

# 2022

COLNE VALLEY MALE VOICE CHOIR NEWSLETTER

NEW YEAR EDITION

## Yes 2022 has begun

It will be a very special year for Colne Valley Male Voice Choir. It is the year that the Choir celebrates its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Before our actual centenary we have **two special events**, both of which were planned for earlier times but which became casualties of the pandemic.

**Saturday 26 February**

**Mrs Sunderland Huddersfield Music Festival** and competitions

We're at the Mrs Sunderland again and will be keen to show that we've lost none of our skills during the 'Zoom months'. Whatever the results of the competitions we will be thrilled to be back on the Town Hall stage giving our best.



**Sunday 27 March**

Afternoon '**Concert for Keith**' with Maestro Keith Swallow, operatic Bass, **Paul Hudson**, CVMVC and other guests.

This is the concert postponed from two years ago. A little bird tells VotV there are new complications to sort out but we are determined to celebrate the astonishing achievement of Maestro, Keith Swallow - 63 years our accompanist when he stepped down in December 2019. He still plays for us occasionally.

What a pleasure it will be to sing our thanks, respect and admiration for a man, who was the backbone of our Choir's success for decades.



Sunday 8 May

## CVMVC Centenary Year starts

Here's the (very) rough timetable of the events to follow. The first part of the Centenary Year will focus on our glorious history and our achievements in the 100 years.

The centenary starts with daytime **Music Workshops** followed by a **Celebration Dinner** for members and guests at 'The Venue' in nearby Barkisland.

More information on this most significant day will follow in future editions.

**Sunday July 3<sup>rd</sup>** - an afternoon of music with **Noel Clarke** at **Holmfirth**

**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> July** - a concert at **Marsden Church**. This remains to be confirmed.

**Saturday 20 August**

Concert at **Scarborough Music Festival** in Queen Street Methodist Church - a joyful return for our 'Seaside Special'. Again an event curtailed for two years due to Covid 19.

**Saturday 1 October**

A very special evening **Concert at Huddersfield Town Hall** - details cannot yet be revealed but it will be exciting.

**Sunday 11 December**

Our **Christmas Festival** at **Huddersfield Town Hall** with our guests **Brighouse & Rastrick Band**

Followed as usual on **Saturday 17 December** by our appearance as **guests of the Valley's favourite, Marsden Silver Prize Band** at Marsden's lovely Parish Church, **Saint Bartholomews**.



## Into 2023

The second part of our centenary year will focus more on looking forward, moving purposively into our glorious future.

VotV can't tell all just yet but look forward to our hosting a conference on the future of choral singing in conjunction with the Mrs Sunderland Music Festival team.

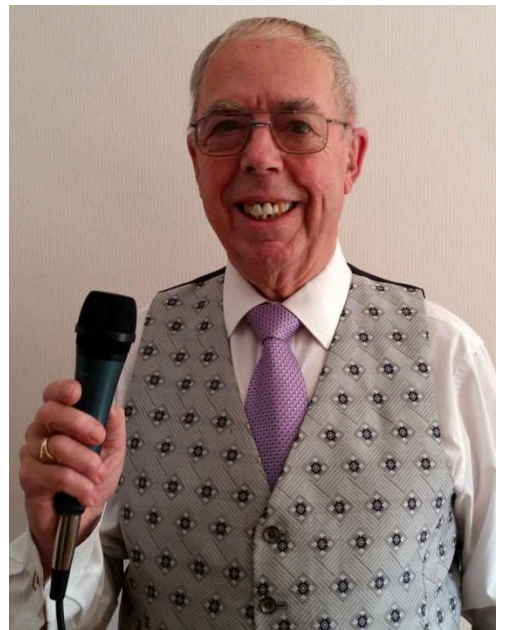
There are also activities planned that will hopefully broaden our range of community contacts and bring new members into singing - our programme of '**100 for 100**': that is we look to end our celebratory year with 100 singers in Boys' and senior Choirs to help keep us vibrant for the new century - watch this space - there's plenty of exciting developments to come.



