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COLNE VALLEY MALE VOICE CHOIR NEWSLETTER - CENTENARY EDITION MAY 2022

Yes, our Centenary has begun.

A very special anniversary for Colne Valley Male Voice Choir is upon us.

May 8th 2022 marks the start of our centenary year, the date the Choir celebrates its 100th birthday.

It was a Monday evening, 100 years ago ...

... a meeting is called at Slaithwaite Liberal Club. It is at this meeting that the Choir is formally brought into being.

Some time before, friends from the valley had started getting together to form a male voice group meeting on Friday evenings. Two local musicians were amongst the prime movers; **Jere Buckley** and **Hervey Haigh**. They both had connections with the Colne Valley Mixed Vocal Union but wanted to see a male voice choir developing. It is not recorded how many others were present.

The Choir which springs from this background that Monday night in 1922 votes to rehearse on Monday evenings: which we still do to the present day. Another resolution passes at the first meeting: the Choir should compete in an open air music festival at Gomersal on July 15th 1922. (Conducted by Hervey Haigh, the Choir was placed fourth.) The Choir is soon giving concerts at local places of worship, in Marsden Park and in the hall at the Liberal Club.



The building where it all started still exists. It's now the Civic Hall, a community venue, home, amongst other things, to the Slaithwaite Philharmonic Orchestra.

The building was created as a Liberal Club in 1883. The Beaumont family who laid the stone was connected with the Tolson's, who, a year earlier, had gifted what is now **Tolson Museum & Ravensknowle Park** to the Council for public use.



Recently 'The Civic' has also been used as a Vaccination Centre providing community protection against the current epidemic.

This seems noteworthy, because in Britain, a hundred years earlier, 1922 had began with a flu epidemic claiming hundreds of victims. That January 804 fatalities had been recorded in the UK. By May it was tailing off.

It is somehow fitting that, on that date 100 years later, Sunday May 8th 2022 that the Choir will convene after close on two years of curtailed activities, created by a pandemic illness affecting the whole country and locking down our Choir from performing in person for so many months.



The UK Prime Minister was the Liberal David Lloyd George.

In May 1922 the British Empire was at its largest, with a quarter of the world and one in every four people under its rule.



At the end of February in 1922, **Princess Mary** (left) had married **Viscount Lascelles**, elder son of the Earl of Harewood, in Westminster Abbey. Their first-born son, **George**, and later his widow, the Dowager Countess, became the Choir's Patrons, lending support to the Choir until the death of Patricia in May four years ago.

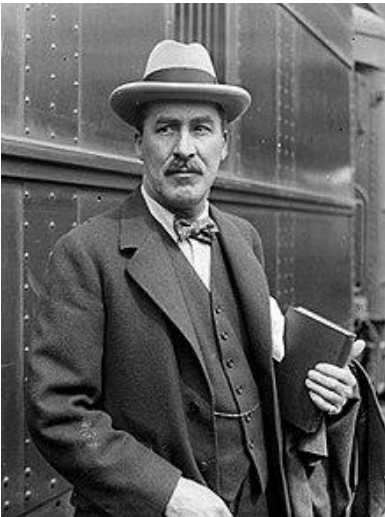


Our patrons help mark the 50th anniversary of Colne Valley Male Voice Choir in 1972

Also in May 1922, in the **Valley of Kings** in Egypt, a British archaeologist, **Howard Carter**, was digging.

He had persuaded, **Lord Carnarvon**, to fund one last season of exploration, convincing him there were treasures still to be discovered. Carter was proved right.

"I see wonderful things." he is reported to have said when peering through a small hole made in a tomb wall a few weeks later.



(Howard Carter and his supporter, Lord Carnarvon below)



Carter and Carnarvon became the first people to go into **King Tutankhamen's tomb** in over three millennia.

Inside, the archaeologists myriad treasures, amongst them a golden coffin containing the mummified remains of the teenage king, **King Tutankhamen**.



