



Back to work.

After a summer break it was back to work for the Choir at our first autumn rehearsal.

After a few general preliminaries, Thom got stuck in to really working us hard to get our abdominal muscles working, those soft palates lifting - generally getting our voices back into shape and our memories refocused on the repertoire we need to get performance-ready.

'We've a big concert coming up soon in **Stone's Methodist Church** and we need to be on top of our material.' That was the gist of Tom's direction and he got us quickly back into the niceties that change a rehearsal sing-through into something closer to performance-quality.

'We're nearly there, we'll get there, but time is short and we have to 'knuckle down' seemed to sum up his rehearsal leadership.



It's all very wonderful thought the Choir.

We'll be ready for 'Stones'.

It's nice to be back.

That next concert



'Choir Day' update

For some while a special event has been in preparation. We'll be holding a '**Choir Day**' on **October the 4th**. Thom reminded the Choir about it at Monday's rehearsal.

It's an event just for Colne Valley Singers - until the evening, that is, when we hold a dinner not just for our members but also for their partners and guests.

Former Chairman, **Joe Stones**, joined in to explain more fully the treats in store and to urge those few members not yet committed to be sure to be part of it.

He told us. *"There are many benefits for participants.*

*During the day we'll have a variety of workshops and the introduction of new music for our repertoire. There will be vocal coaching by **Thom and his team**, all of this in the friendly atmosphere of the '**The Venue**' at **Bowers Mill**.*



*It is the **The Venue team**, which will be providing all refreshments and one of their excellent lunches as well as accommodating us for both small group work and activities for the whole Choir."*

Joe promised that all singers would find not only the camaraderie of fellow singers and the opportunity to get to know each other better but also the opportunity to improve our vocal skills, both individually and collectively.

"We are a Choir that's been successfully rebuilding since the Pandemic. But now our membership numbers are once again healthy, we should be striving for musical excellence. We're already one of the best there is in the country and events like this 'Choir Day' will help move us right to the top of male choir quality."

“But that's not all.” he added. “We've got a lovely evening planned when you and your partners can enjoy a wonderful evening meal in the convivial atmosphere.



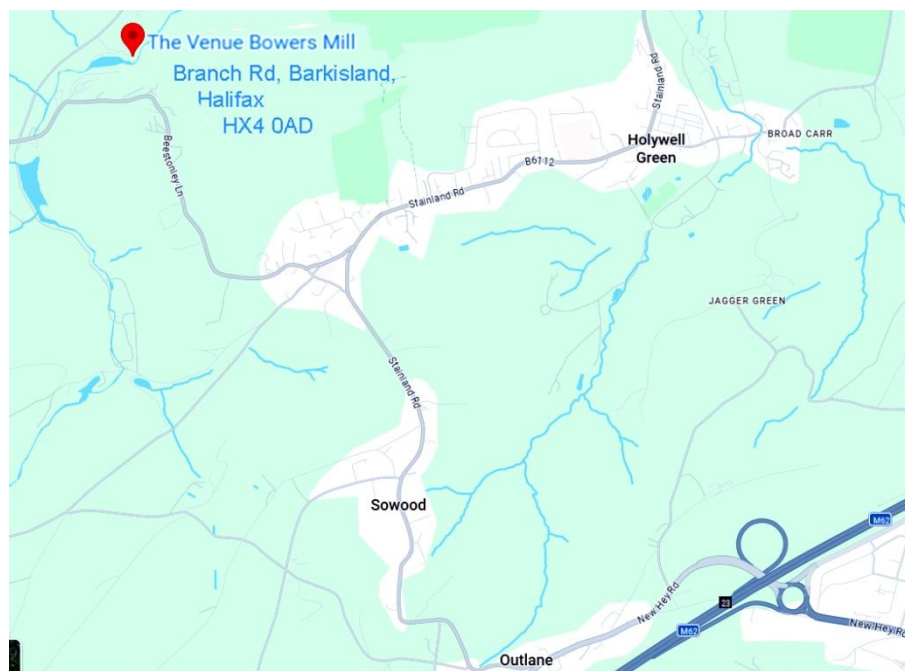
*It's a social event not to be missed. Not only will there be an ‘**Awards Ceremony**’ to recognise some of those who contributed so much to the choir's rejuvenation but there will also be an ‘**After-Dinner Speech**’ by our special guest, **Andrew Edwards**. Andrew you'll recall was a prominent personality at the BBC for many years reporting on local news and events. He has a wealth of insights and anecdotes to bring to us. No doubt reinforced by his recent involvement with our Choir as compare of our major Town Hall Christmas Concert and other recent performances.*

