Saturday 13th March 2027

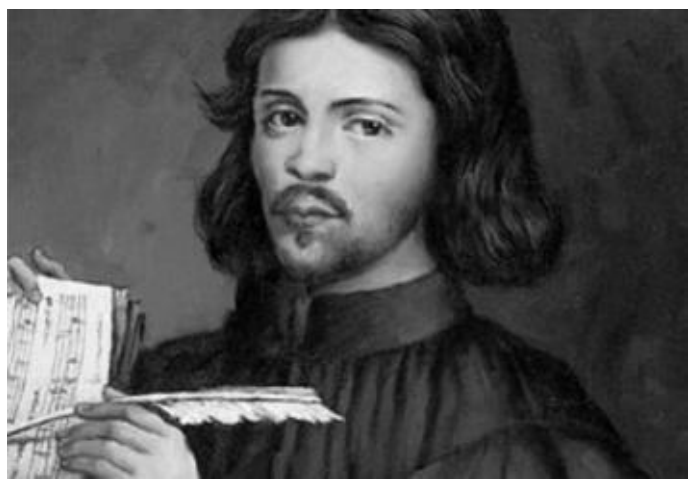
"For Every Syllable a Note": Thomas Tallis and the Tudor Reformation

A workshop for voices and instruments at A=440Hz

Led by Benjamin Maloney

Calcutt & Forest Moor Village Hall, Calcutt, Knaresborough HG5 8JF

10.30 for 11am to 5.00pm (please note later time than usual)



The English Reformation created an urgent demand for sacred music in the vernacular tongue. Thomas Tallis (c. 1505–1585) was among the first composers to meet this need, writing for the reformed liturgy from the 1540s onwards. His compositions circulated in manuscript under Edward VI, before being collated and published during the early decades of Elizabeth I's reign, particularly the 1560s.

This workshop explores two collections assembled by the printer John Day. The first, Mornyng and euenyng prayer (1565), contains four short anthems in which Tallis intermixes chant with simple imitative counterpoint. The second, Archbishop Parker's The whole Psalter translated into English metre (1567), features eight psalm tunes harmonised in four parts, followed by a chordal setting of the hymn Veni Creator. These pieces exemplify Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Cranmer's preference for clear, syllabic word-setting, as expressed in his recommendation that:

'the song … would not be full of notes, but, as near as may be,
for every syllable a note; so that it may be sung distinctly and devoutly.'

Today, this music is usually performed using modern south-eastern English accents, even by ensembles specialising in early music. The distinctive colours of the pronunciation of Tallis's own time remain largely unexplored. In this workshop, we will use Tallis's music to experiment with a reconstructed sixteenth-century pronunciation of English, discovering how it shapes vocal production and expression, and how accompanying instrumentalists might respond through changes in timbre, articulation and phrasing. Offering a fresh approach not previously explored at NEEMF, the workshop invites singers and instrumentalists to rediscover the sonic qualities of the language in which Tallis and his contemporaries so carefully crafted this new repertory.

Benjamin Maloney is nearing the completion of his doctorate at the University of York, where his research explores how historical linguistics can inform artistic performance practice. Having studied music as an undergraduate and later completed a master's degree in keyboard studies at the RNCM, his performance interests centre on the musical cultures of early modern England and North America. He is artistic director of Catterwall (www.catterwall.org), an ensemble exploring innovative approaches to early English vocal repertory. His academic interests as a linguist include articulatory and acoustic phonetics (the physical properties of speech sounds) and historical change in medieval Germanic languages. He also arranges music for vocal groups and serves as an archivist and musicality judge for the British Association of Barbershop Singers.

- -

"For Every Syllable a Note", with Benjamin Maloney, Saturday 13th March, Calcutt Village Hall. Postal applications to J. Rowling, 21A Manor Crescent, Pool-in Wharfedale , Otley, LS21 1ND. Closing date; 27th February 2027.

Name and address (with postcode please)……………………………………………………………………………………………………..
…….Postcode…………………………………

Email ____ Tel: _______________________________

I wish to sing: _______________*(voice)* I wish to play____________________________

I would be able to sing solo if required☐

Please also tell us if you have any special requirements (eg large print, transpositions or clefs preferred, etc):

Your application will be acknowledged by email. If you would like it to be posted please enclose SAE □

I enclose a cheque (*please make payable to `NEEMF'*) for £ _______ Do you belong to NEEMF? Yes / No

Is this your first workshop? If so, we will try to arrange a welcomer to meet you. Yes / No

For non-members of NEEMF: May we email you occasionally? Your email address will not be shared with anyone. Yes / No

Signed __________________________________ Date __________________

Calcutt Village Hall is accessible by road or rail, being close to the A1(M) and only 0.7 miles from Knaresborough Station, which is on the 'Harrogate Line' that runs from York to Leeds.

From the A1(M) take the A59 towards Knaresborough and Harrogate, as far as the Goldsborough roundabout where the A59 goes off to the right into Knaresborough. **Ignore this turning and keep straight on** towards Harrogate (A658). Stay on the A658 at the Wetherby Road roundabout but take **the next right (B6163), signposted to Calcutt.** The village Hall is on your left, just after Forest Moor Road.

On foot from the Station

head steeply downhill, by paths/steps to 'Waterside' and turn left. Stay on Waterside, with the river on your right, until you come to Low Bridge (with Mother Shipton Inn). Cross the river and walk up Blands Hill. The Village Hall is on your right.

STATION

BRIDGE

VENUE (on B6163)



Please note: The NEEMF half-price pensioner concession is only for pensioners whose SOLE source of income is the state pension. Pensioners who live on a combination of occupational and state pensions pay the full workshop rate.