



Choir performs in Christmas Concert - online

Are we down-hearted about lockdown, glum about social isolation? Well, maybe a bit.

But not enough to stop our famous Marsden Christmas concert

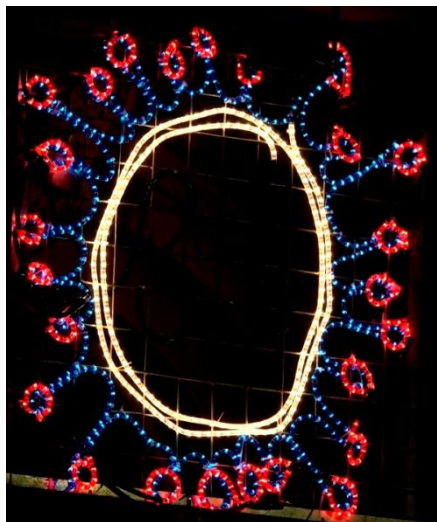
The Choir, with our partners, **Marsden Silver Prize Band** and with our friends in **Saint Bartholomew's Church** got together - virtually and in spirit to create a Christmas concert for our Colne Valley audience to enjoy - even though we can't get together in person.

You might have missed the 'livecast' which happened on Saturday night after the 'Strictly' final but fear not Voice of the Valley Readers, you can still get to see us all perform, at your leisure, by clicking on the link provided below.



The audience for the joyful Christmas concert in **Saint Bartholomew's** often wanders down to the church through the village. Marsden has the best Christmas lights in the Colne Valley and indeed the best for miles around. If you are not in Marsden this year, you can still see the illuminations, courtesy of this delightful video that local film-maker, **Alistair Macdonald**, has been happy to let VotV readers enjoy.

The Marsden Lights - with a 'Fighting the Virus' theme



<https://youtu.be/slftK7IOONo>

The Christmas Concert on the CVMVC Youtube Channel

Our thanks go to all the folk involved and also to the **Coronavirus Community Support Fund**, which has made a substantial financial contribution to the Choir's activities during the ban on live performance.



Here's the concert on the CVMVC Youtube Channel. VotV thinks you will enjoy it

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-dgF8DQOVrY&feature=youtu.be>

A fine introduction



As a preliminary to the 'main event' the audience, as they logged in, were treated to some fine singing by the Choir set to video footage of the magnificent Saint Bartholomew's Church.



This was interspersed by a select few of the superb **Marsden Silver Prize Band**, playing carols in the village.

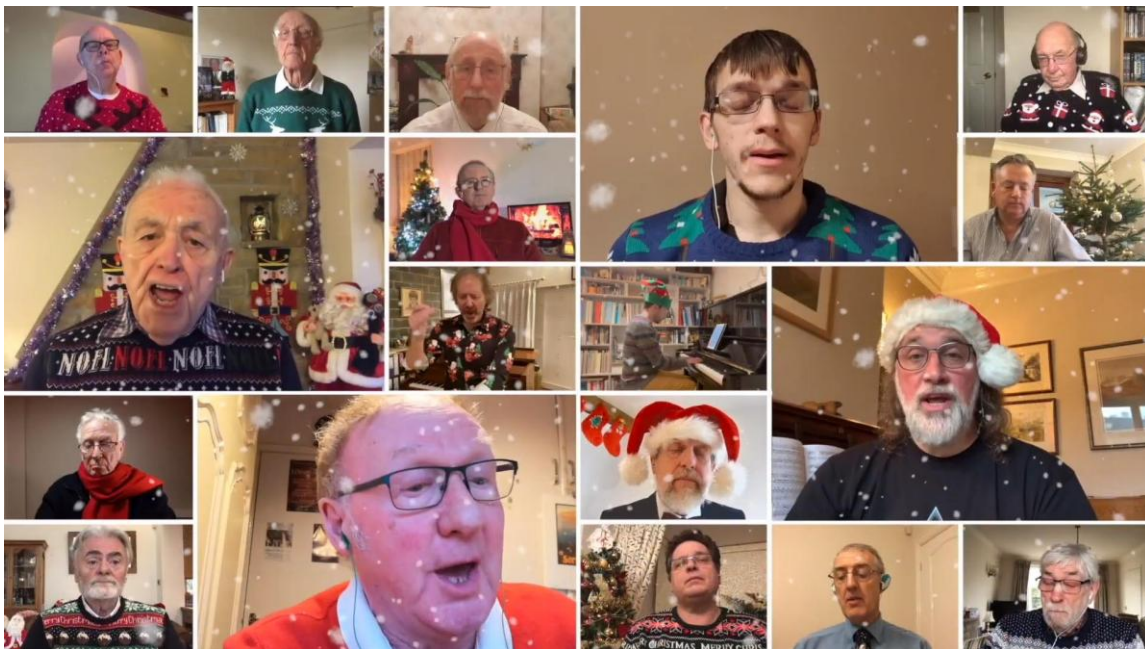
Peter Armitage introduces...

