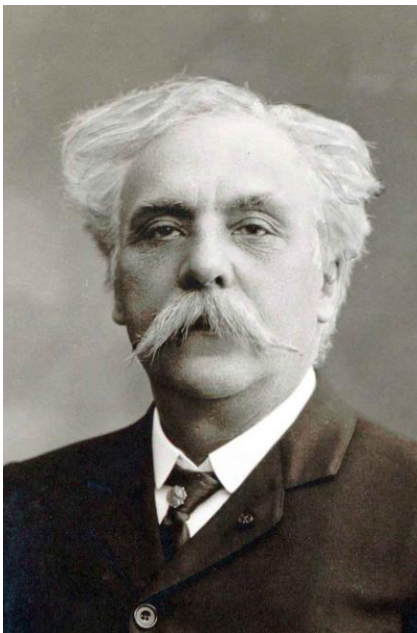


Voice of the Valley

Colne Valley Male Voice Choir Newsletter February 2016

Golcar Fauré Requiem



A chance to sing this wonderful work is coming up shortly at **Golcar Saint John's**. Join in a performance – or just participate as an audience member – on **March 12th**.

The event will be conducted by our very own **Thom Meredith**. **Ann Norton** will be playing the piano accompaniment.

A day of rehearsals on **Saturday the 12th** will pave the way for a performance at **4:15pm**. For those who are less familiar with the work, opportunities for 'note bashing' are planned. Just come to Golcar on March 1st and March 8th at 7:30 to practise.

The soloists are soprano, **Sophie Stones**, daughter of CVMVC second tenor, Joe Stones and **Kit Orange**, two up-and-coming performers from **Halifax Young Singers**.

To get you in the mood listen to this fine version by the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra & Chorus.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VUfi0ts_D-0 is just 'In Paradisum' or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UnilUPXmipM> is the whole piece

Mrs Sunderland 2016

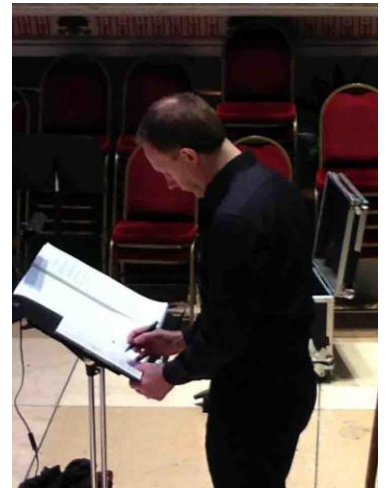
This annual Music Festival is one of the best regarded in the country with 10 days of fine music making. It takes place in Huddersfield's Town Hall and is a major cultural event with which **Colne Valley Male Voice Choir** has had a long and happy association.

We won a prize there in a choral competition over 90 years ago, but for our first 'First Prize' we had to wait until 1929. We've been part of it one way or another ever since that first entry.

This year's highlights for the Choir were our participation in a wider community event – a performance of the '**Armed Man**' by **Karl Jenkins**.

The work was conducted by our very own, **Thom Meredith**, with Colne Valley Boys fine accompanist, **Chris Pullein** at the piano during the day's rehearsals and singing with the tenors in the performance. It was so ably supported by a wonderful **Kirklees Youth Symphony Orchestra** and close on 300 singers – including many CV members – took part. It was a terrific event, made even more dramatic by laser lighting effects. (If you have internet access, see a super 'Son et Lumiere' video of the concert, on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ygzRrEgekKg>)

The performers had spent all day Sunday (21st) rehearsing their rendition of this fabulous piece. The large audience was stunned at the completion of the work and then rose to its feet to applaud a deeply moving performance.

