



Choir News

January
2021



Derbyshire Community Male Voice Choir

Feint optimism for choir's return

No doubt by the time you read this all the fireworks will have ended and you will have put down your party poppers and silly hats - Yes a new year has begun and I offer you all my best wishes for a happy, healthy and prosperous new year. In many ways we remain in much the same position as last year, unable to rehearse or perform together. There is however an element of optimism in the air in that a good proportion of our membership may well be eligible to receive a Covid vaccination within the next few months. That would certainly put us in a better position and it would be great to begin making music together again.



Until this happens, I would like us to consider taking advantage of available technology and revisit some virtual rehearsals using zoom. I have had a discussion with Louise and she is happy to lead these sessions on our behalf. There is an opportunity to perhaps learn some new music in preparation for physical rehearsals later in the year. I think it

would be a shame to think that we have spent the best part of a year in a dormant state and not moved forward as a choir at all. I'm sure our musical team are bursting with new ideas and music that we can perform in the future.



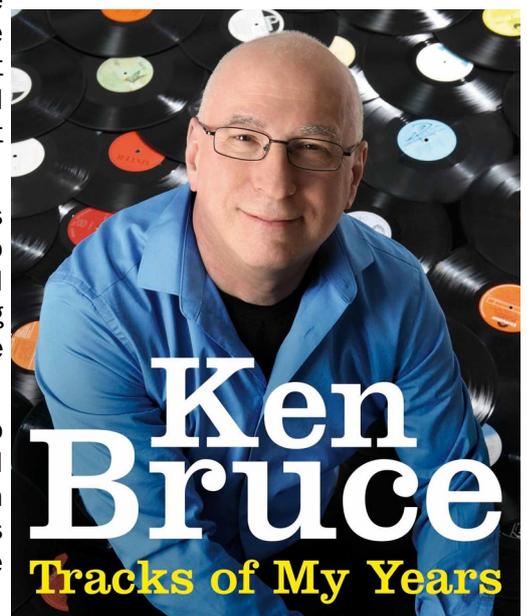
Sales of our new CD remain slow and I am disappointed that we have failed to capture the imagination of the public. I think we have a very good offer; an album dedicated to the victims of the virus with all proceeds being donated to our local NHS charity. It just shows how important marketing is and how difficult it is to get a message across to the public.

We have received quite a lot of useful support from local media agencies during the latter part of 2020 with a number of appearances on Radio Derby, an appearance on BBC East Midlands Today and a nice article within the Derby Telegraph. It may not have generated huge sales of the CD but it

has certainly helped to keep our profile in the eye of the local population. I'm sure a lot of other choirs would have given their "right arm" for the level of publicity coverage we have received recently.

Whether we are actively performing or not there is no such thing as bad publicity and I am very keen that we should continue to maintain as high a public presence as is possible. With that in mind I am asking all members to make a contribution to our marketing activity over the next couple of months. Further details are contained on Page 3.

Finally I would like to thank all of you who have made the effort to keep in touch over the last few months. I have spoken to a good proportion of you on the telephone in recent weeks and it's been great to hear how you are getting on. This is not a one way process and I am eternally grateful to those of you who have taken the time to give me a call



#BRINGBACKMYCHOIR



Two faced Bott

David Bott has shared this anecdote of yesteryear with us which was recounted to him by his father, a regimental padre. Whilst at a regimental training camp one day, an orderly came running through the camp shouting "Doctor, Padre, Doctor, Padre!" The Regimental Doctor, Doc Edwards who was known for his no nonsense approach and was at that moment standing with my father, said " for God's sake man, make your mind up, You can't want both of us".



Can you spot the family resemblance?

During the lockdown Ian Lilley has occupied himself with research into his family tree. This is sometimes a risky venture as who knows what skeletons may be unearthed from times past. Was anyone in the family famous or infamous perhaps? Was anyone ever transported to Australia for stealing a loaf of bread or sheep worrying? Ian thought that "Lilley" was a relatively obscure name and that tracing his family tree would be a reason-

ably easy thing to do. Ian's opinion was quickly transformed when he began his search. The name 'Lilley' seems to originate from the coalfields of Northumberland and he's traced the name back as far as 1692, however, have not found the link as yet which confirms we are related. At present my tree starts in 1785 from the (Cotton Mills) in 'Swanwick'.

