



Now it's Official: Colne Valley to take part in Llangollen Celebrations!

Colne Valley Male Voice Choir is to take part in this year's Llangollen International Music Festival.



2017 will see the 70th Festival and - in advance of the competition – a spectacular **Gala Concert** is to be held. Back last October, the organisers contacted the Choir and asked us to be part of it – but we've been unable to reveal the news until now.

Colne Valley was the first male voice choir to take the stage, way back in the '**Peace Festival in 1947**' and since that time the Choir has performed many times, winning the competition more times than any other male voice choir.

We've kept up our links with Llangollen – but, nonetheless, it came as something of a surprise to Choir officials when we were approached. The organisers wanted to gather three great male voice choirs with long associations with the Festival to Llangollen's famous tent to launch the 2017 70th Anniversary.

This grand opening concert will feature '**Canoldir**' '**Froncysyllte**' and '**Rhos**' male voice choirs alongside ourselves under the baton of the great conductor, **Owain Arwel Hughes**. We'll all be performing with Wales' premier '**Cory**' **Brass Band** and other **special guests on Monday July 3rd**



Choir Chairman, **Peter Denby**, said, "I am delighted that Colne Valley has been invited to participate in this major show-piece engagement and with the enthusiasm the Choir has shown for the idea.

We look forward to being part of a spectacular milestone celebration."

Funiculi Funicula

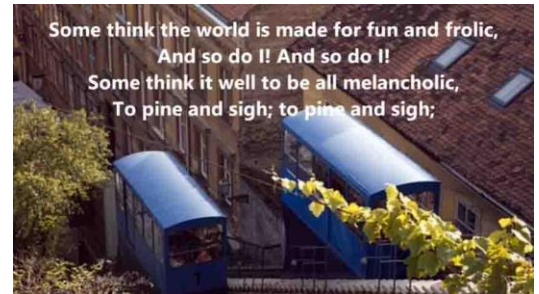
Those, like the Editor, who can vaguely recall Latin lessons (or English lessons come to that) may see this song title and ponder about ropes, cables and hillside railways - and quite right, too!

funicular ADJECTIVE

1 (of a railway, especially one on a mountainside) operating by cable with ascending and descending cars counterbalanced.

2 Relating to a rope or its tension. (from Latin *funiculus* (diminutive of *funis* rope) + -ar.)

And, like the Editor, they'll be scratching their heads a bit – what on earth is the connection between cable cars and a gently comic song - about fun, frolic and the need to maintain a jovial and positive outlook on life?



Well, it turns out the original words were written by a chap called Peppino Turco to mark the opening in 1880 of a funicular railway on Italy's famous volcano, Mount Vesuvius. And the song is indeed vaguely related to the railway. The singer, compares his girlfriend to the mountain - she's hot like a volcano - and just about as temperamental - and he urges her to join him on a romantic trip up the mountain:-

Jammo, jammo 'ncoppa, jammo jà,	Let's go, let's go! To the top we'll go
Jammo, jammo 'ncoppa, jammo jà,	Let's go, let's go! To the top we'll go
funiculì, funiculà, funiculì, funiculà,	Funiculi, funicula, funiculì, funicular
'ncoppa, jammo jà, funiculì, funiculà	To the top we'll go, funiculì, funicular

The music by Luigi Denza has a folk song quality about it that led many people to believe it was an ancient tune. One who got caught out in this was **Richard Strauss**, who heard the piece on a tour of Italy and, guessing it was a Neapolitan folk-song, quoted it in his tone poem '**Aus Italien**'. Denza took him to court and won – and Strauss had to cough up for royalties.



Perhaps the strangest version is this one by the **Grateful Dead** in 1987. **Jerry Garcia** picks up the tune, apparently randomly, during a warm-up on stage in Oakland, California. The rest of the line-up join in.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=93b8t66qwZw&list=RD93b8t66qwZw#t=70>

The song - even back in the 1880's - proved to be a great hit. So much so, that an English translator and lyric writer, **Edward Oxenhope** wrote an English version – quite close to the one we sing – that bears **practically no relation** to the original, except for the, now, almost meaningless 'Funiculi funicula' chorus bit.

Anyway this English version also proved popular in the USA and in the UK and Colne Valley men will be trying to give it a light-hearted and playful rendering, singing it as one on of our competition pieces at the **Huddersfield Mrs Sunderland Music Festival** on Saturday February 25th - wish us luck!



To capture the mood, we are striving for, here's an excellent version by the South African, **Drakensberg Boys Choir**.



Listen, listen, echoes sound afar.....

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1CjihvsA-U0>

And, by the way, the cable railway isn't there now. The volcano exploded in 1944 and what wasn't blown apart in the eruption was buried in lava.

And another thing.....

Here's a nice thing for those dull February days; **Zorba flashmob** in Huddersfield's New Street



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T6296CBFK9I>

And talking of Mrs Sunderland



Colne Valley Male Voice Choir has been part of this venerable local music festival for over 90 years and more – we won our first singing prize there (second place) in 1925.

And this year we'll be there again to try our skills in two competitions.

