



Cracking start to ' & Piano' Festival

By all reports **Christopher Pulleyn**'s festival at the Civic Hall got off to a great start with his 'Songs from the Shows' programme, featuring not only Chris himself but also the vocal skills of **Elizabeth Chadwick**, talented daughter of one-time second tenor, Howard Chadwick, and her colleague **Marc Kelly**.



Then last Friday came a concert of contemporary vocal music with **Payee Chen** and **Heather Lowe** with, of course, Chris at the keys.

But it's on Saturday 21st that the final performances of the festival will occur and it would be a shame to miss them.

In the morning at 11:00 there's to be a performance for children (and grand-children) supported by **'Made with Music'** which will recreate musically and dramatically an exciting trip on the canal.



Then in the evening at 7:30 Chris will again be at the piano, this time in performance with trombonist, **Sam Barber** and viola player, **Tom Broadbent**.



If you haven't been to one of Chris's superb '&Piano' concerts yet, don't let the opportunity slip. We may hope that there will be another series next year but you can't bank on it.

He's a busy man, that Chris!

Choir gets Examiner onboard with centennial preparations

HUDDERSFIELD DAILY EXAMINER THURSDAY, AUGUST 29, 2019

@examiner

News

Choir set to mark its centenary

By MARTIN SHAW
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IN just over two years' time Colne Valley Male Voice Choir will be celebrating its centenary and work is already underway to prepare for what will be a special year.

Choir chairman, Joe Stones, said: "Our centenary will not just be about looking back at the last 100 years but we will also be looking forward, and starting to shape the future years."

Part of the 'centenary plan' being led by the choir's renowned musical director, Thom Meredith, will be to renew and build the choir's sing-

ing membership which remains strong at 65.

The choir has also recently refreshed its musical repertoire and while it will still perform some of its popular and traditional pieces, they will also raise eyebrows by singing music from the likes of Queen, Carly Simon or Andrew Lloyd Webber.

Joe said that if it was good, entertaining music then the choir will sing it.

The choir starts its new season of rehearsals and music on Monday, September 2, and say they are cur-

rently looking to welcome up to 12 new members.

"If you enjoy singing and have ever wondered whether Colne Valley MVC would be right for you, then the best way to find out is to just come along to a few rehearsals," said Joe.

"When you first come, you can either just sit and see what the rehearsals are like or join in and sing straight away, it's that simple!"

Joe said the choir was not only focused on giving fun and inspiring performances but also in developing singing talent, supported by

Thom. Rehearsals are on Monday nights (7.30pm-9.30pm) at Slaithwaite Conservative Club, 19 Britania Road, Slaithwaite, HD7 5HF.

For male singers aged eight to 18 years old, Colne Valley Boys, also led by Thom, rehearse every Monday in school term, 5.30pm-7pm at the same venue.

Prospective members and parents/guardians would be welcome to come along to a rehearsal to find out more. For more information contact choir secretary Jenny Baxter on 01484 645192 or Joe Stones on 01484 323431 or 07889 658365.



Colne Valley Male Choir are getting ready to celebrate their centenary year

NEW MUSIC AND NEW MEMBERS WILL HELP SHAPE ITS FUTURE



Thom Meredith, musical director of the choir
120217Cphil_01
ANDY CATCHPOOL

A grand night in Scarborough



In the last of our Summer Concert Season, Colne Valley Male Voice Choir went to Scarborough to perform at the wonderful **Christine Cox's** Music Festival in the great acoustic of the Victorian Methodist Chapel on the cliff above the South Bay.

It was a grand night; a large and enthusiastic audience and the Choir in fine form.

