



## The tale of the old man and the young

On occasions the Choir enjoys having visiting conductors. We had already seen regular visitor, **Steven Roberts** once this year preparing us and conducting us for 'Concert on the Hill' but, this time, we had two guest conductors to look forward to - just for the sheer pleasure of it.



First came that excellent young chap, **Chris Pulleyn** in his debut on the Colne Valley rostrum and the following week that (much) more senior man, maestro and old friend **Dr Simon Lindley**.

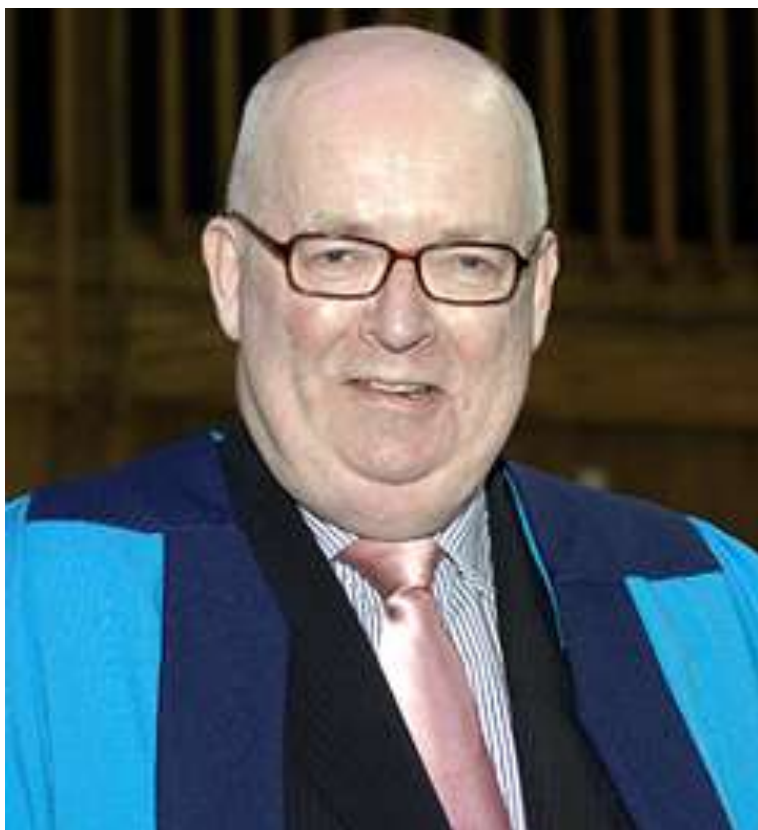
It meant two great weeks of rehearsing, two very different styles and - albeit differently expressed - two very similar critiques of our short-comings.

**Thom** was away - this time with his youth orchestras on a tour of Italy - and it's now familiar practice for the Choir to find full virtue in his summer absences by seeking out fresh perspectives and new insights into our repertoire and performance standards.

The wonderfully talented, **Chris Pulleyn** was the first. We have come to know Chris quite well as accompanist to the 'Boys' and as a recent stand-in piano player for the Choir after **Keith Swallow's** recent injury. Not so many of us had known that he is also becoming a very adept developer of vocal performance. One of his current jobs is as 'repetiteur' to **Opera North** productions. Nor did many of us realise what excellent choir conducting experience he has gained in recent years with - amongst others - **Bradford Festival Choral Society**. And few Choir members knew what a fine tenor voice he has in his own right.

Maybe 60-odd old men were a tad daunting at first but Chris very quickly found his feet and soon the Choir was warming to him for his insights into the music and out of respect for his grasp of good sound-production issues. He communicated his suggestions in a clear and supportive way. He'd won over the Choir and it applauded him at the end of the rehearsal with genuine warmth. *VotV* suspects he'll be welcome back any time we have a slot!

The following week, **Dr Lindley** stormed in like a hurricane and we were pleased to see him. The Choir loves his quirky good humour and his deep understanding of the music. It seems he knew half the composers personally! (And if he didn't actually know **Fauré**, he was in college with one of the leading scholars of Fauré's works.) He gave us a very lucid account of what makes the Requiem's 'In Paradisum' tick, elucidating the key harmonies; the specific notes which make this masterly chorus function. He was helping us unpick, from an SATB original, a version that will work for male voice choir - a version that should work beautifully in Scarborough



with Opera North's, **Victoria Sharp**, taking the solo line. Assuming it does work, this will be largely, due to Simon taking us, not just through 'note-bashing,' but into a more developed understanding of the structure.

