



Romancing the Stones? (Geddit?)

Well.... some of the songs were romantic!

In fact, our repertoire, at a terrific concert at **Stones Methodist Church** the other night, was very diverse - from the romantic to the rousing, from the hearty to the plaintive, from the comic to the sad. But it was that very diversity which held our audience's attention and generated a warm and positive response.



We began with a fine song that covers both the plaintive and the rousing, ' **The Battle Hymn of the Republic**' - "In the beauty of the lilies..." giving way to the "Glory, Glory, Hallelujah" - a fine start with the audience joining in with gusto in the final chorus, confirming that our listeners, too, were keen to have a good night's entertainment.

Our compère, **Keith Lockwood**, led proceedings, once again, and **a grand job** he makes of it.



The Choir was on good form, as was our Musical Director, **Thom Meredith** and our excellent pianist, **Chris Pulleyn**. We were a little hampered for space in the church, which meant that we could not have a proper piano - but Chris - as always - copes heroically with all difficulties.

What a boon he is to the Choir - and the 'Stones' audience didn't fail to recognise it.

But it was the solo talents from within our own ranks that provided the change of pace and much of the drama. The first of our soloists sang, to his own accompaniment, a song he had also written himself - **well done Ben Stirling** - his first solo with the Choir.



The Choir is no longer surprised by **Damian Dyer's** vocal talents.

But the audience were much moved by his heart-felt contribution - a melancholy song, beautifully delivered once again accompanying himself on the guitar.

Just terrific!



Amongst the more romantic ensemble offerings was, '**The Rose**' – a terrific song made famous by Bette Midler in the 1970's



*'Some say Love is like a river
That drowns the tender reed
Some say Love is like a razor
That leaves your heart to bleed
Some say Love it is a hunger
An endless aching need
I say love it is a flower
And you its only seed,'*



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oR6okRuOLc8>

Perhaps the pick of our soloists was young **Damien Stirling**.

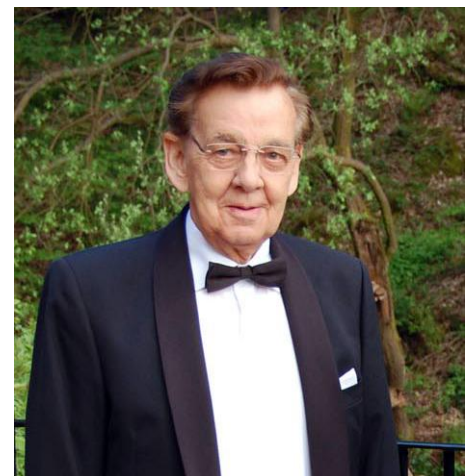
It's astonishing how this young man has come on since being in Colne Valley Boys and over the last couple of years. He gave us a fine rendition of Robert Schumann's '**Widmung**' (dedication).

And then with his voice teacher - one Thom Meredith – he sang a fine duet. Their partnership continued with a beautifully delivered comic song by **Sir Arthur Sullivan**, '**The Dicky-bird and the Owl**' which brought the house down.



Get the flavour in this brief video snippet. <https://youtu.be/rR-MQnMmovg>

This whole concert was, in some measure, dedicated to our departed colleague, **Ivan Smith**. Ivan was a member of the **Stones Methodist Church** congregation and a fine bass singer with **CVMVC** for 42 years.



The Choir ended its recital with '**Angels Watching over Me**' and finally '**The Irish Blessing**', which seemed a suitable tribute to a much-loved man.

Brian Hearn's partner, Judith, gets big win



'Judith and I are very happy with the £1,000 she won on the 200 Club.'

She is now planning a two-day 'Retail Therapy' trip to York for us. As I write I can see she has a broad smile on her face at the thought of all the shops there, that Huddersfield doesn't have any longer.'



Brian, 25 years a member, adds that this is **the second time that Judith has won £1,000 on the 200 Club**. Maybe 87 is the luckiest number!

