

Musical Activities 1950s

1950-51



This year, once again, the musical activities of the School have flourished. All the societies have expanded and a high standard has been maintained. Although the Music Competition was closely contested, the standard was not quite as high as in previous years. We must, however, mention the Junior Piano and Violin Classes where the standard was extremely good. The final placing was Guest, Holgate, Price and Talbot. This year's School Play was Eric Crozier's "Let's Make an Opera" with music by Benjamin Britten. It was a difficult production for a school for all the cast had to be able to sing as well as act. Nevertheless it was a tremendous success and the musical reputation of the School was lifted to a new high level. Though last year's achievements at the Pontefract Musical Festival were by no means trivial we are hoping to do even better this time. As before, the Orchestra and Madrigal Group have entered, and, if practices are attended regularly, we should be successful. Joyce Dixon, who for the past few years has spent a lot of her spare time accompanying the choirs, orchestra and soloists, left us last year for the Royal Academy and we would like to extend to her our best wishes. We were honoured to have our young trumpeter, Ella Godwin, accepted into the National Youth Orchestra and we wish her every success for the future. Miss Carter still works very hard and one often wonders where she gets all her energy. She gives up every night in the week to some society and everyone appreciates the hard work she puts in. Every evening of the week sees a score or so of budding musicians taking lessons under the excellent guidance of Mr. Renhard. Mr. Renhard is a great help to the orchestra and we thank him sincerely for coming along. We would also like to thank Mrs. Allan, who comes along faithfully every Friday to assist the orchestra, and the many members of staff who take part in the activities of the choir.

Dennis Ramsden, U6A

1951-52



This year has been a very successful one for the musical contingent of the school. The success of the Madrigal Choir at Pontefract was marred owing to their being the only entrants; yet they were awarded the high mark of 87 points and look forward to proving their worth in competition next time. Also, at Pontefract, the orchestra was third in a very close contest: they were awarded 87 points whilst the winners were awarded 91. The Musical Concert, at which the winners of the musical competitions performed along with the choirs and orchestra, had its largest audience to date three-quarters of the hall being full. It was enjoyed by the people who were there but would have been enjoyed more by the performers if support from the neighbourhood had been a little more plentiful. The final placing for the Musical Competition was Guest, Holgate, Price and Talbot. The Concert saw the birth of a new musical organisation in the school, the Male Voice Choir, which gives opportunity to the robust males of the school to show their high spirits in song rather than in more doubtful occupations. Speech Day had more Musical entertainment than usual and went off quite well. By far the greatest musical successes this year were the combined musical concerts given by the Mexborough and Hemsworth

Grammar School Choirs and Orchestras. Two performances were given, one at Mexborough, the other at Hemsworth and on both occasions the halls were full. Both the Madrigal Choir and the Male Voice Choir, together with the orchestra, are going to Pontefract this year and all have high hopes. Much of the success of this year is due to the enthusiasm of the choirs and orchestra. Everybody has attended well and there have been no slackers. But most of the praise must go to Miss Carter, without whom the choirs and orchestra could not exist; her unflagging enthusiasm has inspired everybody to higher efforts. We should also like to thank Mrs. Allan and Mr. Renhard for their help with the orchestra and Mr. Burnett for his work in moulding into shape the young Male Voice Choir. Thanks are also due to all members of the Staff who have helped in the choirs and at concerts.

Peter Wall, 5A

1952-53



This year the musical activities of the school opened with the Pontefract Musical Festival and the school choirs were remarkably successful. The Male Voice Choir were placed 3rd in their class (with 82 points) against choirs with considerably more experience; Form 2A and 2B Girls' Choir was placed 1st in its class with 86 points and the Madrigal Choir, again unfortunately without competition, gained an excellent 90 points. The next event on the musical calendar was the House Music Competition and again Guest was successful in gaining first place. But, unfortunately, the winners of the separate classes were unable to display their talents in public as the summer concert had to be abandoned. The choirs, however, were able to perform at Speech Day and gave excellent performances. The achievement of this high standard was helped considerably by the rehearsal the choirs were allowed to have at the Hippodrome in the morning, which enabled them to become accustomed to the acoustics of the hall before the performance. Owing to the fact that music is now included in the 6th form curriculum, the upper school is beginning to take a deeper interest in the subject. As a result,

school excursions were made to a Y.S.O. concert at Doncaster and to two Halle concerts at Sheffield, at the second of which the new Seventh Symphony of Vaughan Williams was heard and greatly enjoyed. It is hoped that this interest will continue and further excursions will be arranged. This year a great honour was conferred upon the school when six boys were invited to take part in the "Singing Together" broadcast for schools. The boys found the experience both enjoyable and interesting and hope that they may continue to take part. As usual, the mainspring of all the musical activities of the school was Miss Carter, to whose hard work and encouragement most of the successes of the year must be accredited. Thanks are also due to Mr. Burnett for his work with the Male Voice Choir and with the other choirs, to Mr. Renhard for his violin classes and to Mr. Revill, Mr. Owen and Mr. Combs for their all-round interest and support. We hope they will continue to support this important side of school life.

