



Choir performs in Golcar

An appreciative audience gathered at Golcar Church, a couple of Saturday's ago to hear the Choir in concert. It was a 'grand night for singing'. In a varied combination of song and solo, the choir and our in-house talents entertained an enthusiastic audience.

Being fresh from Cornwall, we wanted to sing again the competition pieces we had done in Truro. Maybe they were a bit heavy for a Saturday night's repertoire but they were well received and the programme got a lot lighter as we moved towards the second half.

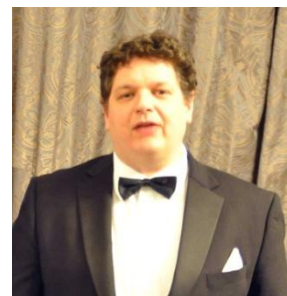


Thom enlists extra percussion players for 'Let the River Run'.



Young **Tom** (Law) accompanied himself on the guitar.

In another fine solo spot, **James Cooke** - local church contact and second tenor did a few songs very pleasingly.



In the second half, Maestro **Keith Swallow** thrilled the audience with a solo spot of pianoforte mastery.

Before he played his second dazzling piece, he chatted about how he had been hugely impressed seeing **Artur Rubinstein** play the piece in a cinema film. Keith had been amazed by Rubinstein raising his hands so high whilst playing in the 1947 film, '**Carnegie Hall**'.

VotV's Editor, John Clark, was struck by Keith comparing himself with typical self-deprecating modesty to Rubinstein, for *VotV* had done so in the last issue. I don't think Keith had seen it - not being on email - but he did so just the same.



(*VotV* had compared Rubinstein's longevity as a performer and had suggested that Keith, with a mere 62 years as the Choir's pianist, still had some way to go to match Rubinstein.)

Keith was comparing piano styles but - in any case - Keith's dazzling version of **Ritual Fire Dance** was wonderful. Here's the Carnegie Hall version of **Manuel de Falla's** masterpiece to remind you.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wj6_5qWZCDY

Thom (the elder) sang, too. He's so good! And we finished with our usual emotional farewell piece, 'The Irish Blessing'. The Golcar audience knew they'd seen a 'class' choir.

The joy of singing

You can see how excited we are to be onstage, entertaining the crowd.

Your editor, notorious for 'jigging about', has gone completely out of focus. The others are thrilled to be performing, revelling in the joy of singing!

Shame, the Choir often looks bloody miserable. It's such a privilege and a delight to sing for people; it would be so good if we showed it a bit more!



Uttley in Aussie



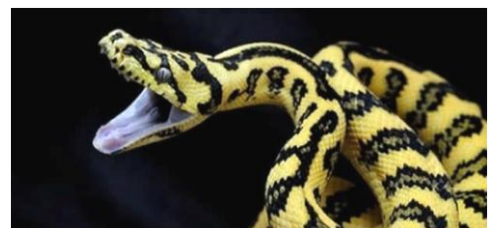
Flying Visit

I arrived in Australia on the 10th of April 2018. It's nicknamed the land of endless sunshine for good reason; I didn't see a rain cloud until December!

It's a country of extremes, in some parts they have suffered drought conditions for almost two years. Thousands upon thousands of hectares have been ravaged by bush fires and when the rains come there is serious flooding. Fortunately, in the suburbs of Brisbane we were unaffected by any of these extremes.

As for sharks, snakes and spiders, the reality is that sightings of any of these are rare. I've never seen a spider that is harmful and I have done a lot of gardening whilst in Oz. We saw a hammerhead shark swim past our boat when on a whale watching trip, it was quite a thrill to see it. As for the whales, the humpbacks put on an incredible show, along with the turtles and dolphins.

This was the 8th year I've been visiting Oz, and I've never seen a snake. Until this trip! Amazingly, whilst walking through the centre of Cleveland, I saw a snake meandering down the street. I indicated to people walking in either direction that they should halt. At which point a big Aussie guy told us it was a green tree snake and we all watched with admiration when he waited until it started climbing the tree and proceeded to take hold of it behind its head. It then wrapped itself round his arm and he took it to the nearest creek to set it free. On a recent tropical forest walk people heading back up the track told us there was a carpet python just ahead on the right of the pathway. This was a big fellow, a good six footer. He was just minding his own business and as the crowd of people stopped to see he coiled back, turned and headed back into the bush. I'm not overly keen on snakes, but they are amazing creatures to see.



As many of you will be aware, the reason for my extended absence is to support my family through a difficult time due to my son in law suffering serious health issues. It has been an emotional rollercoaster for all the family though at the moment I'm pleased to say his condition is stable. We are all hoping that this will continue but the reality of life for them is living from one quarterly scan to the next. Though I should point out, during the times my son in law has been well enough we have had some amazing holidays exploring coastal and inland destinations both north and south of Brisbane, a visit to Koh Samui in Thailand and in the summer (January) an amazing two weeks in Tasmania.

I was anxious to return to the UK to see my many family members and friends and a few admin jobs needed attending to.

*It was with enormous pleasure and pride that I was able to see the choir perform at **St John's Golcar** on Saturday 15th and then at Slaithwaite on Monday 17th June.*

I'm a bit of a softie at the best of times, but to see you all again and the sincere warm greetings from everyone was just wonderful.