Recent 200 Club Winners

15 June 2026	I. Chadha (25)	£45.00
22 June 2026	S. Lodge (56)	£45.00
29 June 2026	R. Holliday (175)	£185.00
6 July 2026	J. Baxter (12)	£45.00
13 July 2026	M. Houston (83)	£45.00
20 July 2026	M. Chadha (116)	£45.00
27 July 2026	G. Bedford (177)	£185.00
3 August 2026	J. Clark (148)	£45.00
10 August 2026	J. Cooke (138)	£45.00
17 August 2026	A. Ripper (128)	£45.00
24 August 2026	D. Hirst (133)	£45.00
31 August 2026	J. Hearn (87)	£1,000.00

200

CLUB

£45 in prize money weekly,
£185 in the monthly draw
and two whopping
£1,000 draws each year.

Even if you don't win, you win -
because half of the fund
supports Choir concerts and
performances.

Contact Tom Jennings at:-

200club@colnevalleymvc.co.uk



No end to the 'green-fingered' enterprise of Colne Valley.

It's come to the attention of your Editor, (someone who, when pressed, might cut the grass if he can't find a plausible excuse) that many a Choir member feels quite passionate about his garden.



It seems that there is a local event devoted to this enthusiasm; the '**Slaithwaite Horticultural Society Show**' in which many of our singers are keenly involved.

There's **Graham Schofield**, for one.

Graham has become a stalwart first tenor with us since he moved up to the Colne Valley, gave '**Let All Men Sing**' a go and subsequently moved into the main Choir.

Unbelievably - at least to a non-gardener like your editor - there were 133 classes and over 580 individual entries, attracting a large and committed set of visitors.

Graham wrote to VotV just after the Choir came back together after the summer break.

'Hi John,

Good to see us all back at rehearsal. The voice box was becoming rusty already.

*I joined the **Slaithwaite Horticultural Society** soon after moving here, keen as I am to get involved in community activities and 'help' where I can. (The show is held in the Civic Hall, which is, incidentally, the very building where CVMVC was first formed way back in 1922... Ed.)*

The enthusiasm, commitment, skills and knowledge of the members has been truly humbling. As you can imagine, keeping the show running takes a tremendous amount of devotion and effort to make it happen, and my part is only the tiniest tip of the iceberg.

Though I have judged once or twice at other village shows (in Wiltshire), I still have much to learn, and was therefore honoured to be asked to judge the 'Fruit Section', my speciality.

*It was a privilege to be judging alongside fellow chorister, **David Morrison**, whose knowledge of all things floral, and in particular Dahlias and Chrysanthemums is unsurpassed.*

We had a great challenge on our hands, as the entries at this year's show are the best they have been in years, the tables replete with high quality produce.

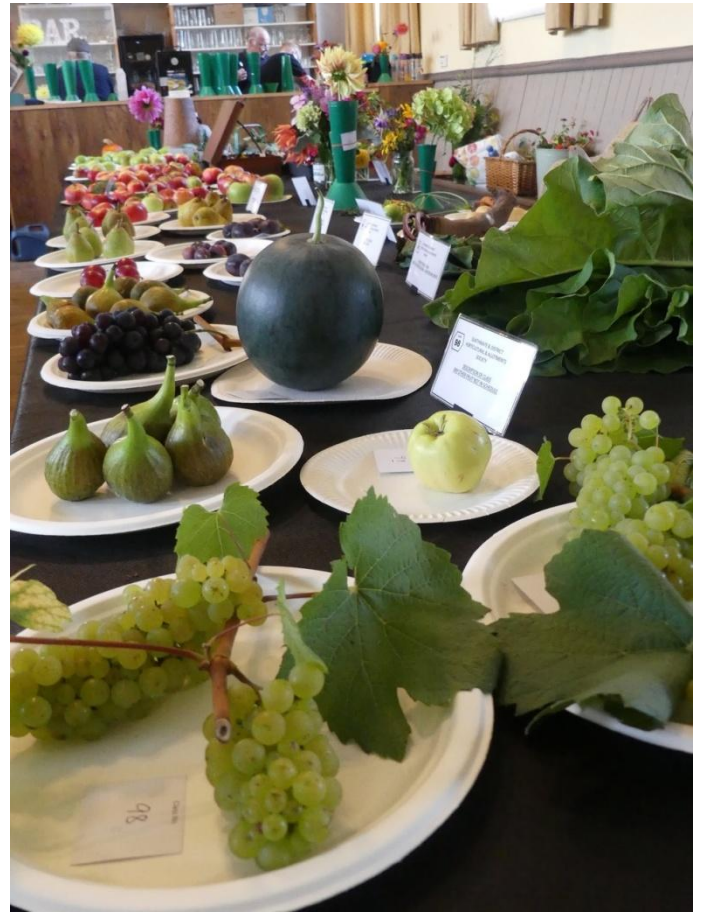
It's heartening to witness what we all hope is a resurgence of interest in growing healthy fruit, vegetables and flowers at home, and the joy of sharing knowledge with a splash of friendly rivalry.



