

# Back together



'Voice of the Valley' celebrates the return of live rehearsals

May 17th 2021

Monday May 17<sup>th</sup> 2021 is a special day for Colne Valley Male Voice Choir.

For the first time since the virus struck and put a halt to all live music, the Choir got together again to sing. What a treat and something the Choir has been looking forward to for well over a year. Anticipating the return, second tenor, **David Morrison**, told Voice of the Valley....



*'I can't wait to get back to LIVE rehearsals. Whilst Zoom has kept us all together it's just not the same! Missing is all the camaraderie, humour, and support we get from singing together with everyone around us. I'm no solo singer and am tired of hearing my own voice - as is Judith. Singing in the Choir is so rewarding - so let's get going, let's get the show back on the road!'*

And that's exactly what happened. In a small way, with no more than twenty singers in each group and with all sorts of safety procedures in place, the Choir got back together.

Our esteemed Musical Director, **Thom Meredith** and pianist, **Chris Pulleyn**, were back in front leading us in song – not more than 'mezzo forte' of course to keep down the aerosol. For the same reason, the first rehearsal was short - 45 minutes a session – so that our Slaithwaite rehearsal room could be aired and sanitised for a second group. It was pretty chilly, too, with the windows open to maximise ventilation. Sessions were also maintained via Zoom for those choir members who, at this stage, didn't feel ready to join with others except virtually.

Whatever the constraints it's a massive step towards normality and the members were overjoyed.

Singer, **Neil Frankland** added, *'I've missed live rehearsals simply because I've missed being around other people. I'm a social person at heart and I thrive on that contact. I couldn't wait to get back.'*



*'Why did I sign up to be back on the first night?' mused **Geoff Bedford**, with maybe a little more restraint. 'Well, I didn't want to lose my place amongst the lads I'm usually next to come rehearsals and concerts - and more than that - I only live half a mile from **Brian Hearn**, who I share lifts with. Self preservation to be honest'.*





## Chairman Joe Stones tells Voice of the Valley...

*After fourteen months of being unable to meet up and sing as we usually would, on Monday we were back 'live'.*

*But in reality, we never really went away. Even though, our usual rehearsals came to a grinding halt in March 2020, the Choir soon picked up its momentum and moved to rehearsing online via 'Zoom'.*

### ***And what a journey that has been for all of us.***

*We have learnt and achieved much over the last fourteen months!*

- Many - maybe most - of our singing membership had never tried 'Zoom' before but we regularly had the majority of our singers in Zoom rehearsals.*
- Our music professionals adapted to suddenly working in very different ways in order to coach a 'virtual' choir. Thom and Chris prepared web-based rehearsal materials and James Cooke reorganised the website to accommodate them.*
- We won a Community National Lottery Grant to help us keep up our activities.*
- We were featured on BBC Look North, and we created two very successful online concerts, attracting bigger audiences than we might have dreamed of in our usual concert halls.*
- We kept in touch with our members, supported each other and even picked up some new ones on the way!*

*On Monday our rehearsals started again - albeit with small groups, with limited numbers and in a socially-distanced way. Hopefully, from June the 21<sup>st</sup>, the full Choir can all sing together.*

*I'm thrilled - as I suspect we all are - that Colne Valley Male Voice Choir can come together again.*

*And I'm proud that we have come through the last fourteen months of lockdowns and choral restrictions as strong as ever and ready to move on again.*

*As we get back to normal we can begin, once again, to focus on celebrating our Centenary Year in 2022 with some extremely exciting concerts and events, helping us to look forward to the next hundred years.*

*Regards Joe*





We're here and  
we're back, kid

Our oldest member was dead  
keen to get singing.



Certainly, and may I just take your temperature, Mr  
Smith?







Six feet apart the first group of twenty singers prepare start the first rehearsal in 14 months.

The pioneers were baritones, Raymond Ellis, Adrian Calverly, Sam Blagborough, David Hirst and new arrival, Matthew Denis, who passed his test about a week before we went into lockdown. Then came five second tenors, David Morrison, John Smith, Richard Pryor, John Clark and Ian McCaul. The first tenors were Ken Parkinson, Robert Dickinson, Keith Holland (who worked tirelessly to get music out), Brian Craven and Matt Houston (to him and Linda go so many thanks for helping organise the Boy's arrival - and also for shepherding the men).