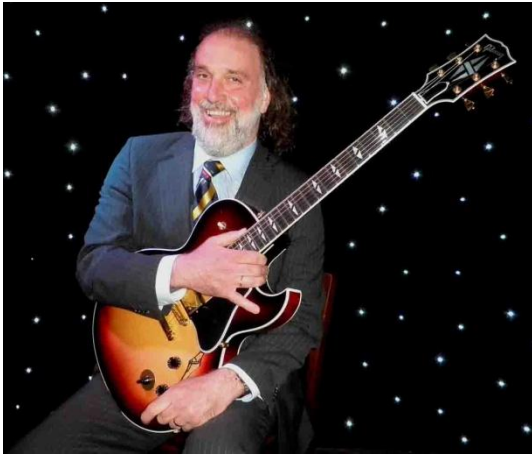
Here's a video of one of our current favourites, **Carly Simon's**, 'Let the River Run' created from original video footage supplied by **Valerie Coles**.

You'll enjoy it

<https://youtu.be/EodVwUbPi-I>



A Note from the Treasurer



"Subs are now due." says **Simon Durrans** "And the good news is they are still very cheap and - better still - you can now pay them **online**."

You may now make any payments to the Choir by BACS using your internet banking facilities.

Bank Name:
Lloyds Bank PLC,
PO Box 1000
BX1 1LT

Account Name: Colne Valley Male Voice Choir
Sort Code: 30-94-43
Account Number: 02489140

When making payments, please provide a reference. This should include your name and reason for payment (e.g. Subscriptions). Alternatively, you may continue to make payments using cash or cheque if you prefer.

Any queries or questions; please come and talk to me."

The 200 Club...

The 200 Club as finally got its act together and arranged for your esteemed Editor to win £45 two weeks running.



Sadly, however it seems fate got it wrong and allowed **Brian Fairclough**, instead of me, to scoop the giant £1,000 prize for this half year.

This is him, captured in an unconvincing disguise, trying to make a getaway before anyone could suggest the 'drinks were on him'.

New Man

Neil Frankland - auditioned on August 12th after sitting in for several weeks. Neil, an adult education worker in Manchester is a contact of Treasurer, Simon Durrans. "My wife & his wife are pals," said Neil "And after they'd be talking my wife told me to come. I think she wanted me out of the house on Monday nights. Whatever I was happy to come along - and enjoyed it enough to keep coming back. After a few rehearsals, the audition wasn't anything to be scared of and I was pleased to be accepted as a member".

Secretary substitute, **Stuart Baxter** welcomed the new second tenor and wished him - on behalf of the Choir - many happy years of singing with us.

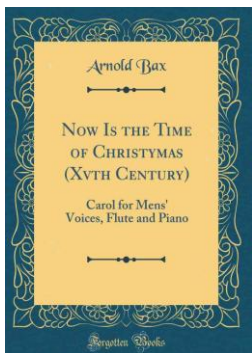


Now is the time of Christymas – surely not already!

You'd think (maybe you'd hope) that Christmas is for the dim and distant future but for the men of the Colne Valley Male Voice Choir it's all very much part of our present reality.

Indeed, the Christmas music was handed out by our librarians a few weeks back and we've been singing songs about 'Baby Jesus', 'Winter Wonderlands' and the like for a couple of rehearsals.

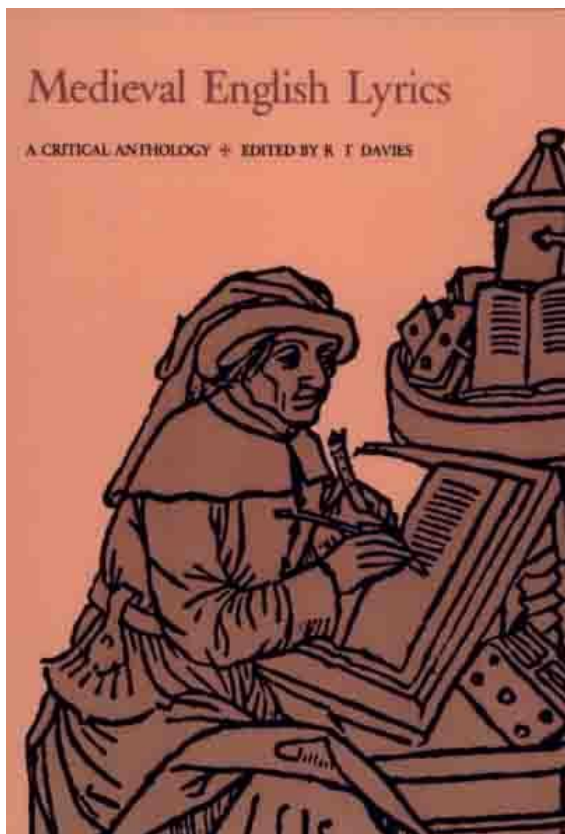
I suppose we know that Christmas concerts will be on us all too quickly unless we get stuck in to learning our festive pieces.