On 11th May, the Thursday of that first week of the Choir's existence, **the forerunner to the BBC**, a radio station called **2LO**, began broadcasting. Transmissions lasted for one hour a day and were made from the seventh floor of Marconi House in London's Strand. This was part of the original transmitter.



The world's first regular radio broadcasts for entertainment, had been made by **Peter Eckersley** starting on the 14th February. This was a transmission on station 2MT from a hut at the Marconi Company laboratories near Chelmsford in Essex.

Initially they are for half an hour on Tuesday evenings.

The **British Broadcasting Company**, as the BBC was originally called, was formally established later on in the year, on 18 October, by a group of leading wireless manufacturers.

Daily broadcasting by the BBC took off later on November 14, 1922 as a nationalised provision. **John Reith**, a 33-year-old Scottish engineer, was appointed General Manager of the BBC at the end of 1922.

This was the first edition of the 'Radio Times'.



A couple of months after the Choir was formed a new car came out. July 21 saw the launch of the **Austin 7**. Made at Longbridge, the car was cheap and popular and remained in production for another seventeen years until 1939. I expect many a Choir member owned one.

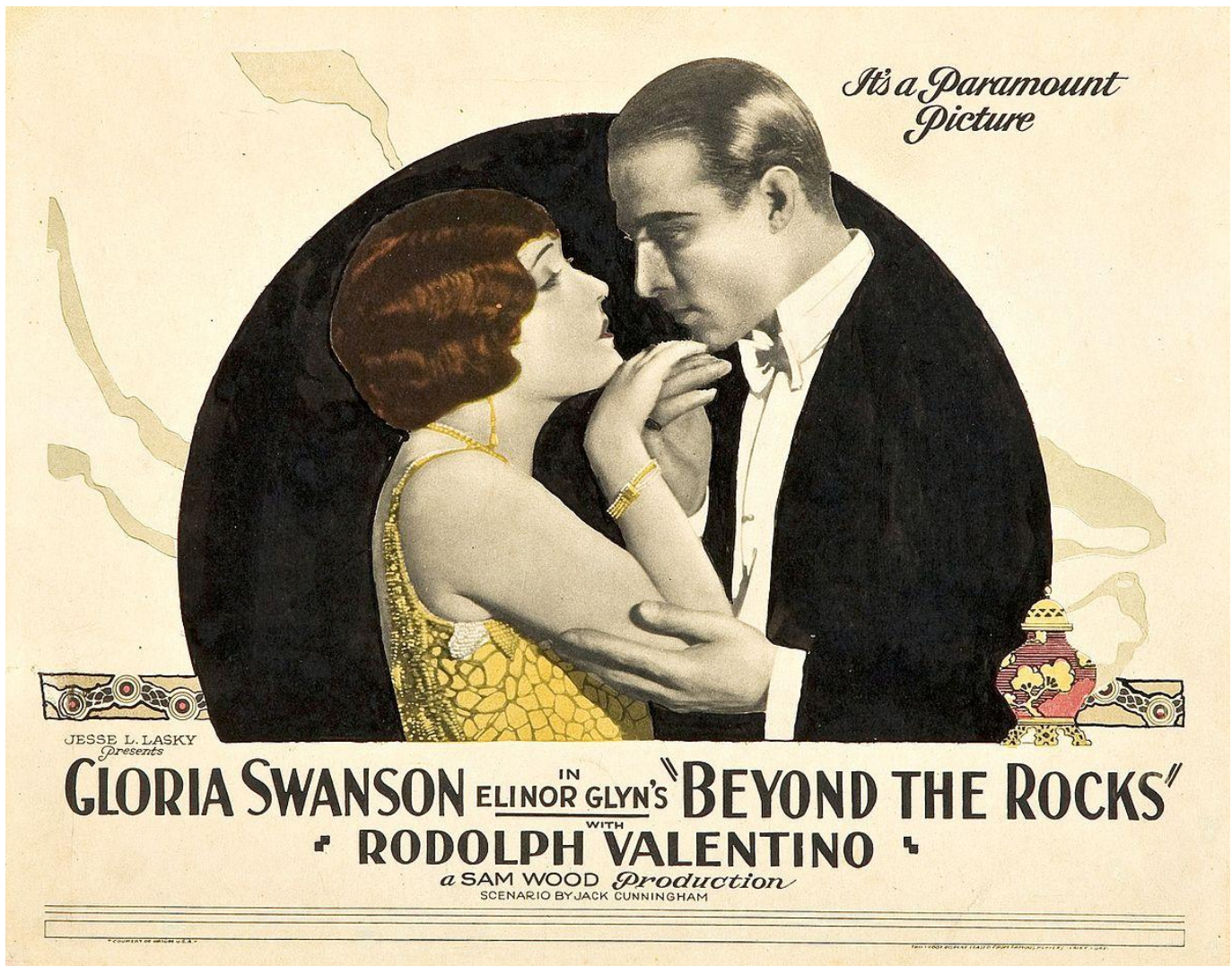
I doubt anybody got the 1922 **Voisin C3**. The President of the French Republic and the Crown Prince of Japan apparently did.



