



Burns Night with a Yorkshire Twist.

"People gave generously of their time to support the Colne Valley Male Voice Choir, Marsden St. Bartholomew's Church and Marsden Silver Prize Band." writes newly appointed CVMVC **Social Secretary, Andrew Leyland** about his first event since taking on the role.



“Over 80 people made up the party, friends, family and members of the three different organisations got together for a fabulous night of fun, laughter and dancing.

Rabbie Burns - Scottish poet and lyricist renowned for his songs and poems including Auld Lang Syne and well known for his contribution to over 500 songs and poems that celebrate love, friendship, work and drink - provided a great excuse for a celebration of his work and a hooley in Marsden Parochial Hall on 26th January 2024.



Renowned local chefs Ian Leyland and Mark Race took time off from their day jobs to prepare a feast for 90 people and what a feast it was. Leek and potato soup with truffle oil, sea salt and rosemary served with focaccia bread which was kindly donated by Rogers Bakery in Marsden; traditional neeps, tatties, broccoli and a special haggis recipe with whisky sauce was followed by the traditional Scottish desert of Cranachan served with raspberry coulis and honey. A vegetarian option was also available.

We were privileged to enjoy the catering prowess of two experienced chefs - Mark has worked at restaurants all over the world and latterly at the Olympic games in Japan, Ian has lots of experience and perfected his haggis recipe when he worked as Head Chef at Tigh Mor Castle in Scotland.

This set the tone for a sumptuous night of fine food and an evening of traditional music with toasts to the haggis, the lassies, the laddies, the Bard himself and dancing.

Some special mentions: Tracey Dawson (church treasurer) and the ladies from the Church for setting up the hall, serving on the bar and clearing away the following day; Kathleen Cotton from Marsden Band who helped with setting up the room and waiting on tables and clearing up the day after; Donna Taylor for organising the raffle; Cheryl Whiteley, Holly Whiteley and Evie Gibbons for waiting tables and kitchen work; Andrew Leyland, Social Secretary CVMVC, for making the time to buy in all the food, for providing the bar, collecting the beer – kindly provided at cost by Milltown Brewery – work as prep chef in the kitchen prior to the event and clearing up after the event; Joe Stones who performed the role of MC and who organised the band and ticket printing; the organising committee; and thanks to everyone else who contributed in any way.

The Bard himself would have been pleased to see so many people enjoying a great party night, what a night it was. If you missed it this time you missed a treat – book early for next year. Room already booked for 25th January 2025.

The event raised over £1,100 that will be split three ways, supporting the three organisations and importantly it was a night of fun, friendship and laughter.



In the words of Rabbie Burns:-

*“Some hae meat and canna eat.
And some wad eat that want it.
But we hae meat and we can eat,
Sae let the Lord be thankit”.*

New CVMVC Social secretary, **Andrew Leyland**, offers a toast to the ‘lassies’ and the ‘laddies’ and to ‘the Bard’s’ expression of our gratitude for a fine meal.

**Well done, Andrew.
Let’s hope this successful
event becomes the first of
many!**

Andrew is a ‘new man to the Choir but Colne valley residents, particularly Marsdeners, probably know him well...

He tells *VotV* :-



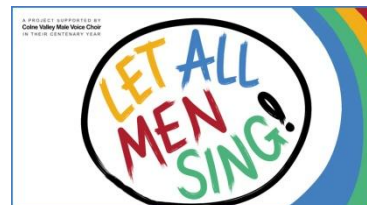
‘I was born 1955 in Marsden where my family owned the Marsden Electric Cinema (everyone knew it as Marsden flea pit). It unfortunately came into disrepair when the roof collapsed in the 80’s.

Leyland's Pictures, the original structure in Marsden, on the corner of Fall Lane and Weirside. [Photograph courtesy of Christine Martindale (Andrew's big sister).]

I joined the choir at Marsden St Bartholomew's Church when I was 11 under the musical guidance of Douglas Bell - a wonderful music teacher and was there until I was 15 when I left school and became an apprentice electrician at John Edward Crowther's Mill. My career led me to become a construction project manager in the UK and Ireland until I retired in December 2022.

I'd always fancied joining the main choir but due to the pressures of work I wouldn't have been able to give the full commitment that I can now.

