



## *Here I sit disconsolate.....*

*A personal view of Saturday's Mrs Sunderland contest  
from Voice of the Valley Editor, John C Clark*

*Here I sit disconsolate watching lower league football on Channel 5. It's Saturday night. I should be in Huddersfield's magnificent Town Hall with my Colne Valley fellows, singing in the prize-winners concert, hoping maybe we'll be the 'Choir of Choirs' or at any rate that we'll be giving a performance to impress – but it is not to be!*



*So it's the so-called highlights of the footie. 'Town' has just surrendered its lead over Barnsley and lost its chance to close the gap on the top two in the 'automatic promotion' places - so no joy there, either!*

*As for singing this morning, I thought we performed pretty well - but the adjudicator put us **joint last!** And for the afternoon contest I don't even know how we were ranked – but it **wasn't in the top three!***



*I notice in the football the pundits spent a couple of minutes talking about the match and probably two minutes talking about the referee. It must be a difficult job, they concede, but then go on, to say he had a 'bit of a nightmare.' Well far it from me to criticise the ref. It must be a difficult job.*

*I wouldn't have minded so much, being 'beaten on the day' by an excellent performance by resurgent **Peterborough Male Voice Choir** under their dashing new conductor, **William Prideaux**. (He dropped in on our warm-up on Saturday morning to shake Thom's hand and to say words to the effect. "We're just here for the experience, really - a chance to be on the same stage as the great Colne Valley." I couldn't help thinking then of 'football's **mind-games**' and wondering if we weren't in for a tonking? **But last? - I'm gloomy about that!***



*Yes, there was a bit more than a hint of defiance in our afternoon performance – more gusto than subtlety - more vigour and less accuracy. **But last? - That hurts.***

*Had we won in one of our classes- as we have done for about 90 years- we planned to sing, '**We Rise Again**'. And I guess that's what we'll do. There'll be an inquest of course. We'll look to learn the lessons. But, to keep on with the football clichés; You might lose 'form' but you never lose 'class'.*

*So congratulations – and I mean that – to Peterborough, (who went on to win the Jessie Jameson Baton for best choir on the day) and watch out. **We'll be back.***





## Peter Skellern

Perhaps VotV readers will have noticed with slight chagrin the announcement in the press that **Peter Skellern** has passed away. I know the Editor heard snippets of his 1972 hit, **'You're a Lady'** with a wash of nostalgia.

Unusually, in the pop music of the time, the song featured the warm sound of a brass band leading into Peter Skellern's distinctive northern vocals, singing to his own piano accompaniment. The record reached No 3 in the charts.

The band was the **Hanwell Silver Prize Band**, whose mellow tones were supplemented by a voluptuous euphonium solo by a chap called Johnny Lucket. A contemporary article in **'The British Bandsman'** carries the claim that, when the band appeared on TV's **'Top of the Pops'** in 1972, this was the first time ever that a brass band had figured on that programme, essential viewing that, at the time, attracted a TV audience of 23 million viewers. Others claim the band was, in fact, **Grimethorpe**.

What we do know is that the track is worth a listen. Click here or on the image.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-hNZ5ichrE>



We also know that Peter Skellern was a lad from Bury who went on to study piano at London's Guildhall School of Music and that, after his few years in the 'Hit Parade' he went on to write many hymns and choral pieces, conducting many a church choir and finally being ordained as a priest a short time before his death.

The Hanwell Silver Band is fading into history, too, having folded in the late 70's.

# Ralph reaches the Quarter-century

Baritone, **Ralph Munt**, was awarded a long-service badge at rehearsal the other night. Choir Pastor, John Radcliffe, congratulated him on 25 years of singing with Colne Valley.

It was clear, from the warmth of the applause from the Choir, how well-liked Ralph is and admired for his contribution. (For many a year, Ralph and his wife, **Margaret**, organised the sale of CD's at Choir events.)



It was clear also that Ralph was a happy man.

“I just want to say, how pleased I am to be a member of this choir. Over the last 25 years, it's given me more pleasure than I can find words for.

I look forward to every Monday's rehearsal and to every concert we do. And, for as long as I can manage it, I'll be here every Monday for years to come!”

Here's Ralph sporting his medal in Choir uniform on Saturday – still smiling despite the morning's result.

Maybe he's remembering that Colne Valley won first prize in 1992 (the year he joined up) and also the Jessie Jameson Centenary Baton in the Prize-winners Challenge - the contest for best choir of the Festival.

What a fine figure of a man ...and obviously at ease in the Lord Mayor's Parlour

VotV says, 'It's only 15 more years 'til you get your next badge, Ralph.'

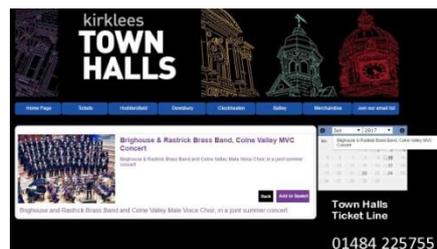
Best of Luck!



