



‘A Feast of Music’



“A Feast of Music” was how one audience member described our ‘Musical Theatre Extravaganza’ on Sunday 27th July.

Our venue, Saint James’ Church in Slaithwaite is a familiar one but it was never so full as it was on Sunday.

“When the show began, when the choir sang its very first number, I was bowled over and then it got even better.” commented another enthusiast; himself a tenor of local repute from a neighbouring choir.



What made the event so special were the young soloists who joined with the choir – quite rightly billed as **'Rising Stars'**.



Our excellent compère, **Andrew Edwards**, announced a stream of fine songs by the Choir and our other guest soloists, **Toby Kershaw** and **Emily Richmond** - all brilliantly delivered and enthusiastically received.

When **Evie Rose Owen** took to the mic to sing **'Summertime'** from **Gershwin's 'Porgy and Bess'** both Choir and audience realised for certain that this concert was going to be terrific.

Much of the atmosphere was created by our small guest band under our accompanist, **Chris Pulleyn**, **Grace Turner** keyboards with **Lucy & Joe Dolling** (guitar and drums) and augmented by theatrical lighting and sound systems supplied by the generosity of **Ellie & Harry Meredith** (aka **Ellie Sax** and **LaserBoy Wonder**) ably worked by technician, **Jack Osborne**.





An exciting 'First Act' was brought to a fantastic conclusion with a piece called '**Bui Doi**' from **Miss Saigon**, in which the US and Vietnamese protagonists finally acknowledge their responsibility for the children left behind after the Vietnam War.

The Choir at its most dramatic best provided firm backing to a most powerful solo by Thom.

It's a stunning piece made even more striking by the soaring tenor contribution by our **Chris Pulleyn** - just wonderful!



This piece didn't generate the first standing ovation of the afternoon (there had already been a couple) but it clearly 'wowed' the audience.



Terrific solo contributions by in-house performers **Chris Pilgrim**, **Sam Blagbrough** and **Matt Houston** added to the joy.

But perhaps the busiest of our soloists was CVMVC Second Tenor, **Damien Stirling**.



Amongst his many fabulous contributions, his appearance as the '**Phantom of the Opera**' singing '**The Music of the Night**' was very special.

He's surely got a sparkling future in Musical Theatre ahead of him.

Of the three items from **Les Misérables** (which has just celebrated 40 years on stage), the finale of our Act II, '**One Day More**' combined all our voices and provided the biggest of big finishes!

It was greeted with a rare Yorkshire show of whoops and unbridled applause as the audience rose in genuine and generous appreciation of our efforts.



"You sang your hearts out- all of you. I was in tears for much of it; the tears were rolling down my cheeks - just wonderful."

"A great concert - everyone was thrilled to be part of it"

.....or so reckoned **Cyril** and **David**.



Another Big Thank You to Chris

Many of the concert pictures in this 'Voice of the Valley' have been taken for us by **Christine Wilson**.

She is becoming increasingly adept at stepping up with her camera to take action shots of the Choir and its members and guests.

Well done Chris and thank you, again.



Rodney Richardson RIP



He had stepped down as a singer some years ago but Rodney remained a keen supporter of the Choir. Along with his wife, Margaret, he was regularly seen in the audience cheering us on.

This is him with his grandson, **Kane Berry**, who for a while sang with **Colne Valley Boys**.

Rodney joined the Choir in 2001 and was an enthusiastic and popular member, a regular participant on Choir trips and a financial supporter long after he stopped singing with us in 2019.

Rodney was with us on our first trip to Cornwall in 2007. He was among the First Tenors when we came away with the Cornwall International Male Voice Choral Festival **First Prize & Overall Best UK Choir**. You'll spot him in this performance picture when we sang at the Open Air Theatre in Minack (just in front of the **Matt Houston** and beside the redoubtable, **John Lees**).



Rodney went into to hospital for a planned knee operation in early July and died unexpectedly shortly after. He was 83. The Choir, in the traditional manner, sang George Stead's '**Fourfold Amen**' in his honour and memory. Our thoughts go out to Margaret and the family.

We are saddened by his departure - Rest in Peace, Rodney

The Fourfold Amen.

For half a century or more the Choir has had its own way to mark the death of departed members.

It's a very moving Choir ritual. The news of the demise of one of our singers is announced, accompanied by a brief obituary, calling to mind some of the contributions that member has made to our musical life - often over decades of participation - and then the **Fourfold Amen** is sung.

It's just 14 bars of harmony singing with a single word lyric: 'Amen'. It was the work of our illustrious leader from 1924 right through until his own sudden and untimely death in 1968 - **Mr George E Stead OBE**.

George composed many fine choral pieces which are still sung by us and by male voice choirs all over the world - but it is his beautiful 'Fourfold Amen' which is the most dear to the Choir's collective heart.

The singing is followed by a few moments of silent contemplation of the colleague we have lost.

Thom Meredith at his 'end-of term' session with the Choir before we (experimentally) stop for a few weeks' holiday after a packed concert schedule, spent much of his inspiring session giving us some much-appreciated 'Voice Coaching'. We were still buzzing about the previous day's 'Songs from the Shows' concert.

