



Stuck at home?..bored?.. watch this, it's brilliant..



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BKzUd_xw20

We might be, as they say in USA, 'Sheltering in Place'. We might be missing time to sing with our Choir colleagues. We might not be able to perform concerts or attend them. Are we down-hearted? We surely are - at least some of the time.



But we find compensations where we can. And here's a video which will bring you a few minutes pleasure in lockdown. This remarkable quartet, **Salut Salon**, playing, 'Weitstreit zu vier' is extremely entertaining. Be in no doubt they are also highly competent musicians. Having enjoyed the performance above - as you surely will - try also their version of **Sanssaens, Carnival Fantasy, Africa**.



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xb5a_WOzeFo&list=RDxb5a_WOzeFo&start_radio=1

Muriel was my teacher

Michael Hirst from the baritone section contacted VotV:



*Many of you will have read in the last Voice of the Valley that **Muriel Stead** passed away recently; the daughter of the late **George Stead**, our ex choir leader.*

*She was my early years' teacher at **Slaithwaite C of E School**. I have so many fond memories of her back in the late 1950's/early 60's. Such a nice, caring and gentle teacher she was.*



I thought I would add a few words to the Voice of the Valley. I'm just approaching my third year with the Choir. Loved every minute of it - the practices, the concerts and the friendship within.

What a surreal period in time we find ourselves and hopefully some good will come from all the hardship we are enduring at the moment.



Here, and on a lighter note, and dressed to save the planet, my three superhero grandchildren, William, Jasper and Thomas.

"We have nothing to fear guys - our future is Safe."

The lack of personal contact with them is difficult but at least in this technical era we have the likes of Skype and Facetime on our i-pads. It's so good to see their smiles at least. But I really do miss the little play fights with them, which they so love.

This is me in Honfleur, in pre-virus times. They will return!

Don't forget: keep your distance and stay safe

Michael

On the subject of Muriel Stead, John Radcliffe adds:-



I keep my ear to the ground in Meltham. No end of people have talked to me about Muriel: she was well-loved.

There will be a Memorial Service, of course. But obviously it will have to wait until we can congregate again.



What has slightly surprised me is that it's not only those with singing connections to Muriel and her father that are keen to celebrate her life. We can add to them many locals with Brass band connections. It seems George was active in helping many brass players to develop their musical skills, too. And it is quite likely that local band players will want to participate.

Harry and Ellie rock it up on the roof



Harry Meredith - son of Thom, of course, and his super-talented wife, **Ellie Sax** invited Facebook friends to join them in a concert **in support of our NHS heroes**. This was on Thursday night with a performance that started at 7:30pm and built up to '**Clap for our Carers**' at 8:00 pm - the nationwide show of support.

<https://youtu.be/lnXtkaeaRvY>



Said Ellie, beforehand, 'Harry and I will be coming to you from a roof in our home village to celebrate these amazing people and help spread some love all over the world. If you know someone who would like this video give it a share and tag your friends.'

Well the concert was fabulous and it has been shared - last time your editor looked - it had been viewed about 28,000 **times**.

Thom, now happily off his sickbed, responded to VotV's enquiry. '*We found it all very moving. We certainly were very proud.*'

Thom has plenty of reasons to be proud of them both.

But his family record is still intact.

When Harry recorded Thom and the Choir singing, '**You Raise Me Up**' at one of Christine Cox's concerts in **Scarborough**, (see article below) he probably didn't think it would have been enjoyed over 68,000 times. But it has!

Ellie and Harry still have a way to go

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p6e3nDCw-Ck>



He walked all the way to Llangollen and he walked all the way back



Well, according to veteran baritone, **John Radcliffe**, he did. That was **Ronald Hill**, a former Choir president and the story goes back to 1967.

It seems that Ronald was a chap with restless energy - he would never sit down - so when the Choir coach set off for the Eisteddfod, Ronald would not take his seat but prowled up and down the gangway.

When the coach stopped at Wrexham the Choir got off for a coffee but Ronald took his 'on the move'. Sad to relate, a number of the members, nicknamed the **Vale Singers**, opted for a stop at the pub opposite rather than the coffee bar. Most Colne Valley men were focussed on the competition. 'These men have come to win.' was their mantra. So a pint or two was completely out of the question.

(As the story goes, when our coach pulled out to continue the journey, there were a number of 'Vale Singers' exposed having gone behind the bus to relieve themselves of some of their excess fluid. This caused a certain amount of ribaldry amongst the majority of singers who had foregone a beer.)