Over the years my wife, Christine and I had always enjoyed the Xmas concerts in the town hall and I kept commenting on how I would love to be up there singing with them. I achieved my goal when Christine nagged me to join the LAMS choir which I did in January 2023 and progressed to the main choir in May 2023.



Now I'm the Social Secretary so, WOW, how things have progressed so quickly.

I'm loving every minute of the Choir. Everyone has been so welcoming and supportive so I hope I can stay with them for a few more years. Thanks to everyone who has supported me.'

*Regards
Andrew Leyland
Social Secretary CVMVC*

Ben Stirling's lad wins at Mrs Sunderland



Second tenor, Ben Stirling is a proud and happy man this week.

His son, **Damien Stirling**, entered 4 competitions in the Mrs Sunderland Huddersfield Music Festival last week and came out with **one second prize and three first prizes**.

One of them was the prestigious '**Rose Bowl**' for the Young Singers Class 44, singing 'Gaelic Blessing'.



I guess '**Colne Valley Boys Choir**' people will be equally proud of one of their members

Now it's over to Ben and the rest of the Male Voice Choir to see what they can do in the choir competitions that come up on Saturday.

This will mark a return to the competition stage for CVMVC. We have been rebuilding and rejuvenating since the pandemic and we'll get to see how much progress we've made in recent months. We've been trying.

The Choir recently enjoyed a few voice coaching sessions with **Joyce 'The Voice' Tindsley**, supplementing **Thom's** excellent support. We hope to do them justice.



CVMVC has an unequalled record of success at the Mrs Sunderland going back 100 years and we hope to begin the process of adding to our glorious heritage as we get solidly engaged in our second century of musical excellence.

Incidentally, 'a Rose-Bowl' connection doesn't seem out of place for **Ben Stirling**. We think he is the Choir's only **Garden Designer**. Ben was a generous sponsor to the Choir, advertising his award-winning business in the Christmas Concert Programme.

So **VotV** recommends you get your garden-makeovers from no one else!

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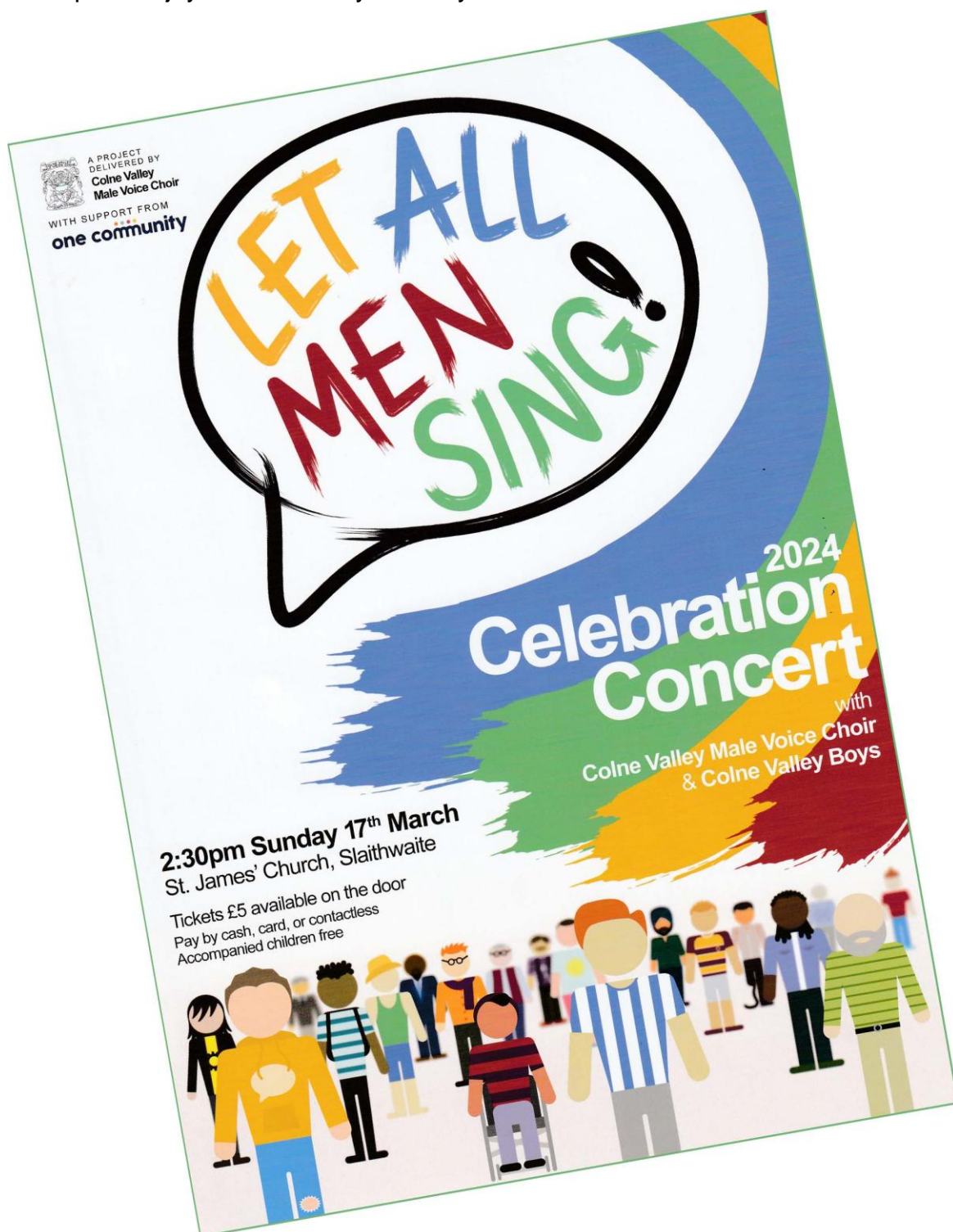
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'Let All Men Sing' update

