

# Voice



of the

# Valley



Colne Valley Male Voice Choir Newsletter

Christmas Special

## A Great Night at the Town Hall

Colne Valley Male Voice Choir hosted their '**Christmas Festival**' again tonight at Huddersfield's Town Hall - and what a terrific event it turned out to be - nearly a thousand ventured out in the snow and enjoyed a performance well up to the high standard the Choir has set in its Christmas concerts for close on half a century.



Here we see the magnificent men of the Colne Valley warming up backstage in the Mayor's Reception Room just before the performance

Tonight, the **Choir**, our main guests, **Colne Valley Boys** and **Brighouse and Rastrick Band** were all on stage to start off the evening's performance; the haunting boy-soprano voice leading '**Who is he .... in yonder stall**' and the Choir coming in with gentle harmonies and finally the band to create a small but dramatic climax before the melody faded to a close. It sounded great in the beautifully decorated Town Hall and it was the cue for both audience and performers alike to realise that there was a glorious concert ahead for us all.



I said we started off with the boy soprano - and so we did - but, in practice, the evening's musical ball had been set rolling sometime earlier - with the fine entertainment provided by **Caius Lee**, at the Father Willis organ. Caius is Assistant Organist to the Diocese of Leeds and a very talented young man.

The audience's got its chance to sing soon after: one of Huddersfield's favourite carols, '**Christians Awake**'. Readers might like to know that the words to this carol were by a chap called **John Byrom**. Byrom was born in the 'Old Shambles' in Manchester in 1692 and claimed he penned verses 'only for recreation'. Indeed he was famous in his lifetime for many other things - not least for his extreme height. He was, apparently 'one of the tallest men in the Kingdom'.



Then came the first solo items by the **Brighouse and Rastrick Brass Band**. We've always known they are one of the finest band's there is - anywhere - but this year they are on a special high, having recently won the N<sup>o</sup>1 spot in the Great Britain National Finals. Under the baton of Guest Conductor, **Lee Skipsey**, they were marvellous as always, showing tremendous musicianship ensemble and as individual players - not least amongst them, **Mike Eccles** who played the flugelhorn solo in their beautiful rendition of '**Away in a Manger**'.



One of the finest pieces by the Choir was a new anthem by **Craig Courtney**, '**One Faith, One Hope, One Lord**', which had been purchased for the Choir by John & Enid Radcliffe, to mark John's 60 years as a baritone with his Colne Valley colleagues.



This first performance was accompanied by a cornet solo from **Kathleen Gaspoz**.

Kathleen has just picked up the trophy as '**Best Instrumentalist**' at the same competition that saw B&R crowned Britain's N<sup>o</sup>1 brass band.

The bulk of the accompaniment, though, came, as always, from that Maestro of the Keyboard, **Keith Swallow**, playing for the Choir for the 49<sup>th</sup> consecutive time in this annual highlight of the Choir's year. Where would the Choir be without him? He made the middle bars in the sentimental John Rutter ballad, '**The Very Best Time of Year**' extra luscious.







Our very own **Colne Valley Boys** get better every year and we were pleased to have them on stage with us for all the first half. With that very skilled musician and - very welcome stand-in conductor of the men - **Christopher Pulleyn**, at the keyboard, the Boys gave us great pleasure, not least in their version of the that favourite, **Irving Berlin's 'White Christmas.'**

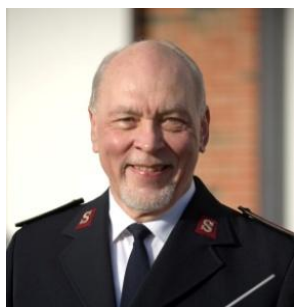


Everyone was involved in the first half 'show stopper' '**We Rise Again**' This fine and rousing song begins with second-tenor **James Cooke** singing a solo verse then gradually Boys, Choir and Band join in to create a wall of sound, jubilant in the apparent power of re-incarnation in that our children and our song live on after us. 'We rise again in the faces of our children. We rise again in the voices of our song.'