Now is the time of Christymas

'Now is the time of Christymas' is one of the best of our festive pieces.

The version we are using was written by **Arnold Bax** for male voices, flute and piano. The words he chose are mediaeval and date back many centuries.



Sixteenth Century

Now is the time of Christmas

Make we mery bothe more and lasse,
For now is the time of Christimas.

Let no man cum into this hall,
Grome, page, nor yet marshall,
But that sum sport he bring withall,
For now is the time of Christmas.

1. high and low. 4. (Servants and officers of the household). 5, 8. sport, entertainment.

If that he say he cannot sing
Sum oder sport then let him bring
That it may please at this festing,
For now is the time of Christmas.

If he say he can nought do,
Then for my love aske him no mo,
But to the stockes then let him go,
For now is the time of Christmas.

11. do nothing. 12. more.

Bax wrote it when he was about 40 and at the height of his composing powers.

It was published in 1921 just before CVMVC was formed. How long it's been in the Choir's repertoire is unknown.

Arnold Bax: a bit of a lad

Bax got a knighthood in 1937 and even became 'Master of the King's Musick' but his life was anything but 'establishment'.

In an article by Roger Ackroyd, we learn that Bax led a double life.

Ackroyd wishes he has been 'a fly on the wall' to listen in on a conversation - the private discussion between Sir Arnold Bax, and his long time mistress and concert pianist, Harriet Cohen, sometime in the spring of 1948. He reckons, **'It must have been a 'corker'**.

He then goes on to give us a bit of background history so that we can imagine the full flavour of the discourse that must have ensued and the revelation that Arnold sprung on the unsuspecting Harriet on that fateful day.

Arnold Bax was born in 1883 into a fairly wealthy family and his childhood was spent in a large house called Ivy Bank close by Hampstead Heath.

He and his brother Clifford were privately taught by a live-in tutor and it wasn't long before Arnold showed great prowess at the piano. By the time he was 17 he was enrolled into the Royal Academy of Music and quickly began to compose, gaining much kudos for the quality of the compositions which by 1905 were gaining public performances.

*It was about this time that he visited Russia and Ireland and became emotionally infatuated with Celtic legends – a theme that was to run through much of his compositions until the end of his life. He was to become a close friend of Yeats, Pearse and many others in the Dublin literary set pre-1916. He taught himself Gaelic and had a number of books, poetry and short stories, published under the pseudonym of **Dermot O'Byrne**.*

The violence of the Easter Rising and the British response shocked him immensely and at least one of his poetry collections was banned from sale on the U.K. mainland. Ireland remained his spiritual home for the rest of his life and it was poetic in the extreme that his last days were spent in the south-west peninsula around Cork.

Despite a number of romantic affairs in Russia and among the fellow students at the Royal Academy of Music he finally married in 1911. Elsit was the daughter of a neighbour in Hampstead and despite quickly fathering two children he realised that his nomadic lifestyle was seriously unsuited to parenthood.

