



The end of an era

Colne Valley men held their last rehearsal at the 'Con Club' the other night. This brought an end to close on sixty years of gathering there every Monday night for Choir practice.



The team at the Slaithwaite Conservative Club (nowadays, principally, just Carol Hey and Nigel Lumb) has made us welcome in the heart of our home village since the mid 1960's. But, rather sadly, the draughty old building with heating and facilities desperately in need of an upgrade, that the Club couldn't finance, became downsides that Choir members were increasingly reluctant to accept.

Add to this the 'scary' staircases leading to our upstairs rehearsal room, which proved to be a huge challenge to some of our less mobile singers and gradually a consensus formed that the Choir needed to find a more suitable place to host our activities.



Thanks to **Joe Stones** for these pictures.



The Choir has certainly shared itself out amongst the Slaithwaite Clubs!

Born May 8th 1922 at **Slaithwaite Liberal Club** (now the Civic Hall) we soon moved to the **Slaithwaite Socialist Club** on Commercial Street.



We were there for over 40 years.

Word has it that the music store was damp and that our copies were being nibbled by rats. Others say that a proposed rent increase provoked a search which resulted in the '**Con Club**' offering us a new home.



Whatever the truth, the club has looked after us for the remainder of the almost 103 years since our formation. We are grateful but it is time to move on.

Over recent months the Choir has trialled various alternative venues and - after some debate - we've moved on to the next village down in the Colne Valley, **Linthwaite**. Here, the Methodist Church has offered us (nearly) all that we could require - mainly a rehearsal space with a wonderful acoustic, but, maybe equally important, spaces with effective heating and updated sanitation and décor. They've made us feel very welcome and the membership, by and large, is very content with the change.



Our new rehearsal room



First Management Committee meeting in our new venue

There's no doubting that for many it really is the end of an era!

Freddy, Eliza's smitten beau

CVMVC baritone, **Chris pilgrim**, is a man with rare talent.

Here we see him (centre) at one of the last rehearsals at Slaithwaite, amongst his fellow baritones

So talented indeed, that he was recently recruited to be a key performer in the recent 'All Souls Amateur Operatic Society's revival of 'My Fair Lady'.



Chris played young **Freddy Emsford-Hill**, the toff who falls in love with Eliza.

Readers will recall that Eliza Dolittle is the Cockney working-class girl that Professor Henry Higgins chooses to demonstrate the proof of his assertion that any 'common girl' with the right coaching could quickly pass as a duchess.

Ever since George Bernard Shaw's created the original play, 'Pygmalion' these themes of class and sex discrimination in society have echoed through contemporary culture, from 'Pretty Woman,' through to more recent views of female presence.

A poster for the musical 'My Fair Lady'. At the top left is a small circular logo. Below it is a black silhouette of a woman in a long, elegant dress and a large hat, standing with one hand on her hip. To the right of the silhouette, the text reads: 'ALL SOULS' AMATEUR OPERATIC SOCIETY presents Lerner and Loewe's My Fair Lady'. Below this, it says 'At the Halifax Playhouse King Cross Street Halifax HX1 2SH' and 'Tue 1st - Fri 4th April 2025 @ 7.15pm Sat 5th April 2025 @ 2.25pm'. At the bottom, it lists 'Book and Lyrics by ALAN JAY LERNER' and 'Music by FREDERICK LOEWE'. There is also a small logo for 'HALIFAX PLAYHOUSE' at the bottom right of the poster.

Of course in the end, Eliza, comes to be her own woman despite the manipulations and she rejects both Freddy and Higgins to go her own way (though, apparently, she may perhaps choose a future with the irascible Higgins, who has finally come to recognise her virtues). Hence this revival struck many a chord with its Halifax audience. And many of them were, of course, still familiar with the long list of great songs in the Lerner and Lowe musical from 1956 and its 1964 film version.

Sadly, VoTV reports this in the past tense. So those who didn't get to see Chris in the role will be forever disappointed, as the show's short run is now complete. Word is; he was excellent!

Young Chris certainly looked the part of young Freddy

And, incidentally, our other Chris - Chris Pulleyn - doesn't let much go by in the musical life of the district without his involvement. He was one of the piano-players/repetiteurs who guided the performers through their rehearsals and stage appearances.



See Freddy's - and Chris Pilgrim's - big song from the musical, 'On the Street where You Live'.

Click here or on the TV.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8M1L-aclB1U>



Well done both Chris's

200 Club still paying lucky winners

The 200 Club, reports Club organiser, Tom Jennings, has paid out lots of lovely cash to owners of the numbers in the weekly draw since January. Here are some of the recent winners. If your name is not on the list, it'll soon come up. That is of course if you are a member of the Club.

