# Nightingale captivates and divides St Helens in summer of 1925



In a rather curious chapter of St Helens' history, a nightingale put the town in the limelight during the summer of 1925, captivating large audiences with its melodious songs near Sherdley Park. Celebrated as a rare visitor to the district, the bird's late-night serenades sparked an unusual frenzy among locals, drawing in crowds eager to hear its enchanting music. The St Helens Reporter noted that this extraordinary event was the first recorded occurrence of a nightingale singing in the region, igniting fascination not just locally but across the country.

For two weeks, this songbird delighted residents, drawing attention from as far afield as Liverpool. Reports from the time indicated that millions were enthralled by the BBC’s broadcasts of nightingale performances, notably featuring cellist Beatrice Harrison, which had stoked public interest in these enchanting birds. An article from the Liverpool Echo noted that a resident had heard the nightingale singing late into the night, further fuelling excitement and drawing hundreds to gather at farmer Thomas Ball’s nearby property to listen. The atmosphere, however, was not without its complications; reports indicated that the gatherings led to unruly behaviour, including "hooliganism," and many individuals were seen trampling agricultural land in a bid to catch a glimpse of the avian star.

The euphoria surrounding the nightingale took a tragic turn when it was discovered dead, electrocuted by a damaged power cable. The Daily Express reported that an electrician searching for a current leakage had stumbled upon the unfortunate scene in Ball's field, where the body of the nightingale lay among other deceased creatures. This incident was a stark reminder of the hazards that can accompany sudden fame, not only for wildlife but for the humans drawn to them. Despite the excitement, the local farmer faced substantial difficulties, needing to repeatedly chase off those pursuing the bird for its nest. This saga illustrates the tensions that can arise when nature and humanity's fascination collide.

Despite the initial spectacle and subsequent tragedy, not everyone was convinced that the St Helens nightingale was a genuine phenomenon. Some individuals speculated that the sightings might have been exaggerated or even fabricated. A year later, another alleged nightingale sighting in Sutton Manor stirred further debate, with sceptics wondering whether the bird was indeed a pretender, as cleverly jested in the local press.

The public interest surrounding the evening of the nightingale's singing in St Helens remains a vivid memory recorded in local history, often encapsulated in the works of contemporary authors like Stephen Wainwright, who chronicles such events in his series, "The Hidden History of St Helens." It serves as a fascinating reminder of how a fleeting moment in nature can galvanise a community, both to celebrate and reflect upon the delicate balance between humankind and the wild.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.sthelensstar.co.uk/news/25197890.st-helens-nightingale-unruly-audience/), [[4]](https://www.sthelensstar.co.uk/news/24328462.new-book-featuring-fascinating-stories-st-helens-history/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.sthelensstar.co.uk/news/25197890.st-helens-nightingale-unruly-audience/), [[2]](https://www.sthelenshistorythisweek.info/sthelens100years/), [[5]](https://www.sthelensstar.co.uk/archive/2024/11/05/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.sthelensstar.co.uk/news/16173629.looking-back-st-helens-first-ever-may-queen-nellie/), [[6]](https://www.old-merseytimes.co.uk/sthelenscrimes.html)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.sthelensstar.co.uk/news/25197890.st-helens-nightingale-unruly-audience/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.sthelenshistorythisweek.info/sthelens100years/> - This resource provides weekly articles detailing life in St Helens, Lancashire, during the 1920s. It offers insights into various events and developments in the town, including cultural, social, and economic aspects, as reported in local newspapers of the time. The articles are updated every Sunday morning, presenting a comprehensive view of St Helens' history a century ago.
3. <https://www.sthelensstar.co.uk/news/16173629.looking-back-st-helens-first-ever-may-queen-nellie/> - An article from the St Helens Star recounts the story of Nellie Barnes, the town's first 'May Queen' in 1925. At 13, Nellie was selected from Ragged School to be crowned the inaugural May Queen. The piece includes a photograph and details about Nellie's life, highlighting this significant event in St Helens' history.
4. <https://www.sthelensstar.co.uk/news/24328462.new-book-featuring-fascinating-stories-st-helens-history/> - This article discusses the release of Volume 4 of 'The Hidden History of St Helens' by Stephen Wainwright. The book delves into various historical events and stories from St Helens, including the introduction of new technologies and societal changes. It is available for purchase at local bookstores and online platforms.
5. <https://www.sthelensstar.co.uk/archive/2024/11/05/> - An archived edition of the St Helens Star from November 5, 2024, featuring various local news stories. The edition includes coverage of a serious collision in Greater Manchester, updates on Earlestown's market square regeneration, and the opening of a new office by a growing financial firm in Newton-le-Willows.
6. <https://www.old-merseytimes.co.uk/sthelenscrimes.html> - A compilation of historical crime reports from St Helens, detailing various incidents and legal proceedings. The collection includes accounts of sudden deaths, mysterious shootings, and other notable events, providing a glimpse into the town's past criminal activities.
7. <https://old-merseytimes.co.uk/sthelensinquests.html> - A collection of inquest reports from St Helens, detailing various incidents and legal proceedings. The reports include accounts of sudden deaths, tragic events, and other notable occurrences, offering insights into the town's past legal and social history.