



Death of our Patron



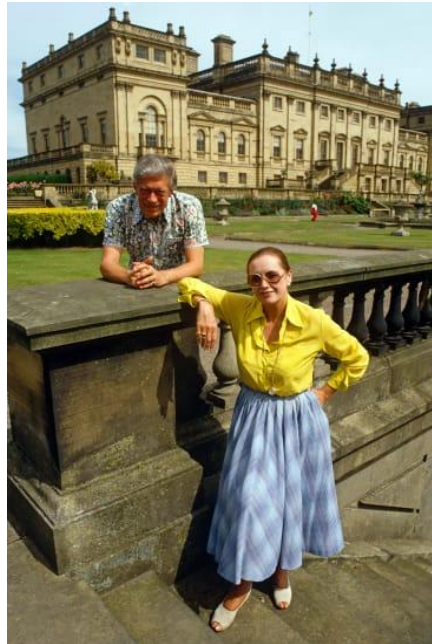
Patricia Elizabeth, Dowager Countess of Harewood

1926 – 2018

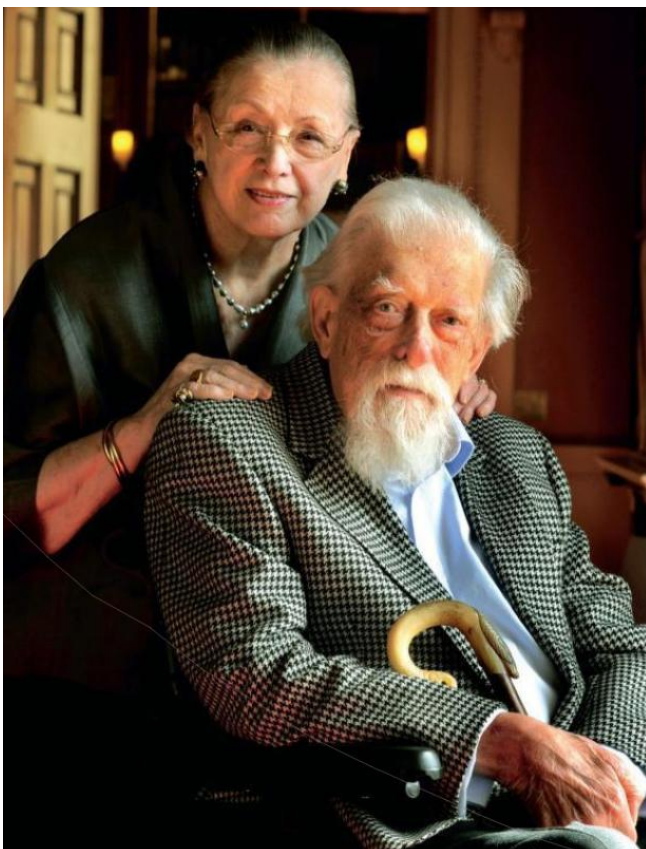
She wasn't born an aristocrat, nor was she even born in England. To Australians, old enough to know the former model and violinist in the bohemian cafes of post-war Sydney, she was simply, '**Bambi**' and there was nothing especially grand about her at all. But she came to the end of her life an 'Honorary Yorkshirewoman' and with one of the grandest titles of all: **The Dowager Countess of Harewood**.



Patricia 'Bambi' Tuckwell (Smith), who became the Countess of Harewood.



'She was deeply unpretentious,' said friends, retaining her Australian identity throughout her life, even as she became ensconced as the chatelaine of the grand Palladian pile Harewood House. That came about in 1967 when she formally married **George Lascelles**, the **7th Earl of Harewood**, who was George V and Queen Mary's eldest grandchild and at one time sixth in line to the British throne.



Earl Harewood was already at that time patron of the **Colne Valley Male Voice Choir**. With Patricia as his constant support, he was a very active patron of the Arts, especially music. The couple were instrumental in setting up **Opera North**. They were described as 'an incredibly well-suited couple, both intellectually and emotionally: true renaissance people who loved culture.'

In 2011 when the Earl died, the Countess readily accepted the role of patron in his stead and continued to be a positive supporter of the Choir, until her health began a serious decline in recent months.

Back in her youth, Patricia 'Bambi' Tuckwell became a violinist for the Sydney Symphony Orchestra at just sixteen years of age. Hers was a musical family. Her father, Charles Tuckwell, was a theatre organist and her brother, **Barry Tuckwell**, went on to become a leading horn player.

When in the early 1960's she began her relationship with George, they became the source of a long-running celebrity scandal, especially after she gave birth to their son in 1964, while he was still married to his first wife, **Marion** (who later went on to marry, newly topical politician, **Jeremy Thorpe**).