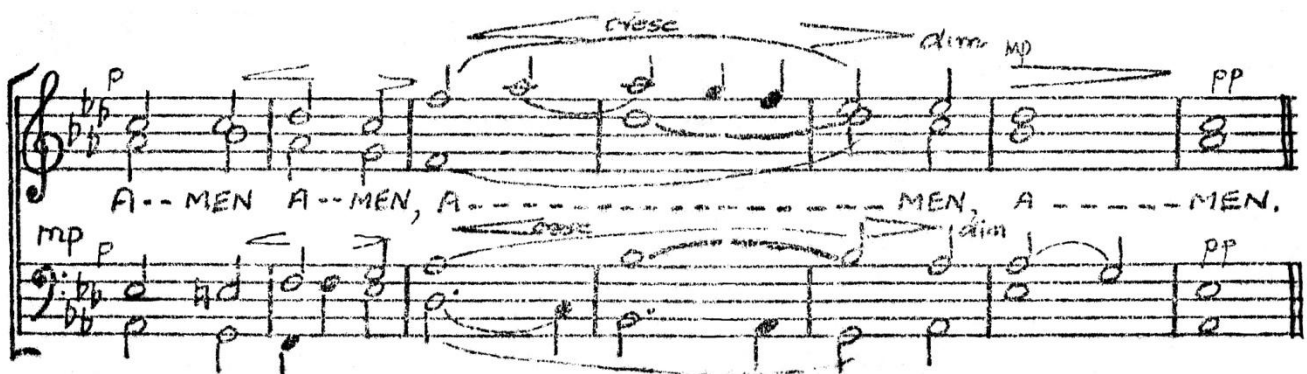
He also took the opportunity to remark that with so many new and recent members, that the Fourfold Amen was unfamiliar to many. So he rehearsed it with us - teaching the harmonies to newer singers and reminding those of us 'longer in the tooth' of what a subtly simple yet elegant few bars George created for us.



Here is George's important little piece:-

Fourfold Amen

G. E. STEAD



NB back to rehearsals on Monday September 1st.

Playing with AI

Editor: Do me an image of a male voice choir practising

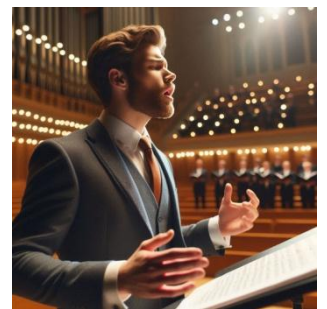
Co-pilot AI: Your image of a male voice choir practising is on the way. I hope you like it!

Make it a larger choir, please



Here's your image of a larger male voice choir practising. I hope it resonates with you!

And less religious



More comical

Here's your comical image of a larger male voice choir practising!



More beautiful

Got it! Your beautiful, comical, larger male voice choir practising is on its way!



Less religious

Here's your more comical and beautiful image of a larger male voice choir practising. I hope it brings some cheer to your day!



Fewer beards, please



No beards



Your beautiful, comical, larger male voice choir practising with no beards
and less religious is on its way!

Without beards, please



Coming right up! Your beautiful, comical, larger male voice choir without beards is on its way!



Please, no bearded men

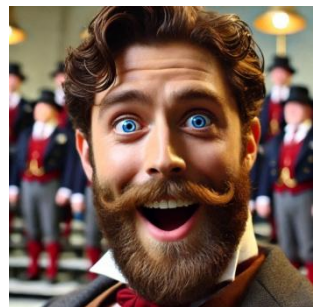


Clean shaven men, please



No, without facial hair, please

Here's your image of a beautiful, comical, larger male voice choir practising without facial hair.
Enjoy!



Don't you understand 'without'?

I apologize for any confusion.

I'll ensure that your image of a beautiful, comical, larger male voice choir practising has **men without any facial hair**. Just a moment!

I'm waiting



But with no facial hair

I appreciate your patience.

Your image of a large, beautiful, comical male voice choir practising

with no facial hair is on its way!

Thanks for your patience!



