

Editorial

It's good to be back. As you'll know, Graham, who waves the Publisher wand that turns my pages of typescript into your Brigand magazine, has been unwell. Thankfully he's now on the road to recovery and I know we all wish him well. Hence the wand has been unfurled and here is the latest edition, which covers the period since the start of 2024.

And what a time it has been! We started the year with our new website almost there but not quite. Eventually, in mid-March it was revealed in its full glory, sophisticated, interactive and up-to-date. That triggered a surge in preparation for the legacy publicity and application process, which all came to fruition as planned on 30th April to coincide with our Charter Night. It's been a terrific team effort between Brigantes and Big Bamboo and shows the way we can benefit from the know-how of a partner with particular professional skills.

And, as this edition shows, we've been busy in lots of other ways. The Technology Tournament was one of the best-ever under Bob's watchful eye and Moya ensured we took over a chunk of the stalls at Harrogate Theatre for 'Oh What a Lovely War'. With over fifty attendees, Charter Night at Oakdale Golf Club, organised by Tony, was a great advert for Rotary. Our programme of Tuesday speakers has given us everything from royalty (kitchens and chaplains) to local charities and from Harrogate Business Improvement District to Assisted Dying. No lack of variety there.

Our ongoing social life has been blighted by the climate. The walkers and the golfers (there's quite a bit of overlap) have been stymied by the weather. Fortunately you can sit by the fire on the worst of days and read a good book, so the Book Club has taken up some of the slack.

All of which shows we're alive and kicking. Yes we need more new members and yes we need new partners but Rome wasn't built in a day. We've made some significant donations already this year and, with the legacy coming on stream, we can look forward to Brigantes continuing to make a real difference in our community.

Peter Wood

ShelterBox and AquaBox

Brigantes have donated £5,000 to ShelterBox and AquaBox. These are charities we've been proud to have supported for many years and the need for them in various parts of the world has never been greater than now.

Each ShelterBox contains such items as tents, tarpaulins, toolkits, solar lights, water filters and carriers, all essential elements of life for people caught up in disaster and conflict. AquaBox provides safe drinking water, through the use of filtration units, to hundreds of thousands of people in crisis zones around the world.



The Legacy – An Update

Once we had decided to invite applications for legacy funding, several elements had to be put in place. Firstly we needed a project team to direct the process. That evolved into President Bill, Charlotte Gale, Tim Grainger, David Read and Peter Wood, together with Nicola Stamford and Matt Reeder from the Big Bamboo Agency. Then we needed to identify a Selection Group which would consider all the applications and propose which ones should receive funding. This would comprise representatives of Brigantes and of the local community. Nicola had already suggested to us that her husband Matthew Stamford, Director of Estate Agents Verity Frearson, would be happy to chair the group. He is to be joined by Sharon Canavar (CEO Harrogate International Festivals) and Frances Elliot MBE (CEO Harrogate and District Community Action) together with President Bill and David Read from Brigantes.

That was all in place early in the year. There then followed a frustrating but unavoidable delay while we awaited the completion of the new website, which would be required not only to give information about Brigantes but to afford access to the funding application form. The form, which had to be designed from scratch together with associated Guidance Notes and Frequently Asked Questions, then had to be inserted into the website alongside a dedicated email address for completed applications. It was a complicated process which was overseen by Charlotte and Tim with additional help from Andy Morrison.

The website went live in mid-March and that was the signal for the organisation to spring into action. Our deadline was Charter Night on 30th April when Bill would announce that the application process was open, with a closing date of 31st May. Big Bamboo would oversee publicity and Charlotte arranged a photo shoot on the Stray in April amid the glory of the cherry blossom.

Matt, Sharon, Bill, Frances and David amid the cherry blossom

All deadlines were met and Bill was duly able to make his announcement to the great and good of Rotary together with Brigantes, partners and friends at Charter Night. In the meantime Big Bamboo went into overdrive. Bill and Diane were interviewed on Harrogate Radio, the Stray Ferret picked up the story and there followed a full page spread in the Harrogate Advertiser. Additionally articles inviting applications have appeared on all the main social media sites and the publicity blitz will continue until the end of May. We have also joined the Harrogate District Chamber of Commerce which gives us a further foothold in the local community.



Matt, Sharon, Bill, Frances and David amid the cherry blossom

We hope all this will help to boost the number of applications. But more than that, it is succeeding in putting Harrogate Brigantes Rotary on the local map in a big way. It gives us a platform to advertise what we do and, hopefully, attract new members and partnerships. Furthermore we are currently seeking applications for funding from a first tranche of £50,000. It is planned that a further £50,000 will be released at a future date, which will not only give us an opportunity for further publicity but will enable us to learn from having been through the process once already.

An enormous amount of work has been put into creating the new website and designing the legacy application process and thanks are due to all those involved both from Brigantes and Big Bamboo. There is still much to do. As I write, with the end of May in sight, there have been 45 applications and then next month the process of assessing them will begin.

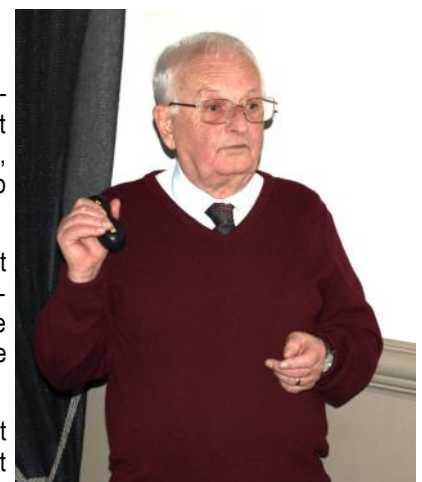
In the meantime, if you haven't done so already, do have a look at the website and in particular at the legacy application process which it contains. We hope you'll be impressed. If you have any suggestions for improvements to the website, or, even better, any contributions you'd like to make, do let the President know.