Last but by no means least came the basses, James Blagborough, Chris Hartley, Ivan Smith, John Garner and our other librarian, Peter Meadows.



**What a fine bunch of men!**

Thom and Chris were glad to be back, too.

*'In fact,' Chris tells Voice of the Valley, 'this is the first rehearsal I've done in post.'*

*Lockdown struck before I was officially appointed to begin as accompanist.'*



# Richard found the return especially meaningful.

He writes....



*After a year spent in isolation, shielding from the virus, attending rehearsals online and with the only excitement being choosing which bin to put out for the binmen this week, the opportunity to once again attend rehearsals in person feels like a gathering for a family occasion.*

*To meet up with friends that you have only seen on a computer screen for the last year and to have the opportunity of once again being able to sing and hear the harmony and musicality of your fellow choristers fills me with delight.*

*All the arrangements have been put in place but it was with some trepidation that I waited for the time to arrive to travel to Britannia Road.*

*But now we are back and am looking forward to the preparations for the **Choir Centenary** next year and to, once again, be able to perform to a live audience!*







He might be pleased to be back, too, but **James Cooke** is reluctant to have his picture taken.

He's still hiding in this next shot of the second group, waiting to go in to the rehearsal room.



Old pals, Stuart and Brian meet up for the first time in months.

And Neil is keen to get back to 'real' singing.



# Making a Donation to Colne Valley Male Voice Choir



Readers have made various queries recently about how they can make a contribution to Choir funds.

The Choir has secured some much-valued support from the **National Lottery** but people also realise that we have had very little income from performance since Christmas concerts in 2019.

Treasurer, **Simon Durrans** reassures that we can weather the current storm but is equally clear that donations are welcome.



## Making a Donation to Colne Valley Male Voice Choir

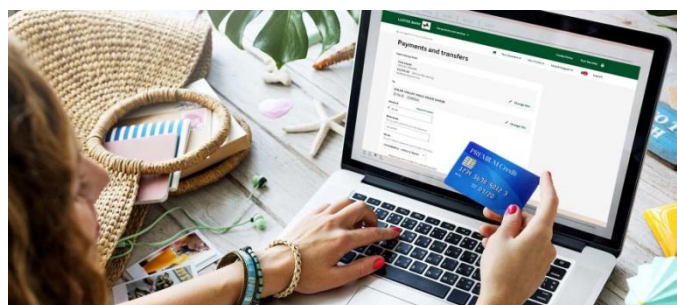
The Choir, particularly in these difficult times welcomes donations from our supporters. If you wish to donate please follow one or other of these methods.

### Online

Make your online payment to Colne Valley Male Voice Choir

Bank Name: Lloyds Bank PLC,  
PO Box 1000  
BX1 1LT

Account Name: Colne Valley Male Voice Choir  
Sort Code: 30-94-43  
Account Number: 02489140  
Please reference this BACS transfer as 'donation'



### By Cheque



Make it out to **Colne Valley Male Voice Choir** (Full name please. Don't abbreviate) Please hand your cheque (or cash, if you prefer) to Choir Treasurer, Simon or mail your cheque to Choir Secretary, Jenny Baxter.

Jenny Baxter  
3 Pinfold Lane  
Bolster Moor  
Huddersfield HD7 4NR



## By Text



## Want to donate?

It's easy...

**Text 5CVMVC to 70085**  
to donate £5.00

**Text 10CVMVC to 70085**  
to donate £10.00

Mobile phone users can donate by text:

When you have made your donation you will get a text offering you the opportunity to 'Gift Aid'. They have their own system. Please follow their guidelines. Otherwise, ...

**Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1.00 you donate**

'Gift Aid' is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer. Please fill in this form and get it back to us.

**Charity Gift Aid Declaration - multiple donation**

In order to Gift Aid your donation you must tick the box below:

☐ I want to Gift Aid my donation of £ ..... and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to:

Name of Charity: **Colne Valley Male Voice Choir**  
(Charity Registration Number 500324)

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

**My Details**

Title .....  
First name or initial(s) .....  
Surname .....  
Full Home address .....  
Postcode .....  
Date .....

