



Barry steps down



*"I was asked by my very good friend, ex 'Household Cavalry' and Choir member, **Jeff Bamforth**, if I would act as Stage Manager and see how I got on.*

I had only been in the Choir about a year and I was quite taken aback that I should be even considered for such an important position.

I thought maybe my past experience playing in champion section brass bands, having been runner up in both the British Open Championship at Belle Vue and The Nation Finals at the Royal Albert Hall, my years of service with The Regimental Band of the Coldstream Guards, and some orchestral work, my spell of brass teaching in schools in the north London area, may have had some influence on the subject.

***Silly me**, I soon found out a couple things that brought me down to earth.*

- 1. Nobody else wanted the job and those that did never stayed long*
- 2. You can always tell a Yorkshire choir but you can't tell 'em much.*
- 3. You spend twice as much time at an event than anybody else.*
- 4. You become a social worker, confidant and sometimes a target.*

*The highlights for me have been the support of the very talented and understanding Choir secretary, **Jenny Baxter**. Also ranking high comes; working with the most talented Musical Directors, guest artists and performers, Masters of Ceremonies and Competition managers.*



Barry - a devotee of steam trains - in the cab of his beloved 45596 locomotive 'Bahamas'.

And seen here on the **Keighley & Worth Valley Railway**, recreating the role of 'Old Gentleman' from the classic film 'The Railway Children'.



Without doubt other highlights came when I was called on, for certain charities, to stage-manage massed male voice choirs and on one occasion a massed choir of ladies.

Some have used the phrase, 'Like herding cats' to describe the stage-manager's job but I couldn't possibly comment.

I've found over the years that the concert performance, though the paramount purpose, is only a part of the event. Underlying the singing, comes lots of planning. Then comes; securing the co-operation, support, deportment, and professional approach by all the singers. These can enhance a performance beyond measure.

Some 14 -15 years later (who's counting) at the ending of the Choir's Centenary Year, having shared the stage with my old band of the Coldstream Guards and Brighthouse and Rastrick Band at the annual concert, I have come to feel that my 'stint' has reached a natural conclusion.

*I am now happy to hand over the mantle of stage manager with my full support to another good friend and experienced Choir member, **Robert Dickinson**.*

*Finally, I have made many good friends, some who have sadly passed and others still present and I thank you all for the 'journey and the challenging experience'. In the words of the Coldstream Guards motto it was '**Nulli Secundus**' - Second to None.*

.....and Robert steps up

New man, Robert, tells VotV:

"I would like to thank Barry for doing a great job over the last few years.

I have learned a lot from watching him."

"Just to warn you," he says to Choir members, "I do not have the same patience he has!

Seriously though, I do hope to get your full cooperation and I ask singers to bear in mind that anything I ask you to do will be for the benefit of the Choir, so we look professional when we are performing."



"Thank you in advance."

Halifax Minster gig



Colne Valley Male Voice Choir and Elland Silver Band

Two outstanding local musical organisations
are collaborating
on this, the first night of the Festival
to bring the acoustics of the Minster alive to the sound of
singing and brass.

Thursday, 22 June 2023
7:30pm - 9:30pm
Halifax Minster

Tickets £10 (£8 - concessions and under 18s - FREE)





It seems no-one knows for sure how old Halifax Minster – formerly the Parish Church - actually is. But we do know that the first Vicar of Halifax, **Ingelard Turbard**, was appointed in 1274 – about seven and a half centuries ago.

