



It's a Grand Night (afternoon actually) for Singing



The Colne Valley team made its first appearance over in **Littleborough**, the other Sunday - and what a grand afternoon it was.

By all accounts there had been some local scepticism when a few of the Church leaders booked us for a concert. But by the end, when the audience gave us a standing ovation - any doubters had been well and truly won over, saying, 'We must book these folk again. They were brilliant.'

These were the good people of Littleborough's Roman Catholic Church. The building had a fine acoustic which Colne Valley men were able to fill with a rich sound.

The more we felt the audience were engaged and enjoying our efforts the finer our performance became.

It was a hot afternoon.

We sang fourteen numbers and many of us felt the strain but we could not have had a better day.



This was one of those lovely concerts that CVMVC does on its own - no brass bands or outside guests - just our in-house talent. There were solo elements in our songs but solo spots of super quality came from within our ranks. **Thom Meredith** (whose 'Mr Cellophane' was so uninhibited it almost broke into a dance routine) gave us a fine set as always.

Chris Pilgrim gave us two Vaughan Williams pieces and the other **Chris (Pulley)**, despite not having a proper piano, coaxed a wonderful performance from his keyboard of a cracking Spanish piece by **Albéniz**. We must mention **Benedict Stubbs**. His lyrical viola obbligato makes 'O' Love' even more special.



But maybe the star of the show was a **Sam Blagbrough**. Sam brought out his French horn only to reveal the case was empty. Perhaps most of us had by now guessed that Sam's feigned embarrassment was just the precursor to that wonderful song by **Flanders and Swann**. Sam really did it justice!

If you don't know it - or even if you do – it's well worth listening to the original version cunningly lifted from Mozart.



Sam gets the horn

<https://youtu.be/VjA6bA1qtqQ>



Afterwards many a singer - and probably a few of the audience - repaired to the Old Bridge Inn In Ripponden (reputedly the oldest pub in Yorkshire) for a cool and refreshing drink.



And the consensus what a grand afternoon.

Brian calls it a day

Local farmer and enthusiastic bass let it be known he was reckoning on giving up singing with Colne Valley Male Voice Choir.

But it was a moving occasion when Brian and his partner, Sue, were there at rehearsal a couple of weeks ago and Chairman Kieran said a few words to let the rest of the Choir know.



Thanking Brian for his contributions over close on twenty years he wished him well. These sentiments were echoed by the Choir who gave Brian a warm and sustained round of applause.

Brian (seen here at the Choir's Centenary Dinner), tells *VotV* he has had growing mobility problems in recent times and finds getting to rehearsals and onstage increasingly difficult.

"It's time to call it a day." he said, *"But I'll be dropping by rehearsals every now and then to see how you are all doing."*

He says he has handed over the labour of running the farm to his children in recent years. It has been a daily commitment for years which he's now shed but not without mixed feelings.

He recalls how he still had farm-work to do the day he married Sue and how it seemed right that they celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary on the farm, too. That was 4 years ago.



VotV says, come back and sing in whenever you can, Brian and may you and Sue enjoy your retirement, even if you can't wrangle livestock in quite the way you once did.

One out, one in

On the night we said thank you and farewell to Brian (not for long - he and Sue were enthusiastic participants in our Littleborough audience) we welcomed another new chap into membership.

This is **Matthew Treece** and we are happy to have him.



Matt is married, likes cats and is a lawyer prosecuting villains who break environmental laws - Good for him! He tells VotV:-

'A few lines about how I came to join:'

***Declan** (from the bass section) told me about doing LAMS in previous years and recommended it to me. So I signed up for it this year and had a whale of a time. Enough people then encouraged me to come along to see what the main Choir was like for me to decide to give it a go and I'm glad I did - having had such a good time at LAMS, I would definitely be feeling the lack of a weekly choir rehearsal by now.*

*I haven't sung since the age of about 9 (with the exception of somehow and slightly unintentionally ending up in the chorus of **Oklahoma!** in Halifax last year, where I happened to meet **Chris Pilgrim** playing Will Parker and **Chris Pulleyn** on the piano - it's a small world).'*

*Regards,
Matt*

AGM - what a thrill

Colne Valley Male Voice Choir (and its Vice Presidents) will make a little bit of history in June, when it holds its first **Annual General Meeting** on a rehearsal night. This is for two reasons. One, it'll guarantee a pretty full attendance and two, it should make the meeting short and sweet as everybody would rather be singing than grappling with administrative issues.