# Coming up soon.....

We've been extending our collaboration with what is, arguably, Britain's Best Brass Band, **Brighouse and Rastrick**. We'll be putting on a fabulous joint concert at Huddersfield Town Hall on June 10<sup>th</sup>. It's an event not to be missed - a Saturday night out with two great Yorkshire institutions making great music together.

Put the date in your diary now and take note that you can purchase your tickets through the following link or by phoning 01484 225755



<http://tickets.kirklees.gov.uk/en-GB/shows/brighouse%20-%20rastrick%20brass%20band%2c%20colne%20valley%20mvc%20concert/info>

But, before then, what promises to be another great night - but of a very different character. In the friendly 'night-club' atmosphere of 'The Carding Shed' we'll be offering a light-hearted evening of pop music and choir classics with an excellent 'Pie & Pea' supper. The exact line-up for this year's **Supper Concert** isn't known to VotV as it goes to publication but we can assure you that amongst our in-house talent there will be great solo performers to bring variety to the choir ensemble.



The photo shows last year's new stars **James Cooke** and **Steven Uttley**. Perhaps they will be back.

That's on Sunday May 21<sup>st</sup>. VotV suggests you book your places straight away as last year's event sold out pretty quickly.

More information and the carding shed's website.

<http://thecardingshed.co.uk/events/april-june-2017/colne-valley-male-voice-choir-frd-raiser-sunday-12th-june-from-6-30pm/>

For tickets phone Jenny Baxter or the Carding Shed on the numbers on the poster.

And in July, there's another big Choir event as we head back to **Llangollen**. Colne Valley Male Voice Choir was the very first choir to take the stage when this world-famous Eisteddfod started some 70 years ago. In a great celebration concert, Colne Valley men alongside several great choirs of Wales and England will gather with Wales's premier brass band - 'The Cory' - all under the baton of **Owain Arwel Hughes**, to launch the 2017 Special Anniversary Festival. That's on **Monday July 3<sup>rd</sup>**. Tickets can be obtained via the following link:

<http://international-eisteddfod.co.uk/events/monday-evening/#SpektrixIFrame>



Events

To get the full picture of the Choir's forthcoming events - see our website 'Events Page' <http://colnevalleymvc.org.uk/events/>



# Simon says .....

VotV was pleased recently to get a note from 'friend of the Choir' **Dr Simon Lindley**.

Simon is a frequent compère in Choir events, organist, pianist - and on many a joyous occasion – our rehearsal conductor. He is a man much admired by Choir members for his prodigious musical skills, his kindness and, not least, his good humour.

His last contact was when he introduced Choir and Band items at our recent Christmas Concert at Huddersfield Town Hall. He writes:-



*Dear John*

*This is just a brief note from the Choir's Christmas colleague to wish you all the very best for 2017 and to say how much I enjoyed last December's Town Hall event.*

*Superb.*

*Not only that, but I really appreciate receiving the absolutely splendid VOTV magazine each month through the wonders of modern technology.*

*This comes with all possible good wishes to you all*

*Most sincerely  
Simon*

Like hundreds of readers, Dr Lindley evidently enjoys getting his monthly copy of '**Voice of the Valley**'.

Readers may like to be re-assured that 'Voice of the Valley' is sent out as 'individual' copies. No other subscriber can see your email details. These are known just to the Editor and to the publishing software firm. "This firm goes to considerable lengths to safeguard user data," says Editor, John Clark, "And so do I. Readers can be confident that their personal data is kept secure and that it won't be used for any purpose other than to keep readers up to date with the Choir and its activities."

---

## And another thing.....

Saddleworth and Colne Valley stalwarts, **Stuart Iles**, **Peter Hatton** and the late and much-missed, **Tony Ackroyd** have spent months organising a charity concert in Marsden.

It features our friends, the very fine, **Marsden Silver Prize Band** and the choir from over the hill, **Saddleworth Male Voice Choir** as the main performers.



The cause is a good one - **Action Duchene** - which seeks to research and combat muscular Dystrophy. It became a cause close to Tony's heart, particularly when it was discovered that his grandson struggles with this dreadful disease.

A good cause but a good night out, too! You could do worse than spend your Saturday night to support this event. Tickets via Peter or Stuart or you can just turn up and get your tickets on the door at the Parish Church, St Bartholomew's, on Saturday April 8<sup>th</sup> 2017 at 7:30.



---

## And one more thing.....we are Colne Valley, **Yorkshire**.....

Readers, lucky enough to live in Yorkshire and those less fortunate might like to see, that even in a bleak late February, 'God's own county' is still beautiful....

This drone video by **Paul Drury** captures some of our Yorkshire sights. The music is "Crystallize" by Lindsey Stirling, who is probably much loved by her mother.

Watch this video. How many locations do you recognise?



And this is a view more like our very own Colne Valley moors – but where is it?



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ee4BNaQe25A>

There are no fabulous prizes to be won. Living in Yorkshire should be enough, tha knows.



## Voice of the Valley

Editor: John C Clark

Ring Choir Secretary, Jenny Baxter

on 01484 645192

to join our Readers' List or for other queries



**And see our new website to get the full story** [colnevalleymvc.org.uk](http://colnevalleymvc.org.uk)



Join us >>

Contact us >>



See Our Latest Newsletter >>