*I could not resist the temptation to enter a couple of classes myself, gleaned what I could salvage of this year's harvest from my allotment at **Golcar Community Garden**.*

Despite the challenging season I was able to manage a trio of onions, Dahlias and, last but not least, some roses from my garden, the latter of which won me 'First Prize' and some silverware!

Show photo credits:- Alexandra Meakes



David Morrison, a second tenor for donkey's years, now a non-singing member, adds;-

'Hi John, It was a pleasure to judge once again the floral classes - which were wonderful and quite testing.

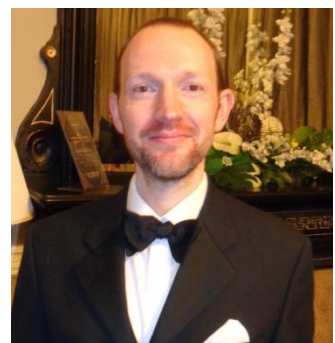
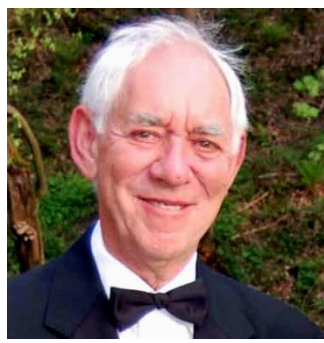
Graham equally had a massive job on his hands with the fruit classes, very demanding, a table full of exhibits and as many Apples to assess as I have ever seen. He was up to the job however and did great work sorting everything out.

A very enjoyable afternoon and we hopefully look forward to next year.'

Cheers David.

By pure chance, your editor discovered that, baritone, **Matt Treece**, won a second prize at the event. And David's wife, **Judith Morrison**, won a deserved '**Second Prize**, for her yummy 'Lemon Curd'. Your Editor wouldn't be at all surprised to discover that yet more Choir people participated.

Well done chaps!



Update - about the Choir day

Some members - not least, your Editor - have been in a minor state of confusion about the imminent **Choir Day**.

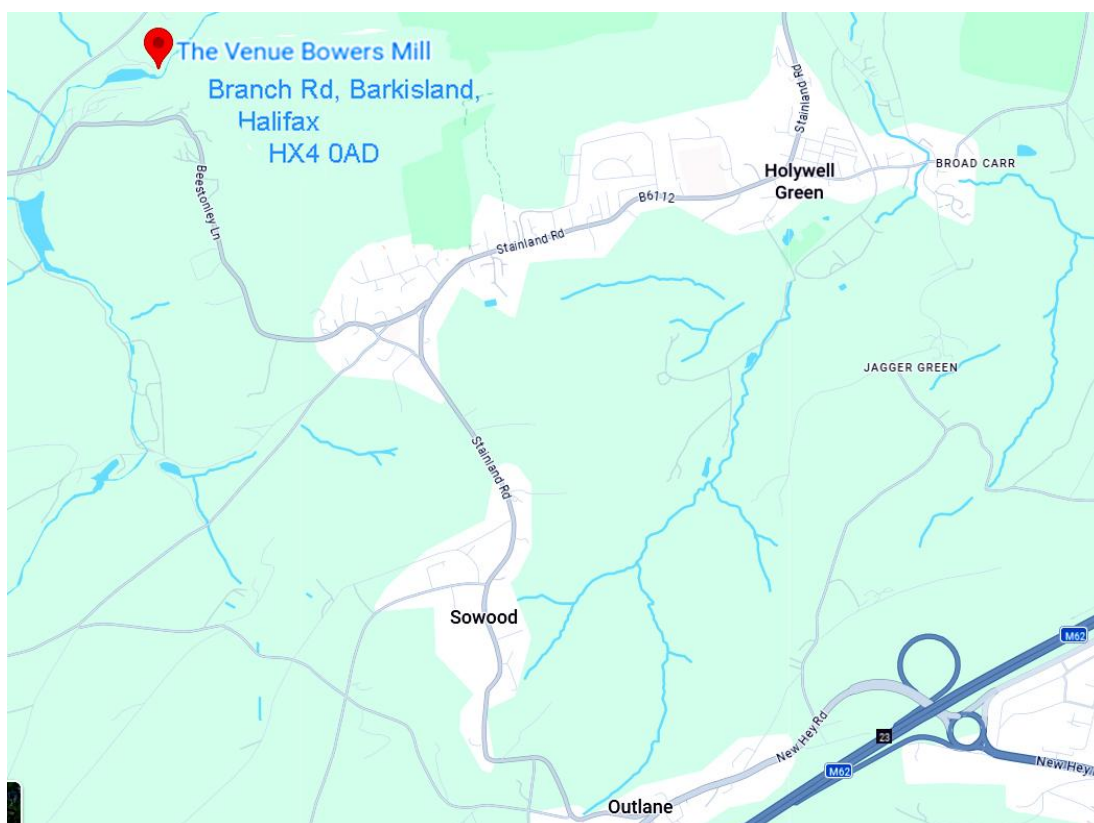
Members are to meet at the **Bowers Mill** for 10.00 on **Sunday 4th**. Choir sessions, both sectional and group, will continue through to 3.30pm - with a leisurely lunch sometime in the middle.