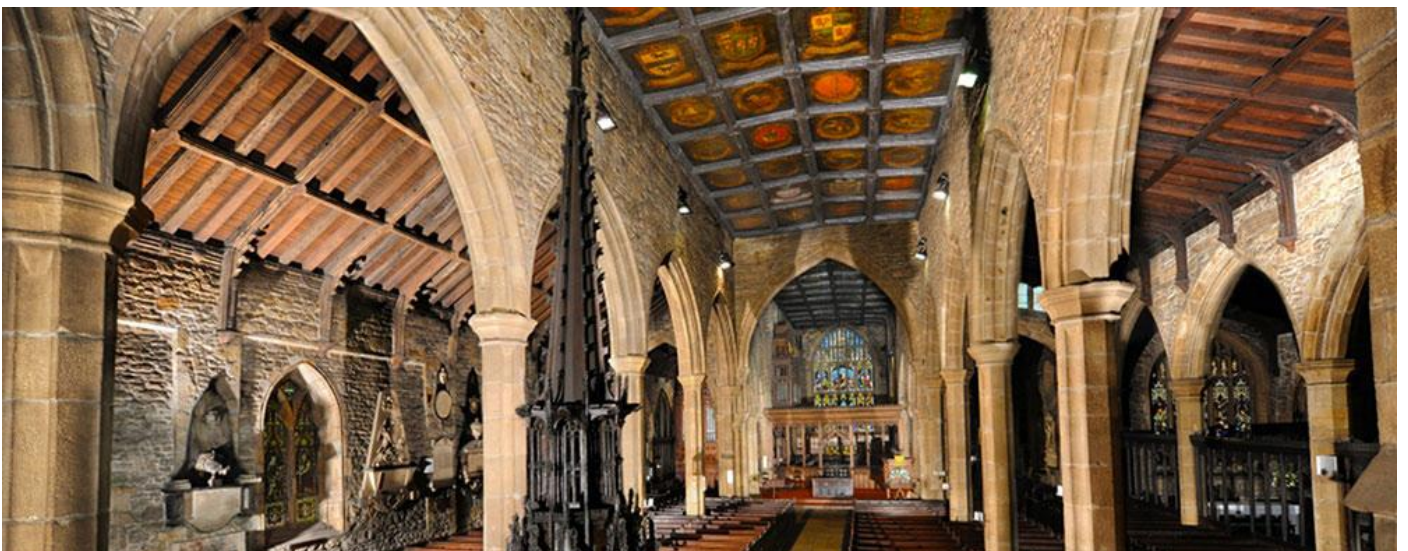
Even earlier, a medieval grave cover in the south porch, dated 1150, indicates the presence of a church - and incidentally - the pair of cropper's shears, carved into the stone, provide the earliest evidence for the textile industry in Calderdale.



Anne Lister, '**Gentleman Jack**', now famous as 'the first modern lesbian' lived at nearby **Shibden Hall** but worshipped in Halifax Parish Church, now the Minster.

Both her baptism and funeral services were held in the church. It is said she greatly admired the altar rails and modelled the balustrades at Shibden Hall on them. Anne Lister's tomb can be seen in the Minster.

But one thing we do know for certain is that this is a fine building to sing in and a fine place to spend some time, enjoying a concert. Take some time to look around.



Kilimanjaro Joe



Choir Chairman, Joe Stones, is going to have to do his vocal exercises in a slightly different way shortly. He'll be setting off to climb **Mount Kilimanjaro**, Africa's highest mountain. Maybe 'Tarzan calls' will keep his vocal cords supple.



Joe, who has done so much good work, steering the Choir through its Centenary Year could do with a break - let's hope it's not his leg!

Go Joe.

Have fun

and

come back safe and sound.

Fun in Golcar



Colne Valley Male Voice Choir and their guests from **'Let All men Sing'** teamed up with the **Lindley Brass Band** for an afternoon concert last month, hosted by St John's Church

The band, under their conductor, **Alan Widdop**, wasn't half bad and CVMVC wasn't half bad either. And when the LAMS men, the Choir and the Band teamed up we produced a terrific sound. Most notably in such numbers as **'You'll Never Walk Alone'**

Perhaps most popular was the sea-shanty, **'The Wellerman'** which was captured on video by Chris Wilson, who also provided VotV with these pictures. Thanks Chris!



To watch the video, go to this link:-

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_r69e1H6XwE





Visiting from the USA

*My daughter and I visited from **Virginia** in the United States a few years ago and heard **Colne Valley Male Voice Choir** sing in **Keswick** – maybe 7 years ago. It was a chance encounter and we were enthralled!*

You gave my daughter and me so much pleasure. I have lost her as a travel companion; she

gently told me she needs to travel with people her own age now (sniff) so my memories of our trips are that much sweeter.

