



Sing softly and don't shout

In July, VotV reported on research going on to assess the Covid 19 dangers from singing. The authors of the original Guardian article have produced an update containing the preliminary findings from the researchers. Sadly the research doesn't seem to point to any terribly helpful conclusions.



It may be that risks are small and could potentially be reduced but - as it seems to VotV - choirs like ours probably won't be able to perform or rehearse for a good while yet.

"Sing softly and don't shout to reduce the risk of Covid-19 spread, new research suggests, offering a ray of hope for musicians who have been restricted from performing in public."

Music makers have been hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic, with singing, as well as playing of woodwind and brass instruments deemed to be a potential high risk for spreading the disease – a concern fuelled by outbreaks in choirs. As a result only professional rehearsals and outdoor performances have, until recently, been allowed in England, and even then only with a raft of precautions.

But the research offers hope to performers keen to get back on stage as soon as possible.

*"It is not about the vocalisation – whether it's singing or speaking – it is about the volume," said **Jonathan Reid**, a professor of physical chemistry at the University of Bristol and a co-author of the research. "Just by singing a little bit more softly you really reduce the risk."*



In a study that is yet to be peer-reviewed, the team report how they asked 25 professional singers to breathe, speak, cough and sing into funnels. They then measured the mass of tiny droplets suspended in the air, known as aerosols, that were produced..

While one route by which Covid-19 spreads is via big droplets, largely produced when someone coughs and which fall to the ground within a couple of metres, Reid said aerosols were another possible route, noting such tiny droplets can linger in the air.

The team found the results of their study varied across participants, however at the lowest volume singing and speaking generated a similar mass of aerosols as breathing.

But when the team asked participants to recite Happy Birthday at different volumes, they found the loudest singing and speaking – 90-100dB – produced about 36 and 24 times the mass of aerosols respectively as generated by breathing.

“The volume of the activity, whether it is speaking or singing softly or speaking or singing loudly, that is really the main factor in governing the aerosol mass that is generated,” said Reid.

Co-author **Declan Costello**, an ear, nose and throat surgeon at Wexham Park hospital, noted other factors, including the size of the space and ventilation and duration of loud vocalisation, play an important role in potential infection risk.

In other words singing in a cathedral might pose a lower risk for spreading Covid-19 than shouting across a crowded pub. “Intuitively that would seem to be the case, assuming people are speaking or singing at the same sorts of volume,” said Costello.

However the research has limitations: it only measured aerosols produced by one individual at a time. “It is a nice study but not exactly representative of the real whole choir dynamic, which really needs further study to truly assess the risk of such large volume synchronised singing vocalisations/exhalations,” said **Dr Julian Tang**, an honorary associate professor in respiratory sciences at the University of Leicester, who was not involved in the work.

The team say their findings have already contributed to [new guidance for England released on 15 August](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/performing-arts) by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, which co-supported the study.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/performing-arts>

The culture secretary, Oliver Dowden, said: “I know singing is an important passion and pastime for many people who I’m sure will join me in welcoming the findings of this important study. We have worked closely with medical experts throughout this crisis to develop our understanding of Covid-19, and we have now updated our guidance in light of these findings so people can get back to performing together safely.”

Looks to me like we'll not be performing fortissimo - in such close proximity to each other or to our audiences - for quite a while yet.





'Good Evening Each', writes **David Hirst**

'Jenny Baxter is not available today and has again asked me to let you know this week's 200 Club Winner. The information has now been passed to me by **Les Stones** and it's a '**big one**' of **£1,000** this week. In normal times the winner would have been drawn and announced at the Choir **200 Club Dinner**.

The winner is tenor, **Peter Stubbs**. . Many congratulations, Peter.

Just a reminder that Zoom rehearsals resume from next Monday (September 7th). You will be informed of the details later.

Best regards
David'



Peter would probably say....

Yes, you, too, can be a big winner. Just let Jenny know you're ready to invest £50.00 and she'll get you a 200 Club number. Pretty soon you will be living the high life just like me.