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## Trevor channels George

Second tenor, Trevor Bowers, generally can be relied on to have a party piece. You can see him channelling **George Formby**, a cheeky chappie revisiting George's saucy song, '**When I'm Cleaning Windows**' from 1936. A pal of his filmed it at a club near his home in Birstall a few weeks ago.



Trevor tells 'Voice of the Valley', "Back in the day I used to be an entertainer on the club circuit. I signed up for one near Bradford just so I could I could honestly tell my audience, I'm a member of the **Idle Working Men's Club**."

Click here to enjoy Trevor's version

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HgFmcnmVQn0>



# Masons make a presentation

Another very pleasant feature of our Christmas Town Hall event was a brief presentation ceremony. Right Worshipful Brother, Stephen Gill visited our rehearsal room before the concert to formally donate grant aid to the Choir by the **West Riding Masonic Charities** to Choir Chairman, **Joe Stones**.



As can be seen from the photo, the grant funds were for a swish new Chair for our Musical Director, **Thom Meredith**, to replace the old wooden stool used at rehearsals, a rather upmarket conducting stand to hold all his music readily accessible, and best of all, as demonstrated by accompanist, **Chris Pulleyn**, a top quality electronic stage piano that will enable the Choir to perform at various venues without suitable facilities.



Chairman Joe welcomed this most generous award, initiated by the right worshipful brothers of **Juventatis 9338 Lodge**.

"This new equipment will help us out considerably. We are all grateful to the members of Juventatis 9338 and to the **Provincial Grand Masters' Fund**.

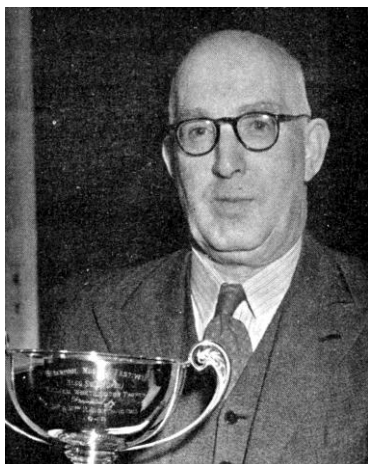
We appreciate it, Stephen that you came here tonight with your wife to formally make the presentation. We very much hope you will enjoy our concert.

We also appreciate the work that you have put in administering this grant award. Thank you, Stephen, and would you please convey our thanks to your colleagues."

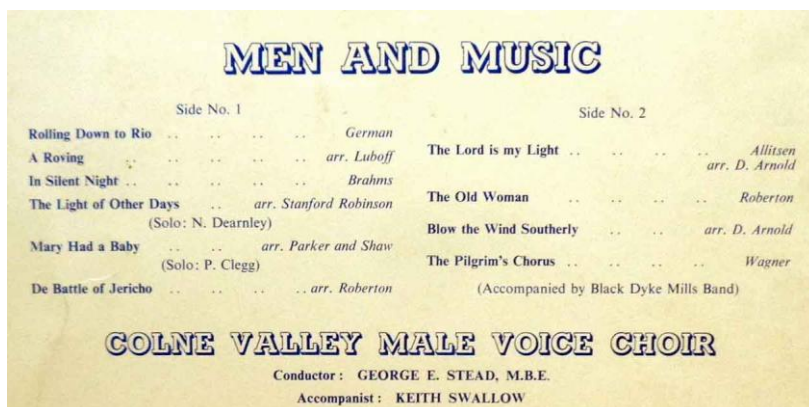
# Men and Music

It is perhaps fitting, as we contemplate our glorious history that an historic record has come to light.

An avid reader of Voice of the Valley in Brockley, South London, has been in touch with your Editor; 'I came across an old record by Colne Valley Male Voice Choir in a 'Used and Collectable Vinyl' store and thought it might be of interest.' It certainly is, **Harriet Clark**, and thank you for re-discovering it.



It turns out it's probably the only surviving recording from the great era when the Choir was under the musical direction of George E Stead. It probably was produced in 1965; just after George had been awarded the MBE and shortly before his untimely death. George Stead has been with the Choir from its beginning and, taking on the Conductorship in 1923, led the choir to illustrious greatness until 1968.