Parish Church Treasures

As an inveterate poker-into-churches my family have been known to steer me gently in the opposite direction when one hoves into view. Not all rate five stars but most have something of interest and the best can be just WOW! As repositories of architecture, glass, memorials, indeed history, they are unsurpassed in their spread around the country and in the way they keep their secrets to themselves.

So it was a delight to welcome Tony Wilson to talk to us about these treasures. He was candid that this was not entirely his own research but that he leaned heavily on the book 'Parish Church Treasures' by John Goodall. Tony had selected from the book fourteen of the best from North Yorkshire so any of us could visit them with relative ease. It was a fascinating trip around the county and the variety of the 'treasures' was remarkable.

Rather than rattle on about the talk, which was excellent, I thought it might be more useful to list the churches and treasures Tony selected so that, come a fine day, you might be tempted to visit one or two of them. They are:



Tony in full flow

Parish Church Treasures *continued*

Rudston : All Saints: A monolith in the churchyard, the tallest in the country. Grave of novelist Winifred Holtby.

Brompton-in-Allertonshire: St Thomas: Hogbacks (Viking grave markers with a carved bear at either end.)

Kirkdale: St Gregory's Minster: A rare Saxon sundial as part of a carved 7ft block of stone.

Lastingham: St Mary's: Large 11thC Norman crypt.

Easby: St Agatha: Medieval wall paintings and two pieces of rare 12thC stained glass.

West Tanfield: St Nicholas: a 14thC hearse (metal framework over a medieval tomb) – vary rare.

York: St Denys, Walmgate: Stained glass of York merchant holding a model of the church in the window he paid for.

Pickering: St Peter & St Paul: Wonderful wall paintings from mid 1400s uncovered in 19thC.

Crayke: St Cuthbert: A stone where arrows were sharpened and a rood screen turned into a war memorial.

Croft-on-Tees: Memorial to Lewis Carroll (his father was rector) and the 17thC Mill-banke raised pew.

Coxwold: St Michael: an unusual 'V' shaped communion rail.

Appleton-le Moors: Christ Church: Built 1865 with lots of colourful decoration.

Helporthorpe: St Peter: Built 1875: Lots of vibrant and colourful painting

Scarborough: St Martin-on-the Hill: Built 1860. Lots of Pre-Raphaelite painting including work by Morris, Rossetti and Burne-Jones.



Medieval Wall Painting at Pickering

Of course you'll find much more than these listed 'treasures' at the above churches but, as treasures go, they're a pretty varied bunch. So if you're in the area – why not pop in? You could be amazed.

Royal Christmas

Colin Alderson reminded us how the little boy walking to school in Arkengarthdale rose to become head pastry chef in the royal household. His grandfather kept sheep next to the Tan Hill pub and lost all but two of them in the big freeze of 1947. His father too kept sheep and when, later, Colin was making his way in the world, he would take his hat off when he got a call from Buckingham Palace.

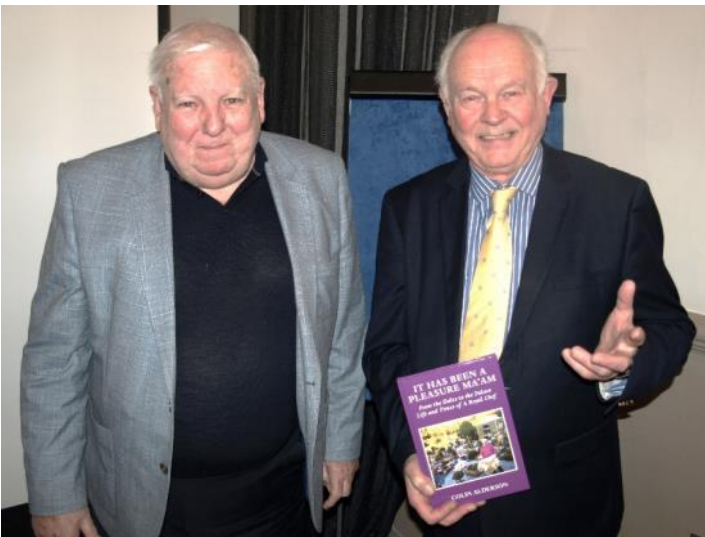
Colin's first job was at Bolton Castle in Wensleydale. Having answered an advert and been called for interview, he soon found himself with a ten minute walk to work as he negotiated the Palace labyrinth. Weekends took him to Windsor where boiled eggs could only be made by Miss Smith and he found taking Her Majesty her afternoon tea required a fifteen minute hike. Summer meant Balmoral where the servants' annual outing led them to a local distillery but a rowdy return one year meant the treat was henceforth reduced to afternoon tea.

But Christmas – Christmas meant Sandringham. All the kitchen staff got a 2lb Christmas Pud from Harrods. The housemaids received two cups, two saucers and two plates on the basis that if they wanted the full set they would need to remain in royal service for a few more years.



We learned lots of gossipy secrets. Charles bought Anne a new doormat; she bought him a leather toilet seat. The kitchen had no fridges so one was specially imported for Christmas. There were lots of sumptuous seasonal recipes and pictures to match. Everyone attended the film show at night. Her Majesty was a hearty eater but preferred plain food. Lamb was a particular favourite.