It was rather sad that the Choir's Patron, **Patricia, Countess of Harewood**, was not able to attend this year. She is quite elderly now and, we gather, would have found the trip to Huddersfield a little wearing. The Choir thanks her for her ongoing support and wishes her well for Christmas and the New Year. We were, however, pleased to see new sponsors in the Duckett family of **Holmfirth Dyers Limited** and to receive the ongoing support of our advertisers and of our printers, **Brook and Learoyd**.



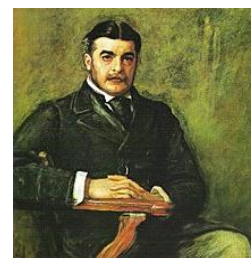




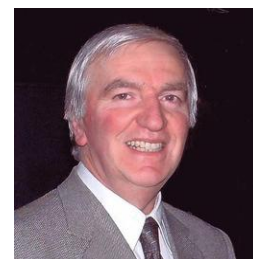
Perhaps the highlight of the Band's performance, delighting an enthusiastic audience was **William Himes's 'Three Kings Swing'**. Others might claim it was their beautifully sympathetic brass band version of a piece the Choir has sung on many occasions; **Morten Lauridsen's 'O Magnum Mysterium'**.



To please the traditionalists, the Choir sang **Sir Arthur Sullivan's 'Lost Chord'**, accompanied at the organ by our wonderful compère, **Dr Simon Lindley**. It was magnificent.



And to round off a great night, our Musical Director, **Thom Meredith** conducted Band and Choir in that much loved finale, **Goff Richards 'Merry Little Christmas'**.





# Colne Valley Boys led the way

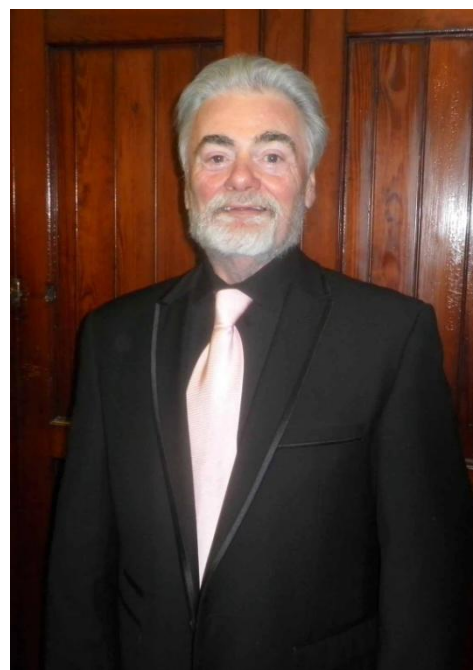
**Colne Valley Boys** had already shown the men how to hold a terrific Christmas Concert, when they performed at **Saint James Church** in **Slaithwaite** in Saturday afternoon. Visitors to the cold church were soon warmed up by the boys and their guests, **Musica Youth Brass** and the game adults of **Colne Valley Singers**.

At one point the 'men', were called out from the audience to join the boys in 'We Rise again'. Someone in the audience said, "You bring tears to my eyes - the boys and the men together - wonderful".



This concert is becoming a 'Landmark event' in the Valley.

And, of course the boys are the stars but great credit goes to **Matt** and **Linda Houston** for getting the show off the ground.







## Joe wants some more new singers for 2108

Joe Stones, the Choir's new Vice Chairman and Recruitment Secretary is on the look-out for new members - and if it's a younger, more diverse, group of men, then so much the better. He writes....

### Calling all men with good singing voice!

*Open rehearsals in the New Year  
January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup> & Feb 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup>*



Colne Valley MVC are looking to increase their already strong and existing membership in the New Year says Joe Stones, the new Vice Chair and recruitment secretary. Joe says that if you enjoy singing and wonder whether Colne Valley MVC is right for you then the best way is come down and join for few rehearsals and find out! It's that simple! The choir is opening its doors to prospective singers in the New Year to join in its rehearsals on January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup> & Feb 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup>.

