



## A good day at the Music Festival

Large Male Voice  
Choir Competition

Saturday February 22



It's always a pleasure singing in the competitions on 'Choir Saturday' at the Mrs Sunderland Music Festival.

### A welcome visitor popped in to wish us luck



Another source of joy - particularly for the 'old guard' - came when who should walk into our dressing room to wish us all the best? Why, none other than baritone, **Trevor Sykes**.

Trevor recently broke his arm quite badly and was in a bit of a bad way - missing our set of Christmas concerts for the first time in years and unable to get to rehearsals in the New Year. "You don't bounce back quite as quickly when you're ninety." says Trevor.

It was good to see him turning up to support us and to see him "...on the mend, I've got my cast off now and I'm expecting to be driving again imminently. I'm looking forward to getting back to Choir on a Monday night quite soon."

Well done Trevor. You'll be welcome back!

They say it's the taking part that counts....



The men of the Male Voice Choir - about 50 of us, anyway, who were free to participate – went onto the stage at Huddersfield Town Hall to sing in the Male Voice Choir class.

Very much aided by **Chris** at the Steinway and by **Benedict**, who beautifully played a viola introduction, we began our first piece; the poignant and romantic new version of '**O Love, that Will Not Let Me Go**'. And we sang it just about as well as we ever have.

Then in complete contrast we sang Vaughn Williams' '**Antiphon**'. This is his setting of the 1633 George Herbert poem, '**Let All the World in Every Corner Sing; My God and King**'. This was an altogether different challenge; robust and hearty and we really did it justice.

We were terrific. Later sitting in the auditorium we listened to the other choirs. They sounded brilliant!

.... But it is nice to win





## A wise adjudicator

Our adjudicator, **Steven Roberts**, knew all the competitor choirs. He said he would focus his remarks on what he liked rather than on any shortcomings and it was plain there wasn't very much he hadn't enjoyed.

Your editor deciphered a few of his comments on the CVMVC performance. (It could be that Stephen's other job is as a doctor – his hand-writing is terrible!) They included, though, the following positives:-

*'O love - an assured and very expressive performance - a beautiful interpretation.*

*Antiphon - a thrilling start - full-bodied sound - excellent dynamic control - not oversung - a persuasive performance full of flair - well done'*

It was clear he liked us but we waited with anxious anticipation before he declared us **winners!**

It's a lovely feeling.



Our Colne Valley Choir knows Steven Roberts, quite well. It's been our practice for many years to invite in the occasional guest conductor to our rehearsals at those rare times when Thom is unavailable. They give the Choir a refreshing new insight and perspective on our items. Steven took a rehearsal in August 2022 as we prepared for our Scarborough Concert and often conducted in those pre-Covid 'Concert on the Hill' open-air events at the Salendine Nook Rugby Ground with us and Honley Male Voice Choir.

And Steven's links to the Mrs Sunderland will continue. The outgoing chairman, in his remarks at the end of this year's festival included the following:-

*"We are delighted to report," said outgoing chairman, **Ray Brown**, "That Steven Roberts has joined our organising committee as Chair. Steven has a wealth of experience within the festival movement and will contribute materially to the continued development of our festival. Our planning for the 2026 festival starts this weekend!"*



## A little Jubilation

Some minutes later, back in our dressing room, the mood was jubilant. This had been our 51<sup>st</sup> First prize at the Mrs Sunderland but it has been a couple of year since our last victory.



For 'New boy' **Graham Schofield** it was a very special day. Looking good in his new uniform - only handed out just two weeks ago - our most recent singer told *VotV*. "I only got my membership confirmed in the New Year and here I am singing in this fabulous hall and better still part of a prize-winning Choir. Brilliant."



The jubilations continued as several members progressed to the pub. An astonished customer in the County was surprised by an impromptu performance of 'Happy Birthday to You' sung with great gusto. (Fortunately it was his birthday.)



Here we see our oldest member, **Ken Farr**, with **Peter Vincent**, watching a sneaky video of our performance of 'O Love' 'You never know quite what the audience is hearing when you are singing up on stage', said Ken - but by all accounts the video nearly reduced him to tears. 'Just Beautiful.'

