



## The most exciting night of the summer

Colne Valley singers joined with the whole ensemble at the climax of Ellie Sax's spectacular Halifax Piece Hall Concert the other night - we were onstage for about 5 minutes but the performance was such a thrill for the 35 or so Choir members who were able to take part - truly the most exciting event of the Choir's busy summer.

Your Editor is in there somewhere. Beforehand he was conscious that he should be gathering material for a VotV story. Having waited, tensely, backstage with the others in a dark tunnel, he was suddenly urged to dash onstage. But, if truth be told, the music started seconds later and, for him, it was all over in the 'blink of an eye'. Exactly what happened he could hardly say - except that it was terrific!

So your Editor is relying on the comments sent in by other enthusiastic participants.

And he's grateful, too, for their photographic and video evidence - so that readers can get an impression of a great night.



VotV Photographer **Chris Wilson** says, "I thought you'd like to see these photos I did at the gig. It was fabulous. It was lovely to see CVMVC IN THE LIMELIGHT."

I even went down to the front to get some photos and the atmosphere there was electric.



It was a long wait to see you all onstage.....but I love the photos of the Choir waiting to go on, too.



Alex Pearson tells VotV he's noted a few memorable moments. "It's hard to write it all down in perfect paragraphs, so I just let my thoughts stream out into a few points.

It was so exciting to see so many people in the crowd, even before we went on stage.



*Although I was so excited and happy to be there, I'd be lying if I said I wasn't nervous at any point that night. The nerves particularly hit me when we were on the balcony getting into our rows and I realised that I was going to be on the front row.*

*The nerves were quickly subdued, however, by the incredible high spirits and support that emanated from everyone in both choirs when we were all together.*

*Walking onto the stage I can just remember gazing into the crowd and being astonished by the sheer size of the audience. It was so wonderful to see so many smiling faces looking towards us.*



*I'll never forget the moment we started to sing - us and our friends from the Halifax Musical Theatre Choir. You could clearly see and hear the surprise and excitement everyone in the audience felt.*



*They recognised 'Fix You' immediately and didn't need more than the slightest hint to all get their phone torches out and to join in our as the choirs sang, 'Lights will guide you home'.*

*I couldn't help but smile whilst singing through the whole piece.*



*There is nothing that can compare to the community spirit that was felt that night.*

*There was such an incredible bond between all of us on stage and that connection quickly extended to everyone in the audience. Music has such a special power to bring us all together and that night is all the proof needed!"*

*"The crowd seemed to appreciate it. We got a lot of folk stopping us on the way out to ask if we were in the choir and say how much they loved it."*

*Damian Dyer (bass)*

*"It was a fantastic evening." said Steven Keeley. "One that will stay in the memory banks for a long time. Very special. Thom did so well organising everyone. He must have been exhausted the next day"*



*"It went great!" said Steve Molinari, agreeing with Chris Beith's comment "An excellent evening last night!"*

*"Brilliant!" agreed fellow bass, Declan Finney, adding, "It was great fun ..... I think we played a role in adding to the performance."*

*"It was proper exciting. Definitely an experience not to be missed. Pretty fabulous, all told. Everyone seemed to be having a great time. Very positive vibes all round." was bass Neil Carey's take on the evening.*



*"The performance went very well as far as I was able to tell.*

*Ellie Sax is clearly a very accomplished musician."*

*It was a really interesting experience and "Fix You" is still buzzing round my head!" said Mike Layton (another CVMVC bass).*

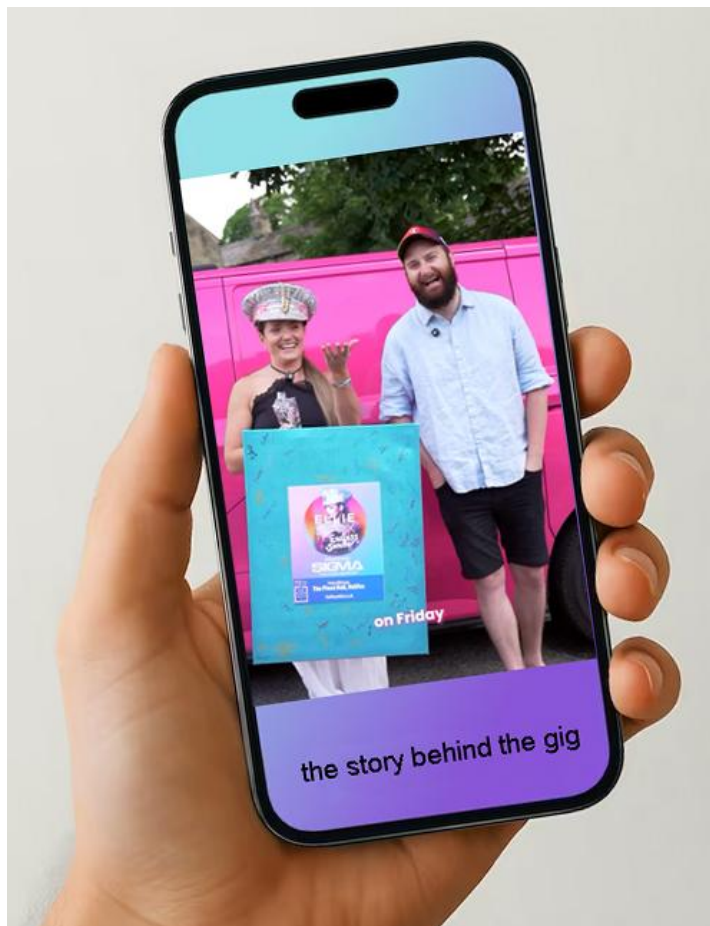
*Thank you Ellie for giving us the opportunity to enjoy '5 minutes of fame' with so many thousands of avid show-goers, cheering us on.*

