in a variety of situations, which suggests that hymn singing of a more informal nature is participated in by many members of this group. Similarly, the Pentecostal and Salvation Army members apparently enjoy a range of informal hymn singing as indicated in the answer to the previous question. Although not all respondents from the Roman Catholic Church answered this question, suggesting that informal hymn singing might not be characteristic of this group, the number of options indicated by those who did, including singing hymns in private such as in the car and in public such as at concerts, suggests that opportunities to sing are taken by all interested hymn singers. The following table illustrates the results of this question. Private hymn singing is represented in all groups, with the highest proportion of all answers showing that hymns are sung in the car and in the bath. It would seem that the Baptist, Methodist and Pentecostal churches and the Salvation Army enjoy truly social singing, as all these groups indicated that they sang hymns at parties. Some members of all groups experienced hymn singing at work.

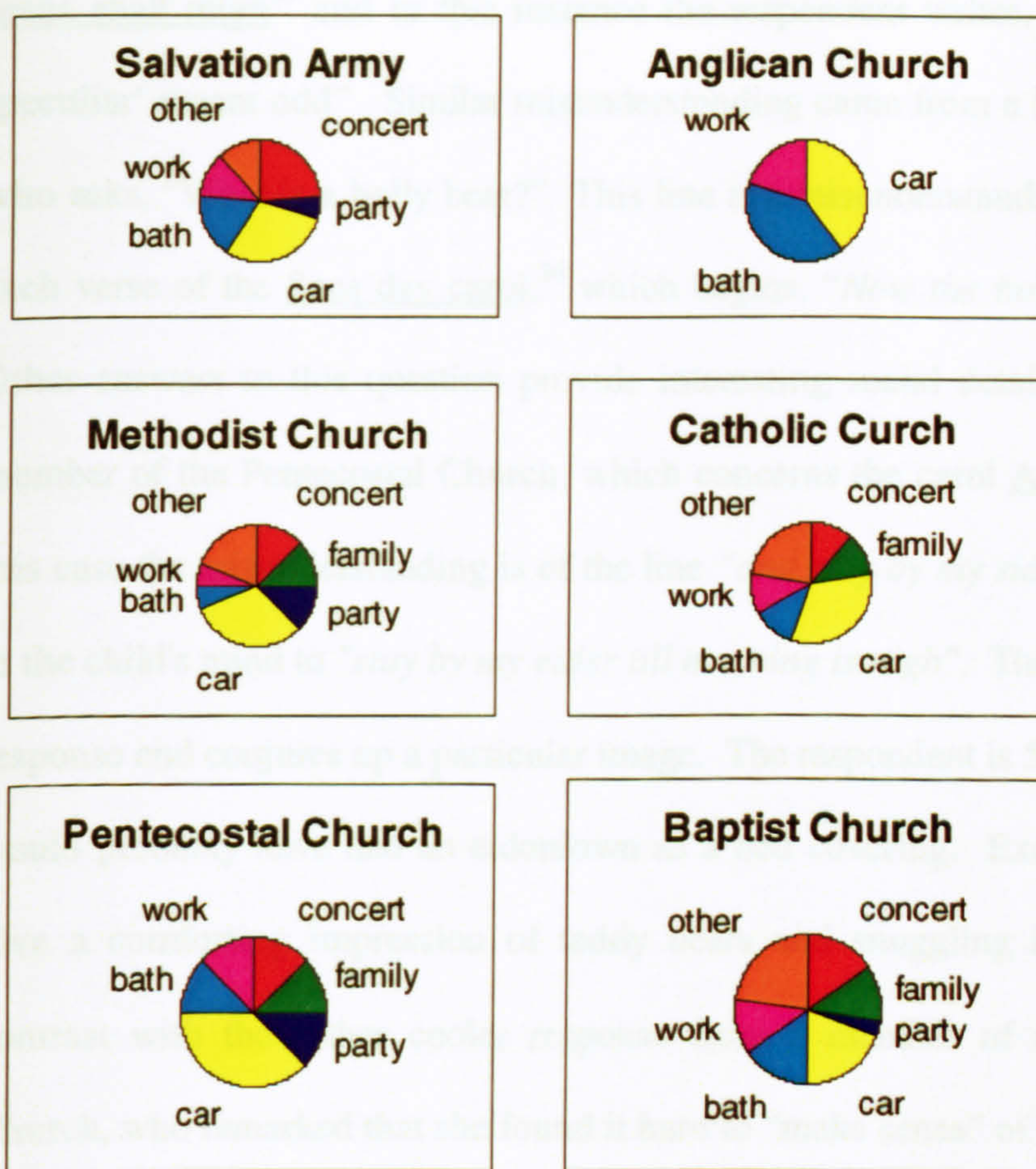


Fig. 11. – Situations where hymns are sung other than church.

