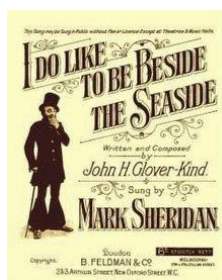




A grand day out in Whitby



The words of the old song: 'Oh I do love to be beside the seaside' proved apt, yet again, as Colne Valley took the coach to Whitby to sing in the famous **Eskdale Music Festival** on Saturday (April 20th).



The well-remembered ballad was written just 5 years after the Festival started up in 1903. And for the Choir's friends and singers, on the trip in 2024, what a grand day out it turned out to be.

'Colne Valley Male Voice Choir Triumphs at Seaside Music Festival', writes Kieran Chadha.

'This weekend, under the sunny skies of Whitby, Colne Valley Male Voice Choir - a local choir with over a hundred years of music-making history in and around Huddersfield - celebrated well-earned success at The Eskdale Festival of the Arts.

After months of hard work under the expert leadership of Musical Director, **Thom Meredith**, fifty Colne Valley singers competed in three classes against fierce competition from across the North.



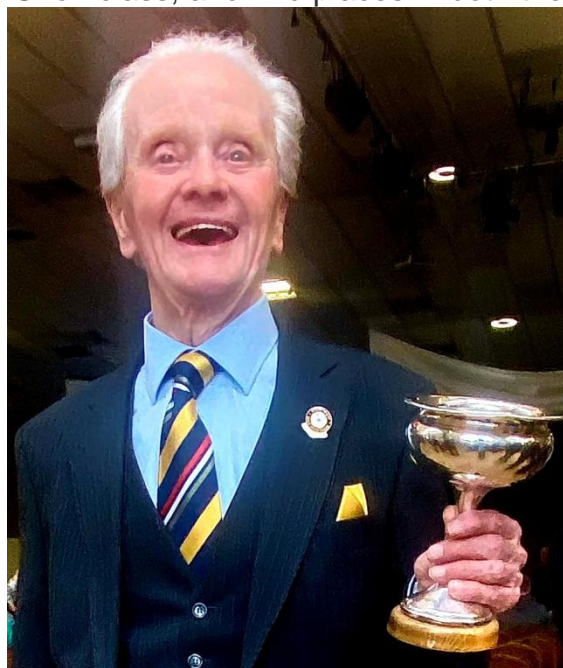
Singing a mix of sacred and popular music, including the Festival's set piece for the Male Voice Choir class, 'Do you hear the people sing?' from world-famous musical **Les Misérables**, Colne Valley took home three prizes - 1st place in the Male Voice Choir class, and 2nd places in both the Sacred Music class and the Recital class.

"We couldn't be happier with the result!" says Thom,



Thom was pleased

"It was a pleasure to be part of such a wonderful festival and to enjoy performances from so many excellent choirs. The Colne Valley men have shown incredible dedication and commitment over the past few months, so it was great to see all our hard work pay off."



Oldest singing Member, Ken Farr 91, was happy, too.

Amongst those contributing to the success on stage were a dozen singers who recently joined after taking part in the Choir's 'Let All Men Sing!' initiative - a community choir project that encourages men with no musical experience to give singing a try. Success at the Eskdale Festival tops a busy year for the new recruits, who have been diligently learning music in between concerts and growing in confidence week-on-week.



The LAMS contingent was pretty pleased. Here's Peter Fox, Peter Partridge with Tom Jennings in the background. David, showing the certificate, seems happy, too.



'Do you Hear the People Sing'- the set test piece - was enriched in Colne Valley's version with a fine strong, solo call to arms from Baritone, **Chris Pilgrim**. He's seen here with choirmen congratulating him after the Choir's victory is called.

Equally pleased was the day's Stage Manager, **Barry Slater**, who got us all onstage, looking smart and 'professional'.



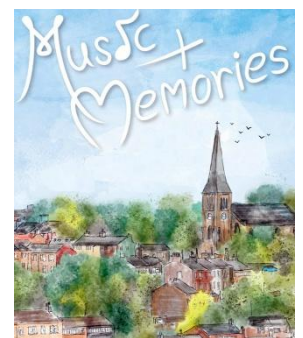
Fresh from success in Whitby, the Choir returns to rehearsals on Mondays in Slaithwaite, turning their attention to their next upcoming engagement - '**Music & Memories**' at **St John's Church, Golcar** on **12th May**.

