

2021 *Voice of the Valley*

COLNE VALLEY MALE VOICE CHOIR NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2021 EDITION



Spookymen - in their rooms

Like Colne Valley Male Voice Choir, Australian superchoir, **The Spookymen's Chorale** has had to learn to cope, cooped up in their homes without rehearsals and concerts. The chap in the pink suit is Spooky Man, **Big Dave**, inviting us into his room.

Like us, they've, individually been videoing themselves, singing to a secret, synchronising backing track, in their living rooms, bedrooms (even sheds - they are all Aussie males, after all!).

Then their equivalent of **Chris Pulley** has edited all the bits together to make a full performance, which is - as usual - quite brilliant.

Their director, **Stephen Taberner** (who doesn't seem to like capital letters) writes:-

the spooky men send you the warmest crimbliest blessings from the bottoms of our crunchy souls. we are where we are. it has been a time. singing is always good, chortling almost always so, cheese! we have been in houses and sometimes out of them. sometimes we even sang. it has been a time. we cherish the gossamer thin skeins of harmony drenched, deeply analogue connections which make our community with each other, and with you. it has been a time. will we do things? we don't know. we'll tell you when we know. we will be back.

*while we were not doing very much, we made a thing, we'd like you to watch it. it's us, singing "in my room", in our rooms. we like it. it's here:
bless your socks*

stephen taberner (bottom left in the flat cap) and the spooky men

Here's the video:

<https://youtu.be/9UI6TTbpHVo>



Feedback on the Christmas Concert: *“This is so lovely”*



The Choir - in a more typical year - would get about 1,000 people into the **Huddersfield Town Hall** for our big **Christmas Festival Concert**. A few days later, as guests of the **Marsden Silver Prize Band**, we would entertain another 400 or so in our performance at **Saint Bartholomews**.

Of course, this Christmas was cancelled as far as **live performance** was concerned.

So we did the next best thing and collaboratively produced a ‘virtual’ concert.

How did it work out? - *“brilliant”*

It seems clear now that we reached a much larger audience online that we would have performing live.

Here are some statistics:-

There have been 2,230 concert views on Youtube, 1,535 via Voice of the Valley and close on 6,000 page views in December on the colnevalleymvc.org.uk website.

Probably, the bulk of the audience is based in the UK but we can't be sure. We do know that at least 125 people watched us in the **USA**, 32 in **Austria** (strangely) and that the concert was seen in the **Netherlands, Indonesia, Thailand, New Zealand, Australia** and in **Finland**.

CVMVC Archivist, David Clarke, passed on these comments:

“Congratulations everyone. You're spreading cheer. God Bless You.”

“So good to see you online! My brother joined CVMVC when he was 15. He's in his 80's now. Many happy memories of past concerts”



“That was so good it really made a wonderful start to my Christmas!”

A **London**-based viewer said, *“Marvelous, so wonderful and professional”*

From a Cave Dwelling in **Spain** we got this feedback: *“The Choir sounded brilliant how were they able to do such a wonderful concert especially this Christmas.*

And from **Canada**: *“Just watched it this morning. Loved the band section and the choir made my hair stand on end - very talented.”*

Richard gives his perspective

Second tenor, **Richard Pryor** sends his thoughts on online performance:-

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



"This has been a difficult time for me. I've had a frustrating and solitary festive season (I am still shielding after nine months), but I will try and deliver something interesting for the newsletter.

After almost 25 years with the choir I have performed in a host of differing venues, from a cowshed in West Wales to Chartres Cathedral in northern France; they all needed lots of preparation.

But then I come to 2020: a year when everyone involved in the performing arts has had to find new ways to stay together and continue to enjoy music making. Thanks to Thom and Chris we have somehow succeeded in keeping some sense of performance. For me and no doubt many others, who have been shielding alone, this has brought a sense of community.

Being involved in producing the Online Concert for Christmas was a real challenge for most of us who were not overly confident with this kind of medium. I approached it with great trepidation. After deciding to 'have a go' and putting some thought into the production of my little scene I have to say the production of the video was a challenge I was determined to conquer.

And after many false starts, I finally sent the results off to Chris with high hopes; silently wishing him "Good Luck with that".

We have now seen the results of the challenge and are we happy? A resounding: 'Yes'

Being involved in music-making is a wonderful and therapeutic outlet. For me it has been, a much needed exercise this year and I would encourage more men to join in. It brings with it the potential to induce happiness, memories, bliss, merriment and mirth, and is much cheaper than a therapist.

Wishing all my fellow choristers a very happy and safe New Year and a return to normal rehearsals when we've all been jabbed."



West Slaithwaite

By the old garage on Manchester Road in the snow, many years ago.

The same scene from a couple of days back - the road is flooded, close to impassable.

Thanks to Charlie Emma, who captured this picture on her phone.



Leslie Stones' Mrs wins big

The last 200 Club draw of 2020 was for the substantial sum of £185.00 and it went to **Joan Stones**, quite coincidentally, the wife of **200 Club Organiser** and veteran first tenor, **Les Stones**.