So now once again we have custody of the trophy.

The Choir of the day was '**Chantage**'. This was a very special outfit; one of the UK's leading chamber choirs; young, stylish and energetic. Drawing members from all over the country this choir, amongst its many achievements won the BBC Radio 3 Choir of the Year competition, and is frequently featured on Classic FM and BBC radio. They were absolutely tremendous!



In your editor's opinion not only do we have to offer great thanks to Thom for coaxing an excellent performance from us, but also we need to thank Thom and the Music Committee for choosing two varied and contrasting pieces.

It was probably that choice that swung it for us. It really demonstrated the versatility and range of the Choir's skills

**Well done, Thom**

**and**

**Well done, everybody.**



We move on to our next competition in Whitby with fresh hope and confidence.

# Schools' tour - what fun we had

Last Wednesday, at 8.50 am a small gang of Choir members rocked up outside the playground at Linthwaite Clough Junior and Infant School. A few minutes later, in a hall full of curious, sometimes tiny, boys and girls, sitting cross-legged on the floor, the 20-odd members of the Choir, backing Thom's wonderful lead, launched into the first of six impromptu collaborative performances.



The purpose was not just to entertain the kids and to get them singing with us, but also to promote our Colne Valley Boys Choir. The trouble with a boys' choir is that they will insist on growing up so there's a constant need to refresh membership.

From **LITTLE MONSTERS** to **LITTLE MAESTROS** **COLNE VALLEY BOYS**

Everyone can sing!

**It's a choir built for boys.**

Why not come along to our open evening and give it a try?  
**Monday 31st March 2025 from 5:30 pm**  
at Linthwaite Methodists church hall, Stones Lane, HD7 5PD  
To find out more, email Matt or Linda at [colnevalleyboys@gmail.com](mailto:colnevalleyboys@gmail.com)

Matt and Linda Houston had done most of the leg-work arranging concerts in six schools all along the valley - not least in arranging a substitute school to visit when Ofsted sprung a surprise inspection on Marsden Junior's causing them to pull out the day before we were due.

They worked wonders. We dashed from school to school and their plan worked like clockwork.

They even planned in a visit to one of our sponsors, **Bolster Moor Farm Shop** who kept space for us in the busy café for excellent - and promptly served - lunches before moving down the road to our next school.



Thom changed the repertoire 'on the hoof' but, typically, as the children sat a little mystified looking at us, a voice came from the back of the hall. This was Thom doing the opening line of an Australian Aboriginal 'Welcome' song; '[A Bey O](#)'. The men echoed Thom line by line, on the repeat going into harmony as Thom slowly made his way to the front. The children were enthralled and later excited as Thom got them to sing the responses, backed by the men. Magic! Then the Choir would do a song, probably 'Let the River Run', demonstrating that even a small fraction of the full Choir was still impressive.

Then in most schools, Thom handed over to Damien Stirling, telling the children that Damien had been in the Boy's choir since he was nine years old and was now studying and performing in music theatre and singing with the men.

Damien dressed as Willy Wonka did a song - and a dance - called '[It must be believed to be seen](#)' in which Wonka describes his Chocolate Factory and invites a few golden ticket holders to come in.

He's some talent is Damien!





In Golcar, St John's, the school choir sang to us.

They too, had won prizes in the recent Mrs Sunderland Festival.



Then a couple more all-join-in songs, maybe the 'Scooby Doo' song or the 'Gospel Medley - with actions - and then we dash off to the next venue.

It was a great day for the men and the schools; both staff and pupils loved it, too.

*'Thank you for coming in to see us, the children and the staff thoroughly enjoyed the performance' says Michelle at Clough head.*

**Schools Tour II** is already in the diary. We'll visit another half dozen schools on **Wednesday, March 26<sup>th</sup>**. That will be followed by another **Open Evening** hosted by the Boy's Choir, the following Monday. This will be held at Linthwaite Methodists' church hall.

We'll be hoping that a good number of newcomers will come along to join in - and maybe - join up.



## A great week for Steve Molinari



Keen-eyed readers will have already noticed Steve enjoying himself in various 'Schools Tour' pictures.