Just one pound a week buys you one of the 200 Club numbers.

There's a good chance of winning: £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 Choir Secretary, Jenny, on **01484 645192**

Another tall tale?

Bass, **Brian Fairclough**, sends VotV another anecdote, which, again, he swears is nothing but the truth.

ALBERT FOURACRE

If I was writing a book of fiction which included a character who was a farmer, and I named him 'Albert Fouracre' people would call it a far-fetched. But Albert Fouracre really did exist, and he was quite a character. His nickname was "Forreecer."



He farmed fairly near to my Father in Law, but had retired a few years previously, and whilst he lived in the original farmhouse, and still pottered about, his farming days were much reduced and he bought a tiny little Yellow tractor which became instantly recognisable across the region as he spent most of his day visiting fellow farmers and gathering gossip instead of wheat!

He would roll up at my father in law's farm and all knew that work would stop for an hour or three. Actually he was also a bit of an odd job man so because he could turn his hand to many things, he often did a spot of work, like installing an electric motor to the potato griddle. He had just one eye, and it twinkled. I have no idea how he lost one of his eyes but it meant that his Yellow tractor rarely exceeded 10 miles an hour ("Tha'll use too much diesel, 'an ahm on't pension")

One day as I sat with my Father in Law, and Albert, chewing the cud over a pint pot of tea apiece, I was told the funniest of tales.

Albert turned to me and said;

"Does't know, a good woman is getting 'arder to find. Tha' mon count thisell lucky wi thy wench"

"Yes" I replied, "but I thought I was marrying into money."

"Thawhat" spouted the Father in Law. "Not me owd lad. Ahm a dirt farmer, but everything ahve geet, ahve paid for"

We ruminated some more.

Then Albert ventured, "That Owd Sow ahve geet is a bad un, 'er could curdle fog." I stifled a laugh, but Albert was soon in full flow.



"Doest know Brian, ahm an 'ard workin man. Allus 'ave been. Dunt ask for much, dunt spend a lot. Waste even less. Six days a week ah works, an all I ask is for a pint wi mi mates in't Station Hotel on a Sunday lunchtime"

I broke in to say that I thought that was a reasonable trade off for his toils. "Ah cawnt drink much tha knows these days, so normally ah only 'av a couple, coz any road, thowd girl es me dinner ready for haif past one. On ah knows if ahm late ah gets it in't neck. Neh that's not much to ask is it? A drink then wom fer mi dinner"

"Any road" he continued, "this Sunday as ah geet in't pub, sum o' me mates came in, and tha knows, they geet another couple 'o rounds in. Well, that cawnt be going wom wiowt buyin thi own corner, can yer? So I admit ah were late. It musta bin about ten past two when I geet wom(home)"

"Er came round corner o' 'thouse, wi mi dinner in 'er hand an a face like a slapped arse. Ah swear there were smoke cumin from 'er nostrils. The Owd Dragon!"

"Doest know whar 'er did? Doest know whar 'er did?" repeating to add to his torment.

"No Albert" I replied, "What did she do?"

"Er geet mi dinner an 'er put it down 'an gin it t'dog! Neh what dost tha think o' that Brian? What a witch".