Please notify us if you:

- want to cancel this declaration
- change your name or home address
- no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

If you have any queries do email Treasurer, **Simon Durrans** at [simon.durrans@dmlifa.com](mailto:simon.durrans@dmlifa.com)  
Or phone Secretary, **Jenny Baxter** on 01474 645192

## Don't forget 'Gift Aid'

Boost your donation by 25p  
of Gift Aid for every £1.00  
you donate

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A printable version of this form is available  
on the Choirs website - just follow this link.

<http://colnevalleymvc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Making-a-Donation-to-Colne-Valley-Male-Voice-Choir.pdf>



# And of course there's always the 200 Club



A recent lucky winner of the 200 Club draw was Trevor Bowers of the Second Tenors.

It's a good scheme and your chances of being a lucky winner are excellent.



Just one pound a week buys you one of the 200 Club numbers.

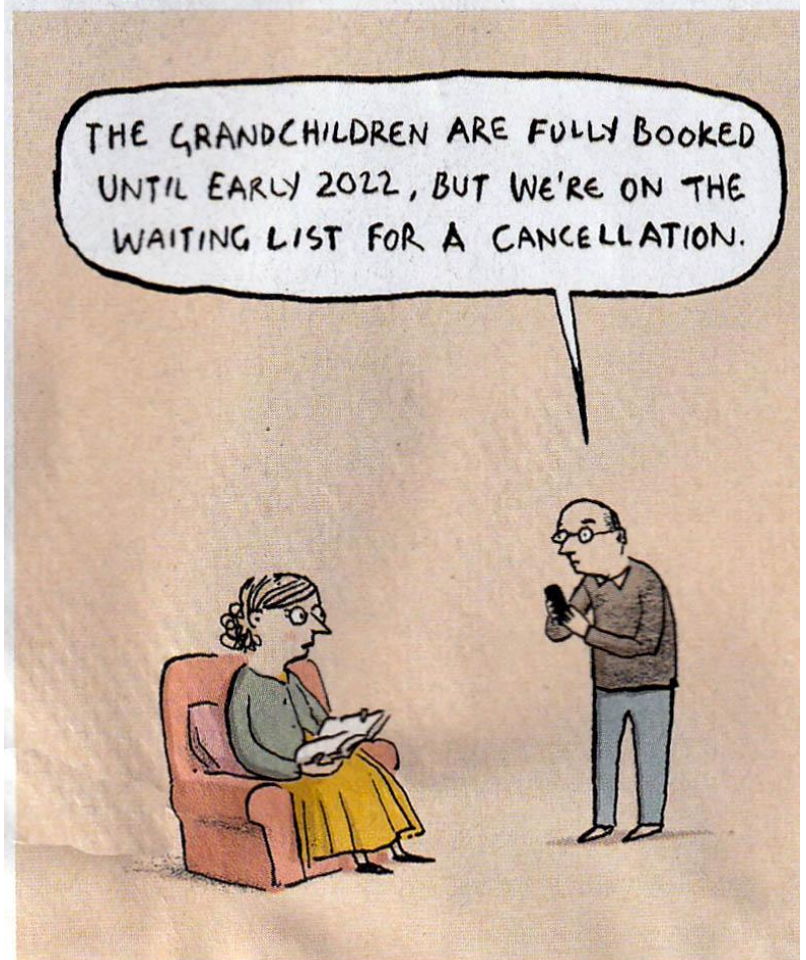
There's a good chance of winning:  
£45 in prize money weekly,  
£185 in the monthly draw and two whopping £1,000 draws each year.

Even if you don't win, you win - because half of the fund supports Choir concerts and performances.

Contact Choir Secretary, Jenny, on **01484 645192**

Well, it made me smile...

## Berger & Wyse





And so did this....

*"Sound the charge, bugler, but sotto voce"*

Private Eye

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Meanwhile....



Send me a picture.

Tell me your news

We might be coming out - slowly - from the worst of our time of distancing and social isolation, but VotV readers, whether singers or audience-members, still can't meet freely.



But we can keep in touch.

Let the VotV Editor know if something happens that might be of interest and has some connection - even if it's a bit tenuous - to the Choir. Doesn't matter if you are not very confident writing, I'll help you put into publishable shape.

Voice of the Valley Editor: John C Clark

Ring Choir Secretary, Jenny, on 01484 645192  
to join us or join our Readers' List or for other queries