In an entirely made up interview Les might have said...*'This just goes to show what a great investment getting a 200 Club number is. I can recommend it. In a sense, you win every time!*

That is: you might not get a prize in the draw but you do get the satisfaction of knowing you have contributed to keeping the Choir afloat in these difficult times.

If you've already got a 200 Club number, you can get another. Or maybe get a number as a present for a friend.



200 CLUB

Support us by joining our 200 Club.

Just £50 a year to get one of our 200 numbers. You get the chance every week to get most of your stake back.

Every month there's a £185 prize & then twice a year a whopping £1,000 draw.

Even if you don't win, you win!
Half the money goes as prizes but half stays to help the Choir cover its costs.

*I do urge you to contact Choir Secretary, **Jenny Baxter** and ask her to arrange a 200 Club number for you in 2021'.*

You'll get her in 01484 645192

Cornish men lose the plot



Our old pals at the **City of Truro Male Choir** seem to have let lockdown get the better of them. With the excuse of supporting Newquay Zoo, the Truro men have shed all decorum and decided to prance around singing '**The Lion Sleeps Tonight**'.

These aging Tarzans, all togged up in jungle gear, with the so-called **King of Kernow**, Edward Rowe, can at least be praised for their enthusiasm. The Musical Director, international composer **Russell Pascoe**, who appears in the video being chased by a lion, said: "In these appallingly difficult Covid times I have been delighted by the men's participation."



We learned all our singing parts at our weekly virtual Zoom practises and all of the parts were recorded individually and mixed remotely by choir member **Adam Delbridge-Smith**. Filming was carried out in a Covid secure manner in Truro's Boscawen Park."

Most importantly this project has been a way for our group to stay connected whilst we are unable to meet face to face. We had a great deal of fun making the film and hope we can bring a chuckle and a smile to people's faces in these stressful times as well as raise some much needed funds for the zoo."

Choir chairman **John Larke** added: "The video is part of a larger project we are undertaking to record how we as a choir have adapted to using **virtual means** to continue as a choir and to record our performances for the benefit of others. It has allowed us to keep our spirit, music and social cohesion together, which is what amateur singing is all about."

https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=RD2ny1x55YsZs&v=2ny1x55YsZs&feature=emb_rel_end

& Piano brings 'Messiah' to locked-down Town Hall



CVMVC's very own, pianist, **Chris Pulleyn** tells VoTV, "Music is a huge part of the Festive Season, nowhere more so than in Huddersfield and the Colne Valley. So many musical offerings from the local choirs, orchestras and brass band and the wonderful **Huddersfield Town Hall** is at its busiest, with a different concert every evening. One of the major highlights in Kirklees' Christmas musical calendar, are the world-famous **Huddersfield Choral Society's** performances of **Handel's Messiah**. They have performed the piece annually since 1864.

'I Know That My Redeemer Liveth' is one of the most moving parts of the work, and you don't need to be religious to appreciate that it is a profoundly hopeful song for our time - that despite all the hardship and suffering, better days are on their way.

And so, with this being the first time the Huddersfield Choral have been unable to perform this piece in over 150 years, this is the '**& Piano**' homage to a major Yorkshire Christmas tradition, filmed in the place that the choir always perform in - the wonderful **Huddersfield Town Hall**.

I was honoured to have the very fine soprano, **Ann Wilkes** join me on that magnificent stage."