The choir has a strong coaching ethic towards developing singing talent, lead by Thom Meredith and supported by a number of key people within the choir which makes it easier to support new members and develop the talent and reputation which Colne Valley is well known for. Joe says that often it is not the 'finished article' in a singer the choir is looking for but someone who will be able to develop their singing and choral talent within the supportive culture the choir has to offer.

Joe says Colne Valley MVC would also like to widen its diversity particularly in terms of both age and ethnicity. Most men join in their mid forties but years ago it would have been mid twenties and it would be great to again welcome some younger singers as well. Colne Valley also do not have any black singers within its membership which is also something we would like to change he says.

So if you are a man with a passion to sing or know someone that might be interested then the open rehearsals on the dates above (Monday nights 7.30-9.30pm at Slaithwaite Conservative Club) are an ideal time to come and find out more.

*See below for more information or contact Joe Stones 01484 323431/07889 658365*

#### Rehearsal & contact details.

Rehearsals for both Men & Boys are on Monday evenings in Slaithwaite at the Conservative Club. Boys 5.30 - 7.00pm & Mens 7.30 - 9.30pm

*see our websites for more details and contact information*

<http://colnevalleymvc.org.uk>

<http://www.colnevalleyboys.com>

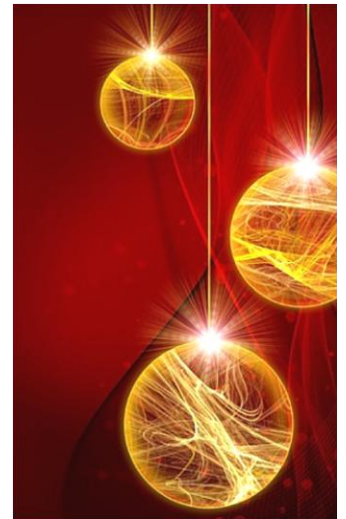




## Next - a fabulous concert at Marsden

We're already looking forward to our Christmas Concert as guests of the terrific **Marsden Silver Prize Band** at the lovely Parish Church in Marsden of Saturday 16<sup>th</sup>.

Yes, set your video to record 'Strictly' and get down to St. Bartholomew's. It's the concert that many people say is the real start to Christmas.



**MARSDEN PARISH CHURCH**  
presents a

# Christmas Concert

featuring

**MARSDEN SILVER PRIZE BAND**  
*Musical Director: Alan Widdop*

**COLNE VALLEY MALE VOICE CHOIR**  
*Musical Director: Thom Meredith Accompanist: Keith Swallow*

Soloist: **STEPHANIE BALL** (Soprano)  
Compere: **PETER ARMITAGE, M.B.E.**

**St. Bartholomew's Church** **Sat. 16th Dec. 2017**  
**7.30pm**



Wine & Soft Drinks served throughout the concert  
**Tickets £10.00** (including tea or coffee at the interval) - **Children £5.00**  
Available from the Band, Choir, Church or  
Duncan (Hairdresser), Warehouse Hill, Marsden. Tel: 01484 845311 (shop hours only)



## This man in Liverpool Echo

Michael Parkinson's tale of remembrance in last VotV - about him going to find the grave of a First World War soldier who shared the same name - was fully written up by the '**Liverpool Echo**' the other week, as part of their 'Remembrance Day' coverage.



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## Oops - not John Radcliffe

The piece about **John Radcliffe** in the last issue of VotV showed John at a 1975 recording of Yorkshire TV's '**Stars on Sunday**'.

Only John Radcliffe noticed it was not him in the front row. "That's not me, that's **Alan Moss**. I'm there alright, just behind Alan." He tells VotV







**Brian and Sue Hibbert** will be holding their '**Carols in the Barn**' event at their farm once again this year. Bass, Brian assures me it will look nothing like this, but it will be an entertaining sing-along to some much-loved Christmas carols.



You'll be very welcome at **Spring Hill Farm, Outlane**

**Thursday Evening,  
December 14<sup>th</sup> at 6-30**



# 100 years ago



A selection of performers at Huddersfield Town Hall in 2007



*The Editor wishes all our Readers a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year*





## Colne Valley Male Voice Choir

Est 1922

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