For nearly 20 years, the couple were effectively banned from court over the scandal, but by the early 1980s they were eventually accepted back into royal life, with Patricia donning Queen Victoria's 'breakfast tiara' when the Queen made her first public appearance with the couple.

Colne Valley Male Voice Choir was represented at the funeral by former Chairman, **John Lees** and by VotV Editor **John Clark**. It was not at all a miserable event.

The Countess's secretary and friend, **Lynn Tungate**, told Voice of the Valley, *"When you are well into your nineties, when you are surrounded by friends and family, in the comfort of your own home, when you have had a chance to prepare for your demise, when you are not in pain....then your death is not a tragedy."*



Of course we are all sad but today is about celebrating her life. The Countess spent many hours selecting music for today's ceremony, picking out pieces that meant a lot to her"

And indeed, with Opera North's chorus and string quartet, all directed from the organ by honorary member of the Choir and old friend, **Dr Simon Lindley**, the funeral held at the church in the Harewood House parkland was an uplifting blend of recital and religious ceremony.

The Choir is grateful for the couple's nearly seventy years of support.

She is survived by her two sons and by her three stepsons.

Great start to the concert season: Lindley Church gig

The 'Beast from the East' may have caused a postponement of our first concert of the year at Lindley's Saint Stephen's but we were back there in Lindley on May 12th to kick off this season's engagements with what turned out to be a fine do.

The Choir performed to the evident satisfaction of a good audience, a fair wedge went to church funds (and to the Choir) in the process and some fine music was presented – some of it for the very first time in our repertoire.

This was one of those concerts where the Choir alone - together with our inestimable accompanist, **Keith Swallow** - provides all the entertainment.

Our soloists at Lindley



Tom Law



Thom Meredith



Raymond Ellis



Johnny Kilner

The evening's soloists included **Thom Meredith** and **Tom Law**.



Johnny Kilner did the first solo spot, including Handel's 'Ombra mai fu' from his 1738 opera, 'Serse' and featured in the film '**Dangerous Liaisons**'

Here's a version by **Andreas Scholl** which even Johnny will concede is a cut above what he can manage, fine though his rendition was.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N7XH-58eB8c>

Our other soloist was raconteur and baritone, **Raymond Ellis**. His version of the '**Flanders and Swan**' '**Elephant**' song was not recorded but to get the flavour, of the ditty about an elephant who has lost its memory, click here to hear the original duo.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vAMrY1MgSuA>



The Choir in what now seems to be a 'signature ending after our final piece, spread out round the edges of the auditorium to give the listeners our '**Irish Blessing**'. 'May the God that loves us all hold you in the palm of his hand', we sang. It was a deeply moving finish to what - for both audience and Choir - had been a good night.

Give as you Live - it's so easy, says Jenny

"I was really surprised how easy it was," said Choir Secretary, **Jenny Baxter**. "I'm no great shakes with a computer but, really, it's very straightforward.

You just look up the '**Give as you Live**' website and sign up.

Then pick **Colne Valley Male Voice Choir** as your chosen 'good cause'. And that's it, you are registered.

Then whenever you want to buy something online, go to GaYL first and then through to your favoured supplier - Amazon - or whatever.

You just order your stuff in the usual way - and GaYL pays a small percentage in commission to CVMVC.

It's very simple, your privacy is respected nobody knows what you are buying - and I guess a few small sums from a good number of supporters could soon add up to quite a tidy fund to help keep the Choir going.

I can recommend it."



Local Band does well



Marsden Silver Prize Band – our partners in the increasingly famous Marsden Church Christmas Concerts over several years now - entered the **Whit Friday** band contests this year and emerged dripping wet but triumphant.

The Band's spokesperson said, "We are delighted to announce that we are **Saddleworth and District Local Champions 2018**.

"We competed in very wet conditions on Friday evening at **nine venues**.

Despite the weather we had a great evening, playing consistently well at every contest.

Thanks to everyone for turning out in such atrocious conditions and cheering us along on the evening"

Commented local enthusiast, **Lynda Elmore**, 'We felt so sorry to see their dripping faces and soggy uniforms, but the playing was excellent.'

VotV says, 'Well done to everyone.'

Elodie est très chic



Some while ago, Elodie came to help the Choir sing in a foreign tongue. I seem to remember we had a test piece for a competition where the lyric was in French, her native language. She evidently enjoyed sitting in at our rehearsals for she would be there every week for many months.

Many readers will know that she's made her home in England and sings - in her own right - as a 'Marsh Lady'.

Bonne Chance, Elodie!

Colourful Night at the Town Hall



Massed male voice choirs and Black Dyke Band at Huddersfield Town Hall for Music For Maytime (Alzheimers Research UK) concert at Huddersfield Town Hall. Soloist was Sarah Odgen.
Photo and review by Suzanne Smelt

A rainbow of coloured jackets bedecked the choral rises in **Huddersfield's Town Hall** as more than 200 men from nine male voice choirs took to the stage, writes **Suzanne Smelt**.