As his research developed further Ian discovered that one of his relatives named Sarah b.1883 married a young man named 'Enzor Briddon'. Together they had 8 children. I was totally amazed, and when I shared my findings with Len, he to was speechless. Ian does not believe that he and Len are related but further investigations in the new year may prove otherwise.

When the pressures upon our medical services have eased somewhat, it may be possible to undertake a DNA matching process. Personally I think if you look closely at their eyes they share a certain twinkle.

DID YOU KNOW

Singing daily for at least 10 minutes reduces stress, clears sinuses, improves posture and can even help you live longer

Find us @ www.dcmvchoir.com

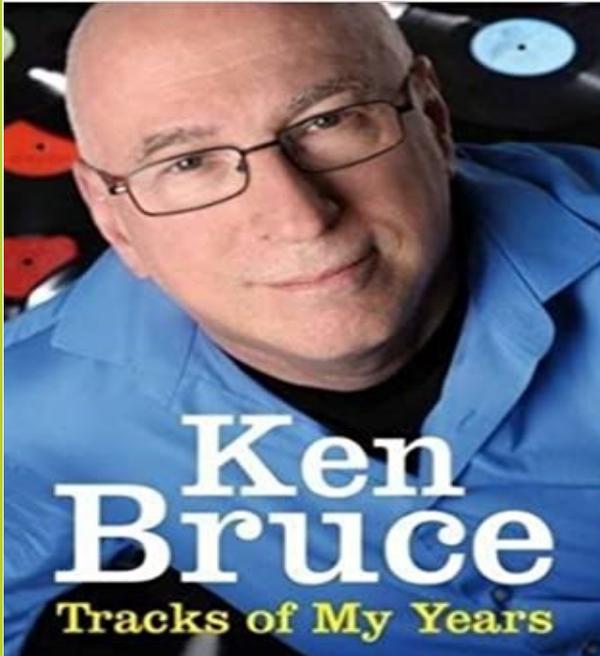




**BBC
RADIO**



The tracks of your years



Throughout the lockdown period we have managed to maintain some presence in the public eye through regular posts on our social media accounts mainly Facebook and Twitter.

We have also been fortunate enough to have featured on Radio Derby several times, an appearance on BBC East Midlands Today and a nice article in the Derby Telegraph.

On our Facebook page we have published short biographies of most of our current choir members and these have been well received. Many thanks to all of you who took the time and effort to contribute to this venture. We have reached the bottom of the barrel with this initiative and there is only one profile left to publish which I have been keeping in reserve for emergencies.

It's still going to be many months before we can get back to performing so I am keen that we have something else to publish.

I would like all choir members to contribute to something along the lines of Radio 2's "Tracks of my years" or Radio 4's "Desert Island Discs".

What I would like is for each member to produce a list of their ten favourite songs / pieces of music of all time. This is not always an easy task to narrow your choices down to ten

and if you are like me my list would probably change from day to day depending upon my mood and my memories.

I don't want this to be an exercise in "musical snobbery" and I would ask all of you to come up with a list of music that you enjoy listening to whether it be Kylie Minogue or Mozart; Blur or Brahms; Stravinsky or Stereophonics; Bartok or the Beatles.

It would be great if you could write some commentary about each piece so it forms a musical story about your life. When did you first hear the song? What is the significance of the song to your life? Where were you or what were you doing when you first heard it?

To those of you who are sufficiently technically minded it would also be great if you could provide a link to YouTube or similar platform for each song so that readers have the option of listening to your choices should they wish to do so.

I would really appreciate your support with this initiative because it gives us a vehicle to remind people that we are still alive and kicking and may generate some interest in recruiting new members and future concert hosts

**BBC
RADIO**



Find us @ www.dcmvchoir.com



Ronnie's "Fools and Horses" connections



In the December 2020 edition of the newsletter there was a spoof story about Ian, Len and Ron, likening them to everybody's three favourite characters from the comedy series "Only Fools and Horses"

In a recent telephone conversation with Ron, it transpires that he has a stronger link to one of the show's characters than any of us could have imagined. Ron recalls the story of his first meeting with the star of the show; "Many years ago I was preparing an evening meal for my wife and myself when there was a knock on our front door. I was just about to serve up egg and chips for the pair of us so I was a little annoyed to be disturbed as we were about to sit down to eat.