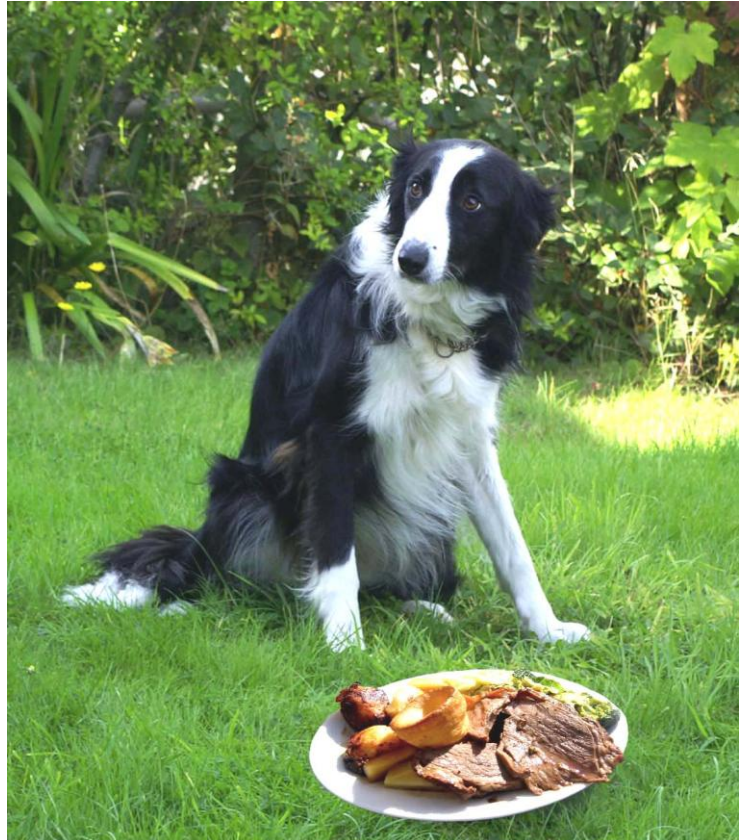
By now I was in difficulty, for I was stifling a laugh in front of a disgruntled man, and seeing the picture in my mind, of Albert's dog walloping down his dinner. I confess there was a smile on my face.

But Albert was not done.

"Er didn't do it in't week after tha knows" he said defiantly.

"Why not?" I asked.

"Ahh took bloody dog wi mi!" he chortled.



Sleight of hand



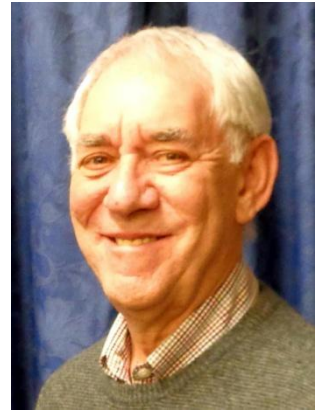
Nothing musical here, nor any choir connections! Just skilful magic and banter, entertaining enough to distract you from the subtle manipulation.

Your Editor has watched it three times and has no idea how he does it.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-XoCvn4fnXw>

Hi VotV, says David Morrison...

Just a little story for you. Judith was having withdrawal symptoms from not hearing the Choir this morning so she put **Light & Easy** CD on full blast! We were sat out having coffee listening and singing '**Another Day**' when the postman arrived - "That sounds very stirring." he said and asked who was singing? Judith told him it was Colne Valley Male Voice Choir to which he responded, "Are they local? If they'd been singing the Russian National Anthem I'd have thought it was Moscow State Choir '!"



Judith told him that the Colne Valley men do sing in Russian too - they can sing anything !!!

Better go now to sing along with '**No Arms Can Ever Hold You**' - another favourite.

Best wishes

David

You decide :



Listen to the **Red Army Choir** first and then **Colne Valley** singing '**Another Day**'.

Would it not be possible to confuse one choir for the other? Let's be charitable - maybe David and Judith's postman only caught the briefest of snatches. He probably rates both choirs now!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9n22Uy-qFPw>



<https://soundcloud.com/john-clark-124140241/tomorrow-is-another-day-by-cvmvc>

Clanadonia

Readers tell VotV they have enjoyed clips of obscure folk music - from Sardinia, Senegal, and Sicily to name just a few.