*Just two years later Arnold met the entrancing 17 year old **Harriet Cohen** – an accomplished pianist – and the flame of a love affair quickly ignited. Elsit could not have been blind to the relationship – letters were flowing backwards and forwards between Arnold and Harriet on a daily basis – but she refused to allow Arnold a divorce on the grounds that she was a Roman Catholic and with a somewhat misguided belief that she would eventually be able to "make Arnold come to his senses". One might also argue that it suited Arnold as much to remain "married" in that it allowed him not to legally commit himself to any other. As we will see, Arnold's eye for the ladies was busy and wide-ranging.*

*Perhaps Arnold Bax's most famous orchestral piece, **Tintagel**, was written in 1917 when he was persuaded by Elsit to holiday with her and the children in St.Merryn, Cornwall.*



The real truth was that Arnold only agreed to this because Harriet Cohen was staying in Tintagel at the same time and he saw an opportunity for some clandestine meetings. For the duration of the holiday Arnold lived in a small cottage away from the main house where his family slept and every other day would slip away to meet up with Harriet.

If Elsita was aware of the liaisons remains unclear but the emotional stress that Arnold endured can clearly be heard in the 'Tintagel' music which is flushed through with romantic and erotic longing.

Bax and his long-term mistress Harriet Cohen

By the end of the war Elsita had finally been cast off, housed by Arnold and at his expense in Golders Green until the end of her life in 1947. Harriet Cohen was to become his confidante, amanuensis and lover until the day he died. But never his wife, a status that was to be the catalyst for the volcanic row in 1948 that Ackroyd wishes he'd overheard.

Arnold began to write music for Harriet and in return Harriet developed a possessive and ultimately corrosive influence on Arnold's career as a composer in the hope that he would be taken seriously by the musical cognoscenti.



While she did much to promote his work both here and abroad there came a point in the 40's when her overarching enthusiasm and her diminishing skills as a concert pianist began to turn promoters away.

Arnold himself, intensely private and publicly unassuming, could do little to suppress Harriet's counter intuitive banging of the Bax drum. Arnold continued to be peripatetic, travelling between Glencolumcille in Ireland, Morar in Scotland, Dublin, London and Sussex.

Although he bought a property for Harriet in London he only occasionally stayed there if he was attending a concert or doing business in London. By 1939 he had more or less finished composing. He ensconced himself in a room at The White Horse Pub, Storrington, Sussex where he was to live out the last 13 years of his life, playing draughts, doing crosswords and generally enjoying drinks with the locals.

Mary Gleaves and Arnold Bax circa 1951

He had been knighted and in 1940, somewhat inexplicably he had been made Master of the King's Musick, a role for which he was eminently unsuitable. He managed to knock out some music for

the films Malta GC and Oliver Twist as well as provide fanfares for the wedding of the Queen and Prince Phillip but, as he himself admitted, it was third-rate fare refashioned from earlier pieces.

And then in 1947, Elsie died and an astonishing revelation finally comes to light.

*Picture if you can that spring day in 1948 at Harriet's London flat and Arnold finally telling Harriet that he would not be marrying her and thus make her Lady Bax – a title she had wanted ever since Arnold had been knighted. And then boom! – **he also tells her that for nigh on 20 years he has had a second mistress, Mary Gleaves**, who had accompanied him on many of his trips to Scotland and Ireland and who he had bought a house for just round the corner from the Storrington pub in which he resided.*

The row that ensued was, by all accounts, monumental. Arnold had even written to Mary to say that although he hadn't planned to propose to anyone if he actually did it would be to her, Mary.

One has to feel slightly sorry for Harriet. Despite her possessiveness and rather scratchy temperament she had spent half a lifetime promoting her lover and his music around the globe and now, at the last gasp, when she thought a promotion into the upper echelons of society was attainable, it had been snatched away from her.

Two weeks after this row she had an "accident" with a tray of glasses she was carrying and cut the nerves in the wrist of her right hand. Surmise as you may.

Arnold slipped into a sedentary life at Storrington enjoying sipping beer and whisky with the locals and visiting with Mary at her house not far away from the pub. His once slight figure blossomed outwards and there were a number of occasions at which old friends worried about his drinking.