Section 3, question 1. Are you aware that you have ever misunderstood the words of a hymn?

This question was not answered by any of the respondents from either the Anglican Church or the Salvation Army. Some of the answers from the other denomination simply said “yes” without providing any examples, and this suggests that the question was too generally worded to allow for full explanations. Where specific instances were quoted, these were often with humorous results, and usually because of a child’s misunderstanding of unfamiliar imagery. One specific answer from a Baptist mentioned the line “*peculiar honours to our king*”. This line comes from the hymn

Jesus shall reign³⁵ and in this instance the respondent writes, “at school I thought ‘peculiar’ meant odd”. Similar misunderstanding came from a Methodist respondent who asks, “What is a holly bear?” This line is a misunderstanding of the first line of each verse of the Sans day carol,³⁶ which begins, “*Now the holly bears a berry...*”. Other answers to this question provide interesting social details, one being from a member of the Pentecostal Church, which concerns the carol Away in a manger. In this case the misunderstanding is of the line “*and stay by my side*” which was altered in the child's mind to “*stay by my eider till morning is nigh*”. This is a very individual response and conjures up a particular image. The respondent is 50+, and in childhood would probably have had an eiderdown as a bed covering. Examples such as these give a comforting impression of teddy bears and snuggling in a warm bed, and contrast with the rather cooler response from a member of the Roman Catholic Church, who remarked that she found it hard to “make sense” of hymns as a child.

Section 3. Question 2. Did your dialect, or the dialect of those around you lead you to sing the wrong words of a hymn?

This question was added after the first pilot survey, and it was hoped that it would elicit more information about the remembrance of hymn singing during childhood, and add to any of the information gathered in response to the previous question. However, as there were no answers from any of the groups questioned, it seems that the question may not have been understood, or perhaps local speech does not pose problems for any of these respondents in the understanding of hymns.

Section 3. Question 3. Did you or your friends ever change the words of a hymn for your own amusement?

³⁵ Isaac Watts, 1674-1748.

³⁶ Collected by W. D. Watson, born 1928.

There were some interesting answers to this question. It was generally considered amongst all groups questioned that the deliberate changing of hymn words is not acceptable, and the responses range from excuses made for the ignorance of youth, to almost disgust that such change should occur at all. Of the two Anglican respondents, one suggested the mild changing of the words of the carol The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came,³⁷ from the original “*most highly favoured lady*” to “*most highly flavoured gravy*”. The other Anglican seemed more reluctant to admit to making any changes, writing, “Maybe in my youth (a long time ago)”. This attitude sets the tone for the responses from the Nonconformist churches where it was generally agreed deliberately changing the words of a hymn was not acceptable. However, some more examples of word changing are provided by the Methodist respondents, mostly the more usual parodies of While Shepherds Watched. One Methodist respondent admitted to changing the words of hymns, and clearly feels some remorse, writing, “I probably did as a child just to get a laugh out of my friends.” A genuine sense of guilt is evident from one Pentecostal respondent who writes that changing hymn words came “mainly when singing after rugby matches as a student and later - looking back they tended to be slightly rude without I hope being blasphemous. (I wasn't a Christian at the time)”. The aside is significant because it suggests that changing words is for the non-believer. Excuses are made by a Roman Catholic respondent who writes that there is “an innocence about this in children...that it is not necessarily done for amusement.” The Salvation Army respondents did not answer this question, which in view of the attitudes of the other denominations to this question, suggests the idea of deliberately changing the words of a hymn was too unacceptable even to contemplate.

³⁷ Sabine Baring-Gould, 1834-1924.

Section 3, question 4. Can you remember any time when changing hymns in this way was not considered acceptable?

The responses to this question continued in the same uneasy tone of the previous question. Answers from all of the denominations contained evidence that the practice of changing hymns words was not considered acceptable. The one Anglican respondent who admits to altering words hints that this was not well received by other members of the congregation, remarking on the “black looks from more pious folk – a regular occurrence I suspect!” One Baptist respondent wrote, “No we were careful”, which suggests that changing the words of a hymn might not meet with approval. Even stronger was the Methodist answer, “It was not done for adults to hear”, and even “I’d never want my parents to catch me altering the words to a hymn. I would not approve of my children doing so either”. Similarly, the Pentecostal respondents agreed that the words of hymns were only changed amongst brothers and sisters, and then well away from adults. Although the respondents from the Roman Catholic church admitted to being familiar with parodied versions of hymns, one echoed the feeling of the other groups by writing, “We, as children, considered it too risky to let adults hear us sing the alternatives”. The most resolute answer came from another Roman Catholic respondent who wrote, “I would never have dared to – I was always raised to have a respect for the church”. Respondents from the Salvation Army said that the choirmaster punished them for changing the words of hymns.