A bit of big news on May 8th was that, perhaps the biggest movie star of the 1920's, heartthrob, **Rudolph Valentino**, revealed he was engaged. His bride-to-be was actress and costume - designer **Natacha Rambova**.



His latest film, 'Beyond the Rocks' had been released on May 7th 1922 but probably didn't reach Slaithwaite for a while.



Just a week or so later, on Sunday May 21st reports arrived that three English mountaineers, on a **British Expedition to Mount Everest** had come within 2,239 feet of the summit, after leaving a base camp established at 25,000 feet the day before.

This 29,027 foot (8,849m) high mountain is the tallest on Earth.

George Mallory and **Major Edward F Norton** with the expedition's physician, **Dr. Howard Somervell**, climbed to an altitude of 26,800 feet (8,200 m), the highest reached by a climber up to that time.

This was the closest anyone would get to the summit until, **Edmund Hillary** and Sherpa **Tenzing Norgay** became the **first** confirmed climbers to succeed on 29 May in 1953, some 31 years later.

In sport on Thursday May 11th **Ted 'Kid' Lewis** in his drive to become **World Light Heavyweight champion** took on **Georges Carpentier** at London's Olympia.

Lewis, fighting at 150 pounds to Carpentier's 175, spent most of the first round giving the heavier man a drubbing.

Then referee Joe Palmer put a hand on Lewis's shoulder to warn him against holding.

Carpentier took advantage of this distraction and sneaked in a vicious right. The Kid went crashing to the canvas.



The bout lasted just 2 minutes and 15 seconds when Lewis sat up in the ring, "with his eyes wide open but ominously glazed and looking as if he would get to his feet before the referee counted ten".

The crowd erupted furiously, crying, "Foul," but to no avail. The Kid remained nonplussed. "I felt cheated, but I didn't bear any grudge," he would later say.

You can see the 1922 footage on this link:-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H5k4gHBXPoc>

The big sporting story

But the big sporting story that those inaugural choir members would have been talking about was still **Huddersfield Town's FA Cup victory** on the 29th of April. Perhaps some of those present at the meeting would have gone down to Stamford Bridge to support the home team.





The Cup Final match pitted Town against **Preston North End**.

The crowd of 53,000 saw only one goal in the match. That was by Huddersfield's, **Billy Smith**, scoring from the penalty spot.

Readers might wonder why the teams didn't play at Wembley Stadium; it was still being built and wouldn't start hosting Cup Finals until 1923.

In the 2nd half, Smith was brought down on the edge of the area. The referee pointed to the spot. Smith, though shaken, stepped up to take the penalty.