I opened the door to find two men standing outside. The first chap, David Jason, walked in straight past me

saying "you must be Ron". The other fellow was David's elder brother Arthur White who quickly followed David into the house. Davis and Arthur are distant cousins of my wife although we had never met before. It transpired that David and Arthur, who are both actors, were travelling to a film shoot in the North and had were breaking their journey by staying in a hotel at Junction 25 of the M1 overnight. Realising that we did not live too far away, they decided to pop over and pay us a visit. They quickly made themselves "at home" and I ended up cooking them both egg and chips for tea.



Although less famous than his younger brother David, Arthur also appeared in the crime drama A Touch of Frost as police archivist Ernie Trigg. He also appeared briefly along with his brother in two episodes of The Darling Buds of May. He has also made appearances on popular television series such as Crossroads, The Professionals, London's Burning, As Time Goes By, Heartbeat and Family Affairs.

"By the time I sat down to my meal" added Ron, "my chips were a little soggy and my egg was a bit rubbery but in compensation I gained a new anecdote which I've dined out on a few occasions. Bon appetite!"

Time for “old Tom” to hang up his boots



There comes a time in every not-so-young man’s (and presumably woman’s) life when it is time to say “I’ve had enough of this working for a living lark. I want to join those lazy layabouts Messrs Griffiths, Hough, et al (.....insert your name here as appropriate) and throw off the yoke of hard graft.”

The above thought came to me about 3 years ago and I diligently set about planning my own extraction from the working classes. I had it all laid out carefully; in 2018 I’d drop down to working 4 days a week; in 2019 it would be 3 days a week and on my 62nd birthday on 31st August 2020 I’d become an aging drop-out and wave goodbye to work forever! But, as Rabbie Burns said:

‘The best laid plans of mice and men gang aft agley
And leave us naught but chaff and ruin for honest toil’.

I didn’t factor in a worldwide pandemic and the need for someone to lead the strategy against it at my place of employment. But more of that later

I started out my university career as a microbiologist specialising in yeast genetics. I later on got dragged in to managing a health and safety team (“it’s only on a temporary basis Tom” said the then Vice Chancellor) and 30 years later I was still in the ‘Elf & Safety’ role;

though in my case it is more ‘Ogre & Safety’ I suspect!

One of the fantastic things I’ve enjoyed about working in the university system is the opportunity to carry on studying while working. Those opportunities have allowed me to top up my science qualifications with a few diplomas and a masters in Law along the way; opportunities I have relished. The Law Masters allowed me to add on a new work role by teaching small groups of postgraduate law students at University of York (fondly referred to as my ‘Idiot Children’, while they lovingly referred to me as ‘that ba*’**d Scotsman’).

One of the most memorable risk assessments I was ever asked to carry out was for a proposed arts project. The concept was to launch a baby grand piano off the roof of famous Sheffield University 17 storey tower building and film its trajectory from numerous angles until its





Derbyshire Community Male Voice Choir



inevitable and terminal encounter with the ground. The artist wanted to capture both the sight and sounds of the piano moving through the air and its dramatic disintegration at 'ground zero'. I absolutely loved the idea! Sadly, although the safety risks could be adequately managed it was finally decided that the 'Piano Jump' would not go ahead for 'PR reasons'; much to my disappointment and the profound relief of my team.

So back to that annoyingly disruptive pandemic in 2020. I was not only asked to put back my retirement to lead on the Covid-19 strategy for ensuring staff and student safety but also to return to a 5 day week! It was a challenge I couldn't refuse and one which, in retrospect, I

have actually enjoyed. However, as per my stipulation a replacement has been recruited and I can hand over the baton on 31st December, which seems a fitting end to 2020!

So what to do now to fill all that 'free time'? Hmm, that's a tough question. As Bertrand Russell pompously said

"To be able to fill leisure intelligently is the last product of civilization, and at present very few people have reached this level." Surely the genuinely intelligent thing is to fill the time with enjoyable activities?

Like an idiot I have started the process of applying for a role as a Magistrate; they do still get given a 'black cap' for sentencing, don't they? Alternatively is it to be more time spent riding around the UK (and abroad) on the motorbike? What about spending more time scuba diving (when travel once again allows, of course) or better still the après diving.