But he had another reason to be enjoying his week - his **200 Club Number** came up – **big** - in the late February prize draw and suddenly he was **£1,000** better off.

Wow, well done Steve.

Your *VotV* Editor suggested he might buy all the Schools' Tour men lunch but, sadly, Steve related that the money was already gone. He had had unexpected car trouble and the bill required all bar about 50 quid of his winnings.

He was philosophical; easy come, easy go.

Still he's sticking with the 200 Club - and so he should. There are very good odds of winning.

There's a few numbers still available - so get in touch with 200 club organiser, **Tom Jennings**. He'll sort you out.

	<p>£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 Tom Jennings at:- <a href="mailto:200club@colnevalleymvc.co.uk">200club@colnevalleymvc.co.uk</a></p>	
--	--	---

# A new Colne Valley role for Keith

Of course, everybody in the Choir and everyone we collaborate with deserves to be treated with respect and we have always endeavoured to do that both individually and collectively. But in these bureaucratic days it's become increasingly clear that voluntary organisations, such as ours, need to revisit and refresh policy, to reinforce our principles and to guide our practice in 'Safeguarding'.

At the last Management Committee, with just a few minor tweaks to come, the Choir adopted a revised 'Safeguarding Policy' to underpin our activities.



Better than that, the committee appointed a 'Safeguarding Officer' to oversee its operation and implementation.

He is one of our more recent Choir members, **Keith Lockwood**.

He made his Choir Town Hall debut in December 2023.



Keith has very recently retired as a head teacher in a primary school - where safeguarding issues are clearly of greater relevance and more necessary. Keith is well-versed in all safeguarding topics.

We are very pleased he has agreed to oversee our policy and to help us ensure compliance.

Keith will now be available as the **First Point of Call** in the unlikely event that any vulnerable person, linked to or in the Choir feels that they have been treated less well than they have the right to expect.

If you've got any issues, talk to him. You'll be sure to get a sympathetic and fair hearing.

He's a lovely chap, too, so talk to him, anyway.

Welcome Keith to your new added role.

# A sad departure: Dr Simon Lindley

It was with some sadness that we heard of the death the other day of Simon Lindley.

Simon was a wonderful musician:-



- Organist - he was the **Leeds City Organist** for well over 40 years



- Pianist - he was very accomplished and a good friend of our wonderful accompanist, **Keith Swallow**, for decades
- Choir master - Simon conducted choirs all over the region from his base at Fulneck near Pudsey.

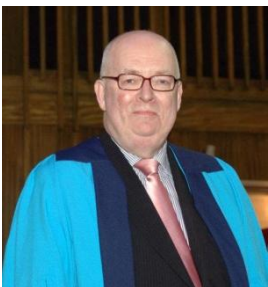


- Guest Conductor of Colne Valley Male Voice Choir - he was a regular visitor, standing in for Thom on his rare absences. He would bring great musical knowledge to our sessions, and would enliven our rehearsals with a dry wit and some excellent anecdotes - often from personal knowledge of the composers or arrangers of the songs we were practising.



- Frequently he helped us to prepare for the **Scarborough Music Festival** that the Choir participated in for 15 years. Simon was the musical guide to our inestimable patron, **Miss Christine Cox**, who organised and underwrote the concerts.

- Compère - Simon a renowned radio broadcaster on matters musical was invited to compère the Choir's big Town Hall Christmas concerts. It was a task he fulfilled with relish. Once again, deep musical knowledge and genial good humour shone through his introductions.



- Honorary Life Member - Dr Lindley was made an Honorary Life Member of Colne valley Male Voice Choir in recognition of his contributions. He remained a good friend of the Choir throughout, participating in our Centenary Celebrations and dropping in on many of our concerts. As is customary for departed members, the Choir sang George Stead's 'Fourfold Amen' in his honour at rehearsal on Monday. We shall miss him.