*What a night!*

Watch video compiled from social media clips. Click on this link



<https://youtu.be/Wu0AnZCF7S8>



## The story behind the gig

The men of Colne Valley Male Voice Choir and the Halifax Musical Theatre Singers (the majority of them female voices) had been invited to join Ellie Sax and Laserboy Wonder at their spectacular Piece Hall performance.

We were to be joining Ellie and Harry in their final number 'Fix You', that had been specially arranged by Maestro, **Thom Meredith**, for this single very special occasion.

The whole event was imbued with special significance for Harry and Ellie Sax and for Thom himself, as they explain.

**Watch Ellie Sax' promo video from Facebook on this link.**

<https://youtu.be/ajdRdWN4jww>

# Other summer highlights for the Choir

Concert at St Paul's Church in Halifax.

Another one of those popular concerts where CVMVC provide all the entertainment - including the solo spots - from within our own ranks.

One audience member expressed her admiration, saying ....

*"Another amazing concert. I loved the variety of the songs. The Choir and soloists were fab, what a great sound!"*

*The two Damiens (actually Damien and Damian) brought me to tears, one with laughter and one with sadness.*



*I haven't seen 'Hamilton' yet; I'll definitely be going now! Damien as George III had us all giggling.*



*'Les Miserables' songs always set me off! - not least Matt's heartbreaking song, as Jean Valjean, prays that Marius will be safe - that someone will 'bring him home'.*



*The other Damian's passionate 'Empty Chairs' was reprised to great effect.*



*A majestic church to sing in! St Paul's reminded me of our lovely St Bartholomew's in Marsden.*





Sam Blagbrough ... 'once had a horn, and he wanted to play, but somebody took it away'



*Keith Lockwood as the compère stood out again. I don't think anybody got the chance to thank him formally when he did the job for the first time at the 'Music in May' concert in Golcar.*

*So I was glad that he got his plaudits at St Paul's.*

*What a good job by him - and everyone else! (including those that haven't been name-checked)."*

# Lions Charity Concert

Every year, for maybe half a century, Colne Valley Male Voice Choir 'tops the bill' in a concert in our home village of Slaithwaite. It's organised by those stalwart volunteers of **Colne Valley Lions** as both a treat for the community and partly as a fund-raising effort to strengthen all the community-support work they do day-in, day-out, throughout the year.

All the organisers and performers are happy to give their time and their skills to help create a joyful night of musical entertainment.



The band from our new home in **Linthwaite** were terrific.



VotV never got to hear the St John's, Junior and Infant School Choir, (we were preparing for the Ellie Sax gig). They opened the concert and, by all accounts, they were utterly charming, exceedingly controlled musically and had the audience captivated.



Our **Damien** rushed to join in, at the last minute, from another gig.

Here **Thom** tells the audience (many of whom have known Damien since his start in Colne Valley Boys Choir almost a decade ago) that Damien has just done his **Grade 8 Music Exam** in singing, achieving a staggering score of 96%.

He did his solo spot and everyone thought - yet again - 'He's going far is our lad'

Brilliant.



# St George's Hall Concert.

The Choir returned to the stage of the prestigious St. Georges Hall in Bradford – for the first time in many years – for a joint concert at the invitation of the super-talented Yorkshire Imperial Brass Band.



**Votv is very happy to quote this report by the Secretary of 'The Imps'**

*The band were thrilled to return to St George's Hall for a special concert as part of our 90th Anniversary celebrations! It was an honour to return to a hall with such a rich history for the band, having claimed eight Yorkshire Area titles there in the past.*

*We'd like to say a huge thank you to the Colne Valley Male Voice Choir and their wonderful MD, Thom Meredith, for sharing the stage with us. A hugely impressive and prestigious ensemble, performing alongside musicians of that calibre is always a privilege.*

*It was also an honour to share the stage with our guest soloist, Roger Webster, who performed three outstanding solos with us and showed once again why he is still regarded as one of the greatest cornet players of all time. 🐷*

*And St George's Hall itself was, as ever, a joy; and the incredible reception from the audience lifted the whole night.*

*One more special mention: to Sam Johnston for his amazing photography*





Richard Holliday really enjoying the 'Star' Dressing Rooms, backstage

Stage Manager Robert got us all in order - no mean feat.



Under the bright stage lights on the St. George's Hall stage

## A rare VotV error (yeah right!)

VotV told its readers this will be the first time the Choir has teamed up with Yorkshire Imperial and the first time we've performed in St George's Hall for over 50 years.