The recording is an extended play 33⅓ rpm gramophone record, made partly in Slaithwaite and some live at Huddersfield Town Hall.

I'm bound to say that the sound quality of the recording isn't great but the Choir most certainly is. I suspect that the problem is that the volume range of the choir is too wide for the recording to encompass.

## The Choir sings beautifully

The Choir sings beautifully at almost a whisper level and yet is capable, at full volume of shaking the rafters in the Town Hall. You editor has the software (if not the skills) to edit the transferred sound files but discovered that the recordings were best left alone just removing a few 'clicks'.

It's quite an odd sound from over half a century ago, quite 'mannered' almost 'posh' but your editor thinks you will enjoy these two excerpts. The first is, '**The Light of Other Days**' which features a baritone solo by **Norman Dearnley**.



<https://soundcloud.com/john-clark-124140241/men-and-music-the-light-of-other-days>



The second piece is '**The Lord is my Light**' a rousing anthem that I seem to recall stayed in the Choir's repertoire until well into this current century.

<https://soundcloud.com/john-clark-124140241/men-and-music-the-lord-is-my-light>



# Reserve team plays a blinder

**Thom Meredith** had other commitments for our last rehearsal so it had been planned that **Chris Pulleyn**, our usual man on the 'subs bench' would take the field. But as it turned out something else cropped up at the last minute which meant Chris was unable to play.

But it all turned out very well....



But it all turned out very well; the lovely, **Sarah Ogden Turnbull**, talented singer & choir leader - and a long-time friend of CVMVC dropped everything to help us out at very short notice.

She's so clever and teases the Choir about our crude maleness and the need to get in touch with our emotional side. (She believes we have one!) She certainly brings out aspects of our performance which wouldn't so easily surface.

With her came super-talented pianist, **Jenny Martins**. She made a welcome return and coped heroically with some very tricky piano parts which must have been mostly sight-read.

(Incidentally, it's clear that Jenny has other skills as singer-songwriter. Watch her sing a rather bitter May 2021 song from about a boyfriend, describing him as her 'soon to be erstwhile lover'. This makes you slightly wonder about the news that she is recently married and is expecting a baby shortly. Did the song come completely from her vivid imagination? Did she find redeeming virtues in her chap after all or has she acquired a new and better model?) Click to watch '**Exit Interview**':



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PiPnwUKk9RA>

Well done you two - do come again

# Peoria Civic Chorale Festival Gloria

Keen readers will be aware that engineer and one-time first tenor in CVMVC, **James Asquith**, migrated to the USA to work at the Caterpillar earthmoving equipment headquarters in Peoria, Illinois. Once there, James joined a local choir - the top-rated, mixed voice, **Peoria Area Civic Chorale**. He's since moved on again to New Zealand but whilst he was in the US, he learned about '**Voice of the Valley**' from his dad, first tenor **Edward 'the birdman' Asquith**. So impressed was James by VotV, he was a mover in getting the Peoria Chorale to follow suit.



Your Editor keeps track of the Peoria newsletter, mainly for the satisfaction of noticing that their newsletter doesn't begin to match the quality of our Colne Valley version.

But he does appreciate their music!

Have a listen to their video of the '**Festival Gloria**' by **Craig Courtney** recorded recently at Five Points, Washington.



<https://vimeo.com/656873291>



# Rigs and Sprees and Jigs of Old Leeds town

The Choir is rehearsing a '**Yorkshire Medley**' a piece blending together a handful of traditional Yorkshire songs in a cunning arrangement, transcribed by our very own **James Blagborough**.

All the songs are very familiar except one, which no one has ever heard of and which more or less defies comprehension. The words seem quite arcane.

*Ye lads and lasses blythe and gay, just listen awhile to what we say.  
If you will stay we'll not be long, to sing the rigs and srees of the town.  
We're up to the rigs and down to the jigs, we're up to the rigs of old Leeds Town*

What on earth is this about? What are the rigs and srees of old Leeds Town?