As always, the inimitable Peter Armitage set the tone, welcoming the audience from his armchair in Marsden and letting us know that - despite the virus - we had all come together to produce a concert, he believed we would enjoy.

He invited us, from our sofas, to join the band in '**Christians Awake**'.



The Choir had grappled with the technological challenges of recording solo from home with but with the video and sound editing magic of **Chris Pulleyn**, all the diverse sounds and images came together to create a performance we could be proud of.





The band pulled off a similar trick; **Andrew Lofthouse** conjuring up terrific ensemble playing of fine quality.

Graeme Holdsworth, the Marsden Vicar, who has worked hard on this fine event, gave the Parish Church perspective. If you want to make a donation, all proceeds of the concert will go to Saint Bartholomew's.



As I walked down the road at set of sun,
The lambs were coming homewards, one by one,

There was a terrific performance of 'The Little road to Bethlehem' by **Thom Meredith** accompanied by Chris.

Choir Chairman, **Joe Stones**, said a few words, putting forward just the right sentiments - well done, Joe!



A Marsden Christmas Concert is not complete without a go at '**The twelve days of Christmas**'. And who better than our hugely-respected Musical Director - who has worked his socks off to keep the Choir together through 'Virtual Rehearsals' - to join with the band and give it an energetic rendition? VotV hopes you were up and down singing along at home.

The credits, scrolled over a terrific performance of 'Wassail' that we recorded live in Huddersfield Town Hall some years ago, showed just how many had been involved in getting a fine show off the ground.



The Choir is famous for its Christmas concerts and this one, strange, cut-down, bitter-sweet will live in the memory as we move with fresh hope towards better times in 2021.



VotV quotes just one of the many congratulations emails that have arrived:-

"Thank you for a delightful concert .Well done to each and everyone. I know Barry would be proud. Happy and a safe Christmas to you all." Margaret Fearnley.

The last word ...

But let the last word go to **Thom Meredith**, who sent this message to the Choir afterwards:-

Dear men,

Having just watched our online concert with Marsden Silver Prize Band, I just wanted to write a quick note of congratulations to everyone. I thought it came over really well and the choir and band sounded excellent. It was full of variety and just the right length for an online concert. I realise that we've all missed rehearsing and performing 'in real life' but to be able to produce something like this has brought a lot of happiness and Christmas cheer to a lot of people.

Also, please don't forget that what happened this evening was on behalf of the whole choir. I know that there are people who, for a variety of reasons, haven't been able to join us on Zoom and some were unable to make the whole 'recording thing' work in order to take part in the virtual performance. However, we are and always have been ONE choir and what we present is on behalf of everyone.

A special vote of thanks goes to John Clark for putting together the pre and post concert entertainment and HUGE congratulations to Chris who has spent hours and hours editing videos, sorting audio tracks and collating the whole concert - we certainly wouldn't have been able to do that without him.

I hope you all now have an enjoyable Christmas, despite the tough restrictions that are affecting us all at the moment. The choir is proving itself to be a strong, positive community, providing support for everyone linked to us and there will come a time when we can all sing together again.

Best wishes to you all for Christmas and the New Year,

Thom



Christine's competition: the result

Christine Cox, our Scarborough patroness sent in a commentary about the imminent departure of **Donald Trump** and offered a big cash prize to the one who can best complete her version of the '**Nellie the Elephant**' song.

*Donald the President packed his trunk
And said goodbye to the White House
Off he went with a trumpety-trump,
Trump, trump, trump*

What she wanted was the cleverest version of the bridge section that matches the theme. As a reminder, the original went....

*The head of the herd was calling
Far, far away.
They meet one night in the silver light
On the road to Mandalay*

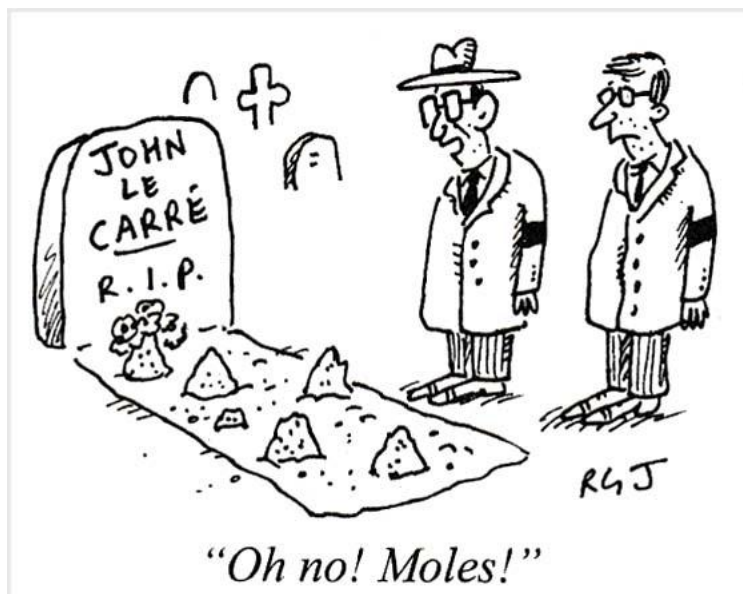
VotV is pleased to announce that the winning entry was submitted by a reader who prefers to remain anonymous. It goes as follows:-

