



Wonderful afternoon as LAMS men make their debut



The 2024 'Let All Men Sing' Choir made their first and only appearance on stage on a Sunday afternoon at Saint James's Church in Slithwaite. About thirty men - who had enjoyed 8 sessions with Thom and Chris, preparing for this one-off concert, made a terrific sound for their friends and family who gathered in strength hear the quality of their performance and to applaud with gusto.

This year's LAMS men emerged as fine singers (after Thom and the Choir decided to repeat this 'Community Initiative' that had run so successfully in 2023) and all involved were delighted that men had registered in numbers to participate. Colne Valley Boys turned out to add their charm and verve to proceedings and the main Choir appeared too, to sing some individual numbers but mainly to join with the LAMS men and the 'Boys' to share in making music together

In 2023, towards the end of our Centenary Year, the Choir set itself a target of having 100 singers for our 100 years of operation. Truth to tell, we fell short by a small handful. But this year we definitely reached our target. It was a wonderful afternoon of singing; the 'New Boys' and the 'Old Lags' all buzzing with the joy of it.



Since their triumph in March, a goodly number of the LAMS 24 men have come to join in rehearsals with the main choir. Many are set on becoming members in due course. The 2023 LAMS group generated some 17 new members and it may be that a similar number of this year's participants will successfully make the transition into regular membership.

The Choir thinks that the LAMS programme has been a huge success in involving men in bringing them together to enjoy singing - and so we have already committed to running it again in the early weeks of 2025. And it has proved to be a huge bonus that so many are continuing on to strengthen and rejuvenate the Choir.

Spectacular night at the Town Hall

Two bands and three male voice choirs filled the stage at Huddersfield's magnificent Town Hall in a concert to celebrate Great British Music.

Organised by the World-class Brighouse & Rastrick Brass Band, a packed auditorium enjoyed the band and their invited guests, the other wonderful local band - The Hepworth Brass Band - playing classic patriotic pieces. Together they made a terrific sound under the baton of B&R conductor, **Ian McElligot**. Add to them, the massed male voice choirs - New Mill, Gledholt and Colne Valley MVC's - and the effect was totally spectacular.



This was an event made doubly special

This was an event made doubly special - and one that provided an explanation for the patriotic flavour in the music programme.

For the Brighouse and Rastrick Band had invited **Ed. Anderson, CBE, the Lord Lieutenant of West Yorkshire.**

He had come, he said, to make a special presentation to the Brighouse and Rastrick Band.

But first he wanted to mention the announcement by **Kate, Princess of Wales** made the day before explaining her recent illness.



He was, he vouchsafed, as Lord Lieutenant, the Kings representative in West Yorkshire and added how proud he was to serve in that role. On hearing the sad news about her Royal Highness's health, he told the audience, he had immediately written to her, on behalf of the people of Yorkshire to wish her a speedy recovery. This news evoked a warm endorsement - in the form of applause - from audience and performers alike.

He thanked the audience for their good wishes and promised he would write again to let Her Royal Highness know that the people of Huddersfield had confirmed his good wishes to her – and indeed to His Majesty, King Charles, too.

Then he went on to talk about the Presentation to the Brighouse and Rastrick Brass Band. This was the **King's Award for Voluntary Service, 2023**. Many describe this award as the equivalent of an MBE - but MBE's are for individual effort, this one was exclusively for Community Groups. He went on to detail some of the many, many community-support activities that the Band has engaged in over many years and how valued they have been to young musicians and to the wider community around Brighouse, where the Band has operated for the last 140 years or so.



Disappointment over Scarborough....

.... but

Excitement grows over Eskdale.

Colne Valley singers were disappointed but maybe not entirely surprised to hear that the annual Scarborough Concert was cancelled.



Disappointed, certainly because for many years the Choir had travelled to Scarborough to perform in the superb acoustics of the hall in Scarborough's Queen Street Methodist Church - but not surprised because, in January this year our patron, the indomitable **Christine Cox** had passed away. It was so much her event that although efforts were made by her many friends in Scarborough it proved impossible to keep the concert in the schedule.

But we do still get to travel to the seaside to sing.

Next Saturday, April 20th, the Choir will travel to Whitby to take part in the **Eskdale Music Festival**.



We travel with the intention of performing to the best that we can manage, hopefully singing well enough to achieve recognition in the three competitive classes we have entered.



Lodovico Grossi da Viadana

Why is this pre-baroque composer important to Colne Valley Male Voice Choir's Whitby trip?



Lodovico Viadana - he took his surname from the Italian town of his birth - lived from about 1560 to 1627 and during his long life in the Catholic Church as chorister, organist and choir-master, wrote one piece that, in its modern notation, is key to the Choir's current repertoire.

It's called '**O sanctum Convivium**'.

