

'ALL TOGETHER NOW!'

Anne and co serenade an old favourite on his return



A village of note

As *The Dales* returns, choir conductor Anne Vetch tells us why the North Yorkshire hills are alive with the sound of music...



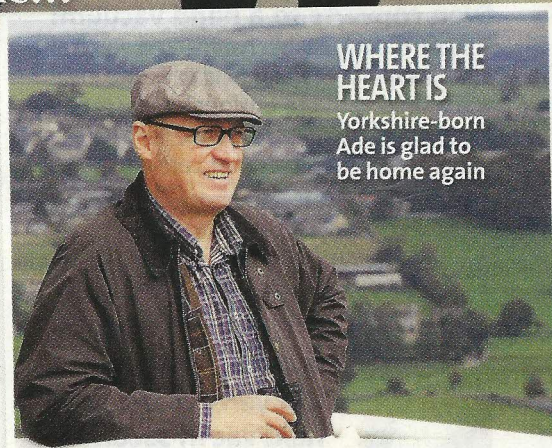
NEW THE DALES
Monday ITV1 (EXCEPT WALES/ULSTER WED)

In a tiny village called Buckden, deep in the Yorkshire Dales, ABBA's *Take a Chance On Me* can be heard drifting across the valleys, mountains and moors that make up this beautiful region. The source of the uplifting tune is the small stone village hall where the Buckden Singers are practising for their summer concert. Started in 2007 by a group of friends who shared a love of music and singing, the choir now has 45 members – a fifth of the population of Buckden. The hills of the Dales, it seems, are very much alive with the sound of music. 'When you live in a place like this, you have to make your own entertainment because we're so far away from cinemas and theatres,' explains choir conductor Anne Vetch. 'Singing is also very good for you physically and emotionally and there's always a great feeling of fun when we get together.' As presenter Ade Edmondson travels around the area for ITV1 documentary series *The Dales*, which

returns for a second run this week, one of the main things he discovers is the vibrant sense of community that underpins life in this remote and picturesque place. Anne and her husband Peter were blown away by the support and friendship offered to them when they first moved to the area in 2006. They were looking for a slower pace of life after their busy and stressful jobs in the Midlands – as a deputy head in a secondary school and an IT director – took a toll on their health. 'We'd only been here a couple of weeks before we were invited to join various village activities,' recalls Anne, who had no musical training before starting the choir. 'You get to know people very quickly and very well out here. When we lived in a town, we had

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never been in our next door neighbours' house and we rarely saw them, whereas here there's a real community spirit.' And the choir is very much part of that. 'If people are going through a bad patch in their lives, as we all do from time to time, sometimes belonging to something like a choir can give you a bit of support,' explains Anne. 'You might not always want to talk about whatever it is that's bothering you, but you do want to be with people who'll support you and give you companionship.' Filming with Bradford-born comedian, writer and presenter Ade and *The Dales* film crew has been the talk of the village ever since last summer. But the choir conductor is a little apprehensive about her own starring role. 'When they first rang up, we didn't realise what a big thing it was going to be,' laughs Anne, 56, who has two daughters, Kate, 28, and Sarah, 25. 'So we were quite



WHERE THE HEART IS
 Yorkshire-born Ade is glad to be home again

surprised when lots of people turned up and then kept arriving. 'They came to the village quite a lot and must have shot hours of footage. At first it was a bit off-putting, but after a while we got used to it and just got on with what we were doing. That was fine, except that the rehearsals for last summer's concert were really challenging. We weren't making our usual progress and I was getting a bit ratty. I'm sure they'll put all that in the programme and I'm just dreading it!'

JOANNE LOWLES

The Dales is previewed on pages 50-51