

Village is Very Proud of its Choir

Daily Sketch Correspondent

The window in Staveley, Westmorland, village midway between Kendal and Windermere, is very full this week. Centre-piece is a silver and bronze shield, and around it are grouped a silver and bronze shield, and around it are grouped a silver and bronze shield. Boldly printed cards tell that all were members of the Staveley Choral Society in the recent Mary Wakefield Festival at Kendal.

Staveley feels about its choir—proud and pardonably boastful. Its pride lies not so much in their success as mug-hunters. In fact, Staveley is a trifle self-conscious about the festival triumph, for it knows that the opposition was negligible.

It is proud that in these early post-war days, when men have been away and village life disorganised, it can boast a choir at all.

But the spirit of active, creative community life pulses strongly in Staveley. It all centres on the village hall, built by public subscription before the war, and the institute, adjoining, which is half a century older. Both are in the lovely local grey-green stone, which weathers so well in this clean atmosphere that they might be almost contemporary.

Here you get everything Staveley has to offer—dances and meetings, concerts and the cinema, rehearsals for the choir and the local silver band.

The Lads Are Shy

An early item on the future programme is a joint concert by band and choir to celebrate the latter's success. But this will only serve to increase apprehension which the choristers feel about their inability to attract new young blood into their ranks. The girls are not so reluctant, but the lads will have none of it.

"The neglect of musical training in the schools has a lot to do with it," Councillor Edwin Brockbank, choir president, told me. "We seem to have lost that race of schoolteachers to whom music was second nature. It is a great pity. We have recently appointed a county music organiser and I hope he will improve things."

Though this may be true, the stream of youthful recruits to the band gives little comfort to the choir.



Miss Betty Johnson, who sings soprano, has been with the choir 11 years.



James Coupland, a coal merchant, who conducts Staveley Silver Band, sings tenor in the choir. Left: Mrs. Elsie Bowan, pianist since 1919, and Mrs. Elsie Bowan, second soprano.



Two busy housewives who sing in the choir, Mrs. R. M. Myers, who sings soprano, and Mrs. P. Ivinson, contralto.