We loved the concert and bought several CD's to take home. We even met one of your members at the B and B where we were staying. I don't remember his name but he and his wife had recently visited friends in our home state.

I've been planning another trip to the UK and was so pleased that I could get to your rehearsal the other evening with my sister, Perry, from Greenfield.

*Sadly my trip was too short to get to another of your concerts. But I do get your '**Voice of the Valley**' on my email and will continue to enjoy your newsletter until I can come hear the Choir again. Thank you.*

Laurey Solomon



Competition results

In the last edition, readers were exhorted to identify a lovely spot where your Editor and his partner (just visible) had enjoyed a super holiday recently. The first correct entry was to get a decent bottle of wine.



Matt Houston won the prize with the first correct entry.

He later told VotV, it was, in fact, his lovely partner, **Linda**, who recognised the location and put in the entry, not him.

Thus his cherished and long-standing record of never, ever winning any prizes in CVMVC 200 Club draws and the like remains intact.

Linda's entry - well done to her - was accurate but non-specific. She just said, '**Anglesey**'.

The next entry came from **David** and **Judith Morrison** with the full details:- **Twr Mawr Lighthouse on Llanddwyn Island near Newborough on the Isle of Anglesey.**

The Editor decided to present another prize - well done to them.

If you haven't been it's a fabulous place.



Editor with partner, Cate



and winners, Judith and David



and Linda (but not Matt)

A night out

To launch us into our 101st year after a hugely successful centenary, Colne Valley Male Voice Choir is to hold a celebratory dinner.

On the evening of Friday June 9th, Choir members, wives, girlfriends, boyfriends and supporters will be coming together at the Outlane Golf Club for an informal gathering, just for the fun of it.

Thom & Chris will be coming and there's a good chance that a few party pieces may be performed.

Contact Peter Kelly below or **Trevor Sykes** on **01484 652760**



Elisabeth Kelly wins £185



Peter Kelly, who runs our fund-raising scheme, 'The 200 Club' looked a little sheepish the other night when Jenny announced that Peter had just drawn the winning number for the June £185 prize.

The winner, it turns out, was **Elisabeth Kelly**, wife of Club organiser, Peter.

There were more than a few Choir members muttering 'Fix' when the announcement was made.

But, of course, they had absolutely no evidence. Just a bit of ribbing!

Well done, Elisabeth

Peter might have added – but he didn't. 'You got to be in it to win it.'

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| | <p>Just one pound a week buys you one of the 200 Club numbers.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Even if you don't win, you win - because half of the fund supports Choir concerts and performances.</p> <p>Contact Peter Kelly at peter.kelly10@btinternet.com or phone him on 07802 544717.</p> |
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Grace Bumbry RIP

Grace was an American opera star with a wonderful mezzo soprano voice and a magnetic stage presence. She was the first black singer at Bayreuth. She died on May 7th this year.



Born in 1937, her first significant performances as a soloist were in school productions of **Messiah** at Sumner High School in her native **St Louis, Missouri**.

In her teens, she came first in a competition on local radio, which led to her appearing at the age of 17 on a national talent show, singing an aria from Verdi's *Don Carlos* and reducing the presenter to tears on air.

The prizes should have included a place at a local conservatory but, because it was racially segregated, Bumbry was offered only private lessons, which her parents turned down.

A year later she won a scholarship to Boston University, where she majored in music, then on to Northwestern University, outside Chicago. Here she met where the great German soprano, **Lotte Lehmann**, who mentored the young Grace for many years. Lehmann also arranged a kind of scholarship at Santa Barbara for her new, impecunious pupil - Grace's father, Benjamin Bumbry, was a railroad porter, and her mother, Melzia (nee Walker), a teacher.

Bumbry intended to stay in Santa Barbara only for the summer of 1955; in the event she was there for three and a half years, following a regular curriculum of voice, theory and piano, then extending her languages and interpretation. After her international stage debut as Amneris at the Paris Opéra in the spring of 1960, she spent a fruitful time learning her repertoire. Her roles included Carmen, Dalila, Orfeo, Lady Macbeth, and Azucena in *Il Trovatore*.