It will be a really special day for Choir members and guests. And remember”, added Joe, “Nearly all of this has been paid for entirely out of Choir funds. Even the cost of the evening meal for members and guests has been substantially underwritten to try and make sure that all our singers can participate. Can I warmly urge those few members who have yet to commit to make space in their dairies to join us. We need everyone.”



Well said, Joe.

Don't miss it



Stephen stands in



The Choir was pleased to welcome **Steven Roberts** at our early August rehearsal.

It's been regular practise for the Choir to occasionally invite visiting conductors to join us.

Partly this is to provide cover for when our esteemed Musical Director, Thom Meredith, can't be with us, but just as importantly it's great to have a fresh face every now and then.

Steven, every time he visits, brings a glorious wealth of musical experience with him, in particular of leading and conducting all sorts of choirs in all sorts of places.

Currently he continues as main conductor of Honley Male Voice Choir. He's been leading them for years in and amongst his many other commitments as performer and conductor. *"It's good to be back with a real choir again."* he said with a smile, adding, *".... and, of course, I shall say the same to the chaps at Honley when I next see them."*

He took us through some of our rehearsal repertoire, often repeating (but in a slightly different way) the kinds of comment that Thom makes. Among these general comments he nonetheless raised points of style and insights into the music that were, uniquely, Steven Roberts perceptions. He knows his stuff and it's good to get a somewhat different perspective. It brings a new take on our material that can enrich our performance. And he's an entertaining sort of chap too, so we thank him for coming.

It was a good session to lead us into our summer break.

'Ilkla Moor' feedback

Readers of our August edition will have seen the excellent work of the Choir's Social Media person, first tenor (not a bass as wrongly reported in that edition), **Alex Pearson**.



He got us all singing **'Ilkla Moor Baht 'At'** as a social media initiative to mark 'Yorkshire Day'.

His video seems to have gone down a storm. I asked Alex for some feedback. He tells VotV....

'Good morning Mr Editor,

I've listed a few of the key insights that I can view about the videos performance so far - it's still getting noticed.

Viewers: 8,700 and rising

Reactions (likes etc.): 380

Comments (all incredibly positive): 46

89% of those reached were non-followers of the Choir's existing Facebook Page.

The video was seen globally, from people in the United States all the way to Australia.

Best wishes,'

Alex

VotV adds to this; there's upwards of 7,000 page-views on the Choir's website in August and yet another 1,000 or so via the online email VotV.

What's it all amount to? - a lot of people enjoying our performance - Well done Alex

And Readers - have another look, or catch up if you missed it first time.



Goodbye Dolly,



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jr8tffNHJno>

Maybe we should do one of her songs?

Quiz night

Hello,

"The quiz night/pie & pea supper was a great success with 40 people in total, including partners.

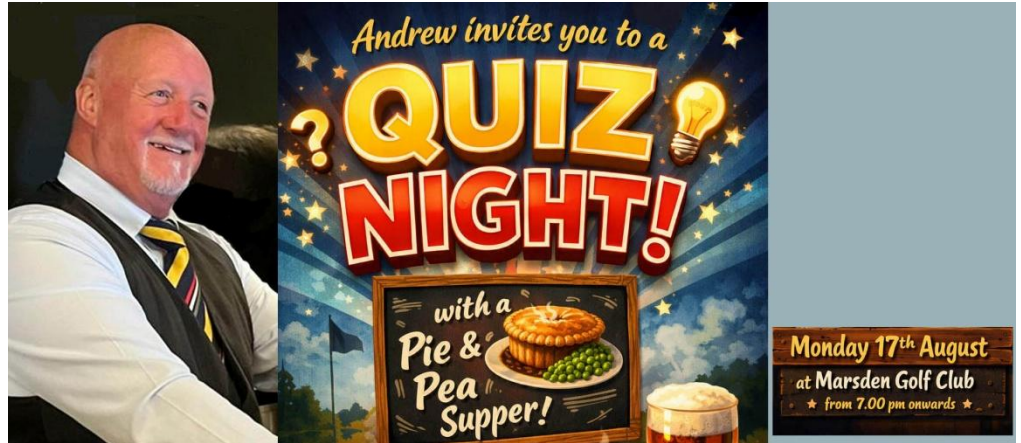
A great selection of questions that were not too taxing on the brain.