Section Four. Question 1. If you hear a hymn or carol that you remember from your childhood, how does it make you feel?



Fig. 12. – Emotional responses to hearing hymns learned in childhood.

The answers to this question draw together two recurring themes that have emerged in this fieldwork survey. These concern the effects that hymns have on individuals, reminding them of their own childhood and home-life, and serving as a common bond with the wider community, as respondents often linked hymns to a significant national event. Of the many responses, all ticked both “secure” and “pleased”. One Anglican suggested that she also felt “possibly” disturbed, but did not write how these feelings would manifest themselves. Although most answers were limited to the simple ticking of the appropriate word, a few people added useful comments which enabled me to understand the reasons behind the feelings associated with hearing hymns from

one's past. For example, one Baptist respondent linked the question to a significant event that had taken place during her childhood, and mentions "the supreme sacrifice of Armistice Day". The Catholic responses emphasised that hymns are a comfort and, for some children, something familiar, a part of everyday life. The respondents from the Salvation Army who admitted to being disturbed gave no reasons for why this might be so.

Section 4. Question 2. Do these feelings last or vanish straight away?

In view of the positive responses to the previous question, it is not surprising that many of the answers to Question 2 reflect the lasting effect of hymns, and thus their role in Christian thought and devotion – an aspect already explored in the discussion of the use of hymns by novelists in Chapter Four. The answers not only indicate that hymns are important to certain sections of the population, but also reveal the effect they have on the memory, triggering the remembrance of significant events. As indicated by the respondents from the Anglican Church, this can cause a significant emotional reaction, as all said that their feelings lasted for "some time" or possibly "weeks". The Baptists too wrote that there was some lasting feeling, and the effect of hymns on the memory is stressed with the idea that "they are normally linked to the memories they prompt rather than the hymn/tune itself". The replies from the Roman Catholics indicate that hearing hymns learned in childhood can trigger a variety of emotional responses. For example, it is noted that although the feelings about certain hymns lasted for "only a short time", the respondent always "feels good after singing hymns in church especially at children's services".

Section 4. Question 3. Do you think hymns had an important part to play in childhood?

The answers to this question continue to draw together the many aspects of hymn singing that are of obvious importance to certain sections of the population. These include the real comfort derived from early experiences of hymn singing in the community, in church and at home. The importance of hymns in Christian education is clearly acknowledged amongst the respondents to the fieldwork survey, as is the fact that hymns form a significant contribution to a cultural heritage. Underpinning these secular responses to hymn singing is the recognition of certain "spiritual truths" that can be found in the words of familiar hymns. Further evidence of the lasting effect that hymns have during the impressionable years of childhood is illustrated in the answers to this question. All three of the Anglican respondents answered in a positive way, remembrance being a significant factor. One writes that he "related hymns to different occasions", and although it is not stated whether these are personal or public, it serves to emphasise the ability hymns have to trigger the memory of events. The comfort and pleasure found in hymn singing are revealed in the answer of another Anglican respondent who "loved to listen and be in the church choir". Family life is also mentioned in the Anglican responses, and the personal experience of hymns is recalled in conjunction with family life. In this latter instance the respondent writes of remembering her mother singing hymns at home.

The answers from the Baptist church all contributed to the discussion in Chapters Six and Seven, emphasising the use of hymns in the educating of children in a righteous and godly life, as shown in the example of SG. One respondent wrote, "They were a good, subconscious way of learning truths - at the time the meaning of the words might not have seemed important, but now in later life things have stuck in my

memory that I wasn't aware of learning as a child." Another remarked on the importance of hymns as a start to a spiritual life, writing that, "With hindsight yes - gave me a good grounding in Christianity that I didn't appreciate at the time!" whereas another simply wrote, "We learnt about Jesus". The Methodist respondents emphasised the significant contribution hymns make to early Christian education. This apparently provides ongoing spiritual direction in adult life, and one answer stated that hymns provided "guidance for behaviour and help in time of trouble. They (hymns) come to mind when needed". The importance of hymns in childhood was noted with the response, "They were a part of my cultural upbringing. Through Sunday School they were a way of sharing worship with other people". Furthermore, it was noted that hymns provide a "store of experiences" and were an "integral" part of upbringing. The Pentecostal respondents also answered this question fully. One person mentions specific hymns, writing, "I can always remember There is a green hill as a reminder of what Christ did for me". The comfort of hymns in childhood is mentioned with the revealing answer, "Yes, they were a way of keeping in touch with God and gave me a sense of being part of a larger family and tradition".