Well, David Hirst comes up with the facts:-

'Yorkshire Imperial Metals Band, as it was once called, and Colne Valley Male Voice Choir performed together last at Dewsbury Town Hall on December 17th 1995. This was the second of two Christmas collaborations that year.' David didn't give chapter and verse but it seems we've appeared together on 8-10 previous occasions.

So VotV was not right at all - but it is 30 years since we last played together. 'As for performing at St Georges Hall, we joined James Shepherd Versatile Brass in a concert there in April 1979 and a few years earlier (in 1970) we sang in St Georges Hall, having teamed up with the venerable Hammonds Sauce Band.' VotV is happy to set the record straight.

VotV May have got the details wrong but it has been over 30 years since CVMVC last performed with Yorkshire Imperial and even longer since we last performed at St George's hall (1979)

## Why has it been 46 years since we last sang at St Georges Hall?

VotV has an idea why that might be.

It could have been linked to the fierce spotlights on us which meant we could hardly see our audience. But mostly, it's because the hall has a very unforgiving acoustic for our Choir. We felt we were singing 'into the void'. Thom advised us 'Just sing as we usually do' and assured us 'It sounds fine out there'. Judging by the warm applause from our listeners he was probably right but we didn't feel we were communicating with our audience as we normally would. The Choir in your Editor's view would be more than happy to work with this fine band again – they sounded just great in the Bradford hall - but he feels we might need to pick a concert venue with a better acoustic for choral performance.



# Schools Tour 2026

The thing about boys is that they grow up. This means that Colne Valley Male Voice Choir has to constantly replenish its stock of young lads for our very own 'Colne Valley Boys' choir. Fortunately this provides us 'Grandpas' with the excuse to go round local primary schools doing silly songs with lovely young children.

This time our Schools' Tour was slightly different - this year we took a few of our current Colne Valley Boys with us. As always, it was great fun and quite hectic - as we dashed from school to school. But, as always, we were very popular and the kids joined in the singing with great enthusiasm.

Of course, these days it's practically impossible to take pictures in schools, so readers will understand that this photo from **Ardron Juniors** - which dates back some seven years - will have to do to convey the sheer joy that the Schools' Tours embody for us members - and with luck for a few of the boys in our audience who might opt to join the Boys Choir in coming weeks.



Ardron was one of the schools in this brief tour along with Marsden Juniors and Linthwaite Clough (where so many Choir members went to school a century or so back.) There's another in the planning.

It's sure been a busy summer so far.

# Steve and Les have birthdays - 50 and 93



A relative newcomer, bass, **Steve Keeley**, it was announced in notices at a recent rehearsal, was enjoying his birthday - usually a cue to burst into song. Steve, who joined the Choir after coming in via 'Let All men Sing' in 2023, looked happy and a little surprised.

'But that's not all,' said our chairman, 'There's another birthday boy today - **Les Stones**'.

There's quite a difference in age – Les, at 93, is now our oldest singing member. Les has been singing First Tenor in the Colne Valley for too many years for your Editor to recall. Steve is just 50.

Nonetheless, the full-throated rendition of '**Happy Birthday**' showed the good feelings of the Choir towards both these two members

Well done, Les and Steve.

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## David joins the non-singers

'Hello,' writes David Morrison, 'I am just letting the choir know, after much soul-searching, and after 33 happy years in the Choir, that I have opted to go on the 'non-singing' list.

Whilst my new treatment is going OK, my energy levels are down a little and I'm now finding standing for long periods and catching enough breath for long phrases has recently become a difficulty. I feel I can no longer make the commitment I have always given in the past, so the time has come!

Of course Judith and I will continue to support and follow the Choir as much as possible, so hopefully we'll see you around. Our Best Wishes to the entire Choir.'



This is understandable but rather sad news from David says your Editor. It's disappointing news, but David has clearly been feeling the strain in recent weeks.

It's been marvellous how well he has responded to treatment since 2022. It has given him many, many months of fitness, sufficient to function, more or less as normal, singing as a second tenor .



David, front row left at the Town Hall Christmas Concert last December

His contributions have been extensive over the last thirty odd years. He scarcely ever missed a concert, he was Section Leader of the second tenors for 16 years and often took on the unsung but demanding job of 'Bus Monitor' for Choir coach trips - hardly ever losing a singer in transit!

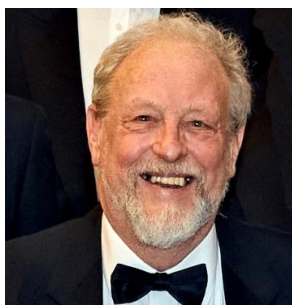
We recognise, David, how important Choir has been to you and the entire Choir wishes you well - we know you will always be a keen member of the Choir and we hope to see you at events for a good long time to come.

Best wishes to you David

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**Stop Press:** Word has just reached VotV that **Eric Cooper** a retired but much valued Choir member has passed away. Funeral at Huddersfield Crematorium on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> July at 11-15. A tribute to follow in next Edition.

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Please, do contact your Editor, John Clark if you have a story.  
And don't forget to check out the websit

