



# Sutton Veny Choral Festival

## CHORAL FESTIVAL AT SUTTON VENY

It is now more than three years since we had to chronicle the consecration of the beautiful church at Sutton Veny, the architectural gem of this portion of the diocese; and we have now the satisfaction of giving an account of a festival of parish choirs, which was held in this edifice on Wednesday last, in connection with the Warminster district of the Salisbury Diocesan Choral Association. The church is admirably suited for such a gathering, and the choral music was heard to great advantage. The choirs assembled in the afternoon, and underwent a practice before the service commenced. The following is a list of the choirs present :-

	Males	Females	Total
Sutton Veny	13	10	23
Heytesbury	10	8	18
Fisherton Delamere	9	10	19
Codford	13	6	19
Boyton		6	6
Imber	9	12	21
Horningsham	14	11	25
St. John's, Warminster	20		20
	88	63	151

At four o'clock the service commenced, and the clergy and surplices choristers having robed entered the church by the south porch, and proceeded up the nave, singing, as a processional hymn, "Onward, Christian soldiers," to the tune to which it is set in the "Sarum Hymnal." The first eight lines of the first two verses were sung in unison by the choirs forming the procession, and the last four were taken in harmony by all the choirs. The other verses were sung in harmony by the choirs. The procession having reached the chancel, the clergy and surplice choirs took their seats therein, together with some of the male singers who were unsurpliced. The females and a portion of the unsurpliced choirs occupied the transepts. The service was intoned by the Rev. H. De ST. Croix, the general confession being said after, and not with, the minister, who said each sentence alone, when it was repeated by the whole congregation. The Psalms of the day and the

“Deus Misereatur” were taken to chants by Sir G. J. Elvey, Mus. Doc.; and the first lesson was read by the Rev. G. F. S. Powell, the rector. The “Magnificat” and “Nune Dimittis” were sung to a service in E flat by Boyton Smith, and the second lesson was read by Rev. J. R. Madam, of Warminster. The “Apostles’ Creed” was recited to an organ accompaniment. The anthem was selected from Psalm cv. 1, 2, 3, “O give thanks unto the Lord,” the composition of Sir George J. Elvey. The rest of the service was intoned by the Rev. J. H. Pearson, of Upton Scudamore, and the hymn before the sermon was “Lord of our Life, and God of our Salvation,” taken to a composition by T. E. Spinney. With regard to the manner in which the musical portion of the service was rendered, we must say that it was most creditably got through, and – which is not always the case – we had the advantage of hearing the rehearsal and comparing the first efforts of the various choirs with the finished performance at the service itself, and the improvement that can be worked out in an hour’s practice is really scarcely credible. The processional hymn was effectively given as a simple hymn tune, because it was not begun until the choristers and clergy reached the church door, so that the organ accompaniment acted as a guide throughout. This is a security against a break down, but the beautiful effect of the singing of the distant choir as it approached nearer and nearer the church was wanting on this occasion.

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The following clergymen were present at the festival :- Rev. G. F. S. Powell, Sutton Veny; Rev. J. Jacob, Horningsham; Rev. H. de St. Croix; Rev. A. T. Corfe, Stockton; Rev. W. Gray, Upton Lovell; Rev. E. Busbridge, Rev. A. Trotman, and Rev. J. H. Madan, Warminster; Rev. T. Waters, Maiden Bradley; Rev. W. Hickman, Warminster; Rev. A. Law; Rev. F. Ware; Rev. W. Slatter, Imber; Rev. J. Powell, Hill Deverell; Rev. A. A. Farnell, Christ Church, Warminster; Rev. A. A. Corfe, Sherrington; Rev. R. U. Todd, Longbridge Deverell; Rev. C. F. Hyde, Dilton Marsh; Rev. E. Eliot, Norton Bavant; Rav. J. H. Pearson, Upton Scudmore, &c.

Between six and seven o’clock the members of the choirs partook of an excellent meat tea, which had been provided in a spacious marquee erected in the Rectory Grounds. The chair was taken by Mr J. Everett, Mrs Everett, Miss Everett, and the Hon. Mr and Mrs A’Court being also present with the clergy whose names are above mentioned.

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Three cheers were then given for the chairman and the Everett family.

The Chairman said he begged to thank the company on behalf of himself, his mother, and the rest of their family, and said they were exceedingly glad to assist in any way in their power, so good a cause. (Cheers)

This brought to a close one of the most successful choral gatherings which we have had the pleasure of attending.

*(Salisbury and Winchester Journal – Saturday 15 July, 1871)*