Section 4. Question 4. Are there any hymns which speak to you in a particular way?

The common bond experienced by many hymn singers is very much in evidence in the answers to this question. Many responses contained an emotional element, and it was emphasised that the choosing of an appropriate hymn to suit a given occasion contributed to the atmosphere. This was clearly, if somewhat predictably, illustrated by one respondent from the Anglican Church who mentions Abide with me as an extremely emotional hymn "associated with funerals". The consideration of this

hymn is particularly significant as it has both personal and public associations, being used in the strangely contrasting contexts of the ultimate individual journey to the grave, and the rousing camaraderie of a football match. This same respondent also hints at the importance of hymns as part of a common cultural heritage. Whilst emphasising her own delight in the association of hymns with occasions, she also voices a concern that traditional hymn singing is a pleasure which is in danger of being lost to young people in more recent times. A much broader debate about the decline of hymn singing in more recent years is hinted at here, as she suggests that it is possible that “many of the old words are lost on younger generations”.

The Baptist respondents contributed a number of moving answers to this question, personal experiences being much in evidence. One mentioned Crimond, which was sung at the funeral of her granddaughter who died in 1983, aged 22 years. Others referred to an ongoing spiritual experience, which could be constantly renewed through hymns. An example of this comes in the answer “Only to the extent that my personal resolve to try to become less self-centred and more Christ-centred is strengthened by the message of certain hymns/songs e.g. I will offer up my life in spirit and Truth.”³⁸ Another answer refers directly to inspired hymn writing, with the response, “Some hymns seem really ‘anoointed’ [the respondent’s wording and punctuation.] I often discover that words/phrases are actually biblical - too many examples to mention but somehow the words are really arresting and make you think about God”. The respondents from the Methodist Church were similarly prepared to name hymns that they feel have a personal message for them. Again this can be seen in both public and personal areas of life. The idea that hymns form a common bond

³⁸Matt Kellman

amongst the population is illustrated with the mention on three occasions of the hymn God be with you till we meet again.³⁹ This is directly linked to childhood memories of “the war” and “men going away”. The healing, and indeed the life-giving qualities which can be found in the comfort of a familiar hymn are suggested with When I feel the touch⁴⁰ which one respondent from the Methodist church felt most helpful when she had cancer.

Section 4. Question 5. Have you ever carried a personal message from a hymn into action?

Here the answers reveal that respondents seemed to be aware of a certain responsibility associated with hymns. Not only was there concern with the teaching of hymns to future generations, but a feeling that, having benefited from a hymn, some action was required by the individual. One Anglican expressed concern about the performance of hymns, hoping that her children would be able to “sing correctly as well”. She is preoccupied with the tunes of hymns, mentioning them whenever appropriate, and it seems that, in her opinion, a good performance will lead to clarity of understanding, as she writes that she would like her children to “get the message”, by which she clearly means the overall Christian message. Another Anglican mentions the “message” in hymns, but this is not specific.

The Baptist respondents were more concerned with the spiritual content of hymns, one suggesting a resolve to act on the exhortations of hymns and “try to be a better person and bolder in my faith and more enduring of trials”. This respondent suggests

³⁹ Jeremiah Earnes Rankin, 1828-1904.

⁴⁰ Keri Jones.

the hymn He who would valiant be⁴¹ as a suitable inspiration for carrying out Christian duties. The Methodists too indicated that hymns spurred them on in their spiritual life, and one writes, "I have often tried to do this in Go forth and tell".⁴²

This question concludes the fieldwork survey. Although the number of replies received from some of the denominations was disappointing, the spread of responses in terms of gender and age mean that the results of the survey can be said to be representative of hymn singers in Bicester at the end of the twentieth century. Even though the denominational spread of responses is uneven, it is possible to draw some informative conclusions. The most striking of these is that the groups questioned differ very little in their attitude to hymns and this suggests a general ecumenical feeling within the community, which may well reflect a similar trend in other areas of the country. When considering overall response, it is apparent that all groups find hymn singing spiritually fulfilling and an important part of their everyday existence. As well as singing in church, it is clear that many people from all the denominations questioned used hymns in private, as part of individual devotions and as an accompaniment to everyday tasks. Hymns are enjoyed in the community, and well-known hymns can contribute to a sense of unity when sung in public. This can be seen in the answers to Section 2, Question 8. Furthermore, it was widely felt that hymns themselves demand due respect, and should be appropriately and piously performed, as indicated in the answers to the questions in Section 3. However, it should not go unnoticed that in spite of these pious thoughts, many of the respondents were aware of parodies of hymn words, and were amused and entertained by them, even if they were disapproved of or punished as a result of using them. There can be

⁴¹ Percy Dearmer.