Anyway, win we did.



It seems that the then **Prime Minister, Harold Wilson**, was a 'Guest of Honour' at the Festival that year and, being a Huddersfield lad himself, he wanted to congratulate the Colne Valley men on their success. As he approached, he spotted Choir member, **Adrian Gledhill**, and rushed across to greet him. They had, it seems, been school chums years before.

A conversation ensued and Harold asked Adrian what he was smoking. The PM was legendary for always having a pipe on the go. Adrian showed him and Harold said he would like to try it. 'Well' said Adrian, 'He asked for a pipeful but he took near a bucketful'

After PM Wilson moved on, Adrian said he was jumped on by security men, fearing the worst but Adrian was able to reassure them they had been mates at Junior School.

On the way home, victorious, **Ronald** kept standing - too flushed with the Choir's victory to think of sitting down.

Even when the Choir stopped to get fish and chips on the way home, Ronald wouldn't sit but spent his time re-arranging the shop's menu display-board to bring out the letters **WINNERS**.

In the small hours the coach arrived home in the Colne valley. **Truly, Ronald had walked all the way to Llangollen and all the way back!**



Ronald Hill is on this 1975 picture, front right, picnicking on tour in France. Behind him we see our story teller and future Choir chaplain, **John Radcliffe**, pouring the wine.

It wasn't **Harold Wilson's** last encounter with the Choir either. Here we see him, in 1984, joining in the Yorkshire anthem, 'Pratty Flowers'.





Simon's other hobbies

Apart from singing, of course

Baritone, **Simon Durrans**, has quite a few ways of dealing with the shutdown and in recent days has developed one or two new ones.

Readers will know about Simon's musical talents with the rock bands - such as '**Dark Side of the Moor**' - and will realise that rock gigs are no longer possible - no gigs or jam sessions for him at the moment.



But he can still spend time practising the piano, as this photograph shows.

The keen-eyed will see this is not a 'Pink Floyd' number but 'Rondo in A Minor' a piece written in Vienna in 1787 by a chap called Mozart.

Simon will have to think about his fingering.



There are some new distractions. He's been building a **Heinkel** in the back room - presumably not 'full size'.

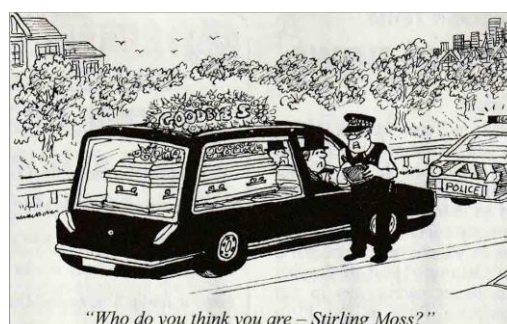
But perhaps one of his favourite hobbies in recent times has been his dedicated study of Scottish traditions, quaint old folk customs and their artisanal production.

And his interest is not purely academic. He is making considerable efforts to ensure his appreciation of Hibernian culture transfers into his domestic routine.

What a hero!



Well It made me smile....



"Who do you think you are - Stirling Moss?"

'In this Coronavirus crisis spare a thought for me'

Christine Cox, Scarborough-based activist, 'one-woman Arts Council', social entrepreneur and 'champion of the Choir' writes with her take on recent events.

'For the past 45 years I have been arranging coach excursions and holidays for people in the Scarborough catchment area.

*The first 15 years were spent trying to save the Royal Opera House in Scarborough (now a dreaded Casino). During that time I promoted concerts, including **Brighthouse and Rastrick Band**, when they were in the hit parade with **Terry Wogan** and **'The Floral Dance'**. **Ken Dodd** was a President and many famous singers were engaged.*

*Later, I continued to arrange concerts for Radio 2's singing stars, **Maryetta** and **Vernon Midgley** and members of their family. We are good friends and keep in touch. Organist **Simon Lindley** took part in these concerts and several piano accompanists including, of course, **Keith Swallow**.*



I have 700 people on my mailing list and together we have seen at least 100 operas and many ballets. We have heard orchestras from around the World at Leeds Town Hall and many a musical show.

We've visited Holland, Germany, Austria, Ireland and all parts of Britain. Our London weekends took us behind the scenes of the Globe Theatre, to cathedrals, palaces, and castles.