Sunday 12th May 2024

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

Free admission

With a 'pay what you feel' collection following

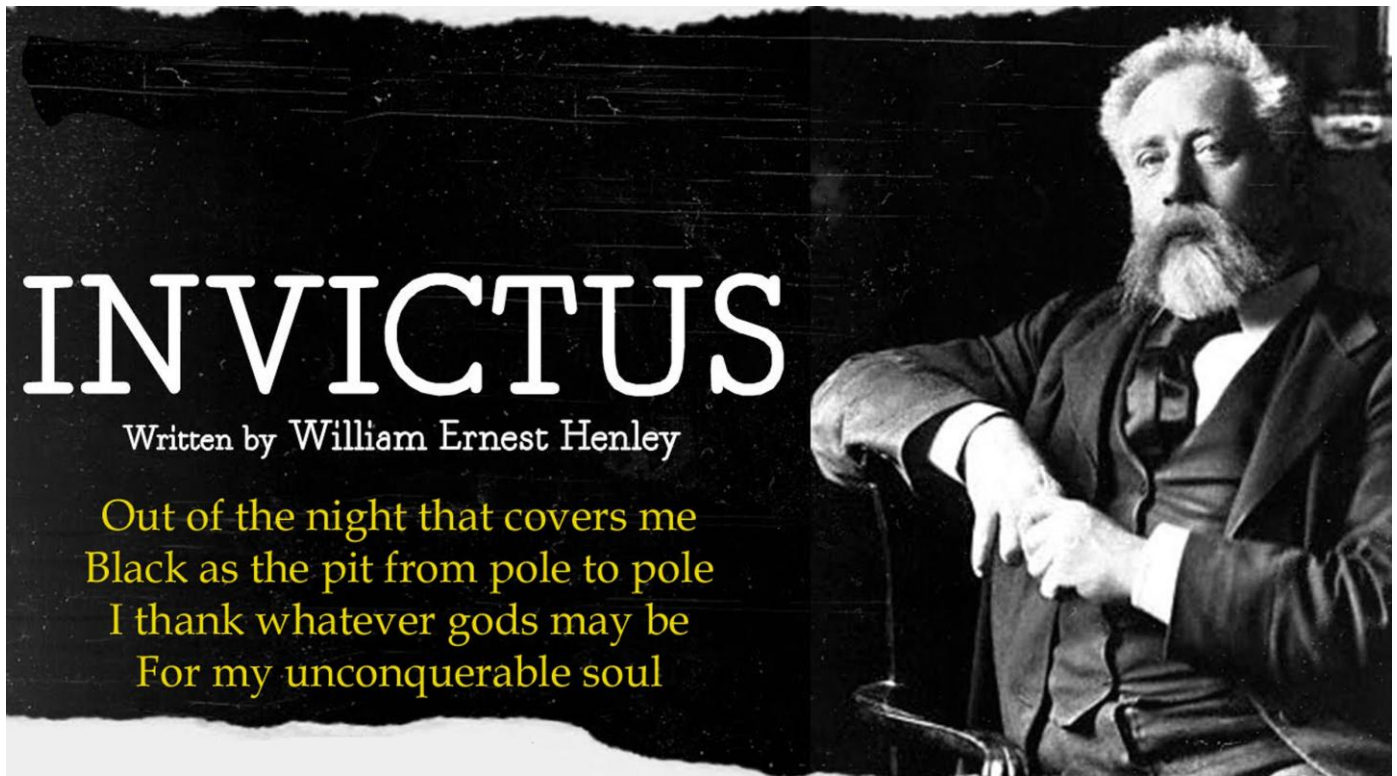


This special concert will showcase '**The Keith Swallow Piano**', which was gifted to the Choir following the passing of their legendary former accompanist last year. Now, with new accompanist **Christopher Pulleyn**, the Choir looks forward to delighting audiences with a mix of new music and old favourites as they continue their proud legacy of music-making in the Colne Valley.