Then there is my spoken Spanish which is dreadful, but worth working on. Oh wait, the bonsai tree collection always need more attention. Goodness knows I really need to spend more time down the gym - especially after Christmas. When did I last pick up a musical instrument? What about all those literature classics I promised I was going to read and re-read? What does my daughter mean when she says I'll have more time to spend with the grandkids?

Last but certainly not least, in terms of foreseeable commitments, is the deeply anticipated pleasure of rehearsing and performing together with all of my choir colleagues again. It is time to dust off my sheet music and get down to rehearsing again methinks, before we all get back together.....perhaps after I have a coffee and bit of cake....and maybe a nap!

Stay well all.

Tom



Find us @ www.dcmvchoir.com



Star of the Silver Screen

It was coming up to the Whitsun long week end in 1966 with nothing planned when one of the lads said that he had seen an advert in the local paper for extras for a film. We all said yes great! We will meet at the Top Hat Club in Colyear Street, so I got there no mates in sight, I made my presence known and was dragged in a room with dozens of racks of clothes. I was directed down one aisle and was told to remove watches and rings then changed into a collar less shirt a pair of thick wool type trousers and a muffler, some of the other lads had wigs and stick on moustache and sideburns fitted all males had a cap. I was ok all my hair was my own, we were then ushered outside and onto a coach. 30 minutes later we arrived at Elvaston Castle there were already loads of other extras there, we all had a drink in a large marquee, we were given a simple instruction when you heard "ACTION" silence was required.



We were herded down the park to where they had built some mock wrought iron gates across a grass area facing the castle, I was given a female partner and queued at the gate with 30/40 others. The film crew had built some tram lines for the camera to move on, an open carriage arrived at the gate filming had started the occupants of the carriage were slowly getting the carriage and entering the castle grounds "CUT". This scene was repeated at least eight times, we were told to report back to the marquee where we were really well fed. A

few of us were selected to sit in front of the castle on a large trestle table filled with food again the cameras panned all around the table front and back views of all while the stars were flitting around, another six takes later "CUT". We went for another snack at the marquee then back on the coach to Derby, clothes changed false hair removed and asked to return the following day.

Next day I had been upgraded to a gentleman and new female partner again we were transported back to Elvaston Castle, our group were told to casually walk around the grounds where there were stalls and a small fair-ground, scenes were being shot all around the site. All this went on for over an hour, it was then back to the marquee for lunch, the afternoon filming was going to be a long session. This was going to be one of the main scenes we were told to run from the castle to the lake and crowd up there, we had several dummy runs that this and then the TAKE. There was lots of activity on the lake but we were kept in the dark, we just crowded up and pointed. That was it, all done on the coach back to Derby get dress and home.



Oh by the way the film was D H Lawrence's "Women in Love" directed by Ken Russell starring Alan Bates Oliver Reed, Glenda Jackson Jenny Linden and Eleanor Bron Featuring and introducing chief extra Dave Carver I saw this film at the cinema and on at least six further occasions and I still haven't been able to spot myself. That's show business.

Passing the Winter hours

Now that the summer has gone and the work in the garden has all but ceased, what is left with Covid still rampant, and no choir? Well walking when the weather is ok, but due to rain that does not seem to happen very often, so work has recommenced on my model railway.

During the summer the railway took a back seat with many projects in the garden and re-vamping the shower room being undertaken. Then there was a shortage of parts due to Covid, stopping production at PECO in South Devon who supply the track.



Things have now improved to a degree, but still some items are in short supply, mainly due to more people taking up the hobby to keep them occupied.

Over the last couple of weeks, I have started to progress the work again on the model with the tedious task of ballasting all the track, which is currently electrified, using fine crushed stone held together with a 50/50 mix of water and PVA glue between the sleepers and at the N gauge scale there are 70 sleepers per foot! Before the ballasting takes place, the rails have to be painted to cover the bright silver on the sides to represent rusty iron as per the real thing. This task can only be done in small sections as it can try the patience of Job.

