

Successes

Success isn't just a matter of the 100 first prizes (at least) we have won over the years.

We count our success in other ways, too. Here are some:-

No Barriers to Entry – Colne Valley men are **not selected** for their musical education or established singing skills. We are, mostly, just ordinary blokes who have learned to love singing.

If you want to join us, we'll make you very welcome – doesn't matter if your voice is untrained or you can't read music. When you feel ready we'll give you a brief test, which most people who want to be part of us pass without difficulty. We have an expert voice coach in Thom Meredith who can bring out our skills and he's endlessly patient as we struggle with new pieces. Soon you'll have them off by heart.

The great joy of singing in a choir is that your individual voice may be 'a bit rubbish' – but collectively we can reach the sublime.

Continuity – We've been around since 1922 and for about 80 years of that time we've had just two conductors:



George Stead,
seen here visiting
Buckingham Palace to
receive an MBE,
led the Choir for 44 years

and

new boy,
Thom Meredith,
is well into
his 35th year with us
and still has a
sense of humour.



Boys Choir

We run a
choir for
boys-
**Colne Valley
Boys** -
to nurture the
community's
male voice
choir future.



Schools Tours

To keep this Boys' Choir initiative current – and generally just to promote singing with young people, the Choir regularly does visits to all the primary schools in the area to have a sing-along with some fantastic kids.



Top Class Accompanists – the Choir was constantly staggered by our good fortune in having Maestro, **Keith Swallow**, as our piano player and that for 65 years! He was 'World Class'. And now in **Chris Pulleyn** we have another top-class pianist who also acts as Deputy Conductor.



Performing with the best Brass Bands - our Christmas Concert, filling Huddersfield's amazing Town Hall, is a highlight of our Choir year and an unmissable event in the local cultural calendar.



This is the Brighouse & Rastrick Band - arguably the best of its kind in the world - with us and the Colne Valley Boys at the Town Hall back in 2014. They've be our guests again in 2024 as they have been for the last decade and more.

Friendly Christmases in Marsden – as guests of the Marsden Silver Prize Band, this event is becoming an increasingly essential part of pre-Christmas celebrations in the Colne Valley.



Bedded into the Musical Life of the Community.



As a community initiative for our Centenary Year (1922-3), the Choir organised 'Let All Men Sing'.

This was a programme geared to attracting local men to try out their singing voices in a friendly and supportive way. The challenge was:- come to just eight rehearsals, work with professional musicians, Thom and Chris, meet new friends and work towards a one-off concert in support of a men's health charity.

A few men were experienced singers who had got out of the habit, most hadn't sung since they were kids except maybe in the shower.



They registered in droves and were thrilled by the experience. The community concert was brilliantly attended and brought in people a little different to our usual audiences.

Though hugely well worth it for the 39 men who stuck with the programme. It was also rejuvenating for the main Choir as 15 or so came on through, joined up, passed tests and are now full members at all our events. So successful was it that we ran it again in 2024 with similarly high community uptake.



We give about a dozen concerts a year

Covid knocked our performance diary but we are getting back on track. Concerts are mostly local but occasionally as far afield as Besancon or California, sometimes with guests, sometimes just with our own in-house talents.

Tom Law and James Cooke - two of our regular in-house soloists at Choir gigs.