For the evening meal we - with our partners and honoured guests - will arrive for 6.30pm.

The dress code is smart casual.



For those who don't know the place, set your satnav to **HX4 0AD**



Geoff - always ready to get stuck in.

When Geoff Bedford takes on a task he doesn't do it by halves. Geoff took on the job of finding advertisers for our big Colne Valley Christmas Concert at the Huddersfield Town Hall.



The programme, when it sells to our Town Hall audience in December will, thanks to Geoff's indefatigable efforts, contain several sponsors' adverts. In and amongst the information about our Choir, our Christmas repertoire and our guests - the world-leading Brighouse and Rastrick Brass Band - these adverts feature useful information about local businesses that our audience may want to engage with.

Second tenor, Geoff, has been most diligent in the last couple of years in finding these businesses and has succeeded in securing for them – for a very modest financial outlay in their part - an opportunity to showcase their enterprises via our souvenir programmes.

This enterprise enormously useful is for the Choir, too. In the good old days, our Town Hall Christmas Concert used to make us enough money to underwrite much of the following year's activities. Not so nowadays: increasing costs all round have severely dented the profitability of our Christmas Concert. It remains 'the cultural highlight of the year' but can't, alone, cover our costs through the year. So Geoff's sponsors make a significant difference to meeting our day-to-day operating costs.

Well Done, Geoff, for dogged effort and persistence.



One of his contacts has been the wonderful local business woman, **Victoria 'Tory' Tillotson**.

She's a Colne Valley Entrepreneur, a supporter of the Choir over several years and a regular at our Town Hall Concerts.

Tory refurbished the **Little Bridge Bistro** in the centre of our home village, Slaithwaite, went on to open the charming canalside café -**The Little Lock**- at Marsden and very recently has added a chic dining experience at her new restaurant, '**Sage**' at 33 Britannia Road, bringing a much-needed taste of Mediterranean Sunshine' to Slaithwaite. Word has it she also runs a 4th eatery; a 'taverna' in Greece.

We are very pleased to have Tory's support – and strongly advocate a visit to at least one of her enterprises!

Tory started with the Floating Light up on the moors in 1992. She ran it for six years before moving on. It's in private hands now and has not been a pub for close on 30 years.



The Little Lock Café

The Little Bridge Bistro





Tory's promotion and those of another dozen or so businesses will figure in our Town Hall Christmas programme.

We know it's going to be a great evening and the top quality programme will help ensure we can continue to provide this landmark concert

Christmas with Colne Valley: - it's coming up sooner than you think - if you haven't already done so, get your tickets online, here.



<https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/town-halls/book-tickets.aspx?eventId=163002ARVVMPPDDJKPSBHTMPKPPJTGHVV>

or contact Ticketing Supremo, **Roger Fielding** on 01484 8462

A plan for the autumn

Bothered about the end of summer excitement?

At a loss about dreary Sunday afternoons?

Feeling that life is a bit drab?

VotV has the answer.

Go support our Colne Valley Boys Choir - their concerts are always fun!