Colne Valley Male Voice Choir is currently running its '**Let All men Sing**' Community Initiative for a second time. No-one could have guessed how successful it would be in 2023 - and now in 2024 it is proving to be just as fabulous as it was last year.

The men who signed up have now had 6 of their 8 sessions with Thom and Chris and are beginning to focus on the one-off concert they will perform - with the help of Colne Valley Boys and the established members of the Choir - on Sunday afternoon, March 17th 2024 at St. James's Church in Slaithwaite.

The Choir wants this 'Let All Men Sing! Celebration Concert', to support raising awareness of men's mental health and so is proudly supporting '**Andy's Man Club**' through a raffle and retiring collection. Do put this joyful event into your diary...



RIP Jeff Bamforth

Jenny Baxter speaks to Choir Members:-

You will all have read my email telling you that Jeff Bamforth died in hospital last weekend. (January 22nd)

Jeff joined the Choir in September 1998 and was a loyal and reliable member of the Bass Section for several years.

During this time Jeff was elected to the committee and in 2007 he was appointed Chairman, a position he was very proud to hold for the next two years.

From 2019 onwards, with his health failing he was unable to attend rehearsals regularly and he moved to the register of non-singing members.

Those of us who knew Jeff will remember him as a gentle, modest man, who served the Choir well during his time with us - please can I ask you all to stand and sing "The Fourfold Amen"



VotV adds After his chairmanship role, Jeff took on the less demanding job as Choir Archivist, which he did for some years. But that, too became too arduous. "I've got a long list of stuff I want to do but I'm not young enough or fit enough to do everything. So I was thrilled to bits when **David Clarke** said he'd pick up the challenge. To tell you the truth we scarcely know what hidden gems will be in there."

Marsdeners, **Judith and David Morrison**, recall that Jeff and wife, Mavis, ran the Fish & Chip shop at Fall Lane in Marsden for many years in the 1970-80s.

They told VotV that Jeff knew much sadness in his life: his son was killed in an accident - a cherry tree planted in his memory is, apparently, still in Marsden churchyard - and that his first wife, Mavis, also died prematurely.

Later Jeff had a long and happy relationship with **Christine** (Donaldson) and together- despite her own health and mobility issues - they supported the Choir attending many Choir events.

In more recent years Jeff's health gradually and inexorably deteriorated but he and Christine stayed active and cheerful. Our thoughts go out to Christine at this difficult time.