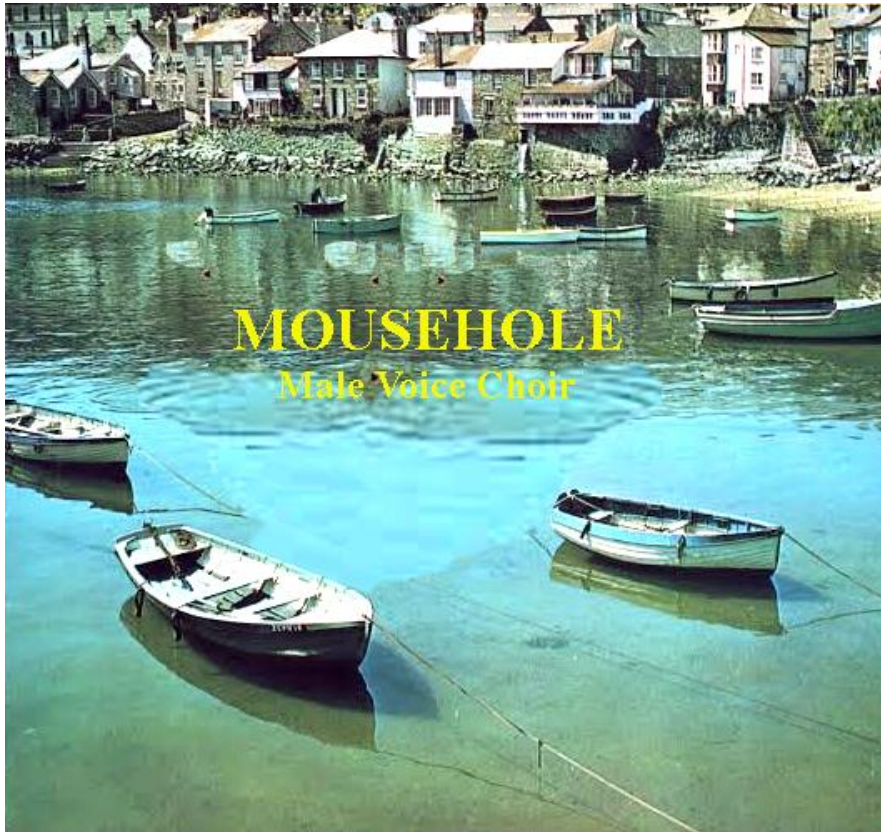
An image of a large beautiful, comical, male voice choir with no facial hair practising



Give me strength!

an image of Give me strength! is on its way.

Mousehole singers coming north

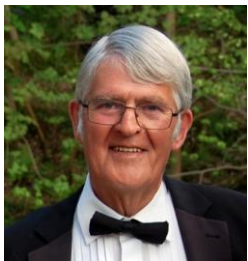


Friends from the Choir's trips to Cornwall, the fine singers of **Mousehole Male Voice Choir** are making a 'Tour of the North' in September.

We are looking forward to welcoming them when their coaches arrive on Thursday evening, in time to prepare for a Male Voice Choir Spectacular with the men of the Colne Valley.

That's on Saturday, September 20th at 7:00pm.

The concert at Saint John's Parish Church, Golcar will bring together two fine choirs with items sung separately and jointly.



The two choirs are planning a 'Pint and a Pie & Pea Supper' at the **Bolster Moor Farm Shop** to follow. The good folk at the Farm Shop have been regular proud supporters and sponsors of the Choir for many years and we remain grateful to them.



Mousehole's visit to our area has been arranged via CVMVC's ex- Chairman, Roger Fielding.

Well done, Roger!



Tom Lehrer's gone - but on his own.

Satirist, musician, singer-songwriter, entertainer, scientist and all round good-egg, **Tom Lehrer** departed life this week at the ripe old age of 97.



This song, **'We'll All Go Together When We Go'** was one he penned in 1959.

He was lampooning the notion of 'Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD)'.

This was the political and military doctrine which posited that a full-scale use of nuclear weapons by an attacker on a nuclear-armed defender with second-strike capabilities would result in the complete annihilation of both the attacker and the defender.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=frAEhqdLFs

You never know – him pointing to the insanity of nuclear war might just have had a tiny bit to do with the fact that we are still all here – though sadly Tom isn't; he went alone at the end of July this year.



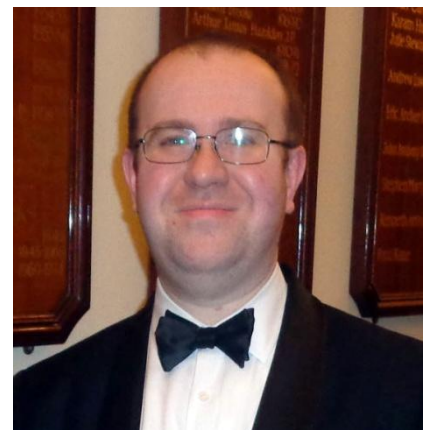
He will be missed but his work will last for ages yet.

Tom Lehrer - RIP

Another of his songs, **'Poisoning Pigeons in the Park'** was sung by our very own **Sam Blagborough** at our 'Sunshine and Song' concert in June.

You can also remember his poisoning song on this link:-

www.youtube.com/watch?v=yhuMLpdnOjY



New Guy, Abe, joins up

The choir was pleased to welcome into membership a new chap, **Abe Richards**. He's now a singer with that august section; the Baritones.

Thom said he's known Abe for years. Abe and Thom's son Harry have been mates since childhood.

We wish him many happy years of singing with us.



First the bad news....



News reached the Choir that **Chris Hartley** - a non-singing member recently suffered a stroke.

But the good news is that he is on the up and recovering well. Even better, just after the announcement of his health problems the other night, Chris won £185.00 in the 200 Club draw.

That should put him in good spirits.

We wish you well, Chris and hope your return to fitness is swift.

	<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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Do get in touch

And if you've got a story or a picture that even tangentially relates to Colne Valley Male Voice Choir, then your Editor would be keen to hear from you. Contact me at:-

newsletter@colnevalleymvc.co.uk

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