

Miscellaneous Cultural Activities

Text: David Gibbs



This photograph is of the village Choral Society of the early 1900s. It's interesting to note how well turned out the choristers are for what must have been a special occasion. In the photo, centre row, second from the right, is 'Blind Joe', who sold newspapers around the village.



Merriott Mouth Organ Band (circa 1920). The band also included tambourines and triangles. Many of the men in this photo had just returned from service in 1914-18 war. The tunes they played were very much of the period. The original band survived for several years before eventually folding. An attempt was made to revive in the 1950s. A

few young lads, including the author of these notes, were recruited in an attempt to swell the numbers. We used to practice on warm summer evenings in the skittle alley of the King's Head (up the steps in the building alongside). A box of mouth organs was bought and then re-sold to the members, Hohner Echoes, price 9/- each. The repertoire was very limited, still mainly tunes of WW1 vintage, and for a while I practiced relentlessly but never became that proficient. Our moment of glory came at the time of the Lynton and Lynmouth flooding disaster in 1952 when we paraded around the village (no uniform, as in the original photograph), our musical output being supplemented by an accordion, played by Roy Lawrence. We collected £50 towards the relief effort. I still have a mouth organ and still can't play very well; my rendering of *'It's Long Way To Tipperary'* still sends the cat slinking off outdoors.