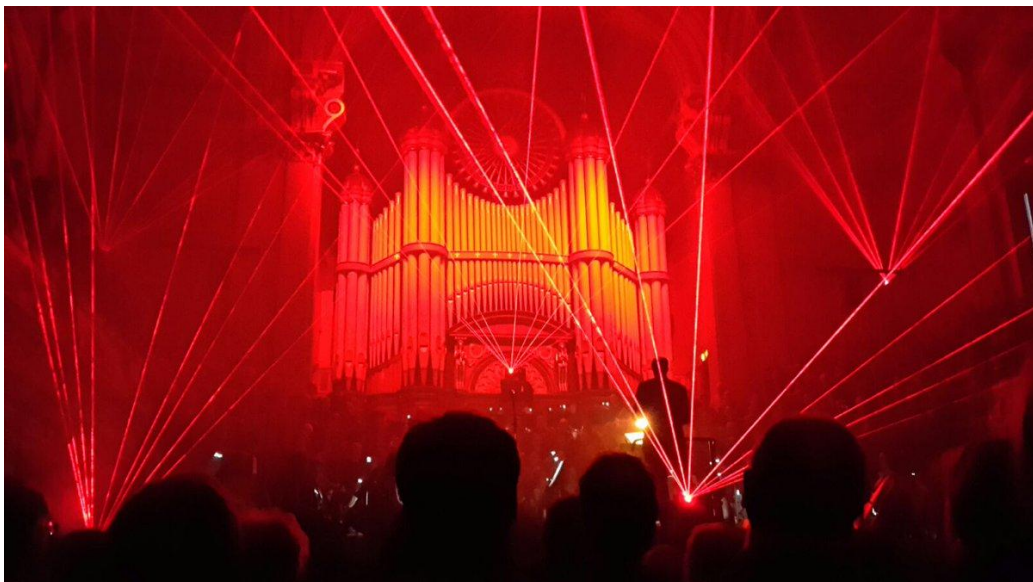


Any readers who don't know the work can see a performance of it by following this link:- www.youtube.com/watch?v=NTGpHnpPyas

The five soloists were excellent, especially, **Osman Hussain**, who sang the Muezzin's role so beautifully. The Orchestra was rich and full and the percussion, which plays such a role in providing the vivid pulse to many of the sections, was crisp and precise. The strings, particularly in supporting the solo cellist, **Will Robertson**, who played the Benedictus with such haunting lushness, were just terrific.



No-one would have believed that the choral and orchestral components could have come together so stunningly well after just one day of rehearsal. It speaks volumes on the skills of Thom Meredith that he could help fashion such a good sound so quickly. All of us who were there - whether on stage or in the audience - will remember it for years.



And the prize goes to.....

Saturday afternoon of the final day of the Festival saw Colne Valley men returning to the Town Hall and preparing to take the stage.



This time it was in competition: male voice choirs - 21 voices & over (Class 93). The task was to perform two contrasting own choice pieces.

We began with **Vaughan Williams**, 'Antiphon' from his suite, 'Five Mystical Songs'. This piece has a spectacular piano accompaniment, which few can play as well as maestro, **Keith Swallow**. It's a vibrant declaration of faith; 'Let all the world in every corner sing, 'My God and King.' We were urged, regardless of our personal religious positions, to sing it with total conviction and great gusto. It's a demanding piece and it's meant to leave an audience feeling they have heard something special.

Our second piece was very different; '**Prayer of the Children**.' This piece is heart-wrenchingly topical. It's about the impact on children of war and conflict. All too often, it's the children who lose their homes, their security and their families in conflicts over which they have neither choice nor control. The most recent focus for such cruelty is in Syria. The piece is sung unaccompanied.

The adjudicator commented on the performances.

The word, '**Outstanding**' was used about CVMVC.

And then came the moment of truth: **Winners!**

Second tenor, **Peter Hatton**, liked that.



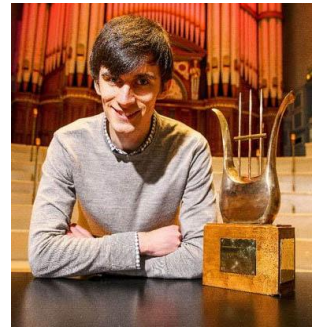


The corollary of victory in our class is that we were invited to take part in the **Choir Prize Winners Challenge** at the **Last Night of the Festival**.