Members should be there on **Monday June 30th 2025**.

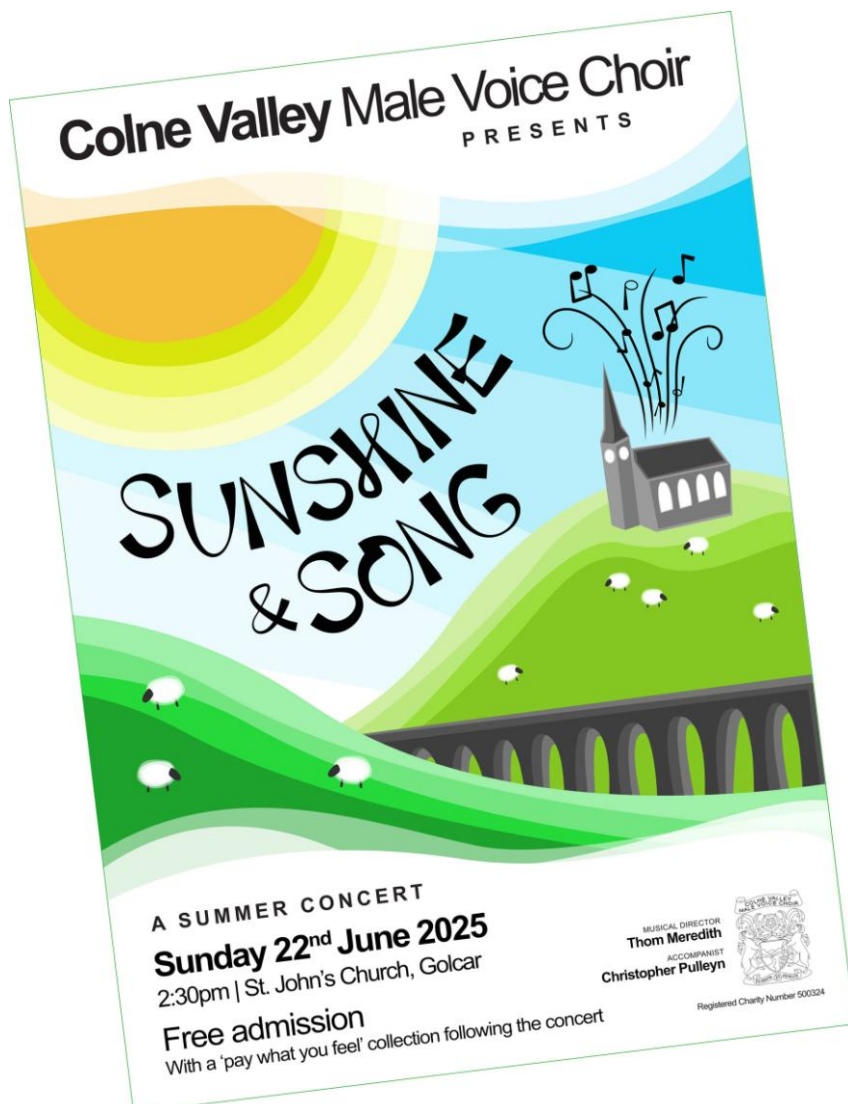
Our very highly esteemed Choir Secretary, **Jenny Baxter**, (who refuses to be photographed) has been trying to retire for several years now. This time she really means it! Thank goodness, having been made a '**Vice President**', she'll continue to bring her wisdom and experience to help the new guy out.



Chairman Kieran reminds our readers...