Preston goalkeeper Mitchell started doing 'dervish leaps' in the air with the obvious intention to put the Huddersfield marksman off his shot. 'Ne'er mind the devil-dances' said Town captain **Clem Stephenson**. 'Just shove it in t' net.'

So, a special year in Slaithwaite 1922 and May 8th a special day



'What the Sun caught in Slaithwaite Spa'

This is the earliest known photograph of **Colne Valley Male Voice Choir** - taken circa 1922 at what is now **Spa Park** in Slaithwaite. At that time it was a 'spa resort' where people would come for entertainment and to take the medicinal waters. (The healing spring is now capped with concrete in the middle of the river.)

It's likely that **Jere Buckley** is front row far left, two down from George Stead who took on the conductorship and led the Choir to national fame in the many years of his tenure.

Plan for May 8th 2022



Secretary Jenny outlines the schedule:-

Workshop for Choir members

From 9.30	Tea/Coffee
10.00 – 11.30	Session 1
11.30 – 11.45	Tea/Coffee break
11.45 – 13.00	Session 2
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch
14.00 – 15.30	Session 3

Celebration Dinner

19.00 – 19.45	Reception and drinks
19.45	Dinner
21.30 – 21.45	(approx) Speeches
21.45 – 22.30	Entertainment
22.30 – 23.30	Music
12.00	Carriages

(This isn't going to be any ordinary rehearsal adds VotV. Choir members should bring their music as they usually do. But there are many special things planned. New music will be brought out on the day and 'Joyce the Voice' will be there to do Voice Coaching with participants.)

And this 'black tie & posh frock' dinner will be quite special - from the red carpet reception, with the photographers, a light Jazz trio welcoming diners and prosecco (or soft drinks) on arrival.

Then a fine meal.

Raymond Ellis, as Master of Ceremonies, will introduce star guest singers from Opera North (the Choir will join in occasionally).



Thom and Joe will make brief speeches and entertainment will continue - with no doubt some surprises, which VotV won't reveal.

Who would have thought that just over 100 years from 'the War to end all Wars' that a barbaric onslaught against Ukraine would be 2022's biggest and saddest news. People world-wide are seeking to do what they can.

The Marsh family's Ukrainian offering

Listen to it on this link:- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M2YJg6_eQiU



Ukrainian folk song from the Spookymen



That wonderful Australian Choir, who are, incidentally, preparing for a UK tour this summer, have also put out a song in support of the people of Ukraine.

Listen to it on this link:- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z6vulwkicvk>

Also doing their bit

- the Marsh Ladies

Sister choir, which includes the partners of many a Colne Valley member, The Marsh Ladies Choir will be performing on May the 8th at Lindley Methodists.

Their performance will be followed by a silver collection and all the money raised will be donated to support the brave Ukrainian people, who are suffering so much from the cruel war being waged on them.

Well done ladies!

Sadly most of the Colne Valley men will be involved with Centenary Day workshops.

But we wish you luck and hope you raise lots of money.

Marsh Ladies Choir
Supported by Lindley Methodist Church
are proud to

'Sing For Ukraine'

At Lindley Methodist Church
East Street, Lindley, HD3 3ND
2.30-3.30pm

on
Sunday 8th May
Free Admission

A retiring collection will be taken and
all proceeds raised will go to help the
people of Ukraine
through this devastating conflict



&Piano makes a welcome return

&Piano Music is back. With a fabulous show of Musical Theatre items, the festival made a great come-back at Slaithwaite's Civic Hall last Sunday.

There are two more main events to come:- 'Song' on Friday 6th May at 7:30pm and 'Instrumental' on Saturday 14th May at 7:30pm.