It's not known when exactly 'Sanctum' was written. Viadana's career began in 1558 when he entered the order of the 'Minor Observants' in his home town.



His work took him to Cremona, Venice, Rome, Padua and Mantua and, finally, to Gualtieri, near Parma, where his busy life ended.

The piece is sung unaccompanied. Four parts weave in and out creating satisfying harmonies. Self-evidently, the text is entirely Christian in character but singers don't need any sense of religion to revel in the delicious interchange of themes, nor in the dissonances and resolutions of chords as the work progresses.

Of course, it is a challenge to keep tuning and unity of tone. The Choir is keen to rise to the challenge and sufficiently confident that we can meet it that we have chosen this piece to be a part of our competition programme in the Eskdale Music Festival in Whitby later this month..

O Sacrum Convivium
Colne Valley Male Voice Choir

<https://on.soundcloud.com/G3niXLa5BehWenbt5>

A fine new piece – “O Love”

Our librarian handed out some new music the other night at rehearsal. It will be a fabulous addition to our repertoire when we get to grips with its subtleties. Even on first run through, the Choir warmed to its generous spirit and luscious, emotional harmonies.



‘O Love’ was composed in 2018 by American composer, **Elaine Hagenberg**.

The lyrics are taken from an old hymn by Scottish Minister, **George Matheson**. Born in 1842, Matheson was blind from the age of seventeen. “**O Love, that wilt not let me go**” was written on the evening of Matheson’s sister’s marriage. Years before, he had been engaged, until his fiancée learned that he was going blind - that there was nothing the doctors could do - and she told him that she could not go through life with a blind man. He had gone blind while studying for the ministry and his sister had been the one to care for him through the years. He was now 40, and his sister’s marriage likely brought a fresh reminder of his own heartbreak. It was in the midst of this circumstance in 1882 that Matheson penned this hymn, which he said was written in five minutes. Readers will probably be familiar with the words.

*“O Love that will not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe;
That in thy ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.*

*O Joy that seeks me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain
And feel the promise is not vain
That morn shall tearless be”*

This fine version by the **Dallas Chamber Choir** features a double bass player. It’s lovely.



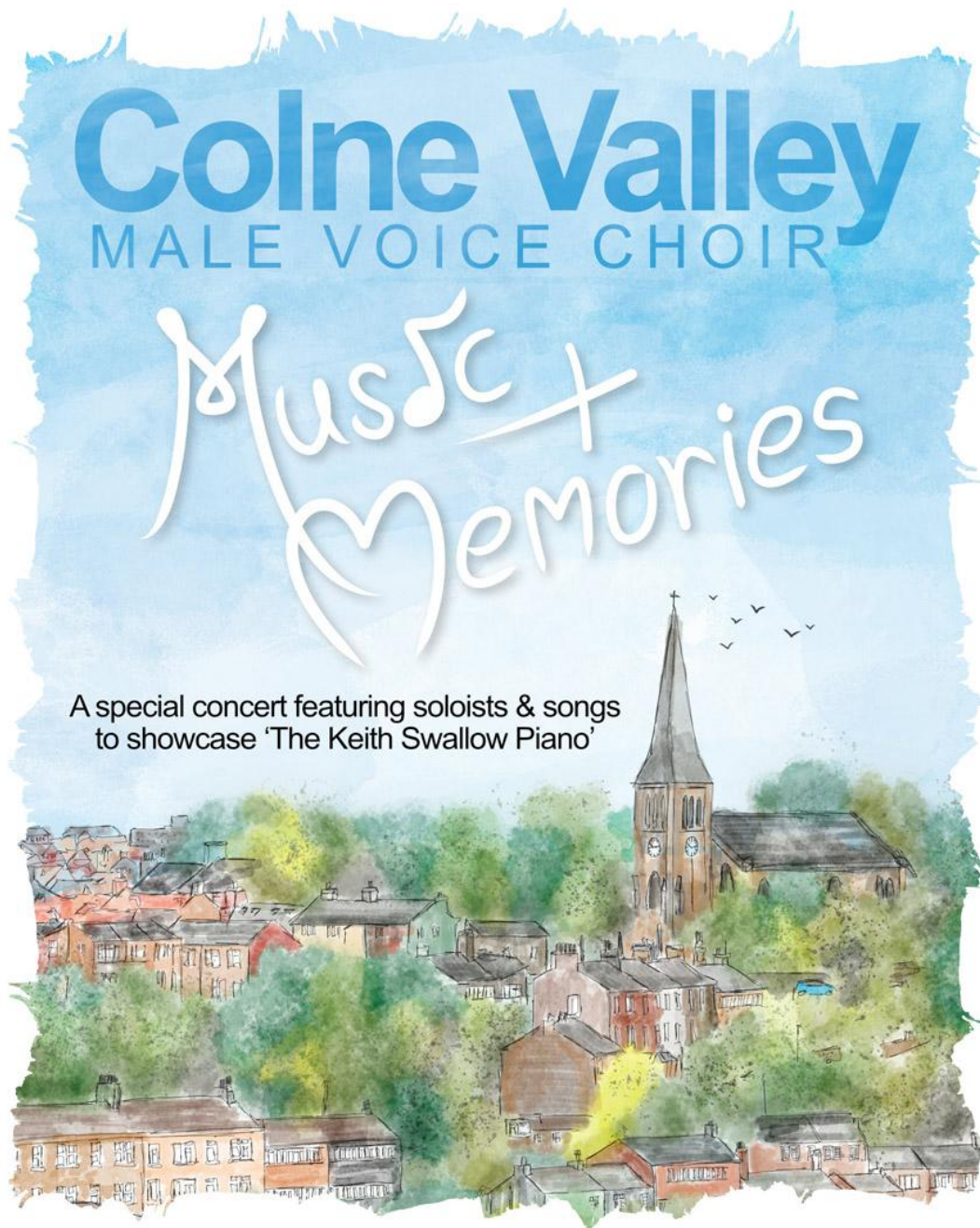
Click on this link to view:

<https://youtu.be/Gcrpil3gC1c>

Golcar gig's experimental approach

There's to be a concert at Golcar in early May. Partly it's to showcase the fine Piano that our esteemed accompanist, **Keith Swallow**, bequeathed to the Choir when he passed away after so many years as our accompanist and soloist. His piano, now housed with our friends at Golcar Church, will feature heavily in our performance programme on May 12th.

But there will be another innovative feature. There will be no tickets sold at this concert. **Admission will be free.** Instead we are trialling a 'Pay What You Feel' approach. At the end of the concert we will ask our audience to contribute, according to how much they have enjoyed the afternoon's entertainment.



A special concert featuring soloists & songs
to showcase 'The Keith Swallow Piano'

Sunday 12th May 2024

2:30pm | St. John's Church, Golcar

Free admission

With a 'pay what you feel' collection following the concert

MUSICAL DIRECTOR
Thom Meredith

ACCOMPANIST
Christopher Pulleyn



No Party Politics Please



Veteran Baritone, **David Hirst**, can't quite recall but he reckons that Colne Valley Male Voice Choir has been rehearsing at the **Conservative Club** in Slaithwaite since the mid 1960's - close on sixty years.



Some newer members have said they were somewhat put off joining by a reluctance to rehearse in a place with 'Conservative' in the name....

But **VotV** can reassure members and potential members that **CVMVC** is strictly apolitical.

We are without political affiliations of any kind. It's likely that some individual members might be dyed-in-the-wool Tories, there will be quite a few rabid Lefties, no doubt many a Green and probably a good handful of namby-pamby Liberals.

But that doesn't matter - our purpose is to sing together and the name of our rehearsal venue says nothing about our organisational political neutrality.

Our current home base at the Conservative Club building on Britannia Road in Slaithwaite itself has a long history. The observant will have noticed a date set into the stonework above the main door - which says the building dates to 1879.

But it is believed that the Club goes back even earlier to 1856.



We've shared ourselves around

In point of fact, back in 1922, Colne Valley Male Voice Choir was founded at the **Liberal Club** in Slaithwaite in a building that still exists but is now known as the Civic Centre.



Sometime later in the nineteen-twenties, the Choir moved to new rehearsal rooms in the **Socialist Club and Institute** on Commercial Street on the far side of Manchester Road from the main village.

The picture below shows us at the Labour Club in 1928.



This is another building that still exists, but completely repurposed as a venue for fitness training and more recently as a day centre for the care of disabled adults.



Recently deceased baritone, **John Radcliffe**, told Voice of the Valley some years ago that when he joined the Choir in 1958, he was very rapidly promoted to be the Choir's Librarian.



It seems that the previous keeper of the Choir's music, the tee-total **Thomas Smailes**, had resigned in disgust when the Choir had been unplaced in a competition in Blackpool after the adjudicator had commented that some of the Choir had 'drink taken' prior to going onstage.



Rats in the Labour Club

John recalled that it might have been 17 years later that he had to move the Choir's extensive music library from the **Labour Club**, when it was found that the Labour Club store was damp and that much of the music had been nibbled by rats.

But others say the Labour Club simply wanted to raise the rent and the Choir's management made a better deal with the Con Club.

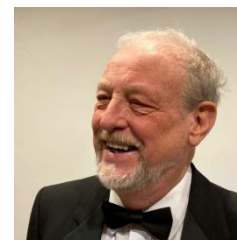
Whatever, apart from a staircase that's perilous for older, frailer members and a slightly 'down-at-heel' feel, we've been happy enough at the Con Club ever since.

Well it made me smile...



For the full 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

Events Recordings Our History About Us Information