⁴² James Edward Seddon, 1915-1983.

no doubt that the worshippers questioned felt that the hymns that they had heard and learned in childhood formed a vital part of their Christian upbringing. This early Christian education can be seen as part of the learning process for those who continue attending church as adults. It is also apparent that the remembrance of hymns learned in childhood is an ongoing source of comfort, bringing to mind the association of a mother's love, and a comfortable bed. Favourite hymns can be considered to be a source of inspiration and comfort for many years, and the singing of a well-known hymn will cross the sectarian divide when associated with national and international events, especially for elderly people with memories of the First and Second World Wars. For the respondents who participated in this fieldwork survey it is clear that hymns are an integral part of their cultural heritage and are enjoyed in both church and community.

QUESTIONNAIRE

I am currently researching cultural aspects of the use of hymns in society. I would be grateful if you could complete the following questionnaire, and return it to the person who gave it to you or to me in the envelope provided. The personal details would be helpful, but if you do not wish to complete those sections, just leave them blank. If there is insufficient space for your answers in the box provided, please continue on the back of the paper.

Name.....

Telephone No.....

Section One: This section is a general section about yourself. Please circle the answer which applies to you.

1. Are you	20 - 29 years old	30 - 39 years old	40 - 49 years old	over 50 years old
2. Are you	male/	female		
3. Do you attend church regularly	yes/no			
4. Would you describe yourself as				
	a Anglican			
	b Baptist			
	c Methodist			
	d Roman Catholic			
	e Salvation Army			
	f Other, please state		

Section Two: This section is about how and where you sing hymns

1. What is your favourite hymn? (If you have several such hymns which you like for different occasions, please give each title, and say why you like them, and when you most like to hear/sing them). Please state order of preference.

1. If you attend a regular place of worship, do you sing hymns regularly from a hymn-book, if so which one do you NORMALLY use (e.g. Methodist hymn-book, English Hymnal, Ancient and Modern, Hymns and Psalms etc.) Please give the edition if possible.

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b Baptist
c Methodist
d Roman Catholic
e Salvation Army
f Other, please state

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2. If you attend a regular place of worship, do you sing hymns regularly from a hymn-book, if so which one do you NORMALLY use (e.g. Methodist hymn-book, English Hymnal, Ancient and Modern, Hymns and Psalms etc.) Please give the edition if possible.
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3. If you do not use a hymn book in your place of worship, are the hymns presented in any of the following ways

- a. Pre-published hymn sheets
- b. Hymn sheets printed at church
- c. Over-head projector
- d. Everyone sings from memory
- e. Someone leads the singing and you all join in
- f. There is no singing,

4. Have you ever sung hymns regularly from a hymn-book in the past. Can you remember which one? (e.g. School Hymn book, Sunday School Hymn book)

5. Do you remember hymns mostly by

- a. the words
- b. the tune
- c. the number in the hymn book
- d. the situations when you most sang that hymn

6. When you do sing hymns, do you get most annoyed when

- a. it is too high/low for you to join in
- b. it is at a different speed for your preference
- c. the tune is not the one you are accustomed to
- b. the words have been altered and you are less familiar with them.

7. Have you ever sung a hymn in a public place other than in church or school. This might include political and civic occasions, or social events such as sporting fixtures, or reunions. Please give as much detail as possible, stating when and where.

8. Do you sing hymns in private at any time other than when you are in church? Please circle any that apply to you

a. at a concert	Yes / No
b. in a family group	Yes / No
c. at a party	Yes / No
d. in the car	Yes / No
e. in the bath	Yes / No
f. at work	Yes / No
g. at other times, please specify.....	

Section Three: The following section concerns the changing of the words of hymns. Sometimes the perceived words are quite different to the actual words resulting in unconscious humour.

1. Are you aware that you ever misunderstood the words of a hymn. Please give examples

2. Did your dialect, or the dialect of those around you, lead you to sing the wrong words to a hymn? Please give as many examples as you can.

3. Did you, or your friends, ever change the words of a hymn for your own amusement. If so, can you remember any of the changed words. Feel free to mention old favourites, as well as any which might be your own renderings.

4. Can you remember any time when changing hymns in this way was not considered to be acceptable, and the outcome of any such occasion - for example, were you punished?

Section four: In this section I ask you to consider the effect that hymns have on you emotions.

