

I'm afraid that as I sit here to write my blog for the BVS I do it with rather a heavy heart. I would describe myself as a glass half full sort of person, but the present state of our country in the midst of this pandemic has rather knocked the stuffing out of me. Most of the North in tier 3 measures which is creeping down to the Midlands. Looks like Nottingham is the next to fall. Our neighbours - Stoke on Trent - now in tier 2 and it won't be long before Staffordshire follows. I suppose first time round there was this feeling that we were all in it together and we would do all we could to keep Britain safe, beat the virus, save the NHS etc. Etc. But the virus has proved to be a tricky customer. Take your eye off the ball and you are lost.

But less gloom and doom. When I reflect on the last couple of months I have been very fortunate, resuming my long distance walking in that brief window we had and have even been back to Benslow again. This time with my piano quartet being tutored by the Primrose piano quartet. What a privilege! And fingers crossed but it looks like, at the moment, the course at the end of November with the Bingham string quartet joined by Nigel Clayton to make a piano quintet, is going ahead. Although will we be able to travel between tiers? Confusion reigns. But I'm descending into Eeyore mode, too easy to slip into.

Had a bit of a fright returning from a four- day walking excursion to mid Wales to find Oliver, my son who is presently living with me, looking very ill and sorry for himself with a high fever. I'm afraid that my first thought was to run away and then I put on the mask previously worn by Oliver to go back into his room. After that, I thought there's not a lot I can do, just to make the best of it. There was no way we could socially isolate living in a small two-bedroom flat with shared facilities. But it did bring home to me how constricting Covid 19 is when forced to isolate. And what about the poor dog? Fortunately the home tests which Oliver had ordered came back negative. So I only had a few days of being trapped indoors.

My last walk was called the Calder Woodland Way devised by Christopher Goddard. Sue, our BVS secretary, emailed me not so long ago to say that she had walked one of his routes around there and it seemed a lot longer than 11 miles to complete it, returning home exhausted. The Calder Valley is certainly a tricky one as you climb out of the valley.

The Calder Woodland Way starts at Brighouse and finishes at Walsden. It would have been a lot easier to walk that stretch along the canal. Sometimes I wonder why I put myself through these things. But what is life without a

challenge? Also the views were quite amazing especially after you passed Sowerby Bridge, Halifax dominating the horizon until then. I stayed at Hebden Bridge Hostel, a frequent haunt of mine, but like most things at the moment not as pleasant experience as I usually have, being incarcerated in my room and not allowed to use the communal area or the kitchen. So hardly why one uses hostels (besides being cheap accommodation).

The next day was what I thought would be a short jaunt over to Walsden having completed the lion's share of the walk the first day. I did think of you Sue. One three-mile stretch took me two hours and I had to scramble through gushing streams on what looked like dangerously slippery and wobbly rocks. Fortunately they were not as bad as they looked although I still tottered and shook my way over them. But I can highly recommend the walk. Give yourself plenty of time and choose good weather for it.

No more staying out. The last trip following the Pennine Bridle Way from Holme Chapel (near Burnley) to Settle had to be cancelled as Lancashire went into tier 3. Can't say I'm too sorry as it was a bit of a challenge especially with the shorter days.

Last night we sneaked in a last get together with my piano quartet before being thrust into tier 2, although I will still be able to meet up with the pianist as we formed a bubble when it was first allowed, so we can continue to play together as things stand at the moment. It does give me something to work towards and to look forward to. Something so important in what appears to be these ground-hog days. In fact, if it wasn't for my viola (and the walking) I wouldn't be coping as well as I am. So, thank God for music which as the old Heineken advert says, reaches parts other beers don't reach.

So happy viola playing to you all with that wonderful wealth of music we have written for us.

Janet Pazio