The Sandringham extravaganza lasted for six weeks. Guests were weighed on arrival and departure to gauge the effects of royal hospitality. To judge by what we saw, the scales will have gone in one direction only. It was indeed fascinating to contemplate our late monarch celebrating the festive season in some style. But then we all push the boat out at Christmas, eat and drink more than we should and try to ignore the cost. Colin brought it all home to us in glorious detail – even the ten chefs a-cheffing.



Colin (plus his book) with President Bill

THE BRIGAND

Book Club - The Siege

The Siege in question is that of Leningrad which began in September 1941 and was finally lifted in January 1944. It resulted in the deaths of 1.5 million people and has become a byword for the horrors of modern warfare. But Helen Dunmore's book does not attempt to give a historical account. Rather it is a re-imagining of a Leningrad winter through the eyes of five characters whose lives change from relative prosperity to a grim fight against starvation and the fierce cold.

The main character is Anna, her small brother Kolya, their father Mikhail and two outsiders, Marina who has had an affair with Mikhail and still loves him and Andrei, a medic who falls in love with Anna. So the story is seen not only as a slice of harrowing history (and Dunmore has done her research) but as a human drama in which people in a complex set of relationships try to live their lives and survive. The details are horrific – unburied bodies in the snow and river, the effects of starvation on the human body, the depths to which people can sink in an effort to cling to life, the measuring out of minute quantities of food.



Booker judges get in a bit of practice

And yet there is hope. People do help one another. Family ties reveal remarkable self-denial. Love can flourish in this most unlikely of places. Rather than give a straightforward narrative Dunmore continually alters her perspective from an overall view of events, to the authorities who have to try to manage the situation, to the fight for food and fuel and to the relationships between the characters.

We agreed it wasn't an easy read but that within the relatively narrow compass of three hundred pages the author has managed to give a gripping account of life at the extremes of survival. Most of us gave it high marks both for the quality of the writing and the construction of the story. There's lots in it that is positive and it is, ultimately, a tale about the triumph of the human spirit and the sheer will to survive.

Resurrected Bites

Michelle Hayes, Founder and CEO of Resurrected Bites came up with some stark stats when she spoke to us in January. 30% of the UK's food goes to waste. The biggest source of greenhouse gasses after China and the US is food waste. In Harrogate and District one in five children lives in poverty. That means more than 5,700 children are growing up in a household that may not be able to afford enough to eat. Since 2020 Resurrected Bites has assisted 15,750 people with between three and seven days' worth of food. Every week it diverts three tonnes of food waste from landfill.

Resurrected Bites tries to bridge the gap between food waste and starvation and it does it via 'give as you can' cafés and shops at Gracious St Methodist Church, Knaresborough, at New Park in Harrogate and in Killinghall. Its aims are simple: to prevent good quality food going to landfill, to tackle food poverty, to address loneliness and isolation and to raise money for charities. The food is sourced from 66 collection points every week. These include supermarkets, cafés and hotels. And it isn't just food that's provided; toiletries, cleaning products and a host of other household items are available. The principle is that you pay what you can afford. The cafés serve delicious meals (see the website for menus) and the shops actually feel like shops with goods on shelves and baskets to take round.



But amid all the success there are challenges. To achieve charitable status would bring all kinds of financial benefits but the Charity Commissioners have rejected repeated applications. Food supplies have dropped as shops themselves do more about food waste and at the same time fund raising is a never-ending grind. Michelle herself wishes the whole enterprise could be more financially sustainable. There is a permanent budget shortfall to be made up through grants and donations. At the moment Resurrected Bites can look no further than six months ahead in terms of its running costs.

Our strapline is 'Making a Difference'. Perhaps we could make a difference for Resurrected Bites. After all, they do it for lots of other people most days.

Michele Hayes, CEO Resurrected Bites

RYLA 2024

Interviews have now taken place and the two Brigantes students for 2024 will be Harry Maguire (Ashville College) and Robert Kidd (St Aidan's CofE School)

Therapy from a Man's Best Friend

On a Tuesday in February Brigantes and guests were treated to a talk by Carmel Wake, a Paul Harris Fellow and the long-time lynch-pin of Kids Aloud. But this time her subject was not music but dogs. She has six of them, including four food-hoovering labradors. One of these, an 11-year-old called Ciara, has become a therapy dog and Carmel explained both what the two of them do in their work for Therapy Dogs Nationwide and in broader terms the range of organisations and types of people the charity supports. The main purpose and ability of therapy dogs is to calm people down, make them feel better about themselves and their predicament and thus do them good.

Most of Carmel's and Ciara's work has been in schools helping children with learning and behavioural difficulties and has centred on a programme called 'Paws and Read' in which the child just reads to a dog. As a result something magical happens. Those who find reading difficult begin to gain confidence and find it easier.

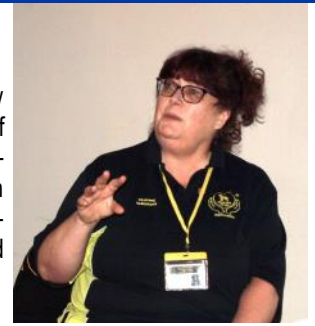


Ciara keeps tabs on Carmel and President Bill

And often they become convinced that the dog, which is reacting to them as they read, is actually understanding the story and the emotional connection that results helps the children to progress. Sometimes Carmel and Ciara dress up for special occasions. On the last World Book Day Ciara went to a session disguised as a Dalmatian and Carmel as Cruella de Vil.