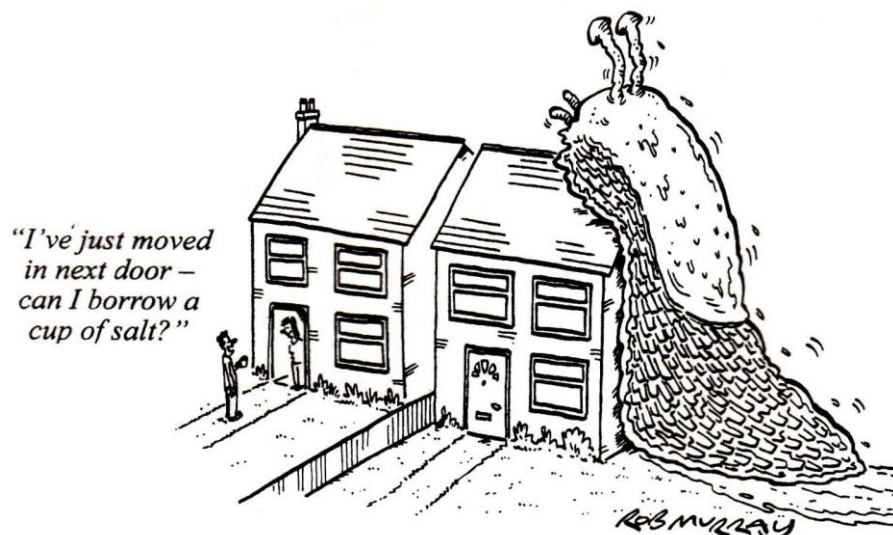
Here, closer to home, is a street band from Glasgow, Scotland, producing exciting sounds in a shopping precinct in Perth. Open air - adequately social distanced maybe - but definitely not 'soft'.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r35ONrHrIKY>

Gardening News

John Lees tells VotV his tomatoes are ripening, nicely. He reckons there's a bit of a slug problem this year.



The Longwood Sing

Many a reader will have heard about the 'Longwood Sing'.

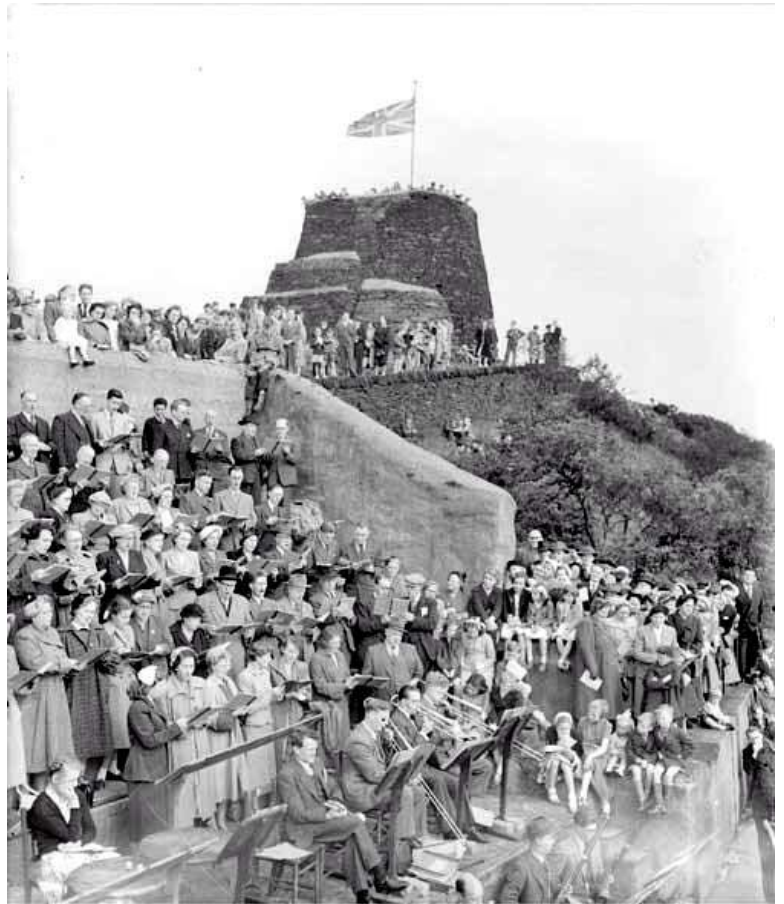
Some will have taken part.