In 1961 **Bayreuth** accepted her as Venus in **Tannhäuser**, where she caused a sensation as the first black singer at the festival. **Wieland Wagner**, the grandson of the composer, who had cast her, told his critics: "When I heard Grace Bumbry, I knew she was the perfect Venus. Grandfather would have been delighted."

There were 42 curtain calls and Jacqueline Kennedy invited her to perform at the White House.



Watch her perform an excerpt from **Bizet's Carmen**, the 'Seguidilla' in which Carmen dances, drinks and flirts with a soldier, who comes to blame Carmen for making him abandon his duty for a life as a smuggler.

But this being opera, it's the woman that gets the blame. Don Jose stabs her in the final Act.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z3RaYSzOQv0>

New Life Member

Bizarrely you only get to be a new life member of Colne Valley Male Voice Choir after you have been in it for 40 years of more.

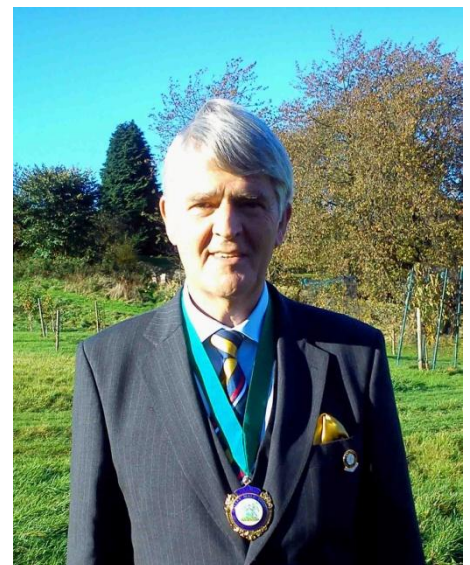
Somebody had done the arithmetic and the honour fell to longest serving member, **David Hirst** to welcome Roger Fielding into '**Life Membership**'. This happened at a brief presentation towards the end of May. Roger got a certificate and a warm round of applause.



Roger - at one time a very successful **Choir Chairman** - has contributed hugely to the Choir's continuing operation as one of the strongest choirs of its type in the country.

Perhaps most usefully he has presided over ticket sales for our big Town Hall Christmas concert, in particular. This has earned him the 'nom-de-guerre', Roger, '**Ticketing Supremo**'. It's a team effort making sure the Town Hall attracts a 'close to capacity' audience every year but everybody knows that Roger shifts more tickets than anyone else.

Now as Life Member, I think, he's exempted to paying subs - the Choir, in its wisdom, reckoning he's contributed enough to cover him for the next 40 years.



Little Monsters?

New Colne Valley Boys Marketing Campaign hits the streets



VotV can't say how effective these new fliers have been...

..... but they are certainly quite amusing and definitely eye-catching.

Do we not see, yet again, the creative spark of young **Kieran Chadha's** new broom in marketing Colne Valley activities? We certainly do!

Well done Kieran and all the others who have participated in the Boys' latest initiatives.

As your Editor said, you can't say for sure the new fliers been a success,

But we can say that the recent 'Schools' Tour' and related publicity efforts have refreshed Colne Valley Boys; bringing in at least **5 new 'Little Maestros'**.