**Colne Valley Boys
Autumn Concert**

**Linthwaite Methodist Church
Stones Lane, Linthwaite
HD7 5PD**

Sunday 18th October 2026

**Starts 3.00pm
Doors Open 2.30pm**

Adults £5, Children Free
Pay on the door cash or card

Sponsored by

The Cuckoo's Nest

New Choir uniform suggested



'Hi John,

I hope you are well. I really liked the last issue of VotV and am looking forward to tomorrow's rehearsal. It'll be good to get back into the Monday routine.' writes second tenor, **Andrew Taylor**

*'Anyway, I spent all last week in **Granada**. I snapped this photo in Malaga airport of a couple of troubadours singing. There are hundreds of groups in Spain and are usually university student societies. They usually perform in bigger groups but these two were busking.*

*I did wonder whether this outfit (which is what all troubadores wear) should be adopted as a new uniform by CVMVC for future performances. Is that **Kieran** modelling the new gear or just his Spanish cousin?*

See you tomorrow.

Hasta la vista,'

Andrew.



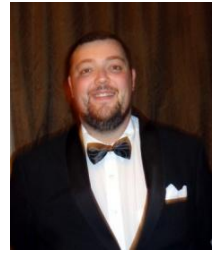
New Guys

'I joined via a chance meeting with Abe (Abe Richards - still a relatively new baritone) and his son Noah in Slaithwaite. We know each other through Honley FC and got chatting.

They had just finished a choir session and what can you say - their smiles were infectious!

I'd been thinking about getting back into choir singing for a while so it seemed like a perfect opportunity.

I was very active in several church choirs as a small lad, and developed a huge love for music through my teens with song-writing & learning several instruments. This culminated in attending the BRIT Performing Arts School in London, being mentored by some great people like Herbie Flowers & Mike Batt.



Abe Richards

At some point I took a left turn into the world of software sales for 30 years - so my performances have become limited to my house with the guitar or piano, and karaoke in the car with my kids!



Paul Roberts

I'm currently an Energy Performance Certificate Assessor and (more like my cooler alter-ego) still a 'saxophone-for-hire'.

I've really enjoyed the first few weeks with CVMVC; thank you all for making me feel welcome.

It's a lovely environment and I'm looking forward to trying to hit some more of those high notes that haven't seen the light of day for a very long time! '



Paul's 'cooler alter ego'



Phil Ackerley

'..... and now a bit about me ! I'm Phil

I found out about CVMVC via your very informative website and listened to various concerts/pieces on Youtube being very encouraged by the sound and musical expertise.

I come from a musical family and grew up in Shropshire.

I was very privileged to be part of a local parish church choir from a boy singing treble, alto and then Baritone/Bass which taught me a lot about singing.

Alongside this I learned Piano and Trumpet moving to Euphonium when 13 in the Shropshire schools brass band. I have also sung in other mixed choirs and a male voice one for over 30 years. I regularly play in my local church band - Piano or Bass guitar and also Euphonium in a wind band.

I work for the Railway and various job promotions brought me up north over 30 years ago. I have lived in the area since 1993 and met my wife in Huddersfield at our church so consider myself an "Adopted Yorkshireman". I have 2 grown up daughters; one who is married and she, too, is musical.

Very much looking forward to my new adventure with CVMVC and encouraged by the wonderful sound and warm welcome thank you !

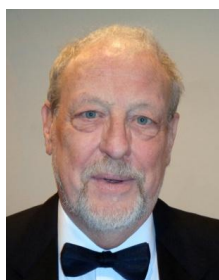
Kind Regards

Phil '

Editor's note: aren't we fortunate! - such fine new talent.

Welcome guys - and may you enjoy singing with us for many years to come!

Do get in touch



Please remember that Voice of the Valley loves to hear from readers.

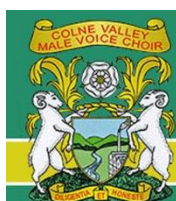
If you've a picture or a story or an event that's interesting and has, at least, some vague connection with Colne Valley Male Voice Choir, then please do get in touch with the Editor at:-

newsletter@colnevalleymvc.co.uk

And for general queries about the Choir, contact new Choir Secretary, Richard Holliday on secretary@colnevalleymvc.co.uk

Thank you for reading Voice of the Valley.

For the full story and for all our forthcoming events see our website:



colnevalleymvc.org.uk

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