Sunshine & Song

2:30pm Sunday 22nd June at St John's Church, Golcar



Kieran writes:-

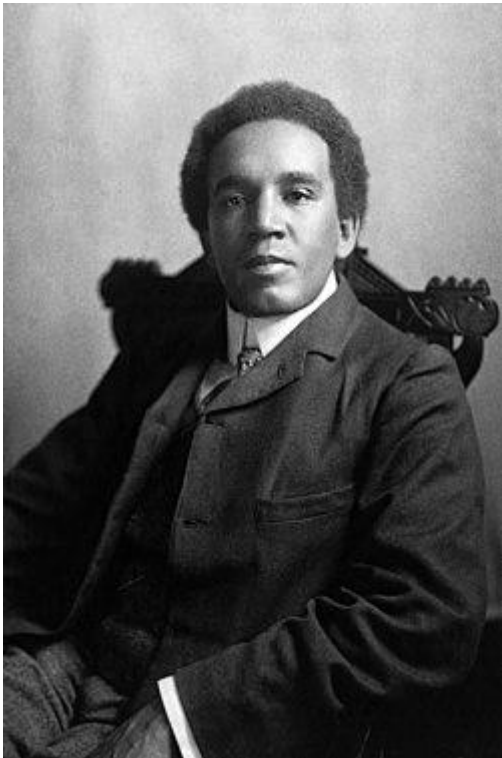
'A summer concert from Colne Valley Male Voice Choir, featuring a mix of beloved classics and modern masterpieces, showcasing soloists from amongst our singers.'

'Admission is free, with a 'pay what you feel' collection following the concert.'

'There will also be a raffle and refreshments available.'

'This afternoon family-friendly event is a great opportunity to show your support for a local charitable organisation and celebrate music making in the community.'

VotV confidently expects that **Chris Pulley** will do a slot - this time playing the wonderful '**Keith Swallow**' baby-grand that Chris's magnificent predecessor bequeathed to the Choir after his sixty odd years of music-making with us.



VotV is pleased to present one of Keith's recordings - a wonderful piano piece by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor



Born in August 1875 in Holborn, London, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor was a prolific composer. At the time Coleridge-Taylor was much admired both in the UK and in America. Supported by Elgar, he was often dubbed the 'African Mahler'.

The piece is called '**Demande et Réponse**' from his '**Petite Suite de Concert**' written in 1911.

He died the following year aged just 37. It was generally reckoned his early death was hastened by poverty. Although his work was popular, he was paid very little for it. - the publishers got lots. His death was one of the triggers that led to the formation of the 'Performing Rights Society (PRS)' which sought to ensure that artists and composers got a decent share of the profits from their work. Plus ça change, eh!



Keith Swallow reported that he had known the piece almost all his life. It had been a popular piece, generally known by the name 'Question & Answer'.

Keith's piano version is just superb.

https://youtu.be/QE6h_AZIQWE

Concert on the Hill remembered



Concert on the Hill was staged at the **Laund Hill Sports Ground** every July for at least 18 years. It was an outdoor event at **Salendine Nook**.

With the performers in the stands and the audience all across the pitch, it became, for those Saturday Nights, a place where the great traditions of Yorkshire were brought together; an award winning brass band - Lindley Brass Band - and two great male voice choirs - Honley and Colne Valley - plus the prize-winning Lindley Junior School Choir.

The format was similar to the '**Last Night of the Proms**', and concluded with a spectacular Pyrotechnic Finale. Every year families from all over Huddersfield and Yorkshire converged on this idyllic sports arena to watch top quality local musicians perform the true British classics of years past; **Land of Hope and Glory**, **Rule Britannia** and **God Save the Queen**.





They brought picnics, tables and chairs, gazebos, even candelabra. The atmosphere was informal and epitomised Yorkshire friendliness, every one wandering about marvelling at the efforts that people had gone to for an evening of classical entertainment.

The spectacle finished with a dazzling firework display in time to the music. After which many spectators and performers retired to the clubhouse for yet more refreshment (and to get warm). The Huddersfield Examiner described the event as “a night of music and merriment.”



Readers may recognise the young chap in the front of this audience pic!



Just a few days later – on **Thursday 26th June**, the Choir will be performing again. Renewing our association with the very fine **Hammonds Brass Band**, our two august institutions in Yorkshire's Cultural life will be opening the 2025 **Halifax Minster Summer Festival**. The acoustics in this fabulous, ancient church create an environment to savour, whether you are an instrumentalist, a singer or an audience member.

Here, for your delight, is a link to one of the Band's glorious performances. This was when they went on tour in the Loire Valley a couple of years ago, performing under the guidance of our **Musical Director, Morgan Griffiths** on their way to becoming 2023 French Open Champions.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nxXIFptl05w&t=150s>

We look forward to meeting up with them again in Halifax.

(Incidentally, this will be our 8th event of 2025 so far. Still, better to be busy!)



It'll be a good do!

Tickets will be available on the door in person or in the Minster Shop by cash or card.


The concert begins at 7:30pm

That's on June 26th

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



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