Invictus

One of the pieces we included in our prize-winning recital at Whitby was the very potent anthem, 'Invictus' which tells of the fortitude of the poet as he battles terrible illness and increasing disability. Whatever cruel fate throws at him he is determined to remain resolute and undefeated.



It's stirring stuff and a magnificent arrangement by Daniel Hall. The choir hasn't recorded it and some of the versions online are paltry stuff. Here's a good one by a young men's choir from Taiwan. I think you will enjoy it.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dCj5PAthvKM>

&Piano

Many performers, one piano, amazing music.
A festival celebrating live music & performance.

Chris and Kieran and friends are back for another year, bringing good music to the Colne Valley.

& Piano Music Festival 2024 April 27th - May 25th

& Piano returns for its fifth festival – celebrating amazing live music, performed by top musicians from across the North of England.

Chris Pulleyn, the organising genius tells behind the festival, tells *VotV* he has another fantastic line-up, with incredible singers, musicians from Opera North and the World Premiere of a new song cycle by emerging composer, Alice Beckwith setting poems by Poet Laureate, Simon Armitage.

To find out about the wide variety of local events and venues, click on the image below.



What's on link https://issuu.com/andpianofest/docs/2024_brochure

And you can get your tickets online by clicking on [this link https://andpiano.co.uk/whats-on/](https://andpiano.co.uk/whats-on/)

Did the Earth move for you?

...the Choir's California Tour 40 years on

40 years ago around Easter 1984 some 45 men of the Colne Valley Male Voice Choir went on tour to the USA - specifically to California.

They flew in a **Panam Boeing 747 Transatlantic**. (Incidentally, the very same jet - N739PA - that was brought down by terrorists over Lockerbie some four years later in 1988.)



Triumph for Meredith's men!



Four trophies in the bag — Colne Valley Male Voice Choir conductor Thom Meredith (left) and choir chairman Ken Denton with the cups, shield and plate won in Blackpool

Seaside tonic

“On Good Friday 1984, a Choir of 45, some with their wives, flew from Heathrow to San Francisco for a fortnight's concert tour, staying overnight with families from churches.

Having had a tour of San Francisco and daily concerts en-route, we had journeyed a hundred miles south to our Day 4 destination in Martinez. From a mid-morning civic reception we were allocated to our overnight host.

One time second tenor and former Choir Chairman, **Ken Denton**, wrote about the trip for *VotV*.

Here we see him and Thom celebrating another seaside competition victory as reported in the local paper- *The Huddersfield Examiner*. The Choir had won in Blackpool.

This was in November 2001, while Ken was still Chairman.

The Editor is pleased to share his 2014 recollections of an amazing trip, which he sent to *VotV* - he edited the choir's magazine himself in pre- internet days.

Ken, 41 years a choir member, died, where he was born, in the village of Holme in 2019.

He recalls the USA trip as follows:-



*With a fellow second tenor I was introduced to Shaaron - a single parent with a teenage son. Her employment was as secretary to the town judge. Needing to make preparations for lunch, Shaaron suggested that we might like to visit the nearby **Viano Winery**. With little ado we were invited to sample the rows of wines, from light whites to dark reds, which we did with great pleasure. The half-mile walk back took us to join Shaaron and neighbour, Dot, at a table sagging under the weight of a large turkey.*

Sharing our winery purchases as we went along, we were abruptly disturbed at 1.16pm, when the world started to do odd things.

*My first thought was that the wine must have caught up with me, so I was relieved when Shaaron said, “**Gee, Dot, we're having a quake.**” We were led to stand under door frameworks, one of a house's strongest quake-resistant points.*

As swinging lampshades settled down and cups stopped rattling, television and radio announced that the quake was centred 30 miles away on the San Andreas Fault; it had lasted for ten seconds and, at 6.2 on the Richter scale, was the strongest for over 60 years.”

*That same evening the local Martinez newspaper's review of the previous evening's concert was headed “**English Choir's Sonorous Tone Moved the Earth**”.*

There's a postscript to this tale. Five years later, while manning an exhibition stand at San Jose, further south in California, I was just 25 miles from the epicentre of the 7.0 earthquake which brought down San Francisco's Oakland Bay Bridge, with considerable loss of life.



1989 San Francisco Earthquake



1984 Morgan Hill Earthquake

Huddersfield Cine Club made a fine film of the tour. The Choir is grateful to them for recording an important element of the Choir's 100 year history of fine singing.