This is the finale event to 10 days of music and competition at which exceptional groups and individuals are invited to perform once more and prestigious prizes such as '**Kirklees Young Musician of the Year**' are awarded.

This year that prize went to cellist, **Chris Mansfield**, a 24 year old, one-time member of Kirklees Youth Symphony Orchestra.

He performed **Robert Schumann's Adagio & Allegro**, opus 70, with exceptional virtuosity.



It was a privilege to be part of it and to see such much talent on display – so much of it nurtured by **Kirklees Music School**.

Colne Valley sang, **Herbert Sumsion's, 'I was Glad'** and that crowd-pleaser, '**The Lost Chord**' and we sung them very well.



However, we didn't win the prize-winners challenge, this year, which went instead to **Opus 44**.

This is a small but very accomplished female a-capella group for their set, '**Dashing away with a smoothing iron**' and '**And so it goes**'.

It was, most Choir members agreed, a deserved victory for them and their conductor, **Alison Pryce-Jones** and we wish them well.

We were just pleased not to have let ourselves down or our Musical Director, **Thom Meredith**. He should regard this year's Mrs Sunderland Festival as a personal triumph - and Colne Valley men can share in some small way in his achievements.

Blackley Concert – but at Salendine Nook

The Choir has been commissioned to give a concert by **Blackley Baptist Church** on **Saturday 23rd of April**.

Sadly, the concert can't be held at Blackley. Part of the ceiling in this fine historic church fell in recently and, until repairs are completed, it looked like concerts were off. But thanks to friends in **Salendine Nook Baptist Church** - an equally fine old building - the event can take place as planned; just in a new venue.



The last concert at Blackley – which held great interest for Colne valley Male Voice Choir members was ‘**Harold’s Do**’, when long-standing member of the Choir, **Harold Clough**, organised a concert as part of Blackley’s **225th Anniversary Festival**. The Choir didn’t sing on that occasion but **Thom, Chris Pullein** and **Keith Swallow** all performed, as did **Harry Meredith** and his girlfriend, **Ellie Pike**.

Harry and Ellie travel the globe as a duo, ‘**The Switch**’. Those with Computer access can see a video of them on ‘home turf’ performing at ‘Harold’s Do’. <https://youtu.be/MsMTxfn1j2M?t=26>

By the way, many readers who have known Harry since he was a just a kid, will be interested to learn that, at Christmas, he and Ellie got engaged.



Voice of the Valley is happy to convey the congratulations, which so many readers would wish to send and to wish them Good Fortune and the Best of Luck!

James Mason: 'Home James'

James Mason, Huddersfield-born actor, now no longer with us, made a return to his hometown in 1972 with a film crew from Yorkshire Television.

He takes the viewer on a personal tour of his roots in Huddersfield and the Colne and Holme Valleys, remembering with pride the musical heritage of the district.