Undoubtedly during his last years Arnold was much closer to Mary Gleaves than he was to Harriet and his last two letters to Mary written four days before he died in Cork in 1953 were affectionate in the extreme: "...but I want to come back to you and your welcoming arms. I imagine all of you close to me and can almost feel your 'bod' warm against mine. Ever my love, my dear and darling."

Complications with Arnold's will, even though he had split much of his estate between Harriet and Mary meant that Mary didn't receive a single penny until after Harriet's death some 17 years later. Immediately after Arnold's memorial service at St. Martin-in-the-Fields Harriet drove down to the White Horse in Storrington and collected all Arnold's musical scores and papers claiming that she was the rightful heir.

The British Library hold all the letters from Bax to Harriet – some 1500 – as well as a substantial number of photographs which would indicate that Arnold and Harriet enjoyed what appears to be a vigorous love life, disporting themselves naked on quiet beaches and lonely country spots.



There is a Ken Russell film which you can find on Youtube in which Russell himself plays Bax and with Glenda Jackson in her last film role before becoming a politician playing Harriet Cohen. Click here - if you want to view the 1992 film made for Melvyn Bragg's 'South Bank Show'.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3srBobRq6Cw>

The subsequent decline in Bax's public performances can be attributed in part to Harriet's possessiveness and refusal to allow any of his chamber and piano works to be performed unless she was the pianist. As her pianistic star had waned considerably it was inevitable that Bax dropped off the concert programming and it was only after Harriet's death that there was a belated recognition that a fine British composer had been neglected for too long.

Gordon at the Organ



It's an open secret that the very best way to spend a Monday lunchtime is to join Gordon Stewart at one of his friendly and brilliant organ recitals at Huddersfield Town Hall.

The Editor usually sees a handful of Colne Valley Men at the one o'clock performances - baritone, **Raymond Ellis** (and his wife), fellow baritone, **Richard Neville** at the last one, and, as often as not, bass, **Noel Clarke**.

Why not join in at the next one - which is Monday September 23rd. Have a sandwich lunch in the Court Room then up to the concert hall for a world-class performance.

The next one after Monday 23rd will be on October 7th

(You can hear Gordon introducing the 2019 series in the video link - Click here or go to:-

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=39&v=gMsljCwRx2k

Busy man that Chris



As mentioned above he's a busy man. Apart from the fabulous '8 & piano' series, VotV learns that Christopher will be the guest soloist at **Slaithwaite Philharmonic's** next concert on Sunday, September 22nd, at 3.00 pm.

Chris will be playing **Beethoven's Piano Concerto No 4** in a varied programme of orchestral music under the baton of conductor **Benjamin Ellin**. The concert will open with an overture by **Mendelssohn**, and feature pieces by Slaithwaite-born **Haydn Wood** in the 60th anniversary year of his death.

Then on the 28th Chris will again be solo performer - and compere too – at **Marsh Ladies' Choir's** next appearance - at Salendine Nook. The talented women will entertain with popular songs from West End musicals.



And, of course, Chris is also accompanying the **Colne Valley Boys** every Monday, too, as they prepare for their Christmas Concerts.

And, when **Keith Swallow** steps back at the end of December, it will be Chris - the incumbent Principal Accompanist to the Colne Valley men - who will step to the fore.

Busy man that Chris Pulleyn!

Piano seeks good home

In November 2006, **J. Brian Shaw** retired from his position as Deputy Conductor of the Choir. Brian, who joined the Choir in 1961, was, for more than twenty five years, Deputy Conductor. One time president, **Norman Dearnley**, on behalf of the Choir, expressed our grateful thanks to him by presenting him with a limited edition ceramic tea pot in the form of a grand piano.



And now Brian's 'real' piano - a boudoir grand - is on sale.

The piano is a Steinway Boudoir originally built in 1868 and completely refurbished in 1968 when Brian bought it.

Brian's three daughters are seeking a buyer and interested parties should contact Choir Secretary, Jenny, (on 01484 645192) in the first instance for further information.