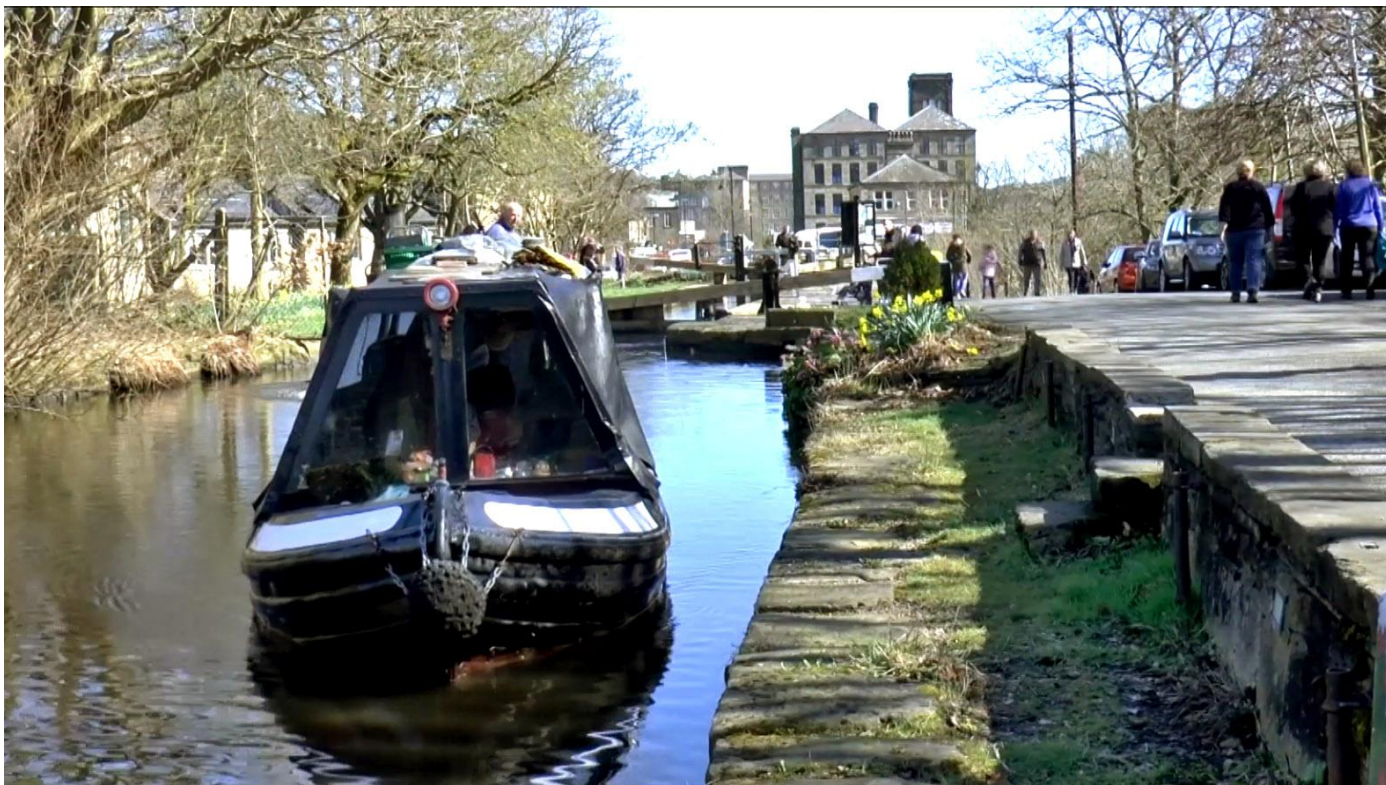
Dr Simon Lindley RIP

10/10/1948 to 25/2/2025

# Gongoozling in Slaithwaite

Gongoozling is messing about in boats - particularly the narrow boats found on the canals of West Yorkshire. The gongoozling gets underway on sunny days in spring.

This footage is set to '**Plaisirs d' Amour**' sung by Colne Valley Male Voice Choir, conducted by Thom Meredith and beautifully accompanied by the late **Keith Swallow**. Enjoy!



Follow this link to view.

<https://youtu.be/9VLQk4wH2cY>



COLNE VALLEY  
MALE VOICE CHOIR

## Colne Valley Male Voice Choir

Est 1922

Events Recordings Our History About Us Information