1. If you hear a hymn or carol that you remember from your childhood, how does it make you feel? Do you feel.
secure
pleased
angry
disturbed

2. Do these feelings last for some time, or vanish straight away

3. Do you think hymns had any important part to play in your childhood, if so how?

4. Are there any hymns which "speak" to you in a particular way. Please give examples of any and suggest how this comes about

5. Have you ever carried a personal message from a hymn into action? Please give examples.

There is a possibility that I would like to discuss your answers more fully with you. Would you be willing to do this

Yes/No

Thank you very much for your help.

QUESTIONNAIRE

I am currently researching cultural aspects of the use of hymns in society. I would be grateful if you could complete the following questionnaire, and return it to the person who gave it to you or to me in the envelope provided. The personal details would be helpful, but if you do not wish to complete those sections, just leave them blank. If there is insufficient space for your answers in the box provided, please continue on the back of the paper.

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2. Are you male/ female
3. Do you attend church regularly yes/no
4. Would you describe yourself as a Anglican b Baptist c Methodist d Roman Catholic e Salvation Army f Other, please state

Section Two: This section is about how and where you sing hymns

1. What is your favourite hymn? (If you have several such hymns which you like for different occasions, please give each title, and say why you like them, and when you most like to hear/sing them). Please state order of preference.

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CHAPTER NINE - CONCLUSION

The aim of this study has been to examine developments in church singing from the middle of the nineteenth century, when only relatively small groups were involved in the performance of church music, to the late twentieth century when congregational hymn singing was very much the accepted norm. Initially, changes in church music were considered and discussed from the evidence found in novels and other works of fiction covering a wide chronological period. The examination of this data revealed information concerning many aspects of hymn singing, and especially illustrated the social and musical importance of the rural choirband. However, the study of a range of representative novels uncovered an interesting subtext concerning the development of hymn singing from its origins until the present time. One of the most interesting features of this aspect of the research was that there was apparently little difference between the responses of the various Christian denominations, and a common familiarity with hymn singing emerged amongst the reading public. In order to examine the importance of hymn singing, a number of discussions were held with interested church musicians and historians at Bicester Methodist Church. This informal research led to the discovery of the wealth of material connected with the anniversary services at BMSS and the activities of the Red Rhythmics. Similarly, a discussion with a retired church organist led to the discovery of the three part-books. The combination of all this material made it possible to trace the transition from psalmody to hymnody both, locally and more generally, in much greater detail than had at first seemed possible. Furthermore, all the primary source material available was instrumental in corroborating the claims of the novelists.

The significance of the transition from psalmody to hymnody across all Christian

denominations became apparent in many of the novels studied in as much that this seemingly inconsequential aspect of community life could be seen as a barometer for social and ecclesiastical change. For example, in the earliest novel examined, The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker, Smollett contrasts the musical preferences of the nonconformist Clinker and his Anglican patrons, the Brambles. During the nineteenth century the Brontë sisters, Elizabeth Gaskell and George Eliot all demonstrate their familiarity both with the hymns of the Nonconformists, especially Wesley's A Collection of Hymns for the use of people called Methodists, and the performance practices of Anglican church choirbands. From these nineteenth century novels it became clear that the reading public was becoming increasingly familiar with hymns and hymn singing. Gradually the research revealed that through the treatment of hymns by twentieth century novelists it could be seen that not only did worshippers of all denominations experience the common bond of hymn singing, but also that hymns were themselves becoming associated less with church services and more with secular events.

The growing knowledge of hymns and hymn singing amongst the general population has led to a feeling of common ownership of hymns. This meant that criticism of all aspects of church music has been freely given over the last two hundred years. Most stringent was the attack on the choirbands issued by the Oxford Movement in the middle of the nineteenth century in such edifying publications as The Parish Choir. However, evidence of less auspicious debate can be seen in more recent times with the discussions aired by SG in his "Super's Diary". Furthermore, the range of strong opinions evident in the responses to the fieldwork survey reveal individual preferences in hymn singing which illustrate the feelings of ownership felt by hymn

singers from all denominations.

A contributory factor in the common ownership of hymns is that although hymns and tunes frequently have their roots in one denomination or another, many have become absorbed into all traditions. The research has revealed that this is connected with developments in hymnody and the introduction of hymnbooks. Before hymnbooks were mass-produced, music was copied into manuscript books used by groups of musicians such as the choirbands. The analysis of the three part-books in Chapter Five is an important illustration of the developments in hymn tune writing and the subsequent publication of hymnbooks. There is substantive evidence that tunes were frequently altered either by accident or design, leading to a wealth of variation and, as has been noted, part-books such as these were not exclusive to any one denomination, and were also used on social occasions. Further dissemination occurred, as private collections such as these part-books formed the basis for published hymnbooks, some of which became extremely popular in all traditions. One example of this is Hymns Ancient and Modern, which, since its publication in 1861, has become ubiquitous, a detail apparent from its frequent mention by novelists from the second half of the nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century. Compelling evidence of the popularity of Hymns Ancient and Modern is revealed in the responses to the fieldwork survey, as respondents from all denominations noted that they used, or had used, Hymns Ancient and Modern at some point in their lives, be it in school, Sunday School or church. This is an important factor when considering the common ownership of hymns. The popularity of a single collection of hymns such as Hymns Ancient and Modern means that when hymns are selected for comfort and inspiration, for civic occasions, or simply for entertainment, it is possible that a common source