More widely in the recent past Therapy Dogs Nationwide have provided services to the NHS (for hospital staff and patients and paramedics), for FA staff at St George's Park, for staff and inmates at prisons and for major companies such as Rolls Royce. Carmel spoke fluently and engagingly about her work and that of the charity. It was heartening to learn more about how man's best friend can help those in need by just being there. Placid dogs are what they want. And assessments are free. So, ask your pet if they'd be interested and then consider volunteering with them!

Guy Wilson



Carmel Wake PHF

Assisted Suicide – For Good or Ill

No one could be better qualified to talk about this than David Hoskins. For many years the Chaplain at Harrogate District Hospital, he has seen illness and death at the sharp end and took the controversial question of euthanasia head-on.

He began with an individual, an elderly lady who said to him, "I want to die." "What," David challenged us, "do you say?" He spoke to her GP who said, "She doesn't mean it." But David makes no bones about it: "Staying alive can sometimes be very hard work. Who can blame someone who simply wants to give up the struggle?" Family members can try to cover their distress with false optimism but invariably the patient knows the truth about how ill they are. The greatest gift we can offer says David is "being there." Indeed that's the title of a book he commended.

The definition of euthanasia is "the taking of a life of a terminally ill person at their request when life has become intolerable, to be carried out by a doctor, often by injection and with the immediate family able to attend." The legal position of course is that, despite assisted suicide being legal in many countries, it remains illegal in the UK, punishable with up to forty years in prison. Diana Rigg spoke up for it before she died; Esther Rantzen has recently said she wants the option; Carol Vorderman has said she would do it. It is a topic guaranteed always to produce a lively debate.

There are, of course moral arguments about the sanctity of life – the kind of opinions often expressed about the related topic of abortion. Then there are considerations about how it might be misused. Hastening death is not unknown, especially when unscrupulous people might be faced with care home costs. If ever it is legalised in this country it must be accompanied by all necessary safeguards.

David also provided chaplaincy services for some time at St Michael's in Harrogate and spoke warmly about the debt we owe to the hospice movement. These are places where people can come to the end of their life peacefully and usually pain-free. They could, for some, be seen to represent an alternative to euthanasia.

He ended by reading a chapter from Richard Osman's latest book 'The Last Devil to Die' in which the terminally ill Stephen, who has opted to inject himself with a life-ending drug, shares his final moments with his wife Elizabeth. It is a sensitive depiction of the ultimate farewell conversation, calm and honest.

Thanks to David who used his unique experience to give us a balanced and at times moving account of one of the great moral issues of our time.



Technology Tournament

Launching a space capsule and ensuring it parachutes successfully into a target area might sound a tall order at the best of times. But coming to it cold, understanding what needs to be done, working out how to use the materials provided, then making and testing it all in the space of a few hours was the challenge facing students from seven local schools in 29 teams in the 2024 Harrogate Rotary Technology Tournament at St Aidan's C of E School.

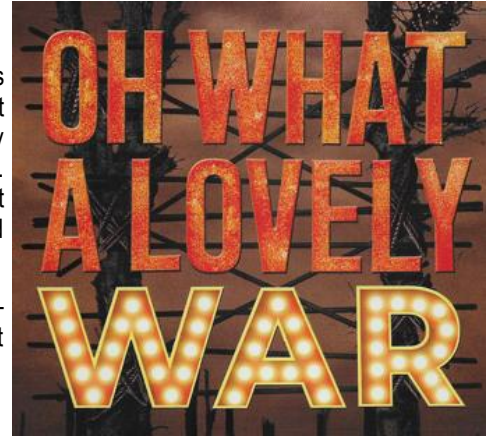
The winners at Foundation Level were Rossett School, at Intermediate Level Harrogate Grammar School and at Advanced Level St Aidan's C of E School. The awards were presented by Harrogate RC President Mervyn Darby and Bill O'Rourke, President of Brigantes gave a vote of thanks.



Oh What A Lovely War

It's sixty years since Joan Littlewood wrote and produced 'Oh What A Lovely War'. With its combination of slapstick humour, serious satire and genuine pathos it turned the spotlight on WW1 at a time when WW2 was still recent history and the Cuban Missile Crisis very recent. Nevertheless it remains as fresh and relevant as when it was first produced in 1963. The Blackeyed Theatre Company gave an energetic, compelling and skilful performance at the sold-out Harrogate Theatre where almost thirty seats were occupied by Brigades and partners.

It was a wonderful night out and it is always a pleasure to meet fellow Brigands on unfamiliar territory and to dispel the rumour that we're all locked up in a cupboard at the Crown at 10.00pm on a Tuesday. Many thanks to Moya who organised the evening.



In2Out

Eleven years ago Terry Wilcox was looking for a new job opportunity after leaving the IT industry. By chance, he was asked if he would give a talk at Wetherby Young Offenders (15-18 year olds) Institute. The objective of the talk was to give the detainees a vision of what a normal life, on the outside, could be like. The response to that talk by one particular young man, Zane, completely changed Terry's views on what these offenders required to prevent them returning to crime when they were released.

To that end he started the charity In2Out 10 years ago. It's objective was to try and prevent offenders returning to crime when they were released. In 2013 that number was 65%; today it is 25%. Of the inmates at Wetherby 71% have mental health issues and 66% have special educational needs. Offenders come from both good and bad backgrounds, but most are from broken homes and have never experienced a normal family upbringing. In2Out runs a mentoring programme beginning three months before release and continuing for twelve months and beyond post-release to help these young people get into and adapt to a normal life. In2Out is an NGO working hand in hand with all sectors of the criminal justice system. It has charitable status and is looking to expand its operations to the other three institutions for young offenders in the UK, to see if it can replicate its achievements at Wetherby. With violent crime rising from 20% to 60% over the last ten years and the cost of keeping an inmate currently at £180K a year the work that In2Out is doing is essential and well worth supporting.