Many Choir members with warm memories of Jeff will attend the funeral service at **Holy Trinity Church**, Greenhead on **Monday 19th 2024** at **12.30**.

At Christine's' request the Choir - and Thom - will sing, '**You Raise Me Up**'.

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

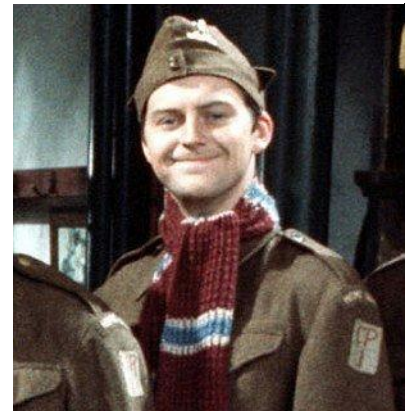
(Readers will note the video performance of Thom and the Choir doing this song at Scarborough has been viewed about 75,000 times.)



A menacing German U-boat captain (Philip Madoc), intending to bring his captors to account after the war is won, starts compiling a list. Private Pike (Ian Lavender) and Captain Mainwaring demonstrate resistance in their own bungling way.

Watch the video to remind yourself. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_YMVPXmaKds

Readers will have noticed that actor **Ian Lavender** - 'Dad's Army's Private Pike - was another who passed away this month.



Colne Valley's own, veteran tenor, **Ken Farr** has his own take on this memorable passage in the nation's cultural life.

He tells VotV....

“Don't Tell Him Ken”

*“Captain Mainwaring's immortal line to Ian Lavender in Dad's Army, was intended by Captain Mainwaring to prevent a German Naval captain, captor of the **Walmington Home Guard**, from identifying names for reprisals after the Nazi's won the War.*

The German Naval Officer was played by **Phillip Madoc**, who, (then Philip Jones) was a member of Merthyr Tydfil Labour League of Youth along with **Ken Farr** back in 1949. At that time, Ken was just starting his engineering apprenticeship; Phillip was at Cyfarther Castle Grammar School, prior to his graduation to Cardiff University.

The picture was taken around 1995 when by pure chance Philip and Ken met up again 'after all these years'.

In the 1990's Phillip was the star of a television series '**A Mind to A Kill**' being shot at an orangery on a private estate near Port Talbot. Ken, who was visiting family in Wales was offered two days as an extra in an episode featuring Susan Phillips as a guest lead.

It was a great experience with Phillip proving friendly, handsome and still with that great speaking voice he had back in the old days.



Sadly, apart from a shot of the back of his head..... Ken's two days 'as a TV actor' ended up on the cutting room floor."

A trip to the seaside

Whitby has many attractions - not least it is the venue for the **Eskdale Festival**, which has been running for many years now, celebrating the musical and dramatic arts through performance and competition.



In 2024 the Colne Valley men will be singing in three competition classes at **Whitby Spa Pavilion** on the West Cliff at Whitby (YO21 3EN)



The Choir hasn't been there since 2011.

This turned out to be a memorable visit: - on the morning of competition we learned that **Thom Meredith** had been in an accident and couldn't travel to Whitby. Do we withdraw? No!

The Choir's stand-in accompanist, occasional rehearsal conductor and page-turner for Keith Swallow, **Philip Baxter**, was persuaded to step up and conduct us.

No one was more thrilled than he, when the Choir won in two of the main classes.

Let's hope Thom's on form and that we can do as well in 2024.

Christine RIP



The ancient church of Saint Mary's on top of the cliff, overlooking Scarborough Bay was packed the other day with friends and admirers of Christine Cox, who had come to say a fond farewell. Church wardens scurried to put out extra chairs and the service booklets ran out as more and more people whose lives had been touched by Christine turned up to show their respect and admiration.

Christine was a long-time patron and supporter of Colne Valley Male Voice Choir, the 'Social Entrepreneur' who had brought us to the neighbouring Queen Street concert hall to perform every summer (pandemic excepted) for 15 years. The Choir got a good mention in the Vicar's Eulogy and we do know that CVMVC meant a lot to her.

The local paper, Scarborough Evening News, covered her full and kind-hearted life in an article which VotV is happy to quote... RIP Christine.