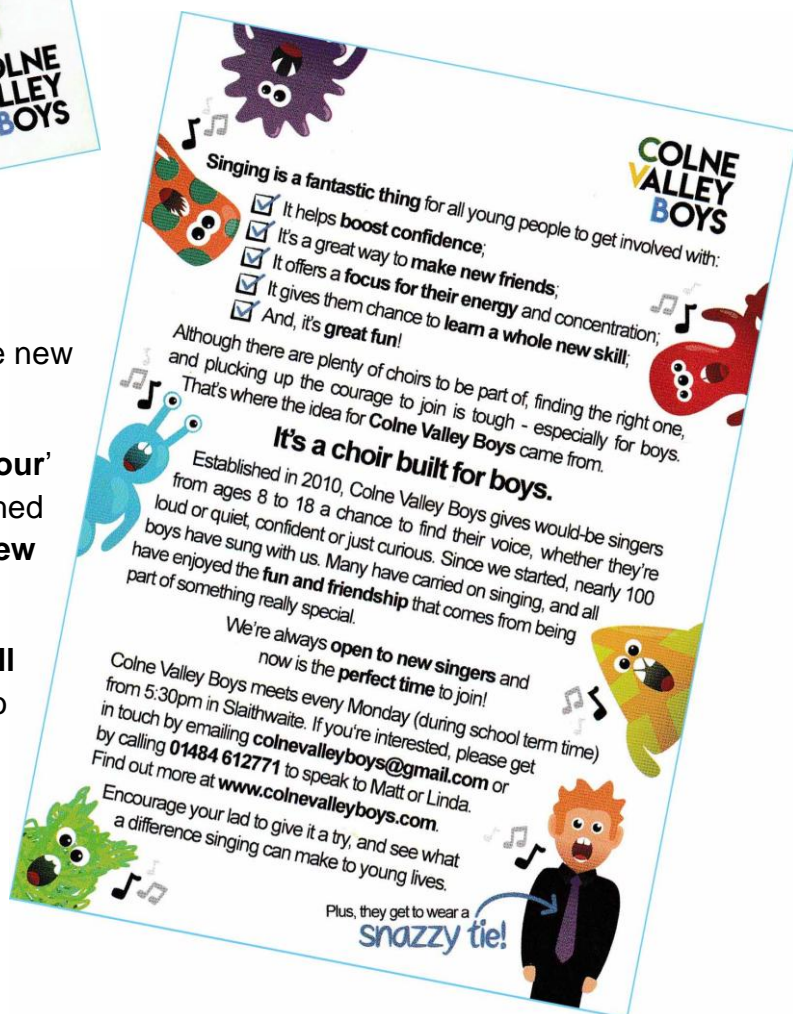


Add to that the 2023 'Let All Men Sing' campaign has to date seen **15 LAMS men** recently accepted into full membership of the adult Choir

..... and probably more to come!

That's absolutely terrific - a rejuvenation

Colne Valley singing goes from strength to strength.



Thank you for the music, Mr Meredith

It was announced some time ago that Thom is giving up his day job.

His many, many friends at **Musica Kirklees** are arranging a goodbye concert in his honour, which many of us would like to attend. It's on July 15th at the Town Hall.



Thank You
for the Music, Mr Meredith

A Concert with Musica Youth Orchestra
Members Past & Present

7.00pm | Saturday, July 15, 2023
Huddersfield Town Hall

Tickets from £10 / £5 for age 21 or under
at tickets.kirklees.gov.uk or call 01484 225755
www.musicakirklees.org

Thom writes to VotV:-

Following the announcement that I was standing down from my role at Musica Kirklees at the end of this year, my wonderful colleagues at Musica are staging a farewell concert.

They have invited members of the Musica Youth Orchestra past and present to take part.

So far we have over 160 players so it should be some orchestra!!

Nick Dolling, who takes over as Principal in September, and the Musica Team are organising it.

<https://tickets.kirklees.gov.uk/calendar/2023-07-15>

I find it difficult talking about a concert for me!!!

However, it would be lovely if some of the CVMVC singers, friends and partners could come along. All profits are going to the Musica Kirklees: 'Gift of Music' scheme which provides music tuition for young people in financial difficulties.

Best wishes,

Thom

So many of us have so many reasons to thank Thom for his work with young musicians for getting on for 35 years. So it's an event not to be missed.



'Simply the Best' Tina Turner

The 'Queen of Rock' is no more. Watch her perform 'Proud Mary' at 2009 concert at Arnhem in

- Simply fabulous



<https://youtu.be/TTfYnRQgKgY>




Contributions welcomed

Your Voice of the Valley editor reckons that readers would enjoy life even more, if they sent their story in to VoTV.

If it's got some connection with the Choir and its members and activities, send me a draft and I'll help you get it ready for publication.

And do check out our website....



Colne Valley Male Voice Choir
Est 1922

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