But, perhaps, more of us will know little about it; what it is and where it takes place.

It's a curiosity and a unique part of Huddersfield tradition.

It happens high on a hillside above Longwood Church in a specially-built, but now somewhat decrepit amphitheatre, set into the cliffside.

Built beside a turreted Victorian lookout tower on the peak of the steep hill, the amphitheatre overlooks the Colne Valley and has a natural acoustic which concentrates the sounds of singing and the accompanying music of a brass band.



The Huddersfield Daily **Examiner**



The Longwood Amphitheatre:

edited clips from the Examiner

'The Longwood Sing feels to belong to an earlier time.

It has been held since 1873 and through two world wars, but its special magic remains untouched even in this modern era. Its enchanting location, perched on a cliff face, must worry the health and safety police, but that is precisely its appeal.



(NB CVMVC bass, **Brian Hibbert**, figures centrally in this picture.)

Golcar Band began the proceedings (Ed: This report dates from 2013) in the sunshine yesterday afternoon and the welcome was given by the ever-affable Dr Bert Jindal, president of the Sing.

Many of those involved are old hands and few can boast a more dedicated involvement than **Jean Jackson**, who has been helping out for 46 years.

She said: “1967 was the first year I came and it used to be absolutely packed in those days. People used to come from as far away as Holmfirth.”

A breath of fresh air is Charles Ross, a university lecturer from Falmouth, who having fallen for a Yorkshire lass, is now fully in love with our traditions too.

He joked: “I’m the one who forgot to step backwards when they asked for volunteers.

“It’s a grand day out for the village and I have been involved for around five years now.”

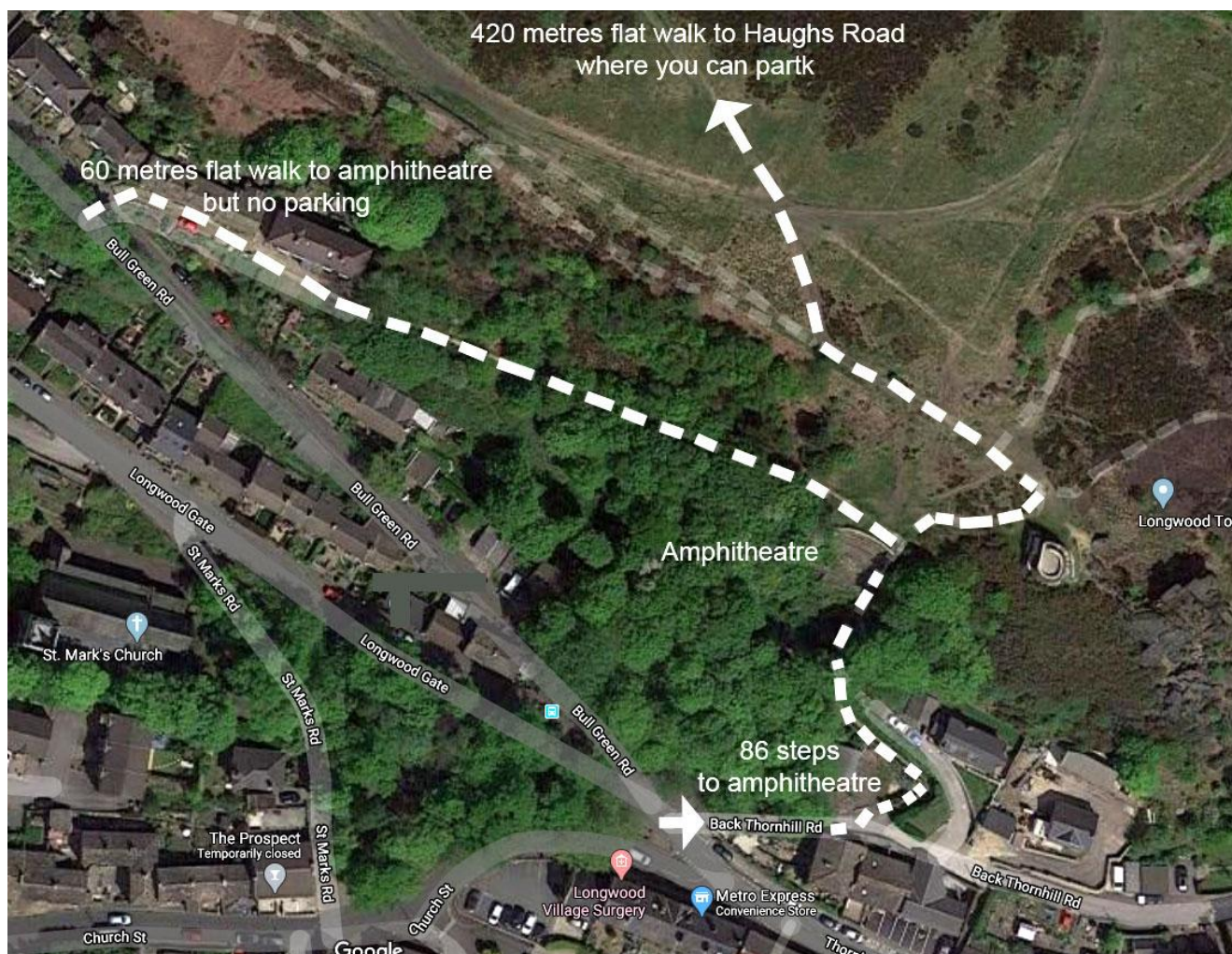
Raymond Kefford, one of the bell ringers who calls everyone to the event, added: “It’s part of a rather nice tradition.”