To take the mind off the

ballasting, I decided to start construction of the buildings for the village scene I propose to fit around the station. The big decision to make was what could I include to give a reason for the village to have a railway station, as I wanted a rural theme, rather than industrial, so I decided on a dairy. I found an interpretation of a dairy in the Railway Modeller and set to, to design my version to fit the space I have. Over the past couple of weeks, I have cut hundreds of pieces of Balsa wood, card and paper, the picture below shows my completed model.



and printed when you need them. The only thing left to complete was the sign, Russell's Dairy which was ably made on the computer to scale by Christine my ever-suffering wife, putting up with me either being out in my railway shed named Merebrook Halt, or covering the dining room table with my model making bits and pieces.

Now the Dairy is completed only a Railway Station, Station house, Timber Yard, Church, 12 Cottages, Pub, Shops and Garage are required to complete the village. Hopefully Covid will be over before all this is complete. As I write this it is raining again, so I will be back in the shed for more ballasting and scenic work, roll on normality and a return to singing again.



Start with a box of hazel wands grown in Beeston by Howard Martin an old colleague of mine.



I've selected a big hefty rough (bit like me I suppose!) oak log for the base, and left it rough to give the piece a primitive rustic look. I've shoulded the lower part of the trunk in a short hazel wand to hide the plain dowel.



Just completed a late request 16 branch tree topped with a solid beech angel.



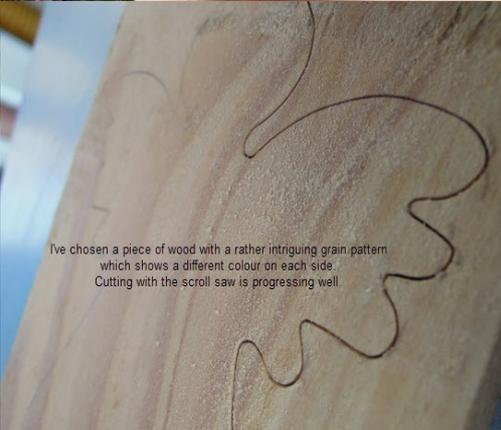
Cut the wands to branch sizes then split them along the grain



Branch fitting completed. Just the trunk to trim and the angel to scroll.



Use a 12mm flat bit to drill central holes holding the workpiece in a special jig to protect fingers and thumbs.



I've chosen a piece of wood with a rather intriguing grain pattern which shows a different colour on each side. Cutting with the scroll saw is progressing well.



Branches arranged ready for assembly.



I've given the angel 2 coats of Liberon Black Bison clear liquid wax and buffed her to a low-sheen finish.

Malcolm constructs Christmas for friends and neighbours

As many of you are aware, Malcolm's wood is good; that is, his ability to work with pieces of wood and transform them into items of real beauty. I'm aware that he has created a penguin themed piece for fellow chorister Sean this Christmas. Whilst searching for suitable material to use he also discovered some discarded hazel branches in his store and has been able to construct a festive Christmas tree. The attached photographs provide a step by step guide should any of you possess the desire to take some wood in hand and create your own festive masterpiece.



Bonkers Buxton starts 2021 with a splash!



Our accompanist Louise is known to be a keen swimmer, and has particularly found cold water swimming beneficial to her health during the last 6 months. She started 2021 with a half mile swim at Spring Lakes in Long Eaton. At 3.2 degrees, it wasn't for the faint hearted. Lou said "I was glad of the extra insulation due to the amount of cake and biscuits I've eaten over the Christmas holidays, although my wetsuit was a bit snug today!" Rumour has it that Lou and her older sister Su are planning to swim the channel as part of a relay team in 2022. Just don't tell their mum!

Get trim in 2021 with the Titcombe plan



You will all have heard of and may well have tried various diets such as the Atkins diet, the Cambridge diet and the F plan. The latest craze set to take the health and fitness industry by storm is the **Titcombe plan** initiated by our very own bass singer Clive. The beauty of the plan is that you can eat whatever you want but the meal has to be consumed using the special fork and spoon provided. "I've not noticed a great deal of difference" commented Clive, "except that an average meal now takes about two and a half hours to consume. The calories expended in eating the meal are roughly equivalent to those consumed so it's a great way of losing a few pounds" added Clive. Clive is currently working on a beer glass based on similar principles but so far it is not proving as popular as you end up with a wet crotch. Clive, who celebrated his birthday during December is keen to keep in good shape as there may well be some special wedding photographs taken in the near future as he and Diane have announced their engagement. Congratulations to you both from all your friends associated with the choir.