Peter Wall, L6A

1953-54



The Musical Year began, as usual, with the House Music Competition, in which the winning House was Guest. Together with the School Choirs and Orchestra, the winners of the individual classes performed at the Annual Summer Concert where they met with an appreciative reception. In November the Choirs and Orchestra performed at Speech Day and, as usual, received an enthusiastic hearing. This year, the Madrigal Choir competed at the Harrogate Musical Festival where they came up against the much more experienced choir from Thorne's House, but the adjudicator commented on the youth of our School Choir and suggested that it had a promising future. The Fourth Form girls' choir had more outstanding success at Pontefract where they won two shields in two very competitive classes. Their marks were 85 in one class and 87 and 89 in the other. The musical excursions, which started last year, were continued and visits were made to The Leeds Triennial Festival and to a Halle Concert at Sheffield. This summer a party hopes to visit the Edinburgh Festival for a week. An encouraging feature of this session, and one which makes a "happy note" upon which to end this report, is the fact that the School Orchestra is again flourishing. It

is hoped it will continue to do so.

Peter Wall, U6A

1954-55



The House Music Competition took place, as usual, in the Spring Term. The winners were Guest, who repeated their success of the previous year. In second place was Price, with Holgate and Talbot in third and fourth places. The winners of each of the classes later performed at the Summer Concert together with the choirs. It is gratifying to see that the concert is becoming increasingly popular. During the Winter term, the choirs gave a concert on Speech Day. The visiting guest of honour, Sir Charles Morris, Vice-Chancellor of Leeds University, congratulated them warmly on their performance, especially of Parry's "Blessed Pair of Sirens", which, he said, had given him great pleasure. Once again the Madrigal and the 5th Form Girls' Choir entered the Pontefract Festival. This year, the Madrigal choir was successful in winning its class against stiff competition, by obtaining 90 marks out of a possible 100. Commenting on their performance, the adjudicator, Eric Thiman, said that it was astonishing that a School Madrigal choir could reach such an excellent standard of singing. Unfortunately, the 5th Form Girls' choir was not able to achieve its former high standard, and only managed to secure third place. In the new "Oratorio" class which has been introduced this year,

the four-part choir were the only competitors. They gained second place in the "Choral" class. During the Spring term, a sixth-form party went to Sheffield to hear a concert given by the Hallé Orchestra. The varied programme consisted of two well-known overtures, "Tannhauser", by Wagner, and "The Barber of Seville", by Rossini; an impressive performance of Tchaikovsky's second piano concerto was given by Gina Bachauer. Many thanks are given once again to Miss Carter and Mr. Burnett, who have given up much of their spare time in order to carry on the various musical activities of the school.

John Farnsworth, L6S

1955-56



At the end of the Autumn Term, we bade farewell to Miss Carter, who, during her ten years' stay with us, has been mainly responsible for establishing the school's fine reputation in "musical spheres", but, simultaneously, we welcomed Mr. Boyd, who has already proved himself a worthy successor by maintaining the flourishing interest and participation in music which is now so clearly linked with Hemsworth Grammar School.

Once more, music played a prominent part at last November's **Speech Day**. By fine interpretation of a variety of items, four different Choirs and a small vocal group received an enthusiastic reception from both the audience and the Guest of Honour, Dr. Edith Summerskill, M.P.

23rd November 1956

Conductors

Mr. C.M. Boyd and Mr G.R. Burnett

Accompanists

Mr. C.H. Owen and S.J. Farnsworth

- **The Male Voice Choir**
Bryn Calfara by W. Owen
De Battle ob Jericho a Negro Spiritual arr. Mr G.R. Burnett
- **The Madrigal Choir**
Thyrsis, Sleepest Thou? by John Bennett
- **The Junior Choir**
Ferry me across the water by Gerald Finzi
Dame Hickory by Armstrong Gibbs
- **The School Choir**
Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring by J.S. Bach
Ye banks and braes by Miller arr. Eric Thiman
Oh, no John! Folk song arr. Eric Thiman

This high standard was evident, later, in the House Music Competition, held during the Spring Term, and won by Guest for the third consecutive year. Together with Choirs and Orchestra, the winners of the individual class performed at the Annual Summer Concert, when talent and variety met with an appreciative reception from the audience of parents and friends. Again, both the School and Madrigal Choirs competed at the Pontefract Festival, held in March. The latter was placed third in face of really excellent competition in a class which included two adult choirs, while the School Choir became the first winners of the Nellie Ryder Shield. Finally, this report ends upon a most encouraging 'note'. During the past school year, the School Orchestra, a previously insignificant part in our musical activities, has been gradually gathering impetus in a well-earned return to the footlights. Now, with fifteen members (and room for more) the School Orchestra has really emerged as an orchestra, as their performance in the Summer Concert proved. Well done! Also, by the beginning of the Spring Term, Mr. Burnett was once more able to lead a spirited revival of the renowned Male Voice Choir. Therefore, the school has had another successful musical year, and, in future, its task will be, firstly, to maintain, and then, to improve upon, this high standard.