Then to hear your amazing voices was too much for this old lad and I admit brought tears to my eyes. Very emotional.

Whilst the acoustics at St John's are not great, I thoroughly enjoyed the repertoire of both the choir and the soloists and thought it was a very well balanced mix performed to a very high standard.

*However, the excellent acoustics in **St James church** on Monday evening provided a fantastic environment in which to hear the amazing vocal talent that is Colne Valley Male Voice Choir. Well done gentlemen, I think you have taken the standard up even further and I shall have my work cut out when I return.*

*It would be remiss of me not to make mention of **Colne Valley Boys** choir who I think rose to the occasion with a very entertaining well performed program.*

Well done all. I look forward to being back in the ranks as soon as possible.

Regards

Steve Uttley

(baritone on leave of absence)



Honley Ladies new venture



To celebrate their eightieth year, Honley Ladies Choir return to the Town Hall in September for a unique event in the company of four hugely accomplished young men, Collabro, 2014 winners of Britain's Got Talent.

Matt Pagan, Tom Redgrave, Jamie Lambert and Michael Auger may have been part of Proms in the Park, won gold discs and played the Albert Hall but surely the pinnacle of their success will be on September 28 at Huddersfield Town Hall performing with the legendary ladies of Honley!

This promises to be an amazing concert that brings together two very different vocal groups for a very special evening of entertainment

Concert on the Hill

The 'must-see' event this week will be 'Concert on the Hill' on Saturday July 6th.

'Last Night of the Proms'- style entertainment on the Salendine Nook rugby ground.



With three choirs, two bands and a spectacular fireworks display to excite the flag-waving audience as we all sing 'Land of hope and Glory' - what could be better on a summer's evening?

The weather forecast is dry and warm – so be there.



Face in the Crowd

The VotV Editor, looking through archive pictures of this fabulous event – it's been running now for 20 years - spotted this 'face in the crowd' from 2015. I bet he's thinking, "Wow ! One day, maybe, I'll be on stage singing with this fantastic choir."



And now he is! You will have recognised, probably, baritone, **Kieran Chadha**, in the crowd. He'll be onstage with us on Saturday. We expect a packed crowd.



A new opera by Tim Benjamin

THE FIRE OF OLYMPUS

or, On Sticking It To The Man

Radius Opera

Colne Valley Male Voice Choir played host to Radius Opera Company the other night – and a most interestingly different rehearsal it turned out to be.

Alongside composer, **Tim Benjamin**, was workshop leader, **Michael Vincent Jones**. Tim introduced the concept behind his opera, '**The Fire of Prometheus**' and recorded our contributions on his sound equipment. Michael led us in a variety of vocal exercises, stressing abdominal muscle control and breathing techniques. This he rather alluringly demonstrated by a suggestive kind of 'belly-dancing' that our esteemed Musical Director, Thom Meredith, doesn't seem inclined to copy.

He also taught us various brief choruses for the recording and led us into a variety of vocalisations that were destined to be sound-effects in crowd scenes. For example, we were a group of rowdy spectators at a political rally heckling the speaker.

All told it was a fascinating way to spend a couple of hours. The opera, including Colne Valley's contributions to the 1,000 strong chorus, will premiere shortly. VotV readers will be pleased to hear that a performance of the opera will come to Lawrence Batley Theatre in Huddersfield on Saturday September 21st this year.

Let Choir Secretary, Jenny Baxter, know if you want tickets and she will negotiate a group discount for Choir members and supporters wanting to see the opera and hear the outcome of our efforts.

Radius Opera and the Fire of Olympus

Prometheus, you may recall, was one of the immortals - the one who stole fire from Zeus, King of the Gods. For this presumption, he was condemned to a life of torment; an eagle pecking out his liver every day for all eternity.

'Further punishment was inflicted by Zeus; he invented women!'

He created **Pandora**, the first woman, who amongst other things opened her box and released all sorts of evil on the World. Fortunately, it was closed in time to preserve 'Hope' and 'Anticipation' indicating, probably, that there may still be something left to mitigate humanity's woes.



Tim Benjamin has taken these ancient myths and created a contemporary setting where some of the themes play out in a modern context.

Instead of a 'Greek Chorus', Tim has created an operatic chorus of 1,000 recorded voices, which will be played into the live performance at appropriate points in the drama.

(Will we be able to detect the Colne Valley men's contribution, wonders VotV?)

As for Michael Vincent Jones, you will be able to hear him in the opera.

You can check out his vocal skills in this rendition of **Franz Lehar's** favourite, '**You are my Heart's delight**'.



Michael Vincent Jones in Thomas Ades 'Powder Her Face'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eOv-ZJEutHU&feature=youtu.be>

And another thing..... a little treat

Victor Borge plays Mozart - a bit



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RtDX1VI-Jxk>



Voice of the Valley Editor: John C Clark

Ring Choir Secretary, Jenny,
on 01484 645192

to join us or join our Readers'
List or for other queries

**See our new website
to get the full story**



colnevalleymvc.org.uk