***He said, "It was all a con-job,
The result was all a fake.
Biden's a cheat, I'll drag my feet.
You're making a big mistake."***

***But...
Donald the President packed his trunk etc ...***



So farewell then....John le Carré



The Virgin Mary had a baby boy

A young choral enthusiast, starring in her school nativity play, delights audiences around the world with her enthusiastic singing. You know it's Christmas when this gem comes back around. Filmed in 1996 at a church nativity, the video reliably surfaces every Christmas, bringing joy and laughter to the Internet and embarrassment to its young star.

The clip, which has more than 2 million views on YouTube, shows a young choral enthusiast raging her way through '**The Virgin Mary had a baby boy**', forgetting most of the words but adding a glorious, fortissimo descant over the top.

Apparently, she was told by her mum before the performance to "sing up so Mummy can hear you at the back". She really took the instruction quite literally.

Since the video was posted over 20 years ago (by the girl's sister, it turns out), the young star has now been identified as 27-year-old law graduate **Ellie Sergeant**.

She has since described the video as "three minutes of embarrassment" but has said she hopes it will spread festive cheer. Ellie says: "Mum was really the instigator of the whole disaster that was my nativity play, as she sat right at the back and asked for me to sing as loudly as possible. The ever obedient (and slightly oblivious) daughter, I complied with her request and sang my heart out. I was also completely oblivious to the fact that I was singing over everyone else and that all the parents in the church were passing round tissues as they were crying with laughter."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ihQuiyV-IXU&feature=youtu.be>



Colne Valley Museum wins another Award



Our favourite museum just got another prize: the **Sandford Award**. The judges said *"From the moment that they pass through the front door of Mrs Pearson's House, pupils enter a different world, that of life in the early Victorian age and textile making in the cottage home before the transition to mill production."*



As their day visit unfolds through a range of hands-on activities, the dedicated and committed volunteers, without whom this museum would not exist, help pupils to understand in depth about their local history and heritage. The Victorian Living Experience at Colne Valley Museum successfully and dynamically brings the past to life."

Readers of VotV know that one of those dedicated and committed volunteers is our very own, baritone, **Raymond Ellis**. What a Christmas present. Well done to you and your pals!

Gordon's last Christmas concert



Enjoy Gordon Stewart's last **Christmas Recital**; for 30 years he's been entertaining Huddersfield audiences with his charm and amazing skills.

He will return for a live goodbye concert when the virus allows.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g4uu7UYBNP0&t=561s>

Christmas shopping as it used to be

Many a CVMVC member comes from our neighbouring village of **Meltham**. And probably a few will remember '**Woodhead's Cheese Please**' on **Station Street**. These pictures from 1967 came long before Morrisons Supermarket.



Shopkeepers, **Jeff and Marcella**, used to scoop out Lurpak butter from one cwt barrels (about 50 kilos) .

Here we see Jeff with his festive stock, proudly inspecting his Christmas hams.



Christmas with the Muntra Musikanter



Just last year the men of the Colne Valley took the stage with a fine choir from **Finland**, that went on to beat us and all comers in the Cornwall International Male Voice Choir Festival.

Here they bring us their warm wishes with a traditional Finnish carol. It's called:-

'Jul, Jul, Strålande Jul'.

It's lovely!



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?fbclid=IwAR2WWIY6MxnD1wSKVKFn-nF6KDwtDibuHCQmypbseqhpKQT-IXvp0EEJ6ik&v=3HK6AsuSOug&feature=youtu.be>

A virtual Christmas

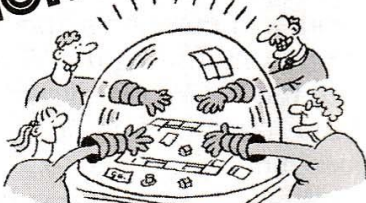
Now that Christmas plans have been further wrecked by the spread of the virus, you might want to get online to Private Eye for some last-minute presents:

LAST MINUTE CHRISTMAS GIFTS FROM PRIVATE EYE

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Don't let Covid ruin your Christmas with the...

MONOPOLY BUBBLE™ from Porton Down



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Colours:

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ADDED BONUS
Inflatable Grandchild™ will keep smiling even when you bang on about how things were better in the old days!

Price: £199.99
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The NHS is ready for Christmas





Well it made me smile...



Send me a picture.
Tell me your news

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

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 - even if it's a bit 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