Nigel Leary, L6A (Guest)

1956-57



Looking back over the past year, it is gratifying to note that the good reputation the choirs have gained has not been lost. Their high standard of performance was applauded appreciatively at the Summer Concert, and provided a most enjoyable evening for the unusually large audience. A new Junior Choir making their debut, proved that although only a few loyal senior boys appear willing to exercise publically their vocal chords, the junior boys were eager to show off their prowess. The solo artists were the winners of the House Music Competition. This year an essay class was added, and the titles ranging from "What is Jazz?" to "Concert Going". Mr. Burnett's Male Voice Choir, singing Negro Spirituals, added a vivid patch of colour in the too mechanical performances at Speech Day. All the members of the orchestra are young, but remain undaunted by their sometimes unmusical attempts to play the progressively harder pieces. Thank you Mr. Boyd for enduring what human ears had never heard before! The orchestra is now playing its way to success with ever-strengthening numbers.

6th November, 1957

Conductor	Mr. C.M. Boyd
Accompanists	G.D. Farnsworth, V.C. Higham

- **The Male Voice Choir**
The Admiral's Broom by Frederick Brown
- **The Madrigal Choir**
Diaphenia like the Daffdowndilly by Pilkington
Awake, Sweet Love! by Dowland
Early One Morning Arr. Dunhill
- **The Second Form Girl's Choir**
Guter Mond a German Folk Song
Boy Johnny by Gerald Finzi
- **The School Choir**
Come let's be merry Arr. Stone
Come to the Fair by Easthope Martin

The skiffle group, an unofficial but entertaining organisation, played the incidental music at the Winter Sports Dance. Many pupils from schools in Yorkshire joined a choir to sing the chorus of Mendelssohn's "Elijah". A public performance was given in Leeds Town Hall conducted by the organiser, Mr. Adams, who is the County Music Adviser. To list the musical activities in Hemsworth Grammar School would not take very long, but behind the melodious tones of the choirs lies hard and often tedious work. We are lucky to have members of staff who are keen and willing to help Mr. Boyd. We thank all who have given their time freely and generously.

Susan Butcher 5T (Guest)



The past year has seen the continuation of most of the musical activities of the School. The transference of the Music Room to its present position (the former Chemistry Laboratory) has been a great improvement, for the number of members enlisted into the main Choir can now be accommodated quite comfortably. The Choir practices have been attended regularly for the most part, although there is a constant need for more male voices in the Choir. The School's musical year began on Speech Day when the four-part Choir, the Madrigal Choir, the Male Voice Choir and the Junior Girls' Choir played prominent parts. Although several boys rallied under the leadership of Mr. Owen to continue the Male Voice Choir, it has had to be temporarily disbanded for lack of support and the conflict of other activities. This is a great pity, since we all enjoyed the delightfully lively singing produced by the boys in the past years. We hope for an early revival. The next event on the musical calendar was the Leeds Festival, when nineteen pupils from our School joined with others from thirty schools in the West Riding to sing Vaughan Williams' "Dona Nobis Pacem". We all

enjoyed singing at this performance, which was given in Leeds Town Hall, and would have wished for more than the fifteen members of the School who found enough interest to come to Leeds to hear this fine work. The House Music Competition revealed a wealth of talent, although there were noticeably less entries from the Seniors than from the Junior School. Although not everyone can win, I am sure that all will have gained experience for the future. The competition was won this year by Guest House, who have now been the victors for three successive years. The individual winners will be able to show their skill in the Concert to be given on May 20th, for which the Choirs are now practising. The concert last year was enjoyed immensely, especially the performance of three Neo-hellenic Folk Songs (sung in Greek!) by the Madrigal Choir. This year the Choirs were forced to withdraw from the Pontefract Festival because it clashed with the first night of the Staff Play, which claimed Mr. Boyd. However, the School was not without honour at the Festival, as Rosamund Leary made her way there and returned with high commendations for her viola playing and solo singing, in which class she did well to be placed second among a total of fifty-seven competitors. The work put in by the Choirs in practicing their pieces for Pontefract will not be in vain, since we shall be able to sing them at the Summer Concert.