Terry with President Bill

David Cresswell

Book Club - A House Unlocked

The house is Golsoncott an ample country residence in Somerset. The writer is Booker Prize-winning novelist Penelope Lively whose formidable grandmother ran the house without fully appreciating that things had moved on from the 1920s. The unlocking concerns items such as the hall chest, the gong stand, a Cedar of Lebanon tree, the knife rests and so on. Each evokes a particular memory which in turn leads to more general themes such as the history of Somerset, wartime evacuees, garden design and education.

These seemingly random subjects give Penelope Lively an opportunity to show what a superb writer she is. "A welter of dog leads", "sumptuously swollen leg-of-mutton sleeves", the railway which "threw out tentacles to net the whole peninsula" are from the first few pages. And she enjoys her characters, the grandmother, the rebellious artistic Aunt Rachel, the Russian Mary Britnieva, the refugee Otto Kun. She has an eye for detail. Each has a story and Lively revels in telling it.

There are downsides. She can seem patronising, even dated, in some opinions. She likes to give plants their Latin names while sniffily dismissing the humble daffodil and forsythia. She has to admit that "plenty of villas and terraced houses" lack a kitchen wing, or that the prospect of sending a child to a state school can be "alarming". But this is of a piece with her curious childhood spent in Egypt and her translation as an **older** child to the eccentric comforts and delights of Golsoncott.

The world she evokes is now gone though Golsoncott itself remains; indeed, as one of our eagle-eyed members ascertained, it is currently for sale. 'A House Unlocked' is a book of great charm though with the occasional capacity to irritate. It demonstrates that, although the country house with its vast garden and host of servants is a thing of the past, it carried with it a warmth, a humanity and an elegance which is worth celebrating.



Job done, the critics can relax

THE BRIGAND

Coppice Valley

Coppice Valley school in Harrogate is a single-entry primary with 209 pupils with a lot going for it. As Headteacher Hannah McNamara and Pupil and Family Support Worker Samantha Wright pointed out, it is a hub for its local community and it also has the largest grounds of any primary school in the town.

It focuses on two community roles. The first involves educating children in sustainability and the second is about supporting the community in accessing resources. It runs a variety of projects including passing on previously-loved school uniform, using slow cookers, creating a community allotment and encouraging healthy lifestyles.

It's also looking to extend its facilities by creating a Sensory Garden and becoming an accredited Forest School. But what it really wants is a tree-hung canopy over a wooden room which will provide an immersive, hands-on experience, foster community engagement, promote sustainability and support the delivery of workshops. At £6,000 it doesn't come cheap but who knows . . . we may be able to help there.



Harrogate BID

You may be like me. I knew about Harrogate Business Improvement District. I'd heard about it and read about it without really knowing what the BID did. Now, thanks to BID Manager Matthew Chapman I know a lot more.

BIDS have been around since the 1970s, first in Canada and subsequently replicated round the world. Harrogate was quite late on the scene, just one year into its second term. They are not-for-profit organisations which are committed to adding additionality (a key word) on top of what councils do. In Harrogate there are 499 members and the BID is funded by a 1.75% levy on businesses' rateable value. In the current year that has yielded £484k.

Matthew told us that the Harrogate BID has three objectives, Pride in our Town, A Vibrant Town, and Voice and Vision. The pride involves employing a street ranger, dressing the streets with floral displays and bunting, creating street art and a host of other things to make Harrogate look good. The Vibrant Town initiative creates, for instance, the Christmas lights and other seasonal attractions, arts and music events and celebrates lots of partnerships to showcase the town such as the dog show and the Spring Flower Show. Finally the Voice and Vision objective helps to provide free parking and public transport at difficult times, international work experience schemes and the Harrogate Gift card scheme to which over 100 businesses have signed up.

Matthew is under no illusions. "We have to deliver our business plan," he says. He knows that if the BID doesn't make a difference, businesses won't want to pay. Judging by his energy and the multitude of ways the BID clearly does make a difference there's not much danger of that. In fact we'd all miss it if it wasn't there.



Matthew warms to his task



The BID Business Plan (with Mike, Matthew and Bill)

Bowls Evening

Brigantes enjoyed the customary hospitality of the Harrogate Bowling Club on a fine May evening. Unbiased bowling was kept to a minimum and although the press weren't allowed to take photos of members in compromising positions, it is rumoured the evening was successfully rounded off with the customary fish and chip supper.

Harrogate Chamber of Commerce

Brigantes is now a member of the Harrogate Chamber, thanks to Charlotte, who has enabled us to join for a year on a trial basis. Your editor went along to the May meeting where I was able to meet members, including some of our friends from local charities, and speak about the legacy and the website. Membership enables us to have a presence within the local business community which not only publicises our activities but might even lead to us attracting some new members

Wishing Well

David Read reported that the May emptying of the Wishing Well yielded £404. Thanks to all our contributors

Hand in Hand in Gaza



Les Bown revisits Brigantes

A lot has happened since Les Bown last spoke to us about 'Hand in Hand in Gaza' in November 2022. Les, you may recall, is a former Rotarian who now doesn't belong to a club but who works for the Rotary Hub and here he was again, talking to us in April 2024. He reprised what he had told us last time, how, starting in 2020, following a speech by Rotary Peace Fellow Nabila Al Zaeem about what was happening to her home in Gaza, he had worked with the Gazan Youth Council and had raised money through a crowdfunding appeal to provide PPE (this was during Covid) and food. An early problem was how to enable the money to get through to where it was needed, but once that was sorted two Yorkshire clubs, Hebden Bridge and Harrogate Brigantes, each gave £500. Indeed Les was able to show us a picture of the food supplies our aid had provided (name attached) and another of people actually picking it up and putting it in their bags.