VotV is pleased to make it available to its readers. Click on this link. <https://youtu.be/PdWI9qBHoQk>



Thom tests a few pieces for the summer repertoire

The post-Whitby rehearsal saw a change in direction. Thom was focussed on the 2023 LAMs men, the new 2024 LAMS men (seeking to join the ever-expanding Choir) and of course the longer-established members. Competition pieces now out of the way, Thom was trying out with us some of the pieces which will involve all our singers - new and old - in music that will form our summer performance repertoire.



There are some old favourites which seem likely to be resurrected from the library, some new pieces we have never performed before as a Choir and some that we've just not sung for a while.

And many of them are 'Crackers': great pieces the Choir will love to sing and the audience will delight in hearing.

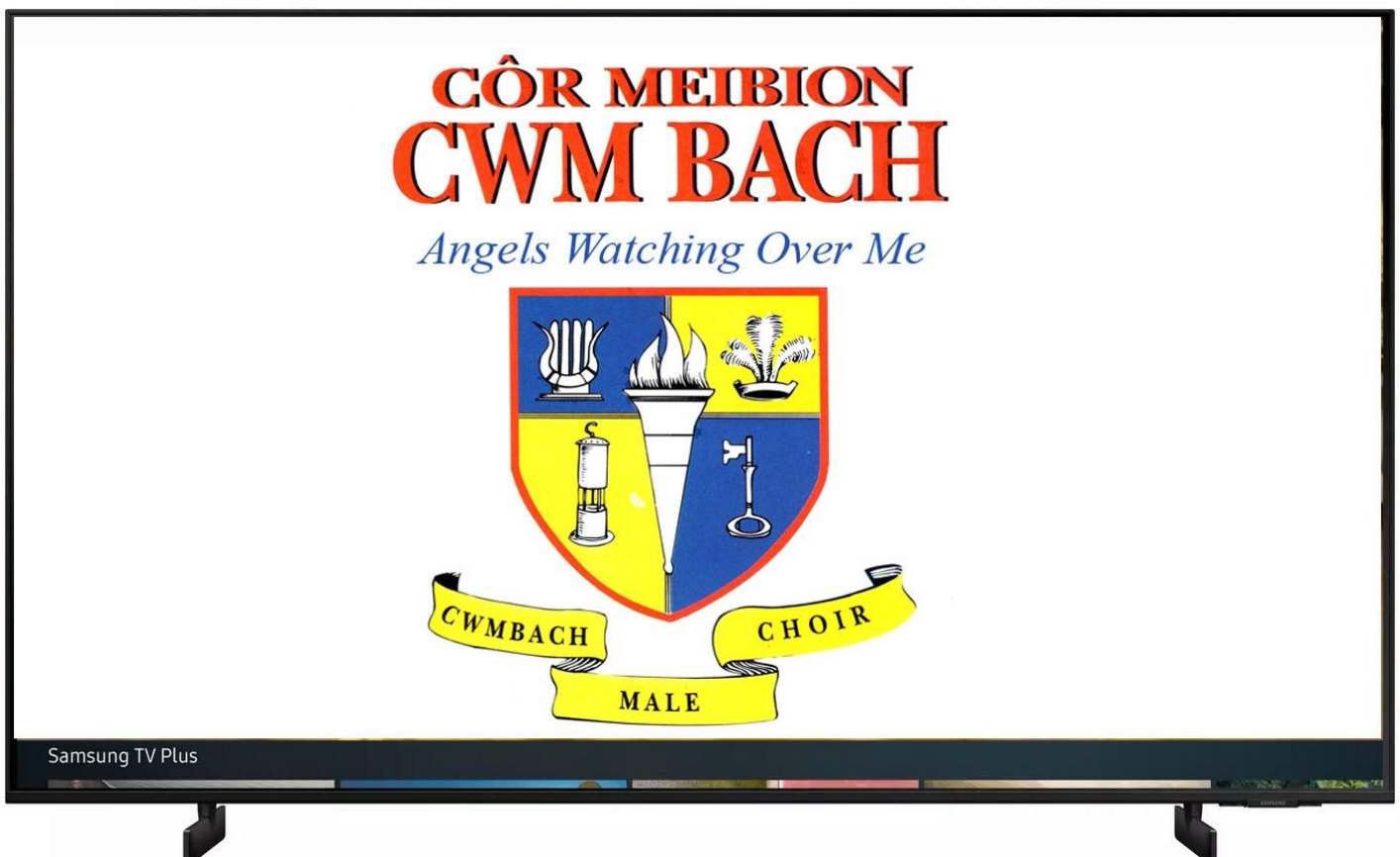


There's a new lease of life for one old favourite: **The Irish Blessing**.