will be used to ensure that all singers will be familiar with both words and music.

Although using hymnbooks is common practice in many churches today, the research has revealed that the legacy of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is still in evidence, especially when the presentation of hymns to congregations is considered. The analysis of the use of hymns for the anniversary services at BMSS has already illustrated how hymns were presented on flysheets from the earliest occasions in the 1850s. This was an inexpensive method of making hymn words available to larger groups of people, even after multiple copies of their preferred hymnbooks were purchased. The responses to the fieldwork survey reveal that the use of hymn sheets for both weekly services and special occasions is common practice in many churches today, emphasising the continuing need to present hymns quickly and efficiently. Alternative methods of presenting hymns to large congregations are also mentioned in the responses to the fieldwork survey, with the use of overhead projectors being popular.

The rise of the Oxford Movement in the 1840s saw the decline of the traditional choirband in rural Anglican churches, and the use of the organ and a choir became common practice in many churches. However, the research has revealed evidence that during the twentieth century the choirband was reinvented to accommodate changes in musical taste and performance. A fine example of this is the Red Rhythmics, who accompanied services for many years at Bicester Methodist Church. Indeed it has already been noted on page 203, that in 1949 the Red Rhythmics were recognised by elderly members of the congregation as a reincarnation of the choirband, and the change of instrumentation from “bass fiddles” to harmonicas is noted. The electronic advances of the twentieth century have found a place in the new

choirbands under the more recent titles of “music group” and “worship groups”, and many of the respondents to the fieldwork survey mentioned guitars, keyboards and amplified acoustic instruments as suitable for the accompaniment of hymn singing.

The case study of the development of hymn singing at Bicester Methodist Church considers a wealth of material existing in the church archives. This might suggest that Bicester was unique in its particularly rich musical heritage. However, it should be noted that much of the primary source material comes from the detailed notebooks kept by SG, as well as from his published books and articles. Additional advantages that BMSS perhaps enjoyed over other Sunday Schools at the time included the fact that SG occupied senior positions within the national Sunday School hierarchy, and this enabled his pupils to perform on many prominent and well-documented occasions. SG’s contact with the Sunday School Union enabled him to contribute to new hymnbooks, notably Sunday School Praise, and his reputation as a popular writer gave him the opportunity to publish his own material. Undoubtedly, it was fortunate for BMSS that SG was committed to musical activity. However, the responses to the fieldwork survey illustrate that there are many churches in the area where musical groups are active and well respected. The difference between these and BMSS was that SG himself reported the activities of the latter through the local press. An interesting further development of this research would be to investigate other church bands through reports in local newspapers.

One of the starting points for such a future study might be to examine the legacy of SG himself. It has already been noted in Chapter Seven that his published books as well as his personal notebooks reveal a commitment to sharing his musical leadership with other youth groups. Indeed the profits made from the Red Rhythmics’ concerts

were explicitly earmarked for the setting up of new bands, with tuition offered by the Red Rhythmics themselves.¹ Searching the local press and examining church records could be a way of exploring the success of these new bands.

The research into the history surrounding the three part-books has been especially interesting. The evidence that the Williams part-book might be connected to the family of Flora Thompson suggests that the examination of such books can provide vital information about the local history of a given area. A thorough search of church records and census material would provide more detailed information of cultural interest. This would be similarly true of the Bache family as their links with the church at Hagley, their compositions and their possible connection with the Gatty family might shed light on the musical and social history of the area.

As has been noted earlier, the transition from psalmody to hymnody is evident in all denominations. The discovery and analysis of the three part-books has been vital to this research as they provided important primary source material concerning the period of time immediately leading up to the general publication and introduction of hymnbooks in rural churches. The analysis of the Williams part-book illustrates the development of church music from the choirbands to the use of an organ, and the tunes contained in it are reminiscent of choirband music. Furthermore, this book can be seen as a forerunner of the published collections that were to follow. Compiled from 1837, it is clear that the Williams part-book was used before printed sources were cheaply and easily available. However, the examination of the much more recent Blue part-book raises many questions, as it was compiled well into the twentieth century, a considerable time after the general introduction of published hymnbooks.