It is good not just for the Choir's self-confidence to have people other than Thom occasionally telling us we are singing well. And, probably, it is even better for us to get a fresh critique!

Both guest conductors - in uniquely different and supportive ways - offered similar criticisms. 'You start your long notes beautifully' was the gist of one reproof they both provided, 'But it seems like by the time you get to beat 2 and 3 you are beginning to get bored and by beat 4 you've lost all interest and so has your audience. You really do need to keep up the level of intensity, with which you start a long-held note, right through to its end.'

Of course, **Thom** is our 'main man' and he tells us this every other week – indeed two or three times a rehearsal - but to get the same rebuke from two such eminent guests feels significant. You never know, we might even do it!



See Thom performing '**Mr Cellophane**' at the Carding Shed concert the Choir did at the start of our Summer Season in May this year.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-QqzRfsz9c>

# The Scarborough Music Festival Concert



The sun came out for last Saturday evening in Scarborough. Once again - and for the 10<sup>th</sup> time – the Choir was participating in the Scarborough Music Festival, taking a leading part alongside Opera North's, **Victoria Sharp**, that very accomplished cornet player, **Philip M<sup>c</sup>Cann** and all in the very competent hands of **Simon Lindley**.

It was a memorable evening, excellent solo performances and the Choir, confident in its summer 2017 repertoire.

What could be more appropriate, than starting with **Funiculi Funicula** given that we were just a few yards away from Scarborough's historic tramway down to the beach.

Perhaps the highlight was the excerpt from the **Fauré Requiem**, 'In Paradisum', sung by Victoria, with Choir and organ accompaniment.



Others might opine that the silken cornet sounds of **Philip M<sup>c</sup>Cann** – so ably assisted by Dr Lindley should be top of the list. Or maybe Victoria's lovely arias with **Keith Swallow**?



This two-day festival, a 'labour of love' by its patron, **Christine Cox**, has become a regular event for the Choir - long may it continue!





Still others might argue that the Choir, backing **Thom** on, '**You Raise Me Up**' was the highlight. **VotV** makes no apology for including a link to the video we made of this a few years ago in Scarborough. It's been seen on Youtube around **61,000 times** but it's worth watching again. Certainly it was very much enjoyed in the hall on Saturday.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p6e3nDCw-Ck>

## Under new management



New Chairman, **Rob Rosborough**, had a brief word with the Choir at a recent rehearsal, telling members how honoured he was to have been elected Choir Chairman at the previous Management Committee meeting.

He explained that he had been selected by outgoing Chairman, Peter Denby, as his deputy two years ago and had gained useful experience to equip him - he hoped - to do a good job in his new role.

“In turn,” Rob said, “I have selected a deputy Chairman, who may likewise, if all goes well, take on my role in two years time. Please welcome, as kindly as you have welcomed me, new Deputy Chairman, **Joe Stones.**”



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## Memories of the Eisteddfod

by '**Colne Valley Lady**' - aka **Libby Lee**, contributor to *VotV* under three editors

Our Editor has already covered the origins of the Eisteddfod. Here are my memories of this prestigious event.



The first time as a member of Colne Valley (1975 to the present day) my baritone, took part was quite momentous, maybe because it was our first time, I don't know. (I'm talking about **Ron Lee**, who joined in 1975, about 42 years ago.)

We arrived at the venue early on a glorious sunny day, clear blue sky and not a breath of wind. We parked in a field set aside for the purpose, above and behind the main marquee.

On our descent we paused to listen to the most glorious voices (sounding as one) of young female singers, singing John Rutter's 'For the Beauty of the Earth'. It was truly magical. We found out later they won their class in that sector of the competition.

As a past singer myself, I know what a hard task it is singing first at the start of the day's competitions, mostly with only a handful of audience, scattered in a vast auditorium, makes it acoustically difficult to say nothing of the lack of atmosphere, this builds up as the day progresses.

As newcomers to the event, we were impressed by the vibrant colours worn by the international dancing troupes, the carnival atmosphere with numerous stalls selling a variety of goods and enticing aromas from other stalls selling food from sausages and burgers to more continental varieties of food.