When the Sing is over, everyone retires to the parish hall for tea and cake.

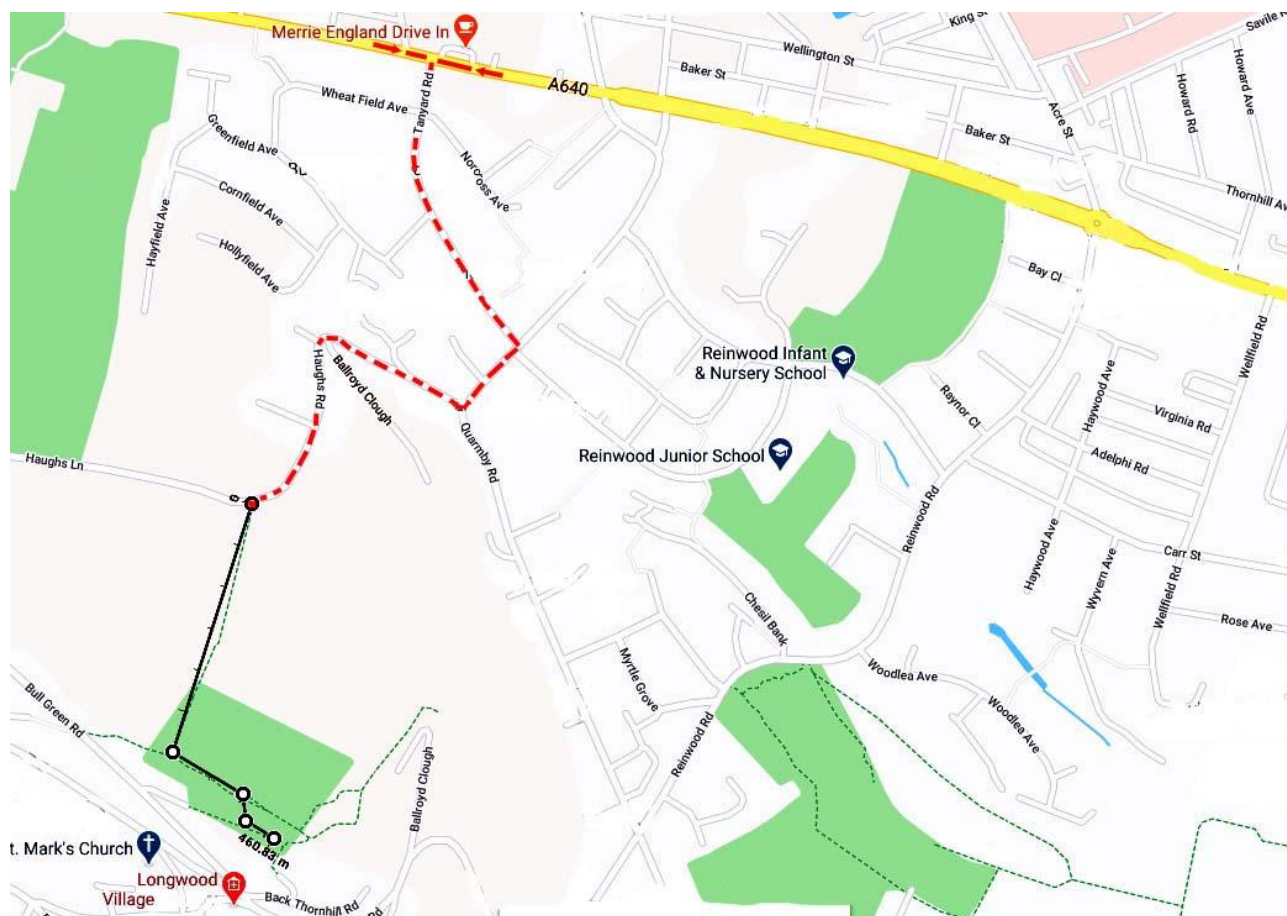
Mr Ross added: “There is a lot of pride involved in this event by people from Longwood, it is really special for them. “It is rather cheekily known as the ‘Mother of all Sings’ and has run continuously through two world wars, which is not bad going.”

No doubt the tradition will go on but probably not until the curse of Covid 19 is lifted.