¹ See p. 227 above.

It would be interesting to ascertain if other handwritten sources such as the Blue part-book exist, as it is possible that church organists simply preferred to write out their own parts.

The analysis of the contents of the three part-books has revealed musical details about how hymn tunes are altered and corrupted by accident or design to suit changing tastes. As noted in Chapter Five, the trends illustrated are that generally hymn tunes were simplified and lowered in pitch in order that they might be more accessible to the non-specialist singer. The examination of the books illustrates these gradual developments from the examples in the Williams part-book, where tunes are written in a florid style with performance instructions and dynamic markings, to the Blue part-book where the tunes are all written in short score with no performance instructions at all. As has been noted in previous chapters, the simplification of tunes, which began in handwritten manuscript books, continued in published hymnbooks and has been the subject of discussion since the introduction of Hymns Ancient and Modern. It was with the introduction of mass-produced hymnbooks that a consensus evolved with regard to hymn singing, and with this an assumption that a familiar or popular version of a hymn was the “right” one. This can be seen from the heated discussions reported by SG when he was trying to introduce different versions of hymns into the anniversary service. More recently the same attitude is evident in the answers to the fieldwork survey, with mention of “the wedding hymn” and “the modern version”. From this it can be concluded that as hymns are selected from a few popular volumes, such as Hymns Ancient and Modern, hymn singing will be truly congregational, as everyone will be familiar with both words and tunes. However, such a consensus in hymn singing raises a number of concerns amongst

interested parties, one of the main ones being that musical standards will be lowered. Certainly the keyboard accompaniments in some of the newer popular collections, such as Hymns Old and New², bear little resemblance to the complex arrangements in former books, and have been simplified so as to be within the capabilities of less proficient musicians. In spite of this, the responses to the fieldwork survey suggest that modern hymn singers are quite happy with these alterations, as long as the versions they sing resemble the hymns they know and love. In the longer term, the question should be addressed as to whether, with constant simplification of the tune and alteration of words, the heritage and tradition of hymn singing will be diluted to such an extent that it eventually bears no resemblance to the cultural experience enjoyed by our ancestors.

The responses to the fieldwork survey clearly indicate the desire that the culture and tradition of hymn singing should be maintained. However, if hymns are to be taught to young people with less experience than previous generations, hymn singing needs to be executed in environments other than church. It would appear that the future for hymn singing is in the community, with minimal input from the teaching of home and school. One of the most significant developments in more recent years is the large number of hymns heard on the radio and on television. It would seem that the teaching of hymns via the media will have a significant role to play in what many see as the maintaining of an important part of cultural tradition.

As hymn singing reaches new participants through the media, there is perhaps a need to redefine hymns themselves. The examination of the use of hymns at BMSS has already highlighted the use of popular songs such as We Shall Overcome within the

² Hymns Old and New, Bury St Edmunds, Kevin Mayhew, 1996.

context of a church service. Furthermore, political correctness and a desire for an all-inclusive language in hymn writing have removed some of the traditional religious imagery. Both of these developments were challenged in the responses to the fieldwork survey by hymn singers who wanted their children to learn the “old” words and tunes. This raises important questions about the defence of a tradition which, whilst held dear by some, has been thought by many to express itself in an older and outdated language of prejudice and discrimination.

In conclusion, although this research raises many questions both about the traditions and the future of hymn singing, much has been revealed about the line of development from psalmody to hymnody. Without the tracing of social and musical aspects of hymn singing through well-known literature, from the earliest novels until the closing years of the twentieth century, less would be known about the general interest in this subject, and the fact that hymns are familiar to a wide section of the population. The study of primary source material has highlighted many developments in hymn singing, and the detailed analysis of the three part-books has been important in the discussion of hymn singing in a specific geographical region. Without this close examination the contribution that such part-books made to the wider development of hymn singing throughout the country would not have been revealed. As part of the consideration of general developments in hymn singing and the use of hymnbooks, the analysis of the use of hymns at BMSS serves to illustrate not only changes in children’s hymns, but also the importance of musical training and leadership within the Sunday School environment. This aspect of the research also introduced and explored the concept of hymn singing in the community, as through the Red Rhythmics, hymns were used to entertain both locally and, via radio and

television, nationally. The fieldwork survey reveals how hymn singing continues to be important to certain sections of the community, both for entertainment and for worship. The wide-ranging research into the development from psalmody to hymnody has demonstrated that, although rich in tradition, hymns and hymn singing have been modified to accommodate continuing social and cultural change.

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