## Your Editor took up the challenge:

To the best of Google's knowledge such a song doesn't exist specifically about Leeds. There were a few old ballads published after 1860 - though doubtless some had been around from much earlier - which refer to 'the rigs of the town'. It seems you could quite easily insert the name of your own place should you wish to do it. So it looks likely seems it was a popular ditty that somehow became associated in local folk-culture with the old town of Leeds.

## What are rigs and jigs and srees?

**Srees:** a lively frolic or outing, a bout or spell of drinking to intoxication; binge; carousal, period, spell, or bout of indulgence, as of a particular wish, craving, or whim

**Jigs:** energetic traditional dance of Great Britain and Ireland, or the music that is played for such a dance

**Rigs:** a frolic, a game, a trick, a joke, a riot, a debauch

A dictionary of slang provides us with a pretty good idea that what we are singing about is probably a 'Night on the Town' a few drinks, a bit of a dance, having a laugh, playing a few pranks on your mates and all this with a saucy hint of what the tabloids today call 'Romps'. – back to George Formby territory!

## Rigs and Sprees OF THE TOWN.

Tune.—"Beverley Maid and the Tinker."

H. Disley, Printer, 57, High Street, St. Giles  
London.—W.C.

You lads and lasses blythe and gay,  
Listen awhile to what I say,  
If you'll attend I'll not be long,  
It's about the rigs and srees of this town.

You may kiss the girls if you're inclined,  
But mind and don't rumble their crinoline,  
Young lads and lasses of renown,  
These are the rigs and srees of this town

Now in this town on a market day,  
There is lots of farmers blythe and gay;  
Their wives and daughters cut a shine,  
With their ninepenny bustles and crinoline.

Old Jack, the cobbler, mind your eye,  
Don't court that young girl on the sly,  
If you roll her on the grass so green,  
You'll be sure to spoil her crinoline.

There's carotty kit, so jolly and fat,  
With a regular flippaty, floppaty hat,  
The holes in her stockings as big as a crown,  
And the hoops of her skirts is dragging the ground.

St. George's Hall, in this town,  
It is the place of great renown,  
Where all the swells they cut a shine,  
In their pegtop trousers and crinoline.

Of the Rifle Corps just mind your eye,  
They're sure to get shooting the girls on the sly  
But they may do as they've done before,  
They may kiss the girls behind the door.

In High-street every night you'll see,  
Recruiting parties on the spree,  
With bouncing Sal and pretty Jane,  
Playing the tune called Do it again.

The old and young you plainly see  
To buy my songs they will agree,  
It's about the swells and ladies fine,  
With their pegtop trousers and crinoline.

So now to finish my funny song,  
What we have said there's nothing wrong.  
It's all about the ups and downs,  
And the funny rigs and srees of this town.

By William Hall.