And the pot of gold? Not quite. Instead, we saw the golden instruments of world class **Black Dyke Band**, conducted by maestro **Professor Nicholas Childs**.



Choral experts **Thom Meredith** and **Steven Roberts** compèred this evening and between them conducted the massed singers, representative of many local choirs such as **Colne Valley**, Elland, Honley, Featherstone, Gledholt, New Mill, Saddleworth, Sharlston, and Skelmanthorpe - all told some 230 men.

Add a fantastic audience for this fundraising concert, organised by motivational **musician Norman Mellor** in aid of **Alzheimer's Research UK** Support Group (Huddersfield) and the scene was set for a fine evening.

The phenomenal band kicked off proceedings with speedy, driving rhythms and military precision in the high energy number 666 Squadron (Goodwin). Later, they set the stage ablaze with show stoppers Enter the Galaxies (Lovatt-Cooper) and The James Bond Suite. In the latter, the sound both exploded and then melted away as lyrical tunes seeped into the score. Exhilarating.

A truly impressive band, not least because of the stunning calibre of its players, tonight represented by soloists **Brett Baker** (trombone), **Siobhan Bates** (tenor horn) and **Martin Irwin** (soprano cornet).

And the choir?

This multitude of singers gathered together for the first time on the day of Saturday's concert to rehearse and perform. And having a good rapport with their conductors they sang with an amazing feeling of unity.

Notably, unswervingly accurate piano accompaniment was provided by **Keith Swallow** and **Catherine Hall-Smith**.

We expected a big choral sound and were not disappointed as the opening number, O When the Saints (Hood) was stylised by powerful melodies, confidently sung syncopated motifs and outstanding diction.



Some of the 230 performers assemble on stage ready for the show.
- Not everyone is happy to have his picture taken! - photo John Clark

In favourites The Lost Chord and Psalm 126 the rich tone of these singers blossomed.

However, it was in the artistry of songs such as The Rose (McBroom/Humphreys) that the choir's full potential was exploited. Here, beautifully soft dynamics were eked out from the gargantuan choral body, making any louder singing all the more effective.

A hushed unison start to The Rose gave way to beautiful bass melodies, quietly accompanied by the tenors' subtle, yet warm, sound. With unrushed tempi, carefully shaped phrasing and a poignantly everlasting final note, this was a memorable performance as was the similarly polished rendition of An Evenings Pastoral (Shaw).

Local singing sensation **Sarah Ogden** delighted us with a mixture of classical and less serious songs and it was in the latter that she sparkled. Excellent characterisation brought numbers, such as I'm just a girl who can't say no (Rogers and Hammerstein), to life.

The evening concluded with a stunning tutti version of Morte Criste (Jones), with a solo verse for Sarah. The final rapturous swell of sound filled Huddersfield Town Hall ... and filled it was with people too.



Soloist, Sarah Ogden, discusses repertoire with accompanist, Keith Swallow, at rehearsal whilst Bandsman practices a few arpeggios - photo John Clark

This write up was by **Suzanne Smelt** for the **Huddersfield Examiner**. VotV is pleased to quote it.



The Huddersfield Daily
Examiner

Coming up soon

Our next concert is on Monday June 18th at Slaithwaite Church.

This is the 'Old Folk's' charity concert organised by the Colne Valley Lions (though, if truth be told, many of the Choir are older than many of the audience).

For many years the Choir has held a brief rehearsal on this June Monday evening and has then popped down the road to 'top the bill' at this annual event.



And talking of Lions.....



The **Lion of St George's Square** may never have taken a stroll but he still appears as a spectacular sight for those entering the town from the town's magnificent Railway Station. This crowning glory of St^t George's Square is a well loved local landmark and keeps a watchful eye over the Huddersfield town centre.

Immediately noticeable to anyone emerging from the station is a magnificent lion, eleven foot long and eight foot high, perched sixty feet above ground level atop the Lion Chambers building.

According to some who tell the local legend, this well loved Huddersfield landmark will get down from his pedestal and take a walk around the square when the station clock strikes twelve. (Both events are unlikely to happen as the station clock is not a striking one.)

Others say, "And of course at midnight he walks around the square to check everybody's in bed especially children. And still others add, "I was told he came to life and walked around town when the clock struck thirteen"

Whichever version of the story you hear, the lion has continued to keep watch over the town centre since the 1850's.

(Thanks to Eddie G. Hudson for the information and the photo.)

And another thing.....

Hawthorn blossom in June in a hay meadow above Slaithwaite - home of the Colne Valley Male Voice Choir



See our website to get the full story

colnevalleymvc.org.uk



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