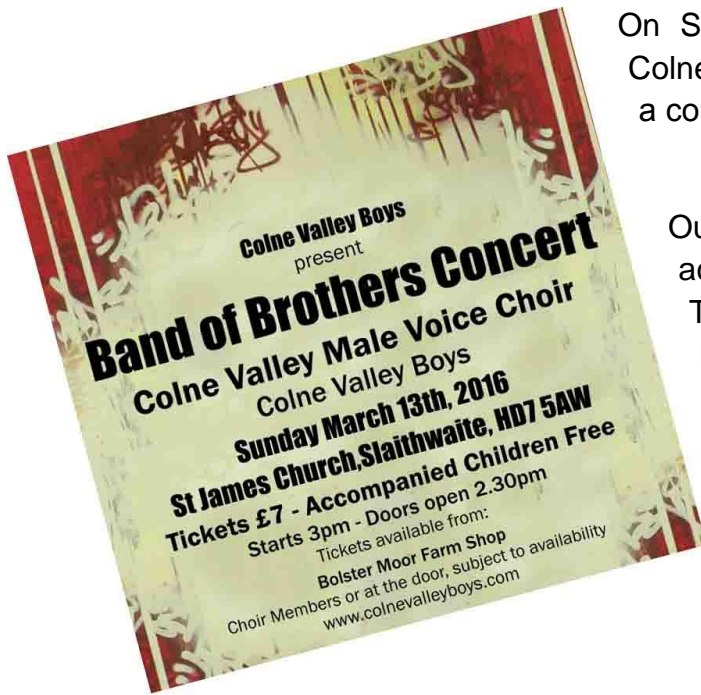


Made well over 40 years ago, the film is now a historical document, showing days at once long-departed and people at work in industries long-gone. Nonetheless we see many characteristics still present in the district today. A small part of the film includes a rehearsal of the **Colne Valley Male Voice Choir**. The film is about an hour long but it's worth the time – but if you just want to see the Colne Valley men, they appear in the first few minutes. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l4LsSIWzITA>



If any members recognise the piece or can identify any of the singers, VotV would be most interested to hear.

Concert with the Boys



On Sunday afternoon, March 13th, the men of the Colne Valley will be joining with our Boys Choir to give a concert at Saint James's Church in Slaithwaite.

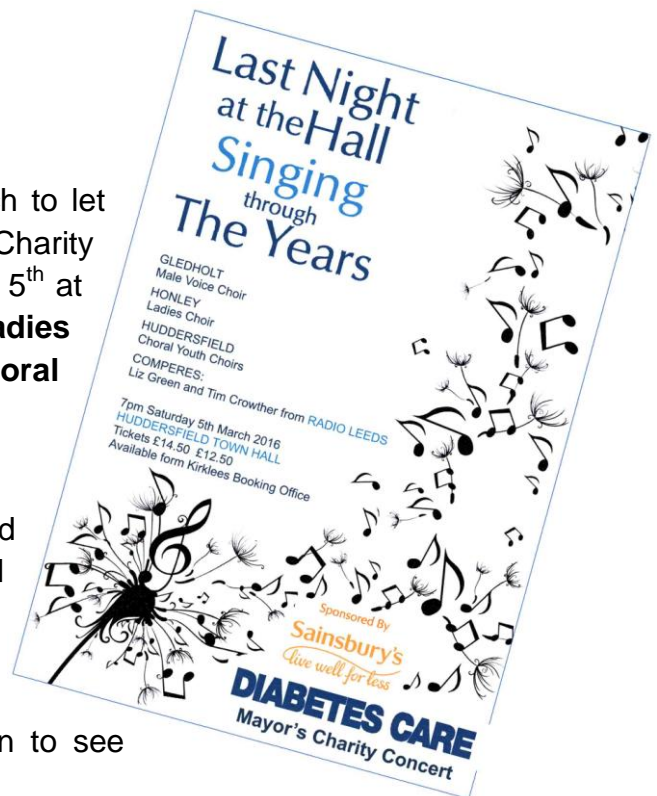
Our Colne Valley Boys - with their fine accompanist, Chris Pullein, and the inestimable Thom Meredith as conductor – get better and better.

We are proud of our 'youth wing' and hope that as many VotV Readers as possible can come along to support them - and have a very pleasant afternoon, too.

And another thing.....

'Honley Ladies', **Lynn Brooks**, has been in touch to let VotV readers know that this year's Mayors Charity concert, in aid of Diabetes Care will be on March 5th at the Town Hall and will feature the **Honley Ladies Choir**, **Gledholt MVC** and **The Huddersfield Choral Youth Choirs**.

Lynn tells VotV that many of the Honley Ladies had signed up to sing in the Karl Jenkins, '**The Armed Man**' that was such a success at the Mrs Sunderland Festival, earlier this month. She adds that they are hoping to do the piece again in the Autumn and that she would be very keen to see Colne Valley men getting involved.



Seen in Thailand



Deep in the Fashion section of **Bangkok's Chatuchak Market**, amongst the 35-acres of bargains and the 8,000 market stalls, we see this business.

The Editor wonders, 'Has Thom found a new way to deal with cuts in Music Service budgets?'



Get the full story! See our new website:

colnevalleymvc.org.uk

Voice of the Valley Editor: John C Clark

Ring Jenny on 01484 645192 to join our Readers' List