Colne Valley ended up coming second to an American University Choir, by one mark on one set piece and by two on the 'own choice' pieces. It might have been the 'presentation'. The Americans ran onstage from both sides to form 3 rows of singers: our more mature gentlemen came on more sedately to take their places. Watching them, I was thinking, 'He's doing well with his new knee, he's waiting for a hip replacement. I remember him having his foot operated on (sadly deceased; that gentleman's son still sings with the Choir). It's nice to see pairs of brothers like the **Baxters** and the **Fieldings** and fathers and sons singing together'.

On that and on many another occasions, the Colne Valley men sang beautifully but it was the sound of those fine young girls' voices which will live forever in my '**Golden Memory Box**'.

Sadly due to ill-health (mine) we were not able to travel for the, I am sure, fantastic, wonderful event - that was the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary gala concert.



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## Carding Shed - 'Softly'

Readers might also like to see the Choir performing '**Softly, As I Leave You**' at that most successful supper concert in Hepworth a few weeks ago. The Editor has been told on a few occasions that 'softly' is their favourite of all our repertoire - it's certainly wonderful when we do it at our best!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ia3QnlbzwqA>



# Terry Pickering:RIP



*Terry with the Choir at Cornwall's Eden Centre in 2009*

Secretary Jenny Baxter, said, just before the Choir sang the **'Fourfold Amen'**:-

"Most of you will know by now that **Terry Pickering** died on Saturday (July 29<sup>th</sup>) in Huddersfield Royal Infirmary. Terry joined the Choir in August 2001 and had been singing with the Bass Section for almost 16 years.

He had proved himself to be a reliable, conscientious member and was an asset to the Choir. He will be sadly missed."

"The Choir will not be singing ensemble at his funeral service." she added, " But his wife, Val, has asked that we sing, **'You Raise Me Up'** and **'Gwahodiadd'** at the next Choir rehearsal on August 14th."

This we were honoured to do in his memory. Our thoughts and best wishes go out to Val and the family.

**At the funeral service at** Huddersfield Crematorium on Tuesday 15th August, Terry's niece, **Dianne**, gave a moving eulogy – much of it derived from things that Terry himself had written.

Maybe it was the emotion, maybe it was a microphone malfunction, but many of those in attendance reported that they could scarcely hear what Dianne said. A copy of what she told those who had come to celebrate Terry's life has come to VotV and we plan to reproduce it in full in the next edition.

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## And now some good news ....

One of our younger Choir members, second tenor, **Tom Law**, became a first-time father the other day, when wife, **Emma**, brought **Betsy Marie** into the world.

Saturday August 12<sup>th</sup> is a date that plumber and guitar player, Tom, will never forget - the day his 6 lbs 9 oz baby arrived. VotV learns that the couple moved into their new house in Meltham only a few days before.

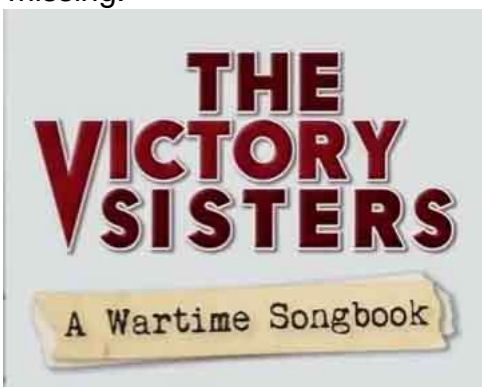
We wish him and his newly extended family all the very best in the coming years.



## and another thing.....

Many a choir member will recall second tenor, **Howard Chadwick**, who left both Yorkshire and the Choir (silly man) a few years back to retire in Scotland of all places.

Howard must be as pleased as punch to see daughter, **Elisabeth** (far left) making such an impact with her fellow 'Victory Sisters'. Maybe Meltham's 'Wartime Weekend' people should book them. It'll give Howard a chance to come back to the Colne Valley and see what he's been missing.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tin36tVfGe8>



## Trades Descriptions Act flaunted

A flier has reached VotV from our choral colleagues in Honley. They are obviously so desperate to recruit new members that they have taken to outright deceit, which I'm almost certain could be actionable in the courts.

They claim, 'EVERYONE KNOWS THAT SINGING IN A CHOIR PREVENTS MALE PATTERN BALDNESS.'

They then add to this outrageous falsehood, the feeble defence, 'IF YOU SEE BALD MEN IN A CHOIR IT'S BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T JOIN SOON ENOUGH.'

No doubt all lovers of truth and honest dealing will flock to Colne Valley instead - and get more sex!



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