In between, &Piano has a day events for people of all ages to enjoy. There's live music on Saturday 7th May, starting with our **Family &Piano Event** at 11.00am. Performers will be taking their audience on a journey into outer space, with soprano **Charlotte Trepass**, and cellist **Stephen Laidlaw**. Then at 2.00pm Chris will be presenting a completely free relaxed performance in the afternoon for anyone to enjoy and drop in. Later, at 7:30pm in the evening, it's the first live **Young Musician Showcase**, featuring talented young musicians from Greenhead College, Huddersfield New College and Huddersfield University.



Laura Coard gave a dramatic and moving performance of 'As Long as He Needs Me' as Bill Sykes' much abused - and finally - murdered lover, Nancy from Lionel Bart's great Musical, *Oliver*.

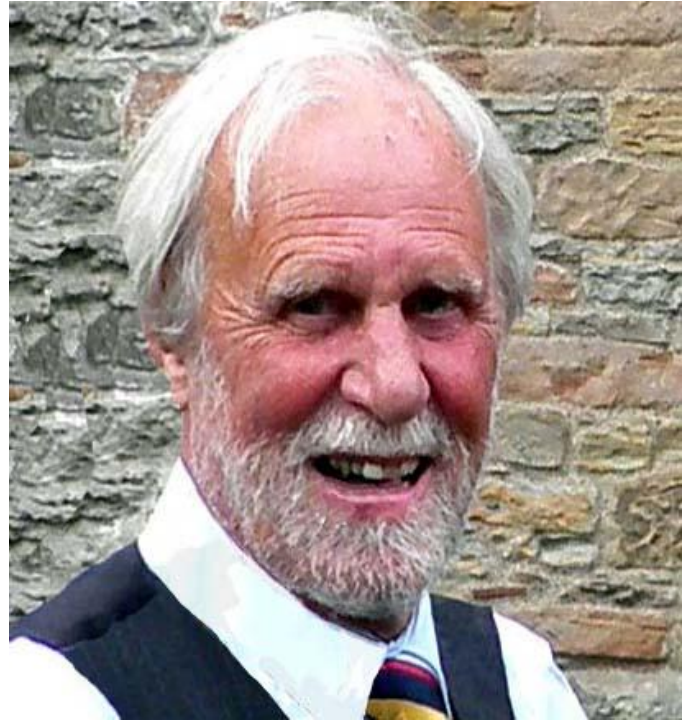
Mixing up my Baxters

The sharp-eyed amongst you readers may have noticed that your Editor confused his 'Baxters' in the last issue. He ascribed the arrangement of 'You'll Never Walk Alone' - the final item in that very special 'Concert for Keith' a few weeks back - to **Stuart Baxter** instead of to his much missed brother, **Philip**.

Stuart has many talents, but writing Male Voice Choir versions of great songs from the musical theatre is not one of them.



Stuart Baxter, stalwart of the basses



Philip Baxter, pianist and arranger

Well, it made
me smile ...





Pete steps up

Bass, **Peter Kelly**, a reasonably recent new Choir member, has kindly stepped up to help out with the **200 Club**.

Club Organiser, **Les Stones**, who has done such stalwart service over many years running the Choir's money-raising scheme, is not currently in the best of health. So he was grateful when Peter offered to stand in whilst Les is dealing the health problems, hampering him at the moment.

VotV (speaking on behalf of the Choir here) wishes Les a good recovery and thanks Peter for stepping up.

VotV didn't contact Peter but, you can be sure he would have reminded readers what a beneficial fund-raiser the 200 Club is and would have urged you to renew your numbers - or better still buy a couple more. What better way to support the Choir in our centenary year?



So, we're 100 years old this week - what a fabulous achievement.

Maybe you have got some recollections of our glorious history. Maybe you've got some thoughts about our fabulous future. Either way, VotV would love to hear from you.

Get in touch with me, your Editor, at this address cvmvc_newsletter@yahoo.co.uk if you have something that might be of interest. Send me a picture, tell me a story. Doesn't matter if you are not very confident at writing, I'll help you put it 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

And see our website to get the full story

colnevalleymvc.org.uk



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