It is lovely to hear people make new friends on my coach excursions and I've opened people's eyes to the beauty of God's world by taking them to special gardens, stately homes, zoos, museums and galleries and let them loose in towns and cities to explore their special interests.

With the current lockdown and the likelihood of social distancing for a long time, will we be able to continue our lovely times together?

It has always been nice to shake hands with a new acquaintance. **Max Bygraves** sang a song about it - '**You Need Hands**' and a hug is a comfort in times of trouble. Theatres, concert halls, games and sporting events bring people together in large numbers, so how will it be?

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



For the past 11 years I have been bringing **Colne Valley Male Voice Choir** to Scarborough. As a devotee of MV Choirs, I think this Choir is very special indeed. Hearing them, **Keith, Thom, Simon, Phillip McCann** and the **Opera North** singers at Queen Street Methodist Central Hall is for me and many others a highlight of my year. Having sung in a famous school choir myself I realise how important the discipline of singing together is to well-being.



Many strange things have happened this year so I am bound to think there must be a message in all of this disruption, as our hearts go out to those who have lost loved ones.



I am the Chairman of the 'Friends of **St Mary's Church**' in Scarborough, most famous for having the remains of **Anne Brontë** buried in the Churchyard.

The Friends raise money to preserve this ancient building and we were due to hold our annual flower festival at the

end of May to celebrate the **200th Brontë Anniversary**.

This may not now take place now, as our Government has made clear that saving lives is vital.



Please keep safe everyone and if our concert on 22 August 2020 cannot go ahead we will be sure to book 2021, which, I believe, is the true start of the next decade and a new beginning.'

With all good wishes from Christine

Old men can still do it

(though Choir members already know that.)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N7pZgQepXfA>

Mick Jagger	76
Keith Richards	76
Charlie Watts	78 - how talented to play drums that aren't there!
Ronnie Wood	72

(Paul McCartney, 77 - though, what an embarrassment, should have stopped 20 years back)

‘Bluebells are bluebells, bluebells are blue.....’



Mike Smith took this fabulous photo in Huddersfield's **Grimescar Valley** (<https://www.colouredimages.com/>)



Just purely for the entertainment value, click here or on the TV for this 'Song and Dance' routine from an outfit called **Postmodern Jukebox**.

And the song fits, as we seek to look out for each other. From 'Friends' it's "I'll be there for you"



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3q7ExHaKt2M>



Happy Birthday

Regardless of your views on constitutional matters, you can't but help admire the Queen.

She was bang-on in her recent address to the nation, the other day, calling up, in these difficult times, so many of the things the Nation aspires to.

At 94 - even after 68 years of practice - she does it very well.

Lowry's Huddersfield

Your editor was intrigued to discover very recently that L S Lowry, famous for his Manchester street scenes, also visited Huddersfield.

In 1965 he painted this scene. Can you recognise the location?

The picture is at Huddersfield Art Gallery and, one day we might be able to go and see it.



If you didn't bring to mind the location, you might now.



It's the top of **Chapel Hill** looking from the town centre towards Lockwood.

Cycled to the local shop for a bottle of gin so we didn't run out during the lockdown, but as I put it in my basket I thought, what if I fall off my bike & break it?

So I drank it all outside the shop.

Good thing I did, I fell off the bike 7 times on the way home.

Well it made me smile...

Thanks to Chris Rowell of Marsden who posted this tale the other day. Maybe slightly updated for the times, I'm sure it's an old, old story but nonetheless it still makes me laugh out loud.

Know your mustelids - weasels and stoats

I expect many a reader will have asked themselves, whether what's depicted is a weasel or a stoat? Maybe they wondered about this as they contemplated the charming creature on the 'Voice of the Valley' logo at the top of this edition.

Indeed, some readers may not know which is which.

Well, in point of fact, it's quite straightforward to distinguish between the two; you see, a weasel is weasily recognised but a stoat is stotally different.

Now you know



Tell me a story, send me a picture

At this time of social isolation, VotV readers, whether singers or audience-members, can't meet each other.

But we can keep in touch.



Let me know about anything of interest that has some - perhaps tenuous - connection with the Choir. Don't worry if you are not very confident writing, I'll help you put it into shape.

Voice of the Valley Editor: John C Clark

Ring Choir Secretary, Jenny, on 01484 645192 to join us or join our Readers' List or for other queries

And see our website to get the full story
colnevalleymvc.org.uk