Since then Les and his colleagues have moved to a more sustainable programme by engaging with Rotary District 2452, which embraces nine Middle east countries and with the Rotary Club of Ramallah, which is working with the group in Gaza. These links were being finalised when the world changed in October 2023.

Les steers resolutely clear of opinions about the Middle East but is clear about one thing: a lot of people in Gaza need help. He would like to develop a Rotary Community Corps in Gaza but the problem is that there are no Rotary Clubs there. However he has been able to source help from Ramallah via the Bank of Palestine and Palestinian Rotary Clubs. The biggest current challenge is in Rafah which formerly had a population of 300,000 and where there are now 1.3m people. De-

spite the fact that that politics makes working within the situation difficult, Les has had support from RIBI in trying to ensure that money is not used for the wrong things and that help gets to the people who need it most. He deserves the support of all of us.

Last word from Nabila:

"Rotary's donations give us an opportunity to help those who are the most affected, whose voices have not been heard, who otherwise would not survive cold, starvation and homelessness."

End Polio Now

Malcolm Tagg from Denby Dale RC has spoken to us before about Rotary's long campaign to eradicate polio. He admitted it always seems to be the same message – "We're almost there" – only for this horrific disease to spring up again. This time he says it with some justification. It is now reckoned to be endemic in only two countries, Pakistan and Afghanistan, and currently there are just four cases, two in each. A country must be free of polio for two years for it to be declared clear.

Polio has a long and infamous history. Malcolm was able to show us an Egyptian painting of a man with a stick and a withered leg and we can all recall from our early days children in calipers. It's actually a type of meningitis which begins, usually in children under five, with flu-like symptoms. These pass after a few days and for some that's the end of the matter. But with others the infection becomes more serious and the worst symptom is paralysis. Transmission is via water systems and, like Covid, it can be transmitted by people who are a-symptomatic. It can be prevented but not cured.

The traditional way of coping with serious infection was via an 'iron lung'. A person would have to spend a significant proportion of time encased in one of these machines but it didn't mean the end of an active life. Indeed Malcolm told the story of one man who had to use one from 1952 until his death in 2022 but seemed to be able to travel and do all sorts of challenging things in the intervals between treatments.

Rotary started to get involved in 1988 when there were 350,000 cases in 125 countries, so we've come a long way since then. One problem with treatment is that the vaccine needs to be refrigerated. Nevertheless it is estimated that it has prevented 19m cases of paralysis, the result of 400m children being vaccinated every year. Rotary money is currently being used to develop the vaccine as a patch which is particularly useful in countries where people are very suspicious of injected vaccines. And the new vaccine doesn't actually contain any polio. It simulates its qualities and the research which led to its development was conducted at Leeds University.



Malcolm with President Bill

So, as Malcolm said, 'End Polio Now' has a particularly local flavour. It seems only a matter of time before it is eradicated – fingers crossed we aren't saying the same in ten years' time. And when that great day comes it'll be a source of enormous pride for Rotary worldwide.

The Happy Wanderers

In the late 1950s a group of friends in Harrogate decided to form an entertainment group and give concerts in the area. They always opened with 'The Happy Wanderer', complete with its "Fal da ree, fal da raa" refrain and so they became known as 'The Happy Wanderers'. As they went round they noticed there was a gap in the provision of transport for disabled and older people for whom they often performed. So they bought and adapted an ambulance and became 'The Happy Wanderers Ambulance Association'. Today they have two minibuses, they take people on outings, to local attractions, on shopping expeditions and trips to the seaside and to church. And they don't charge.

We know all this because Les Sudron, proud native of Starbeck and Harrogate and HW Chairman gave us a talk about what the charity does. In the last year it has done 233 journeys (average length 36 miles), covered over 8,000 miles, made 91 wheelchair passenger trips and 1541 individual passenger trips. It has supported over 30 charities. It has acted as a wedding limousine and taken a group of nuns on an outing.



Les Sudron, Chairman of the Happy Wanderers

Now it is appealing for the £54,000 needed to replace its 10-seater bus. As an organisation run by volunteers and which depends entirely on voluntary contributions from donors and supporters and which exists to serve the local community, it relies on that community for support. So Les came along not only to tell us about what the Happy Wanderers can do for us but also to suggest what we might be able to do for them.

My Royal Connections

We've gone all regal! Hot on the heels of Colin Alderson who cooked for the late Queen, we welcomed Rev Tony Shepherd who was one of her Chaplains.

Tony was quick to point out that there are two groups within the (very large) Royal Household. The first has all the toffs (élite education, ex-forces, large and good looking) and the rest are honorary and comprise a collection of Gilbert and Sullivan titles such as the Queen's Sword-Bearer and the Clerk to the Queen's Closet. Moreover there are 36 chaplains so duties aren't too onerous. The first Tony knew about it was when a letter arrived from the Royal Chamberlain asking if he would be willing, should the royal invitation be forthcoming, to be a chaplain. (You aren't allowed to say "No" to HM.) "Yes", he said and was spirited off to Newcastle to be fitted for a magnificent red cassock which he duly wore for us (though which, lamentably, your editor omitted to photograph) as well as preaching tabs. The cassock was paid for from the royal exchequer but he had to fork out for the tabs, which he admitted were on the short side.



