

# Voice



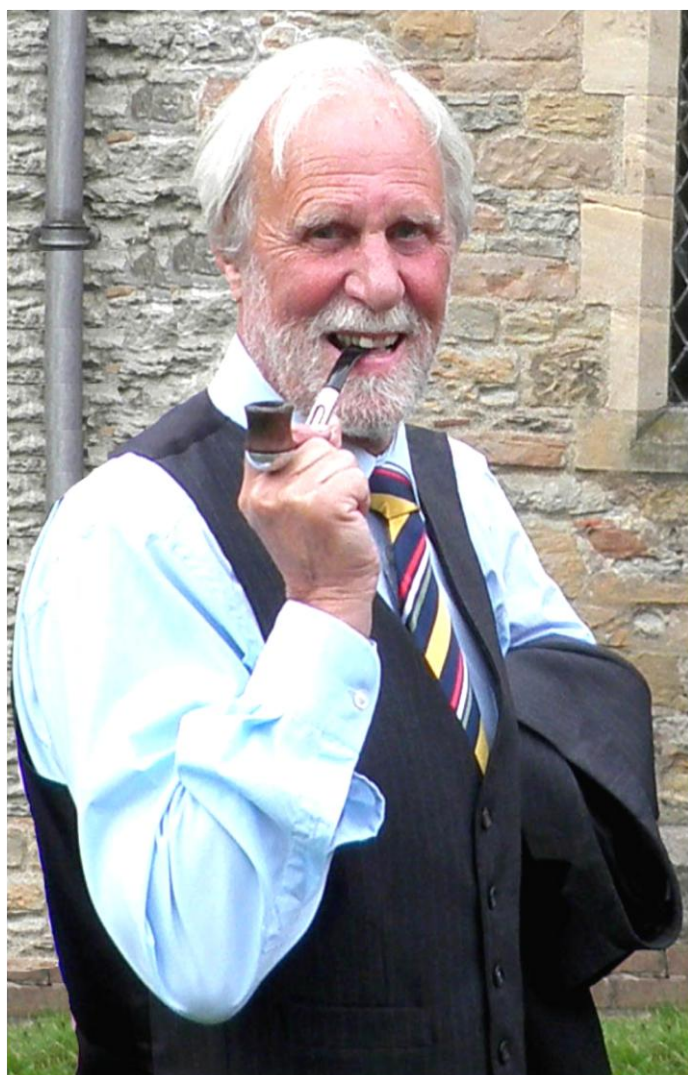
of the

# Valley



Colne Valley Male Voice Choir Newsletter

October 2015



## Man of the Month: Philip Baxter

It was the day before our concert at **Poulton Le Fylde** when the news came through.

Our Musical Director, **Thom Meredith**, had stepped into the road in Dewsbury and had had a painful encounter with an oncoming car, striking him in the midriff. Battered and shaken he had been admitted overnight to hospital for observation. The word came through: he's OK, nothing broken but bruised and shocked, but he would be in no state to conduct Saturday's concert.

There was a hasty debate and then our Man of the Month, Philip Baxter, agreed he would step into the role at just a day's notice.

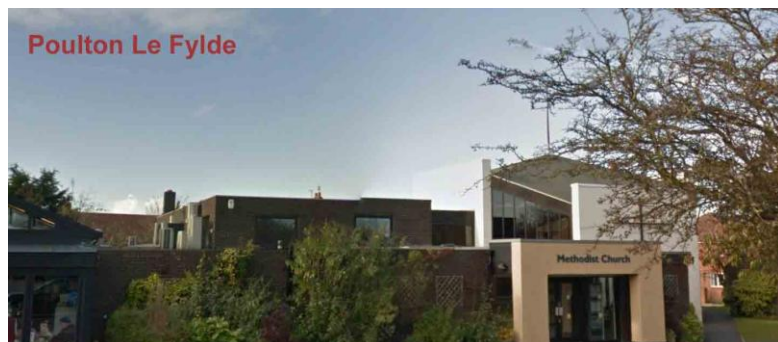
Philip is our rehearsal pianist, assisting Keith Swallow. Whenever Thom is delayed for rehearsals, Philip will usually step in to lead the singing.