*The overall winners were 'The Apiarists' which consisted of **Matt Treece**, **Chris Pilgrim** and **Damien Field** and their partners. All winners were presented with a bottle of wine (the small ones)*

Thanks go to the steward Ben and his staff for making us feel welcome and a cracking bowl of pork pie and mushy peas with mint sauce... perfect

Regards,"

Andrew



The keener eyed of our readers will recognise, **Edwin Field**, (Damien's son) who rescued our last Town Hall Christmas Concert by appearing at the last minute to play the Father Willis Organ.

Post Eclipse

Wednesday 12th August, 2026

Too late to get eclipse glasses but equipped with my homemade pinhole camera viewer, the eclipse was nicely visible at its peak outside our Linthwaite rehearsal room just prior to your Editor joining the Choir's Management Committee meeting.



A kind lady, who was there in the car park, gave Secretary, **Richard Holliday** and me the special glasses she had managed to purchase, just as he arrived so we both got the best view of near totality - thank you kind lady.

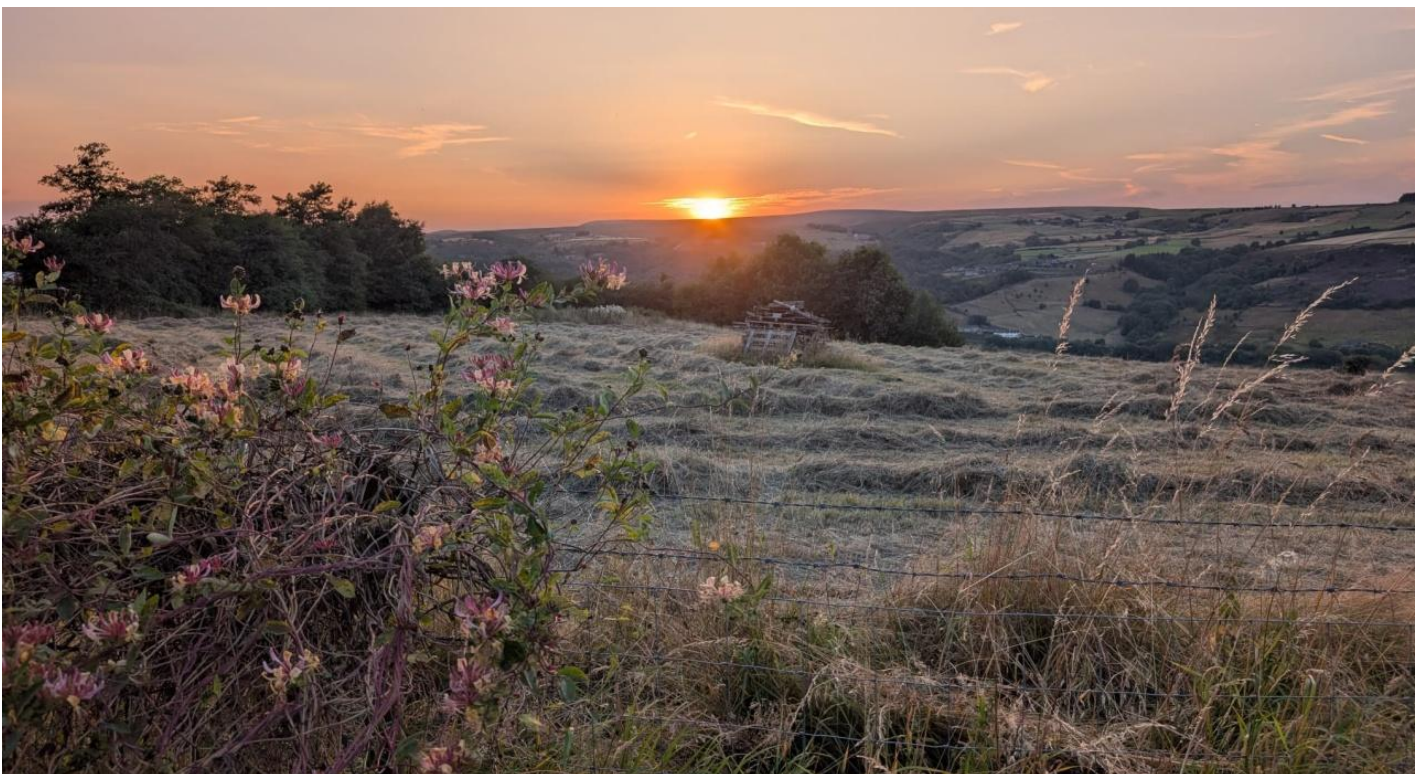
Richard realised that he knew her – he reckoned she was the woman who had months earlier contacted him to say she lived nearby the church - and as a Welsh valley girl - how thrilled she was to hear the sounds coming out from inside as we rehearse.