A great moment: Tony is appointed Queen's Chaplain

So what did the job entail? Well, he had to preach in the Royal Chapel at St James' Palace though in the eleven years he did so, not once did HM show up. He always had two sermons ready, one if she did and one if she didn't. February 6th was an important day in the royal calendar, being the date of the Queen's accession in 1952. The Diamond Jubilee was especially important so all the gold came out and there were fanfares and a herald and a scroll. Apparently the royals love a good scroll. After lunch another scroll was produced which the dignitaries had to queue up to sign. So long was the queue that a couple of Japanese tourists joined it and ended up adding their signatures to the scroll without understanding what on earth was going on.

Then there were the Buckingham Palace garden parties. Should you be fortunate enough to be issued with a red ticket, you could have tea with the Queen. Well, not exactly with; more in the same area though separated from the royal presence by a rope. However on one such occasion Tony was standing with the Nepalese ambassador when the Duke

of Edinburgh wandered across for a chat. Pleasantries were exchanged and the Duke departed. The Nepalese ambassador was at a loss for words. "Who was that?" he asked.

Two jokes from Tony which you might just have heard before:

- Guest's phone rings just as he/she is being presented to the Queen. Queen: "Don't you think you should answer that? It might be someone important."
- Tommy Cooper (forgetting it's the Queen who should initiate conversations): "Can I ask you a personal question Ma'am?"
Queen (A bit nonplussed) "You can ask me the question but I can't guarantee you a full answer."
TC: "Do you like football Ma'am?"
Queen: "No"
TC: "Can I have your Cup Final Tickets?"

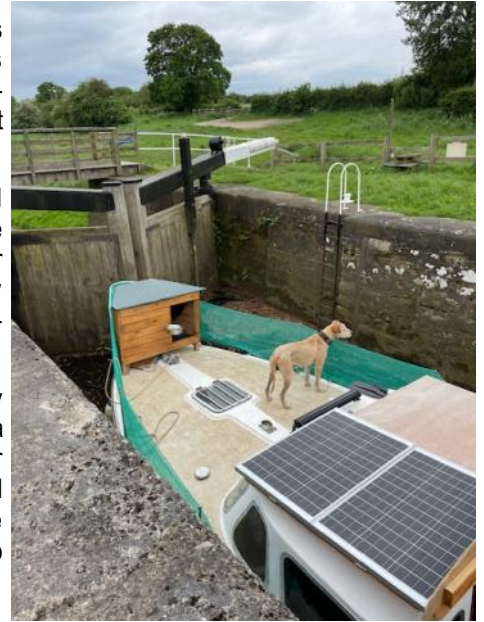
Roecliffe to Littlethorpe

This was a straight walk along the banks of the Ure. That it required complicated instructions went with the territory, given that it needed a car at either end. Indeed John Wood, who was going to meet us halfway was convinced he too should be walking from Roecliffe to Littlethorpe, which would have resulted in him following rather than meeting us – if you see what I mean. So he had to walk from Littlethorpe to Roecliffe. Got it?

As Guy said, the instructions were more complicated than the walk which was a delightful saunter through fields and woodland amid dappled sunshine. Only after we'd started did he reveal he had an ulterior motive. He had with him a wartime photo of soldiers training on a river crossing "near Ripon". It was our job to identify the straight stretch of water from the blurry details. The short story is that we didn't. The long story is that we had great fun trying to, visualising the riverbank minus eighty years' vegetation and finding a place for that large chimney.

A text message at coffee time revealed that John was sitting on the bank opposite Newby Hall's railway. Having collected him – and it was good to see him in fine form – we found a convenient lunchtime bench next to a lock. And, lo and behold, entertainment was laid on for us courtesy of a boat encountering it. The occupants, one man and a dog, seemed well used to canal life but might have been stranded there had John not lent his weight to help open one of the lock gates. It was a compact little vessel, with a kennel on the prow and an owner who was happy to let providence take him where it willed.

We made a successful landfall at Roecliffe (or was it Littlethorpe?) up the only hill of the day and via some teenagers besporting themselves in the river. It was a great walk on a fine May day. Thanks Guy – and we might persuade a few more out with us next time.



Small Dog on Boat



Two guys with . . .two Guys!

All that Jazz.

If you did not know it before you know it now. Peter Wood has a great passion for jazz. It teemed out of every part of him, heart and mind. His talk to the club, "All that Jazz" was a revelation. He is so much in love with jazz that he could not help himself breaking into song time and again. "I love the sheer joy of it," he said, and we felt that joy.

We learned about spontaneous improvisation, key changes, and rhythm. He played ten tracks to illustrate jazz in all its rich variety. Ken Colyer began it followed by Louis Armstrong (Satchelmouth ergo Satchmo) who Peter thinks is the greatest of all because he made jazz what it became. Peter says the piano is his most loved jazz instrument (which he also plays very well himself). We heard Billie Holiday, Lester Young, Chris Barber, Miles Davis and a several others who sprinkled the evening with joy and rich variety. Peter said, "You cannot play jazz quietly". "Recorded jazz has been around since 1917," said Peter. "Ironically the first record was by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, a white band playing what was, in essence, black music."

I came to the evening a sceptic; I did not 'get' jazz. And while I cannot say I had a Damascene conversion into an instant jazz lover I can say that my mind and spirit were opened to appreciate and understand more clearly what jazz is all about and for that I will always be thankful to Peter, and I do not think I was alone in that.

David Hoskins.



Charter Night

With partners in attendance, the Rotary great and good assembled, delightful food courtesy of Oakdale Golf Club and guest speaker Sir Thomas Ingleby on the perils of living in a castle, Charter Night 2024 was memorable. Five members, Jean Grainger, Bob Tunnicliffe, Ian Bainbridge, Graham Chilvers and Peter Wood were given awards. President Bill and District Governor David Phillips gave a Rotary perspective and MC Tony Doveston ensured everything progressed smoothly. A great evening!