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

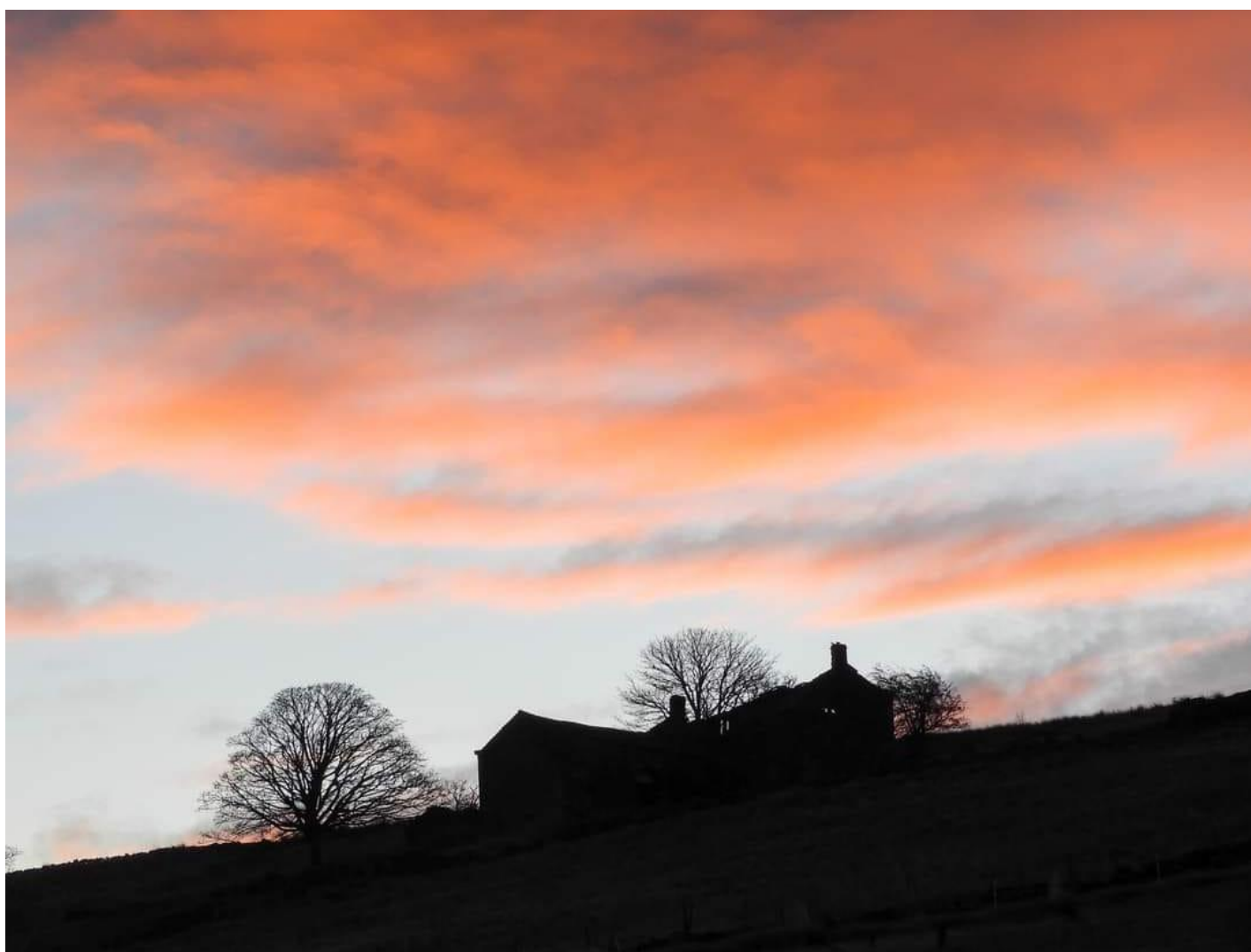


VotV knows the readership likes a good picture. Here's a couple and local, too.

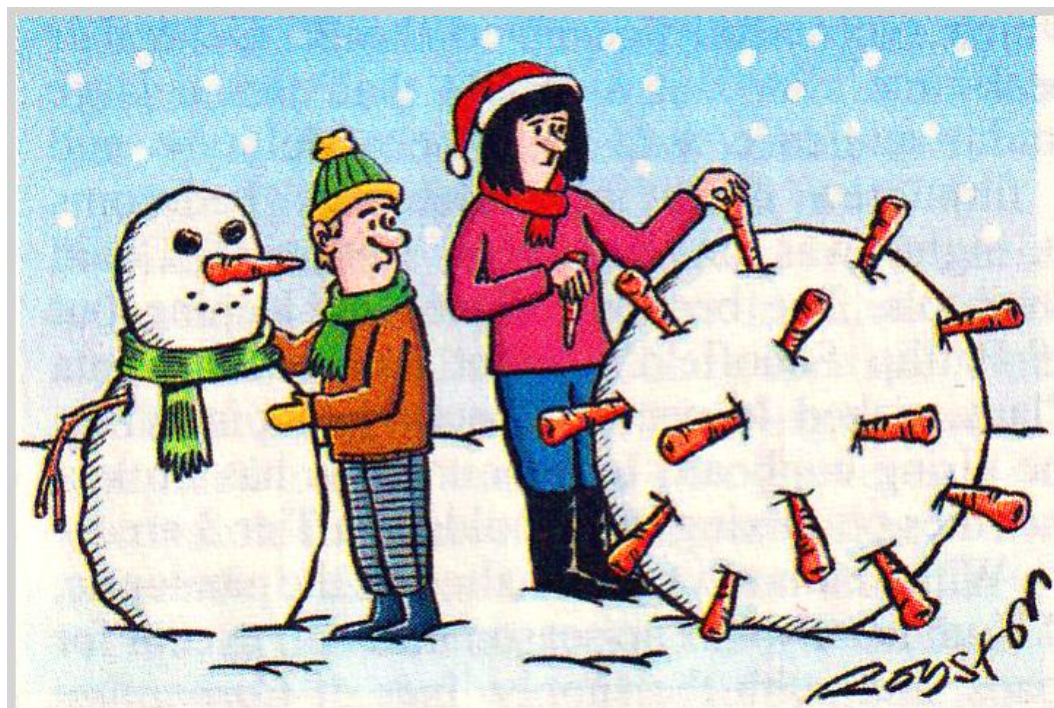


An unidentified Class 40 has just exited Standedge Tunnel and is about to pass **Marsden** station and start the descent at mostly 1 in 105 to Huddersfield with a morning Liverpool Lime Street - Newcastle service sometime in February 1978.

And here's a nice photo taken just the other day by **Jan Davies**. It shows 'Old Ash' a derelict farmstead just above the Choir's home village of **Slaithwaite**.



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