Thank you, again, kind lady.

Sobering afterthought

3 September 2081: next deep partial solar eclipse (99% coverage) comes just over 55 years after this last one - and it's another 9 years to 2090 till a total eclipse in England

Your editor doubts he'll get to see this next one.



Post-eclipse photo: Henry Clark

Christmas will be upon us sooner than you think

So it's timely to get your tickets as soon as you can....



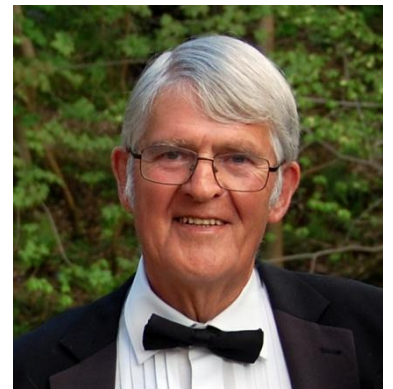
Photo: Alex Beldea

The Choir's Town Hall Christmas Concert is rightly famous as the best there is. The easiest and cheapest way, at the moment, to get the seats you want, is to contact Ticketing Supremo, **Roger Fielding**.

He'll see you right

You can email Roger (fielderfie@aol.com)

Or phone him direct on 01484 846262.



Tickets are already also available online via the Kirklees website and it won't long before the Town Hall people hold all the remaining tickets.

We're planning and confidently expecting another sell-out, so be sure you've got your tickets for....

'Christmas with Colne Valley' with the Choir and Guests, Brighouse & Rastrick Band

Sunday 13 December 2026, 19:15 start



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

Another sad departure

Dear All,

'Sorry to be the bearer of sad news. One of our past Bass singers, John Morrison, has passed away. For those of you who did not know John, he was, for a time, section leader of the bass section and after retiring from the choir remained as a non singing member. John's funeral will be at Linthwaite Methodist Church on Thursday 17th September at 11am. The Reverend Sue Pegg will perform the service. John's daughter, Rebecca, has asked if the choir would sing at the service.'

Thom

Friends and more established members of the Choir will remember John fondly. He joined the Choir early in 1989 and sang with us for 26 years or so.



John stepped down as a singing member, partly because his own health wasn't good but mainly so that he could take care of his beloved wife Pat, whose health was progressively deteriorating.

He was enormously proud that he and Pat had been together for upwards of sixty years, raising two children together. His daughter, Rebecca, sent VotV this lovely portrait of the happy couple's wedding to mark their Diamond Anniversary.

It's quite something to go through thick and thin for sixty years.

John told VotV at the time that he had many memories to treasure of their life together.

As a singer, John was well liked and well-respected. He had clear views about the choir and how it might best progress. So his perspectives brought many useful contributions to the Choir's Management Committee. Admirably, he was always ready 'to stick to his guns' even if his opinions were sometimes in the minority. As a non-singing member of the Choir John retained his strong regard for Colne Valley Male Voice Choir, keeping in touch, as best he could, with our various activities.