# rig

6. A frolic, game; a trick, joke; a riot, spree, debauch; a fuss.

Sc. Afore the Whigs began their rigs, He was anither creature, *OUTRAM Lyrics* (1887) 98. Abd. Ye'll repent your riggs an' fun, *ANDERSON Poems* (ed. 1826) 26. Per. The General's dochter is cairryin' on an awfu' rig the noo at the Castle, *IAN MACLAREN K. Carnegie* (1895) 345. w.Sc. (JAM.) Flf. He was the saul o' mony a rig, *GRAY Poems* (1811) 71. Lth. (JAM.) Nhd. Aw's up tiv every rig, *N. Minstrel* (1806-7) pt. iv. 73. w.Yks. When we saw this we thowt we'd hev a rig on, *HARTLEY Clock Alm.* (1873) 17; w.Yks.<sup>15</sup> Lan. Aw rambled up and down To see the rigs of this great town, *Cyman's Ramble*, st. 3, in *Catal. Pearson*, No. 317. a.Lan.<sup>1</sup> I.Ma. Draw a pictur of her! come! that's a rig! *BROWN Yarns* (1881) 75, ed. 1889; Up to all sorts of rigs (S.M.). Cha.<sup>18</sup> None o' thy rigga. a.Not. He did play some rigs (J.P.K.). Lin.<sup>1</sup> sw.Lin.<sup>1</sup> None on your rigs here! LeL.<sup>1</sup> Some o' his rigs an' schames. Nhp. The dusty miller playing many a rig, *CLARK Vill. Minst.* (1821) 28; Nhp.<sup>1</sup> They played him a pretty rig. War. They couldn't stand our rig (C.T.O.); War.<sup>2</sup> Glo. *BAYLIS Illus. Dial.* (1870). Brks.<sup>1</sup> Bdf. *BATCHELOR Anal. Eng. Lang.* (1809) 141. e.An.<sup>1</sup>; e.An.<sup>2</sup> A rum rig. Dor.<sup>1</sup> Ther youthful rigs a-played by we, 66. Som. You'll allus get tha mooast trouble and regs we thic un as goos tha last, *AGRIKLER Rhymes* (1872) 119. w.Som.<sup>1</sup> They'd a-got a purty rig way th' old 'ummun's things; they turned over her warshin tub, and then they pushed down the butt o' bees way a long stick. Dev. Shouldn't wonder misself if it doan't end in a summonsing rig 'tween some of 'em, *Stooke Not Exactly*, v. Cor.<sup>12</sup> [Amer. He got a rig on him, *Dial. Notes* (1896) l. 231.]

## 7. Affair, narrative.

I.Ma. She tould him all the rig, *BROWN Wüch* (1889) 3; Did you hear the rig of their quarrel? (S.M.)

8. Phr. (1) *on the rig*, (a) having a frolic; (b) unsteady, wabbling; (2) *to be up to a person's rig*, to be a match for him; to perceive the aim of his designs; (3) *to carry on one's rigs*, to be up to mischief; (4) *to get one's rig*, to meet with sharp treatment; (5) *to go the rig(s)*, 'to go the pace'; (6) *to go the rig teapot*, to keep up the game; (7) *to run a (one's) rig*, to play tricks, be up to a frolic; to run loose; see *Run*, II. 2 (14, 22); (8) *to run a (one's) rig of*, or *on*, a person, to play a trick on him; to make game of him, banter him;

English dictionary of slang

## “Ronnie Spector was ‘raw, passionate, distinct’”



“Though Ronnie Spector died on Wednesday, aged 78, all the signs...” writes the Observer journalist, **Barbara Ellen**, “... are there that, culturally speaking, she is not going anywhere. Not if the past near 60 years are anything to go by.”



The tributes keep coming: Keith Richards, Brian Wilson, Darlene Love, Joan Jett, Elvis Costello. Patti Smith wrote: “Farewell, little fireball.” Ronnie Spector isn’t just part of rock n’ roll history, she’s the staples holding it all together. As lead singer of the Ronettes, she was barely out of her teens when she was influencing the influencers.

The Beatles courted her. Jimi Hendrix played with her. The Rolling Stones opened for her. She and Richards, for a time lovers, became life-long friends. She was also linked with David Bowie, a long-time admirer. Friends included everyone from Dusty Springfield to Aretha Franklin. Brian Wilson famously had to pull his car over to avoid crashing when he first heard the Ronettes’ 1963 classic, *Be My Baby*; he went on to listen to it obsessively, declaring it “the greatest record ever produced”.

Maybe a bit over the top, Barbara, but ‘**Be My Baby**’ was a great song.