20 January 2025	Maureen Stead (49)	45
27 January 2025	Carol Hey (28)	185
3 February 2025	John Robinson (27)	45
10 February 2025	Hester Meredith (161)	45
17 February 2025	Peter Hirst (174)	45
24 February 2025	Steven Molinari (10)	1000
3 March 2025	Bronwyn Lees (186)	45
10 March 2025	Trevor Sykes (72)	45
17 March 2025	Annabel Cooke (45)	45
24 March 2025	Ian Mellor (114)	45

Contact Tom if you are not or if you want an additional number. Just a pound a week (£50.00 pa) and Tom will sort you out with an opportunity to both support the Choir and to win big!

	<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:- 200club@colnevalleymvc.co.uk</p>	
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Choir to perform at Whitby



On Saturday, the Choir will be in performance and competition at the **Eskdale Music Festival** in Whitby.

It'll be a long day for 50 or so Choir members who will travel by coach up to the **Whitby Pavilion Theatre** to enter three competition classes in the hope that they will be able to repeat their recent competition success in the '**Mrs Sunderland Music Festival**'.



One of our performance items - part of the 'Recital Class'- will be '**My Lord , What a Morning**'. This piece, one that has just returned to our repertoire after a ten year absence, holds an interesting part in the Choir's history.



Veteran baritone, **David Hirst**, contacts VotV with the story:-

'My Lord, What A Mornin' was one of two items, introduced to the Choir by the 23 year old, **Thom Meredith** following his selection as the new Conductor of Colne Valley Male Voice Choir, thirty six years ago in 1989. The other item was entitled 'Jonah'.



*The Choir's very first public performance with Thom as conductor was held at **Fountains Abbey**, Ripon on the evening of September 16th 1989 as part of the National Trust's then series of 'Son et Lumiere' concerts and events. Ten items were performed which, in view of the venue, were all unaccompanied and these also included, the two introduced items previously mentioned above. The items, shown in concert order were:- The Sailors' Chorus, Spin Spin, An Eriskay Love Lilt, The Farmer's Boy, Jonah, **My Lord What A Mornin'**, The Two Roses, True Love, The Drunken Sailor, Sanctus (Schubert)*

Ten items performed at Thom's first Concert - Just a small introduction to the almost unbelievable 354 different items of music which have since followed, under Thom's leadership. And, all performed without the aid of music notation, in actual Concert performances.



Click here or on the image to listen to our recording

<https://on.soundcloud.com/xeUcDJ3ikoq4CShK6>

David

Another New Guy

The Choir gave a warm welcome to a new Baritone recently. He is **Richard Pearson**.

Richard, our newest member, tells VotV:-

*I am 63 and live in Wooldale, Holmfirth very close to **Ken Parkin**. I still work and have my own Financial Advice business, which my son and daughter-in-law now work in with me.*

My wife of 32 years is Fiona -who sings with the White Rosettes Barbershop choir and is also the lead singer in a Motown band.



*Fiona and I sang with Holme Valley Singers for around 15 years until recently. But I have wanted to experience singing with a male voice choir for a number of years. We knew **Kieran and Chris** from their time at Holme Valley. I was also pestered for many years by the late **John Garner** to join Colne Valley.*

I have 2 other children a son and a daughter who is an acoustic guitar player and singer who performs in a lot of local venues. A granddaughter and another on the way.

Outside of working and singing, I enjoy golf and have been involved with Scholes Cricket club all my life.

I am looking forward to singing with Colne Valley and singing in some of the wonderful venues, hopefully for many years to come. The welcome I have received from the members has been very gratefully received.

Thanks

Richard

A reason to celebrate

The 2025 'Let all Men Sing' group held their one-off concert on the 16th March.

This was this year's cohort of men, who signed up in the New Year for 8 sessions of singing with Thom and Benedict. After just eight weeks, they bravely took to the performance area at Slaithwaite, St James's to entertain family and friends for their first - and maybe - their last time.



They were joined by Colne Valley Boys and the men of the Male Voice Choir and so the stage was full. All of us - whether performers or our large audience - enjoyed a super afternoon of choral music.

This culminated in the final ensemble singing of the 'American Trilogy', including 'Glory, glory Hallelujah'. This had the added bonus of accompanist, Chris Pulleyn (VotV thinks for the first time) pulling out all the stops to boost the sound even more, playing the church organ in the rear of the building.



There's no doubt that the LAMS programme has brought joy to many men in the local community in recent years.

And, given that no small number of these LAMS men have carried on singing and gone on the join CVMVC, it has done wonders to revivify and rejuvenate the main Choir.



Well done all you LAMS men

- and keep singing!