John passed away close just shy of his 90th Birthday. Our thoughts go out to his family.



John Morrison sings his heart out, with his fellow basses. This turned out to be his last Town Hall Christmas Concert before stepping down.

December 2016.

Sailors Chorus?

This Welsh origin song - **Cydgan Y Morwyr** - by **Joseph Parry** is rapidly being lost to history.

*“Let mirth and joy reign in our hearts -- Haul away, Haul away
While now we sing in different parts -- Haul away, Haul away
Raise the anchor, Haul away, jolly sailors night and day
When rough weather bends our form,
We sing to calm the roughest storm,
Haul away, Haul away, Haul away, Haul away*

*When the waves like mountains rise -- Haul away, Haul away
And our ship's thrown to the skies -- Haul away, Haul away
Furrows in the angry deep, sailors sing but never weep
Sailors merry night and day
When at work as when at play
Haul away, Haul away, Haul away, Haul away*

*Bravo sailor comrades sing -- Haul away, Haul away
Till the world with music ring -- Haul away, Haul away
Sell the world and merry be
Sailors joys are all on sea
Sea is the home of sailors brave
Reefing the sails and fighting the wave
Reefing the sails and fighting the wave*

*Haul away, Haul away, Haul away, Haul away
Haul away.”*

CVMVC has been singing it since time immemorial and it is threatening to make a comeback into our repertoire. Some Choir members would have preferred it never to have been dug out again!

Others are intrigued by its strangeness and look forward to performing it.



English lyrics of this piece are hard to find. Typically, you can call up in Google the words to any song - not so with this ‘Sailors’ Chorus’.

In fact, these words were transcribed by your Editor, himself. He copied them out 11 years ago - though he can’t remember the song actually making it into performance at that time. Nor are there any recordings of this traditional male voice choir piece worth bothering with.

The English words to Parry’s song were contributed by **Thomas Charles Edwards** (1837 -1900) a Welsh minister and the first principal of the University College of Wales.

The internet with its supposed 'Artificial Intelligence' continually confuses the song with the Sailors' Chorus from Wagner's opera 'The Flying Dutchman' (which, incidentally, has figured many times in the Choir's repertoire).

As for Joseph Parry, (1841- 1903) - known to the Welsh at 'Y Doctor Mawr' (The Great Doctor) when he became a professor of Music there in the 1880's, his many works are now almost forgotten.

Today he's mostly famous only for '**Myfanwy**'. This remains a beloved anthem of Welsh male voice choirs.



Hear it here by the Treorchy Male Voice Choir.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4FFaxOv3nnU>

And as for his 'Sailors' Chorus', there no mention of it in Parry's Wikipedia pages - excerpt *for the briefest reference to 'various hymns and anthems'*. One can make a guess that it was put together by the two men sometime in the last two decades of the 19th Century - maybe 140 years ago.



Fount of all knowledge, **David Hirst**, who joined the Choir 66 years ago, recalls *"learning and singing this already established song with the Choir, right from my early days. It was an item not only used and sung in the Choir's formal concerts but also informally, as an 'at the drop of the hat item', similar to Mousehole's rendering of this very item, at Bolster Moor Farm Shop in their recent visit to us.*

My own records of my first performing the item with the Choir in public performance, was at Huddersfield Town Hall when the Choir were guests of Black Dyke Band's Christmas Concert on 18th December 1966.

I also recall performing the item informally, when the Choir visited California in 1984.

The last time the Choir sang the item in Concert was 11 years ago."

One of the four 2015 performances was at an open air concert at the Bandstand at **Lands End**. Your Editor can't recall the song but vaguely remembers the occasion - fun but wet



'When rough weather bends our form, we sing to calm the roughest storm'

Do get in touch



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

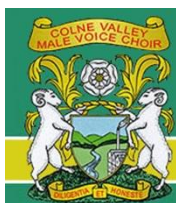
If you've a picture or a story or an event that's interesting and has, at least, some vague connection with Colne Valley Male Voice Choir, then please do get in touch with the Editor at:-

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.

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