

CURSE YOU COVID! WE WILL NOT BE BEATEN!

“We’ve pencilled in the Carols for Tuesday 22nd.”

“Should be able to that by then, after all it’s June now and things are getting better.”

“Are we still on for Carols?”

“It’s still in the diary but singing is still a problem.”

“It doesn’t look like we’ll be able to do the Carols this year.”

“Maybe we should cancel?”

For many people, Dan Cram, Pete Pinto and me especially, our Carol Celebration is something we look forward to. It is a real part of Advent when families and the whole range of the community can get together for a jolly good sing. The idea of cancelling was very upsetting and seemed to signal that real life was out of reach.

“How about we do something we can stream with the carols and readings. Try to keep the Christmas spirit alive, for everyone, Barty house, families, oldies etc” Dan

“Great idea live or pre-recorded?” Bob

“If pre-recorded we could then have others involved in smaller groups for some drama bits or readings etc. (Is this Paul Dixon’s area of expertise?)” Dan

“Definitely...” Pete

Our knight in shining armour (aka Paul Dixon) was roped in! He was happy and used to filming in a Covid-safe way and even offered use of the studios in emergency. In the event we were able to film on two separate Sundays in church with added “Pinto extra sound equipment”, and it turned out to be remarkably easy. Big shout out to Jenny Lovelock and Anne Hayden who thought they were going to be part of a small congregation but ended up leading the singing and reading!! With a band made up of Dan (organ), Pete (bass), Pia Alexandre (violin), Callum Glazier (euphonium), Chris Trim, Chris Dixon and myself (guitars), and the singers, we hacked our way through the programme (one take only for all of them except Callum’s favourite, Cowboy Carol, which just about finished his euphonium lip!). The readings were mostly recorded after the music and Paul would occasionally stop and take a different angle but we were done in under 3 hours!! Stanley Kubrick would have been proud! The children were recorded with one or two bits and bobs separately (thanks a million, Michelle Pinto, for gathering the various families) and we were done.

At the end of the children’s session, Paul said “Do you want a bit of a preview?”

“Well it will be what it is!” I thought, “warts and all!”

“You’ll be surprised to know that I didn’t have to do much with the sound. And given that you’re playing that’s saying something!!” That’s Pete, who, quite correctly, always takes the mick out my instrumental expertise!

I watched two or three minutes. It looked lovely and sounded brilliant! On transmission there were families singing along at home and to this date it has had 749 views on YouTube! Huge thanks to all those who contributed and hopefully it brought a little joy into what was by that an unrelenting Tier 4 Christmas! It really could not have happened without Paul and Pete’s expertise and Dan’s support and initial suggestion of broadcasting! Hopefully we thumbed our noses at Covid and brought some extra joy to people at a difficult time. Happy New Year!

Bob Piggott