For those who don't know it, there's an updated video of the Choir singing this anthem, made originally to celebrate the Choir's Centenary Year. Go to this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P4htY4IBLjM>

And another 'Oldie but Goldie' is coming out again - '**Angels watching over me**'. Your editor isn't sure whether we've recorded a version but here's a pretty good one by **Cwmbach Male Choir**.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NXq6aTAHZc>

International Relations

Keen *VotV* reader, **Alex Denholme**, has been in touch. He tells your Editor he recently made a visit to Austria, taking with him a stock of CVMVC recordings.

Morning Mr Editor,

*Over Easter, I visited a museum in the wilds of Upper Austria. It is devoted to the life and works of a composer called **Ignaz Joseph Pleyel** - a contemporary of Mozart.*

They have a studio and audience space, and were delighted to play some of your Choir CD's over their loudspeaker system.

They were enthused by your performances backed up by brass bands - to quote the museum curator 'oompah bands are great'.



How it might have looked - embarrassing for a Brit

We are now best friends, and after been treated to exotic chocolate cake, I was given DVDs and CDs.

I was, for the first time in my life, kissed on both cheeks by a bloke!



Carry on singing,

Best wishes,

Alex

VotV has discovered that the village birthplace of Ignaz Joseph Pleyel is **Ruppertal** by the Czech border. It is home to the **Ignaz Pleyel Gesellschaft**, which runs the museum, where, now, the Colne Valley Male Voice Choir is suddenly famous.

Your Editor had never heard of Pleyel. Maybe he'll be unfamiliar to other readers - so here's a clip of one of his works. Enjoy (and thanks Alex for the story.)



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

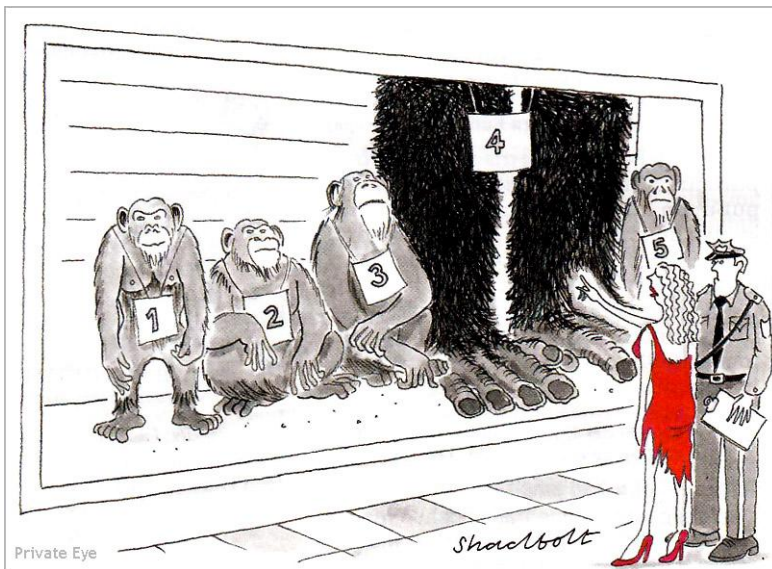


Well, it made Peter Kelly, smile...



"Your car has been keyed. The good news is that the damage appears to B minor."

...and this tickled your Editor...



Private Eye

Shane Bolt

Tell me a story, send me a picture

Do let the VotV Editor know if something happens to you, that might be of interest and has some - even if tenuous - connection with the Choir. Doesn't matter if you are not very confident writing, I'll help you put into publishable shape.




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

And see our website to get the full story

colnevalleymvc.org.uk

Colne Valley Male Voice Choir
Est 1922

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