

# Voice *of the* Valley

**Colne Valley Male Voice Choir Newsletter**

**October 2014 Edition**

## Choir Welcomes New Second Tenor



The Second Tenor section was particularly pleased to see new recruit, James Cooke, given a welcoming round of applause the other night to endorse the official announcement of membership. As is typical, he had been singing with the section for a few weeks and had then sailed through our informal audition process. Not that singing is new to James. He relates that he has been singing since he was a boy treble many years ago in Sheffield Cathedral Choir. James went on to earn a degree in music from the University of Huddersfield, specialising in Electro-Acoustics, the fore-runner to what is now, more commonly, called Music Technology.

At nearly 40, James almost counts as part of the 'Youth Wing'. James is married with a three-year old son – not quite ready yet for Colne Valley Boys. As a Golcar resident he's been aware of the choir for some time – not least because of his connections with Golcar's St John's Church, where he is church warden; also the venue of our last Choir performance.

James owns and runs Huddersfield Electronics on Cross Church Street – so you know who to go to for your audio equipment from now on - and he is a wizard with computing and the Internet – being amongst other things webmaster at Golcar Church.

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## Scarborough Success



**Val Coles** took this video of the Colne Valley Male Voice Choir at August's Scarborough Music Festival.

We were singing a medley of songs from the First World War. This performance, accompanied as ever by Keith Swallow on the piano – and on this occasion by Philip McCann on the cornet – also featured Victoria Sharp of Opera North singing, to the audience's evident enjoyment, 'Roses of Picardy'

Readers with internet access can find this video on:-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FDrZcULXxcU>

# Thoughts from 25 Years Ago.



## Some observations gathered by Eric Cooper

After the departure of George Stead it was thought that the choir could cease to exist. There were various appointments after George Stead and all had their own individual qualities but nobody really put their mark on the choir's direction.



When Thom was auditioned for the post there were among the applicants some who had a proven track record and had already established themselves as choral directors.

It would have been reasonable to assume that one of these would be appointed. There must have been men on the interviewing committee who recognised that there was **something special** in the young 23 year old Thom."

[Thom has an interesting homelife.](#)

A certain pianist confided in me that he was thinking of leaving the choir but decided to give it a try with the new M.D. He is still with us! I think he must be happy with the appointment."

Some were a little apprehensive about performing without music. Thom stuck to his guns on this matter and the choir soon found that they could manage, with Thom's clear lead, to perform well without copies. One tenor in the choir commented that even those with a poor memory were given the confidence to perform to a much higher standard by being able to give their full attention to Thom."

"Thom has been consistent in his cheerful manner. Never losing his temper and always courteous and tolerant even when he could be excused for getting a little angry."

The choir have had many successes on a national level and could arguably claim to be one of the best male voice choirs in the world. All this is down to Thom's constant enthusiasm and choral skill. From the opinions of those who were there 25 years ago, the ones who were responsible for making the decision, made a very wise choice.



Thom has an interesting homelife.

### **Finally - from Choir Chairman, Roger Fielding.**

"I was a young and inexperienced committee member at the time so I didn't feel too confident to express an opinion. However the more knowledgeable choir members recognised a talented musician, who they compared with George Stead

The other applicants were of a good standard and Thom was by far the youngest, but the committee had the foresight to engage him.

Nobody has ever questioned that decision, but I do remember saying that I feared we could soon lose him, because he was so good that he would soon be promoted and move on.

Thom has been promoted several times but always in this area. How lucky we are to have had his services for so long. When you couple that with over 50 years of Keith Swallow, we cannot be in better hands and are so blessed musically."



Thanks to all the choir members who have freely given their views as the basis of this article.

**Eric Cooper**

# Colne Valley men link with Budleigh Salterton



The Boyhood of Raleigh – painted by John Everett Millais at Budleigh Salterton in 1870

The Choir shared the stage with Budleigh Salterton Male Voice Choir and the Mirfield and Dewsbury Music Centre Swing Band in a joint concert on September the Fourteenth. Good fun was had by audience and musicians alike.

The linking factor between the three sets of performers was Nic Dolling. He was born in Budleigh Salterton, came to Huddersfield to do his music studies at the University and stayed on to work alongside Thom Meredith at the Kirklees Music School, amongst other things, leading the swing band. It was through his family connections that the BSMVC's Yorkshire tour came to Huddersfield's Holy Trinity Church for a thoroughly enjoyable Sunday afternoon.



Nic Dolling

We'll be seeing the Budleigh Salterton men again, soon. They, like us, will be part of the Cornwall International Male Voice Choir Festival next May.

## The Bookcase

### Brenda Iles' Ikea Adventure

We needed a new bookcase the Tenor and I, so we went to Ikea, as you do. We ate lunch at a very reasonable price as one tends to do when visiting Ikea. After lunch we spotted the ideal bookcase then went on a trawl around the store as one is obliged to do. There were lots and lots of interesting things there, all at absolute bargain prices and one never knows when one is going to need all these interesting things does one? After spending a lot of the Tenor's hard earned money and saving him an absolute fortune, ( I had to keep reminding him of this from time to time), we finally got round to finding the bookcase in the warehouse area.



It wasn't a very large bookcase but it was quite heavy and unwieldy in its cardboard flat pack. We had a lively discussion, as is common in these situations about the best way to put it on the trolley without anyone's back being damaged, or anyone's sense of humour being lost. Eventually all was resolved and the bill paid, the Tenor hiding signs of shock and distress quite successfully I thought. Next came the exciting bit, getting it into the car. I stayed with the purchases whilst the Tenor ran across the rain swept car park for the car, he was gone for some time as we hadn't had the car for long and he was familiarising himself with the intricacies of collapsing the back seats.

In the fullness of time he returned and it was quite a relief as I had been attracting sympathetic glances from the passing crowds. The bookcase almost fitted into the car, it was about three inches too long.

"Ikea deliver you know" I said looking meaningfully at the customer service department which was about two yards from where we stood.



**"This thing is going in this car."** said the Tenor in a voice that brooked no argument. He proceeded to circle the car in a very determined way, as a tiger might circle its prey. He opened doors, he closed doors, he pushed and pulled to no avail.

My offers of help were to say the least very firmly declined. Once more I felt the sympathetic looks of the passing crowds who were all slipping very compliant packages into very obliging cars. After some time I turned my back on the Tenor and pretended that I was waiting for someone else.

Suddenly the sounds behind me changed from those of futile pushing and pulling and profane language into the distinct sound of ripping cardboard! Bless him he had solved the problem. There in the rain before Ikea's customer service department he unpacked the bookcase. It fitted into the car, the packing fitted into the waste bin and in the gathering gloom we headed home.

The bookcase looks very well and we are still married.

Brenda Iles

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## And another thing...

Wish us luck for  
our competition  
on Saturday

ST8 7AR on your sat-nav

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- and should they wish to - they can unsubscribe at any time.

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