Photos by Charlotte Gale

“Doing Right in Wrong Times”

That was Jan Jauncy's theme as she took us through the story of her involvement with the tiny French village of Montcony. It was a story with lots of threads – her move to Linton-on-Ouse, the children of Easingwold School visiting Dijon, her visit to Burgundy with her husband to collect some wine and her first view of a Montcony ceremony where there were over 200 people, a band playing the English national anthem and then everyone standing in silence.

It took Jan a while to unravel the full story of what was going on. This was an event held annually since 1945 but its origin was what happened on 23rd October 1942 when a Halifax bomber en route to bomb Genoa docks was shot down, narrowly missed the local chateau and ploughed into a road. The crew of six British and two Canadian airmen were killed. In spite of German instructions not to interfere with the wreckage, villagers removed pieces of the plane, made coffins and gave the crew a proper funeral. They also placed flowers where they had died. It was a silent act of resistance. There were the inevitable reprisals. The school was closed and searches took place for the plane parts and for photos which had been taken. It was 18 months before the airmen's relatives were told they had died.



Jan with President Bill and the Montcony exhibition

Then things began to come together. The plane had taken off from Linton-on Ouse so there was an immediate connection. The ceremony Jan and her husband had witnessed was an annual commemoration of what had happened and the memorial at its centre was on the spot where the plane had come down. They learned of the photos and plane parts being wrapped in cloth and hidden in a well and of a local resistance group which was formed and which helped to enable many airmen to escape via Switzerland. There were exchange visits. French families from Montcony visited Linton and drove down the runway from which the Halifax had taken off. Some were in tears. They brought with them part of the engine casing from the doomed plane, returning it as an act of homage.

It was a wonderful story, poignant and inspiring and it was enhanced by a comprehensive display of photos and other memorabilia which brought the sequence of events to life. It was, as Jan concluded, a memorable tale of “doing right in wrong times”.

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Shakespeare's Restless World

There have been many memorable evenings at the Book Club but none more so than in May when a bladed weapon was produced. While there have been strong disagreements about books in the past, none has yet descended into physical violence. Fortunately it was averted on this occasion.

Our book was 'Shakespeare's Restless World' by Neil MacGregor, a follow-up to his 'A History of the World in 100 Objects', published in 2013 and 2010 respectively and much imitated but not surpassed since then. The 'Restless World' is essentially a selective history of Shakespeare's time, refracted through the prism of his plays. MacGregor is well-placed to select his twenty appropriate objects, having been a former Director of the National Gallery and the British Museum. Thus, for instance, Sir Francis Drake's Circumnavigational Medal from the British Museum illustrates the Elizabethan voyages of exploration and leads to quotations from plays as disparate as 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', 'The Comedy of Errors' and 'The Merry Wives of Windsor'. Similarly a striking clock, also from the British Museum, leads us into how Shakespeare's audiences knew the time (the concept of minutes was a novel one) and on into 'Richard II', 'Loves Labour's Lost', 'The Winter's Tale', 'Twelfth Night' and 'Julius Caesar'. The most gruesome relic is the right eye of the unfortunate Blessed Edward Oldcome, a Jesuit caught up in the aftermath of the Gunpowder Plot and subsequently hanged, drawn and quartered. The eye, mounted in silver and “a bit like shrivelled prune” is the property of Stonyhurst College and leads us inevitably to the horrendous blinding of Gloucester in 'King Lear'.

The book is both entertaining and informative. It started life as a Radio4 series and it does read a bit like a radio script, with each chapter an episode. But that does not detract from the quality of the scholarship and the writing. It is a popular history of the time but, more than that, it gives us a window into Shakespeare's world through the medium of his plays.

And the weapon? Not content simply to contest MacGregor's assertion that “the standard dagger that every man carried was as much a piece of cutlery as it was a weapon,” Guy proved his point by producing a model of said dagger and mighty fearsome it was. It was much too large for a piece of cutlery (unless you wanted to impale your neighbour). The trick, as Guy demonstrated, was to carry a small knife in the sheath.

North Yorkshire police are investigating.



Not a dagger to be seen

"Two Eskimos sitting in a kayak were chilly; but when they lit a fire in the craft, it sank, proving once and for all that you can't have your kayak and heat it too."

Tommy Cooper

Being a little older, I am very fortunate to have someone call and check on me everyday. He is from India and is very concerned about my car warranty.

My wife and I decided never to go to bed angry. We've been awake since Friday.



When Lord Nelson died he was 5 feet tall. His statue in London is 15 feet tall. That's Horatio of 3:1.

**OMG, I'm rich!
Silver in the hair,
Gold in the teeth,
Crystals in the kidney,
Sugar in the blood,
Lead in the butt,
Iron in the arteries,
and an inexhaustible
supply of natural gas!**

I never thought I would accumulate such wealth!

A Senior's Version of FACEBOOK

For those of my generation who do not, and cannot, comprehend why Facebook exists: I am trying to make friends outside of Facebook while applying the same principles. Therefore, every day I walk down the street and tell passers-by what I have eaten, how I feel at the moment, what I have done the night before, what I will do later and with whom. I give them pictures of my family, my dog and of me gardening, taking things apart in the garage, watering the lawn, standing in front of landmarks, driving around town, having lunch, and doing what anybody and everybody does every day. I also listen to their conversations, give them "thumbs up" and tell them I "like" them. And it works just like Facebook. I already have 4 people following me: 2 police officers, a private investigator and a psychiatrist