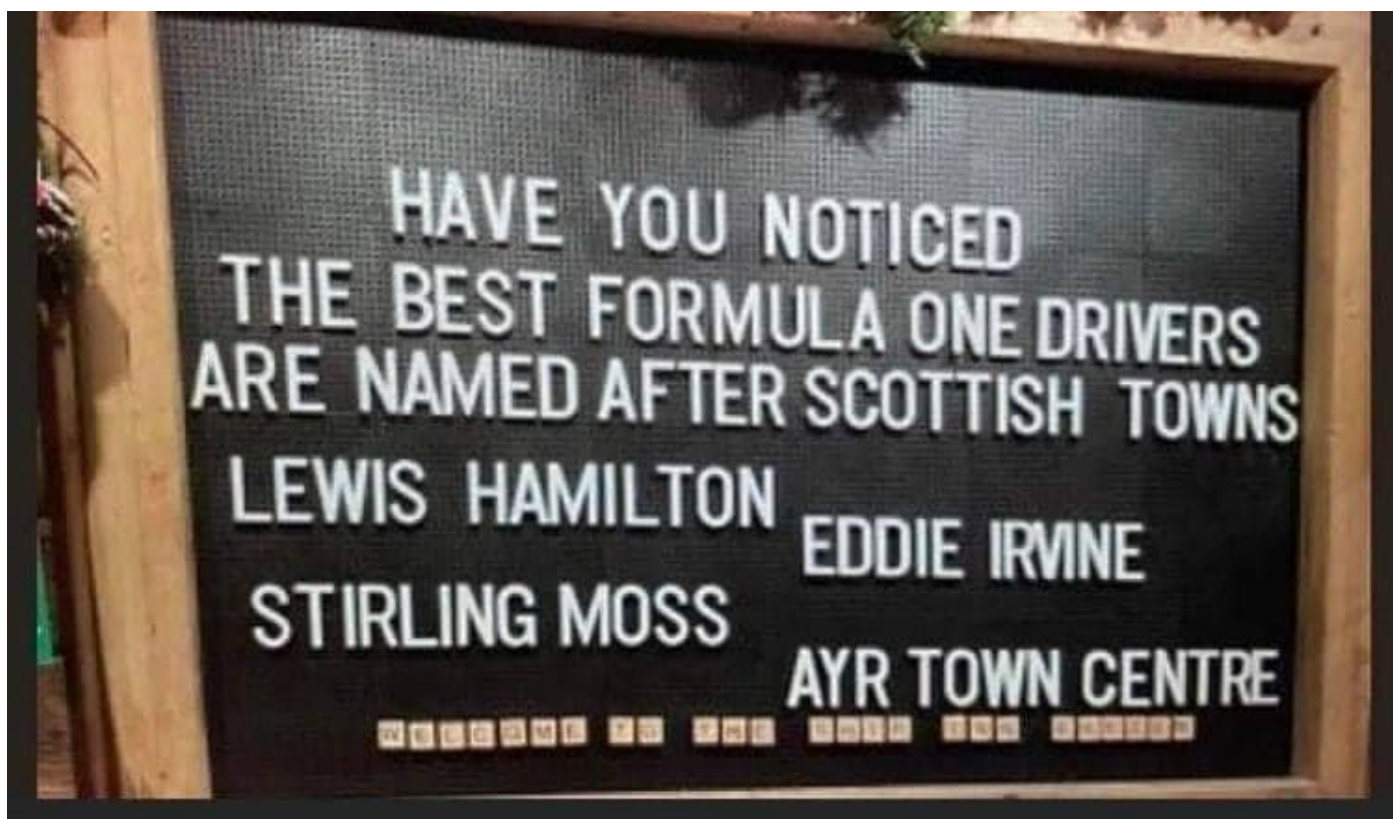


Enjoy it here.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bTBNlvj49zU>



# Well it made Rob Rosborough smile...



## Denis Law compares football today and football of yesteryear

Denis Law, as all footie fans know, is the veteran footballer, who started his playing career with Huddersfield Town and then went on to be a star with **Manchester United's** great line-ups of the 1970's and 1980's.

He was recently interviewed, says veteran Baritone, **David Hirst**, on a TV programme that was looking at the golden old days of the game.

Inevitably, the question came up; suppose, Denis, that you could put your star team of the 1970's up against today's Man U players: how would you fare?

Denis contemplated his answer for a while and then said, 'I reckon we'd still win but it would be close: maybe a 1:0 victory.'

1:0, queried the interviewer. Why so close?

'Well,' said Denis, 'You've got to remember most of us are in our seventies now!'



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