Gloria D. Farnsworth U6A

1958-59



Last year's musical activities closed with the Summer Concert in which the Main, Madrigal and Junior Choirs took part, while there was the new and adventurous addition of a Sixth Form Girls' Choir under the capable leadership of Mr. Owen. The Male Voice Choir had unfortunately been abandoned through lack of support, but the Orchestra still flourished. Many more new members were enrolled at the beginning of the year as many had left in July. The Four-Part Choir received a large response, especially in the male section, where it has been deficient for some time. The Madrigal Choir was deliberately reduced in size - a step which has proved successful, apart from a slight lack of tenors. The School Orchestra has shown a promising improvement and its performance at the Carol Service was appreciated by all. The first musical event of the year was on Speech Day when the Four-Part, Madrigal, Male Voice and Junior Choirs provided the entertainment. The lively singing of the Male Voice Choir was especially enjoyed and it is most pleasing to see its revival, for which much credit must go to the hard work of Mr. Owen.

4th November 1959

Conductors

Mr. C.M. Boyd and Mr. J.S.E. Oliver

- **The Junior Choir**
Three Folk Songs:
(a) I will give my love an apple arr. Vaughan Williams
(b) Dashing away with the smoothing iron arr. Cecil Sharp
(c) Farewell Manchester arr. Somervell.
Glad Hearts Adventuring by Martin Shaw
- **The School Choir**
Three Ships by Colin Taylor
All through the night arr. H. Robertson

The Madrigal Choir and Orchestra were again to the fore at the Carol Service. On this occasion, the Orchestra showed how much it had improved. Not only did it accompany some of the carol singing, but it also gave a very creditable performance of a movement from Haydn's "Clock" Symphony. The honour of the school was again upheld at the Pontefract Music Festival on March 11th. It was exciting and enjoyable to enter the competition again after last year's withdrawal because of the Staff Play. Although the Four-Part Choir's winning of the shield was inevitable through lack of any opponents, it earned a very worthy eighty marks. The Madrigal Choir also did very well, receiving only one mark less than the winning choir which was a mature and experienced one. The House Music Competition showed the supremacy of Guest House. They won for the fourth successive year! Holgate came second, eleven points behind Guest's seventy-seven points. Talbot was third with forty points and Price fourth with seventeen points. The individual winners of each class will be able to display their talents in the Summer Concert, for which both choirs and orchestra are now working hard. This year, a trip was arranged by Mr. Boyd for a visit to Sheffield to hear the Halle Concert on March 13th. The excursion was greatly enjoyed by many pupils and whetted their appetites for future performances. The Choirs certainly owe a great deal to Messrs. Owen, Woodcock, Cookson and Reasbeck, who have devoted much of their free time to the rehearsals. Our thanks must also go to Mr. Owen and Mr. Reasbeck for their work in the School Orchestra. We can only hope that we shall have a large and appreciative audience at the Summer Concert.

Margaret E. Biggs, U6A



Over the past school year we have had several changes in the Music Department. In September we welcomed Mr. Oliver, who immediately took charge of the Main Choir. Many new members enrolled to replace those who left in July. Unfortunately, the attempt to continue the Male Voice Choir was unsuccessful. The Madrigal Choir gained recruits for the tenor section, where it had been deficient the previous year, and the School Orchestra continued to improve under the capable guidance of Mr. Renhard. The first musical event of the year was on Speech Day, when the Four-part, Madrigal and Junior Choirs provided entertainment which everyone enjoyed. The Madrigal Choir and the Orchestra were again to the fore at the Carol Service in December, the last musical event organised by Mr. Boyd before he left at Christmas. He had been at Hemsworth for four years and we are greatly indebted to

him for the work he did. Miss Evans joined us in January and, together with Mr. Oliver, had the task of training the choirs for the Pontefract Music Festival on April 5th. Their work was not in vain: the Four-part Choir retained the shield and, despite the absence of opponents, earned the worthy score of 80 marks. The Madrigal Choir was beaten by the same mature and experienced choir as last year, but gained 79 marks, only one mark behind the choir which came second. After the monopoly held by Guest house in the Music Competition for the past four years, it was a pleasant change to see Holgate House take first place, with Guest second, Price third and Talbot fourth. A party went again this year to hear the Halle Orchestra at Sheffield. There was a pleasing response and the excursion was very enjoyable. The Summer Concert brought the musical activities to a close for another year. We had a large and appreciative audience and the standard of the performers was very high indeed. Our sincere thanks go to those members of staff who have devoted so much of their spare time to the choirs and orchestra, and without whose help our efforts would have been of little value.

Margaret E. Biggs, U6A