Meanwhile it's a great place for a walk

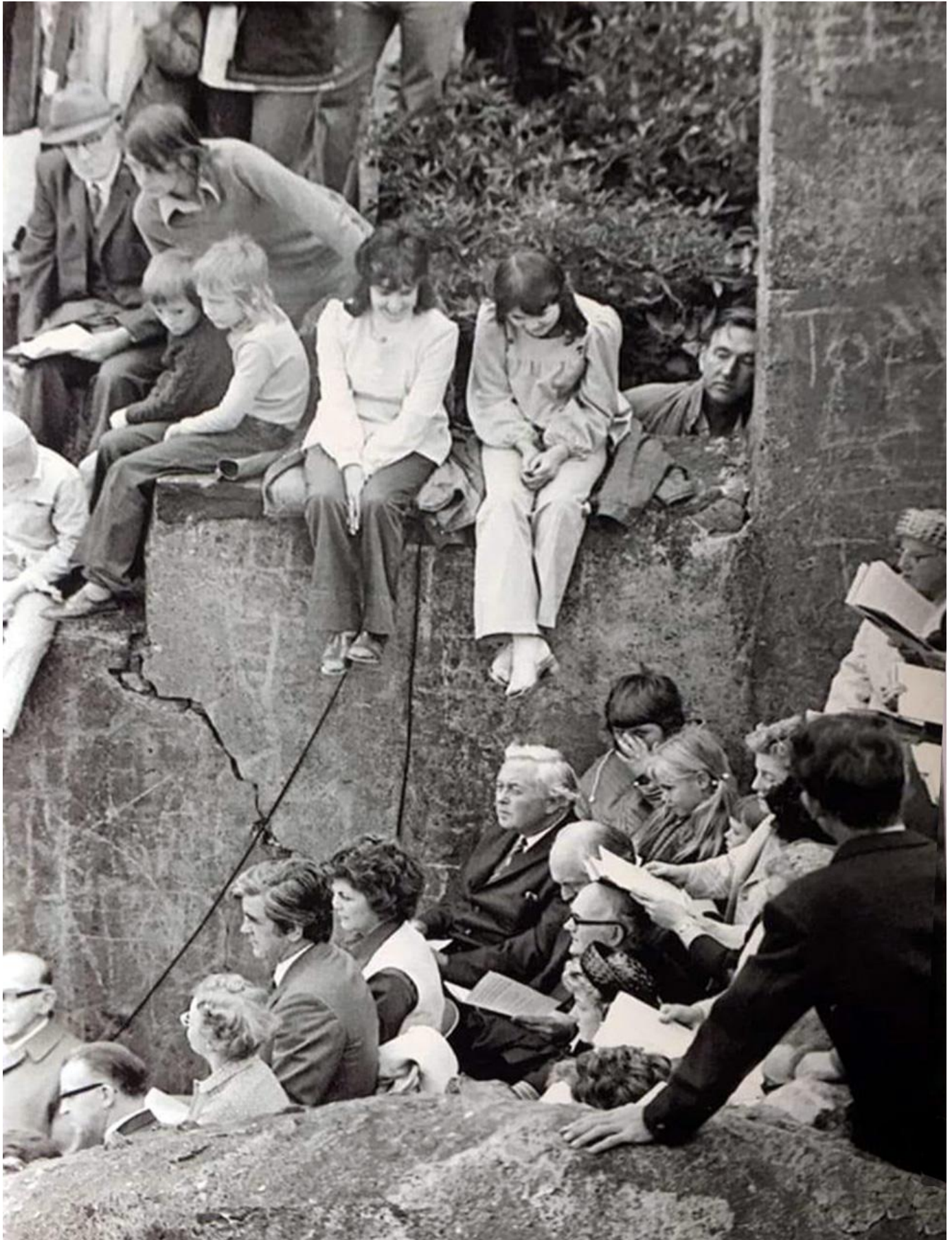


You can also approach from the top of Longwood Edge. Turn off New Hey Road down Tanyard Road by the 'Merrie England' and drive to Haughs Road where parking is straightforward. It's a great walk with terrific views.



Huddersfield's most famous son, **Harold Wilson**, joined in the **Longwood Sing** at least once.

Here he is in 1973; the Leader of the Opposition. The following year he became Prime Minister for a second time.



Well, it made Ian smile...

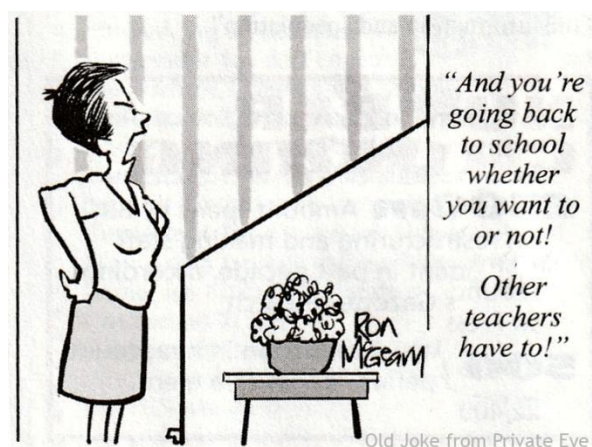


A Yorkshire man passed Covid 19 on to his cat, don't ask m'ow!

Trust all well with you and yours

Best wishes
Ian

The old jokes are the best...



Send me a picture, tell me your news....



At this time of continuing social distancing and isolation, VotV readers, whether singers or audience-members, can no longer meet each other.

But we can keep in touch.



Let the VotV Editor know if something happens to you, that might be of interest and has some - connection - however tenuous - to the Choir. Doesn't matter if you are not very confident writing, I'll help you put into publishable 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