But conducting a full performance is something else again!

As we formed up in Poulton le Fylde at Saturday tea-time for a pre-performance run-through, you could see that Philip was aware of the magnitude of the



task he was facing. He urged us to remember the good advice Thom had been drilling into us all summer. "I'll do my best", he said, "But I might not be able to give you as strong a lead as Thom gives us, nor mime the words as clearly as Thom somehow manages to do. But concentrate hard and it'll be fine."



And so it proved: an excellent concert in a venue we love to sing in (this was our 5<sup>th</sup> concert in Poulton) and with an audience that was clearly on our side. Choir Chairman, **Peter Denby**, took on Thom's compere role and won the audience over.

New solo act, **Simon Durrans**, got them singing along with his version of 'Bye-bye, Miss American Pie', the inimitable, **Raymond Eillis**, did his engaging comedy stuff, including the ever-popular Sterndale Bennett suite of short comic songs. **Keith Swallow** amazed us all with his solo piano spot and – another man stepping into the breach, **David Hirst**, sang a couple of baritone solos in the slot, originally allocated in the programme to Thom himself. And, in between, performances of varied groups of songs from the Choir, led with increasing confidence by Philip.



As the Choir spread round the auditorium for our moving final number, 'The Irish Blessing', both Choir and audience knew that they had enjoyed a night to remember.

Readers will be glad to know that a week later, the Choir performed a very similar concert - this time a charity event at Lindley Methodists in aid of '**Action for Children**' and that this time Thom was back on great form. If his bruises were troubling him, he wasn't showing it. But he did take opportunities to acknowledge – with the Choir's full endorsement – our warmest thanks to the **Man of the Hour, Philip Baxter**.



Incidentally this is not the first time Philip has stepped in heroically. Back in 2011 when the Choir went to the Eskdale Music Festival in Whitby, Philip again took over the baton in Thom's sudden absence due to illness,

He conducted the Choir in competition. Our repertoire included, for the first time, that Simon & Garfunkel song, that Philip calls '**Trouble over Bridgewater**'.

We won in every class we competed in.



# Heritage Day



The picture shows '**Heritage Men**' from the Colne Valley, backstage at the **Heritage Open Day** at **Huddersfield Town Hall**.

Colne Valley Male Voice Choir did a half hour show at the hall, which was offering free shows, free tours and a vintage cafe to draw in the public.

There is good reason to celebrate the magnificent Town Hall and the performers who have brought it to life on so many occasions in the last 133 years.



The Hall was built in two stages, beginning with the offices at Ramsden Street which opened in 1879, before the concert hall at Princess Street was opened on October 18, 1881.

Huddersfield Town Hall cost a total of nineteen thousand, three hundred and eighty six pounds, five shillings and sixpence.

Also on hand was Borough Organist, of 25 years, **Gordon Stewart**. Tours of the truly wonderful **Father Willis Organ** were available. (Gordon is a long-term supporter of our Choir and of live music in Huddersfield. He is now in his 'Farewell Series' of organ recitals at the Town Hall and – until next March- every other Monday at 1.00pm, people are invited to enjoy a terrific recital.

In addition to CVMVC, visitors could have seen **The Huddersfield Choral Society**, **New Mill MVC**, **The Slaithwaite Philharmonic**, and various **Kirklees Music School** ensembles.





