

# THE CLARION

Newsletter of the Nelson Arion Male Voice Choir

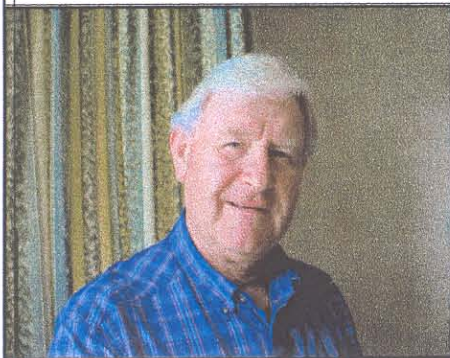
Editor: Gerry Brown

AUTUMN 2005



## MEET OUR NEW CHAIRMAN

### KEN HOLLAS



Born 1943 in Huddersfield, Yorkshire. Has lived in Lancashire for the past 35 years 'doing missionary work' among the unfortunates on the wrong side of the border.

One of my earliest recollections is of me sitting on my father's knee and him singing 'A Farmer's Boy' to me. My father, no mean baritone, and my mother a mezzo soprano in local church choirs, always encouraged me to sing, and so I have been singing for most of my life.

I was introduced to the Arion by John Thornton in 1979 when we were both coaching junior rugby at Calder Vale RUFC. I mentioned to John in conversation that I was going over to Huddersfield that day to do some solo ...P2

## Dates for your Diary

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**Sat 10th Dec 2005**  
St. Johns Church  
READ—Nr Burnley

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**Sat 17th Dec 2005**  
Annual Xmas Cracker  
Yorkshire Building Society  
Concert Brass Band  
(Municipal Hall—Colne)  
TICKETS 01282 428384  
(From 1st Nov 01282 661234)

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**Sat 14th Jan 2006**  
St Matthews Church  
St Matthews Street  
BURNLEY

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**Sat 21st Jan 2006**  
St Thomas' Church  
BARROWFORD  
Proceeds to Church Development

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**All Concerts Commence At**  
7-30 pm

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**We regret that all tickets for the Katherine Jenkins Concert have been sold.**

### NIDD HALL 10 FEB 2006

Quite a lot of interest has been shown in our proposed visit to this wonderful venue in Yorkshire. The invitation is open to all our Patrons and Supporters who are able to attend this three day event. The cost is only £185 per person - half board. If you would prefer to just support the Sunday concert on Sunday 12th Feb and stay for a three course dinner, the cost would be £25 per head. Speak with Gerry Brown. 01282 428384.

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KEN HOLLAS (Cont'd from Page 1)

.....singing for my former singing teacher. John's ears pricked up at this and before my feet could touch the ground I was being introduced to Frank and the rest, as they say is history.

I have been privileged to have been a part of many of the Arion's successes over the past 26 years and a privilege indeed it has been -it is not given to many to be a part of such a unified and purposeful body of men, so as your new Chairman with something of the weight of history on his shoulders, and attempting to follow the example of Neville Mitchell an outstanding Chairman over the past 27 years, I approach chairmanship of the Arion with some trepidation.

However, I'm sure that with goodwill and the help of the many friends I have made in the Arion, we can continue to make music and enjoy the good fellowship that is the hallmark of the Male Voice Choir movement.

The funeral took place at Cowling Methodist Church on the 8th September 2005 of Vera Hoyle whose husband David has been a prominent member of the choir over a number of years. There was a large attendance of members, friends and relatives, some of whom had travelled from as far away as Australia. Eulogy was given by members of the family. Vera will long be remembered as a lady whose kindness and support of her family was a very prominent part of her life. To all who had the privilege of knowing Vera, she will be sadly missed.

### CHOIR NOTES

Congratulations to Patron Secretary PAUL WRATHMAN, who has recently been appointed Vice Chairman of the Choir.

The year 2006 could be very busy, as the choir prepare to return to the competitive platform. Having had a reasonable recruitment drive, our Musical Director is currently 'bleeding' new members to enter the musical arena - and there isn't a better place to start than Llangollen!! That really is something to look forward to. But it should be remembered, that success does not come without dedication and hard work.

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It is some 20 years since the choir had a new uniform. During this time Peter Belton (a good looking 2nd Tenor) has realised that his jacket has shrunk!! The good thing is, that his shrunken (tight) trousers have helped him to retain perfect pitch!

