

*Saddleworth Historical Society Lecture Series*

# Sarah Harrop and the Singers of Hey Chapel



## *An Illustrated Lecture by Victor Khadem*

The subject of a mere footnote in Radcliffe's *Saddleworth Parish Registers* and virtually unknown today, Sarah Harrop is one of the most significant people in Saddleworth's history. Making her debut at Covent Garden in 1777 at the age of nineteen, she would become one of the leading sopranos of her day, performing for Joseph Haydn in a private recital at her London home and comforting George III with her singing in his bouts of madness.

Even amongst musicologists her life has been overshadowed by the achievements of her husband, the Halifax-born Joah Bates, a civil servant, gifted amateur musician, and organiser and conductor of the highly influential Handel commemoration concerts at Westminster Abbey. This lecture will assess Harrop's cultural importance as a woman in late eighteenth century London, and ask what impact marriage had on her career and the way she has been remembered.

But how did the daughter of a modest woollen weaver from Quickmere emerge as one of England's leading vocalists? The talk will also examine the pivotal importance of Harrop's childhood chapel at Hey, renowned throughout provincial England for its music-making, and will look at the lives of some of its singers who, though not as famous as Harrop, were vital in helping forge the great northern choral tradition.

**Wednesday, 14th September, 7:30 p.m.**

**Saddleworth Museum, High Street, Uppermill OL3 6HS**

**Members Free, Non-Members £3**