# Christmas is Coming

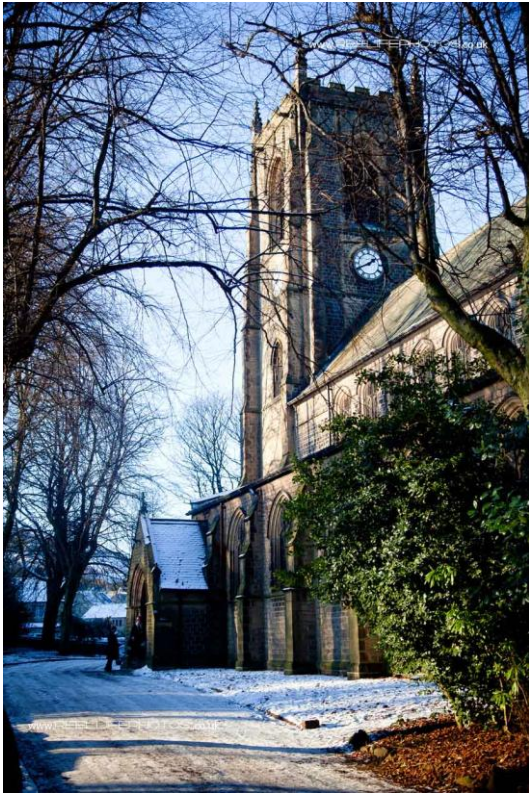


You would hardly believe it but Christmas music was being handed out to Choir members at recent rehearsals. Our summer programme was completed at Lindley on September 26<sup>th</sup> and now we are starting to prepare for our next gigs: the two big Christmas Concerts in December.

The biggest concert of Colne Valley's Year is the **Christmas Festival** at **Huddersfield Town Hall**. This year it will take place on **Sunday December 13<sup>th</sup>** and once again our guests will be our very own **Colne Valley Boys** and – arguably – the best brass band in the world – **Brighouse and Rastrick Band**.







Then on the following Sunday, we will, once again, be the guests of the absolutely superb **Marsden Silver Prize Band** for the joyful Christmas Concert at Marsden's wonderful **Saint Bartholomew's Parish Church**. For many people the concert is the start of Christmas proper.



Marsden Silver Prize Band had enjoyed a terrific renaissance under their Band-master, Glynn Williams. Sadly Glynn has relocated to South Wales and has stepped down.

An announcement of the new Musical Director is imminent. We can be confident that his replacement will keep up the very highest standards that the band has reached in recent years.



Glyn leads the Band at Morley in June this year – one of his final performances with Marsden

# *Singing in a choir is good for you.*



***Researchers at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden have discovered that singing in a choir has health benefits equivalent to yoga.***

*They found that:*

- 1. Choir singers' heartbeats synchronize when they sing together, bringing about a calming effect that is as beneficial to our health as yoga...*
- 2. Singing has a dramatic effect on heart rate variability, which is linked to a reduced risk of heart disease...*
- 3. Singing requires the same controlled breathing as yoga, a study has found, meaning it has similar health benefits...*

## ***And more on the benefits of choral singing:***

*Gothenburg researchers proved that with singing we can train our lungs to breathe better; similarly, a study at Cardiff University in 2012 found that lung cancer patients who sang in a choir had a greater expiratory capacity than those who didn't.*

*Singing has also been shown to boost our immune system, reduce stress levels and can help patients cope with chronic pain.*

*A joint study by Harvard and Yale Universities in 2008 went one step further, claiming that choral singing in a Connecticut town had increased residents' life expectancy.*



If you are reading this, the chances are you already know about Colne Valley Male Voice Choir and our terrific Email Newsletter, '**Voice of the Valley**'.

But, have you told your friends and musical contacts? Do your neighbours and your workmates know what Colne Valley Male Voice Choir is up to?

To help them find out more about our fabulous choir, sign them up for our terrific e-mail newsletter. It's completely free and will land in their in-box every few weeks for as long as they want it. (And you can be assured we won't share their details with anyone!)

Just click on the sign up icon and send us your friends name and email address. We'll send them a welcome message and add them to our list



And see our new website to get the full story  
**[colnevalleymvc.org.uk](http://colnevalleymvc.org.uk)**

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## And another thing.....weird, musical and oddly-fascinating listening

Click on the image or on this link to hear **Petr Fatr Kladkobřinkostroj** and his crazy player piano with added percussion.

Or look up <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a1R8Rx2db9c> on your computer