Friends pay tribute to unique and magnificent Christine Cox

“Friends have paid tribute to the unique and magnificent Christine Cox, who enriched the cultural life in Scarborough for more than 40 years.

By Sue Wilkinson

Miss Cox, who was born and lived all her life in Scarborough, has died after a short illness, aged 82.

She had an unwavering faith and worshipped at St Mary's Church, where, until recently, she was the Chairman of the Friends of St Mary's Church and with Valerie Gorbert raised thousands of pounds for the church.



Christine Cox gained wide recognition in Yorkshire Art Circles for her work in the abstract field. She held solo exhibitions of mixed media around Yorkshire

Throughout her life, Miss Cox was involved in the arts, organising theatre and concert trips, holidays abroad and bringing music festivals to Scarborough.

Over the past 49 years of arranging coach excursions, she was recognised for her cultural contributions with a Borough of Scarborough Award in 2002.

Her friend Sheena Mosey said: "She was a wonderful person. Her faith was very important to her. She was a tremendous character and helped so many people – in ways that other people did not know about.

"She was a natural giver," Sheena said. "She was a one-off, had flair and it was a privilege to know her."

In the 1960s she gained wide recognition in Yorkshire Art Circles for her work in the Abstract field. She held solo exhibitions of mixed media around Yorkshire and, aged 23, was invited to Hull University Fine Arts Society to stage an individual exhibition. Her distinctive work was a feature of her shop – Ancient and Modern Collectables in Hanover Road.

In 1974, Miss Cox joined ‘the cause’ to save the Royal Opera House, which was threatened with demolition and spent 16 years volunteering as secretary for the group.

Friend and Councillor Janet Jefferson said: “Through her trips and holidays, she brought life and sunshine to other people’s lives.”

Harry Henderson and Miss Cox met through a mutual love of music. “She was a remarkable woman and extremely popular,” he said.

“What she contributed to the cultural scene of Scarborough by taking coachloads after coachloads over 49 years to opera, ballet, musicals and plays was amazing. Sometimes, it was at her own expense.”

Friend Bill Pringle said: “I came to Scarborough when I lost my wife. I immediately felt at home on her trips. It gave me a dimension to life in Scarborough that I would not have had without Christine.”

Miss Cox attended Gladstone Road Infants and Junior Schools. After leaving what was Falsgrave County Modern Girls’ School, where she was a member of its award-winning choir, she completed a year’s commercial course at the then Scarborough Technical Institute.



She worked first for F Shepherd & Son, later Shepherd Building Group, in Falsgrave. After leaving there, Miss Cox was employed as a secretary at Scarborough Hospital. She held various secretarial roles before retiring after 31 years.

Being invited to the late Queen’s Garden Party at Buckingham Place was a delight for her.”



Christine congratulates retiring maestro, Keith Swallow, for his massive contribution to her Scarborough Festival

At the risk of making this the VoTV 'Obituary Edition', here's news of other departed people...

Mary Weiss reunited with 'The Leader of the Pack'?

Lead singer of the Shangri Las, Mary Weiss, also died recently. Leader of the Pack was a big hit in Britain and America in 1964.



Another New Yorker, Mary Weiss (centre) was the teenager who, in the song lost her boyfriend in a motor bike accident.

"Is she really going out with him?" - launched a heartstring-tearing mini-opera which told the story of Betty's tragic love affair with Jimmy, the leader of a motorcycle gang. The sound of a revving motorbike engine and squealing tyres added to its aura of romantic intensity, said a recent obit.

I was never sure whether the song was tragic or 'tongue in cheek' but it did convey something of the mood of the early sixties.



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Ge8_6rtQvs

Melanie

Melanie, who died at the end of January just before her 77th birthday, cheered us up with her biggest hit 'Brand New Key' in 1972 but your Editor prefers 'The Nickel Song' that she recorded in 1971.

<https://youtu.be/UBvSNRGWIO8>



Or 'Goodbye Ruby Tuesday'

<https://youtu.be/RanxlzBac0k>

For a happier and fuller picture of life in the Colne Valley - at least the life of its Male Voice Choir - see our website.

And don't forget your Editor wants your story. As long as it has some connection - even if a little tenuous - with CVMVC, do get in touch.



Colne Valley Male Voice Choir
Est 1922

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