In the Large Male Voice Choir Class we'll be singing **Vaughn Williams'** rousing 'Antiphon' followed by the lyrical 'Benedictus' by **Robert Arwyn**.

Then, later in the afternoon (Saturday 25th) we'll be taking to the stage again in the Choir Programme Class which is open to both male and female choirs of various sizes. It's in this group that we will start with '**Funiculi Funicula**' (see above). This will be followed by an unaccompanied piece in Old Church Slavonic - **Borogoditse Devo** - from the **Rachmaninoff Vespers**. It's a challenge but it will be a hauntingly beautiful piece if we find that elusive 'Russian' feel.

Then to complete the set we'll be performing 'The Pilgrims' Chorus' from Tannhäuser. This again involves a denuding unaccompanied quiet section. But the piece then builds to a very large and triumphant double forte finish with the unparalleled 'King of the Keyboard', **Keith Swallow**, making a credible imitation of a full Wagnerian Orchestra.

Should we win in either class we'll be taking part in the evening's gala **prize-winners concert** with a further set of pieces to make up our best shot at the 'Choir of Choirs' trophy. Whether we get there or not it'll be a great final concert to this year's Festival. For tickets: https://tickets.kirklees.gov.uk/en-GB/shows/do%20you%20hear%20the%20people%20sing/_info



But you don't have to wait until Saturday 25th for excellent musical entertainment, Mrs Sunderland style! Our very own **Thom Meredith** and **Chris Pulleyn**, together with colleagues will have been holding all-day workshops on **Sunday 5th February** and will then lead a tea-time performance (5:00pm) of excerpts from the shows, including, **Les Miserables**, **Phantom of the Opera** and **Wicked**, accompanied by the very skilled **Kirklees Youth Symphony Orchestra**.



And there's more musical fun, too when the **Huddersfield Philharmonic Orchestra** do a child-friendly performance of 'Animal related' music. Once again, our very own, **Thom**, will be involved as compere, introducing pieces from the **Three Bears Suite**, from **Jurassic Park**, the **Wasps** and then acting as narrator in Prokofiev's wonderful '**Peter and the Wolf**'. That will be at 2:30 on **Sunday 12th February** - again at the Town Hall and will be a great afternoon for your kids and grand-children. For tickets, click:-

<https://tickets.kirklees.gov.uk/enGB/shows/huddersfield%20philharmonic%20orchestra%20%20%20classical%20creatures/events>

Voice of the Valley: more readers wanted



Choir Chairman, **Peter Denby**, took a few moments during Monday's rehearsal to heap praise on CVMVC's email Newsletter, Voice of the Valley.

"It's the best Choir magazine there is." He said. Together with our website it's the 'shop-window' for our fine choir.

I know I look forward to it dropping into my email inbox every month or so and many readers tell me they do, too.

It lets people know what the Choir is up to, what it's all about, gives them news about forthcoming events - there's something of interest in every edition.



Not just for Choir members

But it's not just for Choir members, though. 'Friends of the Choir' tell me they enjoy it, too. It's become one of the best ways to keep in touch with our audience and with our potential audience. It is proving to be a vehicle for attracting new singers and as a tool to promote our performances and concerts.

We need to sign up our friends, too.

"So", said Peter, "We should be doing what we can to boost our number of readers. I want to see three times as many subscribers as we currently have. That's our goal, gentlemen! Get in touch with your family and friends, your neighbours and workmates, everybody in your social circle and get them signed up. It's a 'quality' product'.

VotV costs nothing. We won't use their email addresses for any purposes other than to keep them in touch with the Choir and, if anybody should want to stop getting it, it's very easy to unsubscribe"

VotV Editor, **John Clark** says he would be more than happy to add new 'Friends of the Choir' to the list. All you need do is pass on a name and an email address to him or choir secretary, **Jenny Baxter**, and we'll do the rest, confirming their wish to join and ensuring they get future editions.

Alternatively, email us the information jennybaxter@btinternet.com or phone her on 01484 645192

And another thing....



If you've got time here's the best way to spend a couple of hours on Monday lunchtime - go to Friend of the Choir's Gordon Stewart's 1:00 pm Organ Recital. (next one, 6th February.)

They are brilliant. Soup and a sandwich in the Courtroom, an hour's gob-stoppingly good playing on the magnificent Town Hall organ and you'll still have change for a tenner.

What could be better?



And one more thing.....

VotV has just heard that veteran bass singer, Frank Littlewood has moved into a care home in Dalton. Frank has not been in the best of health for some time now and has been unable to join us on stage.

Lately, he tells me he has been a bit unsteady on his feet, too so probably the move to the Tolson Grange Care Home is probably a good one.

"He's in his usual good spirits." reports Choir Secretary, Jenny Baxter.

VotV can say, on behalf of the entire Choir, **'We wish you well, Frank.'**



Just up the Valley
from us in Slaithwaite?

well, it tickled me!



Voice of the Valley Editor: John C Clark

Ring Choir Secretary, Jenny,
on 01484 645192
to join our Readers' List
or for other queries

See our new website to get the full story
colnevalleymvc.org.uk