## Choir notes cont'd

Is it not time the choir had a 'new look' ?

**This would be a costly exercise and one where we would be looking for any available support. Can you help? Do you know of anyone who would be able to offer sponsorship?**

The choir do appreciate the 'feed back' they get from their Patrons and Supporters.

There have been a number of recent requests, one being that our Musical Director uses a microphone when addressing the audience, particularly for concerts at the Municipal Hall.

Possibly unknown to the audience, in directing the choir, Frank very often sings any one of four parts which he feels needs to be encouraged. Unfortunately there have been occasions where the microphone has not been switched off!! It can be embarrassing.

I feel quite sure that Frank will try and remember the 'hard of hearing' in the future.

The choir have recently brought into their concert programme, music that has brought them huge success on the competitive platform.

The choir are looking to produce two C D's that features this music -in time for Christmas.

Modern technology is being used to reproduce these high quality recordings, the best in Male Voice Singing.

## ROTARY CLUB of COLNE CHARITY CONCERT

There is no greater sound to fill any theatre than that of the finest Male Voice Singing and musical contributions from the 'Best in Brass' - the Brighthouse & Rastrick Brass Band. That was the setting that welcomed the audience to Colne Municipal Hall on the 1st October 2005.

The event was organised by Roy Beal the President of The Rotary Club of Colne and Neville Mitchell until recently Chairman of the Arion

All proceeds were donated to the PENDLESIDE HOSPICE.

This event formed part of the Arion 'Autumn Series' of Concerts, which was designed to bring international artists to the area of Pendle. The support and enthusiasm given by Pendle-folk over the lifetime of the choir has been nothing short of remarkable.

A brief history about the Arion winning the Bardic Chair in 1910 (which was re-presented to the choir during the evening) was given by Frank Smith.

The selection of music provided by both Musical Directors, gave tremendous pleasure to everyone present. The rapturous applause following 'The Floral Dance' and the sea of smiling faces at the end of the concert said it all. What a good night!

Sponsorship was generously provided by John Macadam (Garages) Ltd and Marsden Building Society

Where were they - the male voice singers of Yorkshire? The day was glorious, the venue was stunning at Blackley Baptist Church set high on the hill 'twixt Huddersfield and Halifax and near the M62. The visitors came from New Zealand and, after what happened to the Lions, we needed the strength of Yorkshire Male Voices to show the singing All Blacks what we could do. They stayed away. To more than compensate, however, 40 men from Nelson Arion on the Lancashire side of the Pennines made the journey to Blackley and with just a sprinkling of Yorkshire representatives we had a hundred singers to spend the day with Alan Simmons. He was a splendid leader and surely not a "prophet without honour" in his own country!

The experience was a completely new one for the Nelson men and some, I know, were a little fearful at the prospect of sight singing for a day. Their worries and anxieties were groundless and evaporated within minutes as Alan introduced us to his arrangements and compositions throughout the morning session, including Negro-spirituals, traditional Tyneside songs and Lennon and McCartney. Lunchtime came after we enjoyed a couple of Maori songs from the New Zealanders and then a chance to mingle and mix with the visitors and learn how they organised their singing together, with members travelling up to three or four hours for a weekend rehearsal, the men from each Island meeting separately and coming together just prior to their tour.

After lunch Judith Blezzard introduced us to some singable Schubert from her compilation for male voices, a volume to commend to conductors, and then we undertook some serious work with Alan's commissioned piece for the Comish International Male Voice Festival in May this year. This included clapping, tapping, stamping and finding our way through some tricky rhythms. The Nelson team enjoyed their introduction to this composition and will certainly add it to their repertoire. Finally we had a light-hearted sing at Alan's "King of Swing" featuring Cole Porter, Fats Waller and Glenn Miller.

What did the Nelson men think of their singing day in Yorkshire?

"Alan Simmons is blessed with an infectious and down to earth enthusiasm for his music and he puts this across in a very direct and forceful way!"

"A good exercise for us all - I enjoyed chatting and singing with the New Zealand lads."

"A chance to meet other singers from afar and try different styles of music - educational yet fun."

"A day well organised and serviced. I enjoyed the quick pace of learning - words and notes at the same time!"

"A brilliant day - let's do it again."

FRANK SMITH