

THE BRIGAND



Editor : Peter Wood

Issue 132 August 2022

Publisher: Graham Chilvers



Editorial

If it seems quite a while since the last Brigand, that's because it probably is. To be fair, we haven't been turning away fans demanding advance copies of the next issue but we have been quietly squirrelling away reports and pictures of our various Brigantes activities with a view to them hitting the air waves when you least expect them. Like now.

So here we are with another bumper edition. Much of it reports on our Tuesday speakers and what is remarkable is not only their variety – from Knaresborough to Iran and medieval glass to the Titanic – but their high quality. What has also made Tuesdays so attractive has been the Crown's excellent food, a far cry from John Mordue's innocent enquiry of yesteryear as to when the chef was due back from his holidays. The current holder of that office deserves nothing but praise and thanks.

The new Rotary year finds Brigantes in good heart. Active membership is down slightly at 28 and our age profile is up slightly – certainly to more than 28. Two significant birthdays have already helped to lubricate members and rumour has it that at least one more is on the cards before the year is out. Of course you wouldn't guess it from all we do, including our regular cafés at St Peter's and the Wesley Centre and preparing for Kids Aloud 2023. Pride of place however must go to our Charity Dinner and Auction held in June at the Cedar Court. It was a wonderful evening which made over £5,000 to assist Ukrainian refugees but was marred by the untimely death only a week later of our guest speaker, former Look North presenter Harry Gratton, whose family and friends have our deepest sympathy.

Brigantes continue to enjoy each other's company and our Walking, Golf and Book Club groups meet regularly courtesy of, respectively, our wonderful countryside, Spofforth golf course and the hospitality of Oakdale Golf Club, while we shall soon be taking once again to the immaculate greensward of Harrogate Bowling Club.

As ever, we are on the hunt for new members and partner groups. Currently we are working with staff and students of Ashville College on various projects including RYLA and tree planting and with fourteen primary schools in the lead-up to Kids Aloud. We're also planning a new website and new publicity material so there are plenty of exciting developments in the pipeline.

The Secretarial baton has now passed from Ruth, to whom many thanks, to Moya, to whom our best wishes. In the meantime although President Les has been in post for several months, this is the start of a new Rotary year so we wish him all the best for his remaining twelve months in office. The Rotary regalia must seem small beer after the Mayoral chain.

Peter Wood

Ray Kidd turns 90



I visited RAY KIDD, a Founder and Honorary Member of Harrogate Brigantes, at his home on 4th August to celebrate his 90th Birthday.

Ray is bright and retains his sense of humour but is frail and sadly has lost his sight.

His three daughters are caring for him with District Nurse support.

He sends the Club his Good Wishes.

Thank you

Alisdair Stewart (Founder and Honorary Member)

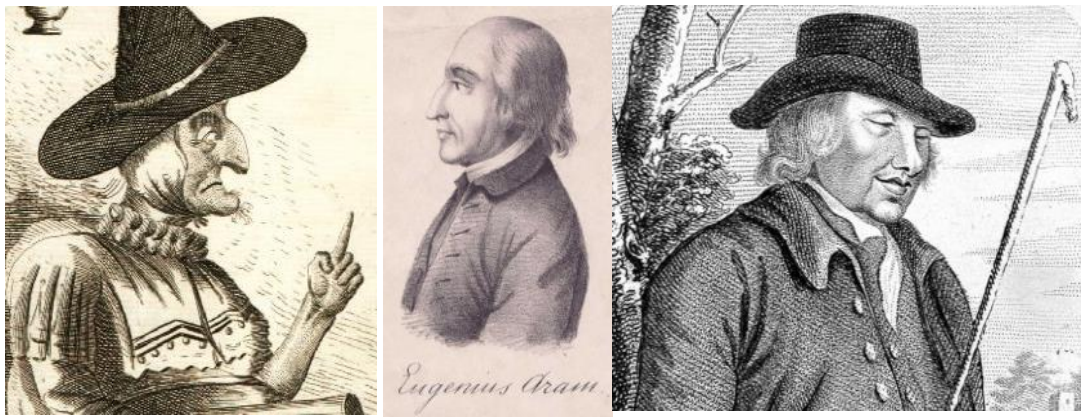
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Knarborough Characters

Knarborough may not be a big town but it has a long history. Hence, if you go far enough back it has its fair share of 'characters'. Brian Foreshaw kept producing them like a magician from a hat and, having entertained us for the thick end of an hour, reckoned he had another fifty in his repertoire. Given that his first was back with King John, he gave himself plenty of scope.

In the Sellars and Yeatman version of history John is 'a bad king'. Nevertheless he apparently began the tradition of the monarch giving Maundy Money – at Knarborough, of course, having just forked out £1290 for his magnificent stone castle atop the cliff. And he was given his come-uppance by St Robert, who, refusing to rise from his prayers in the royal presence, held a head of wheat and asked in all innocence, "Is your power such, my Lord King, that you can make this out of nothing?" Game, set and match to St Robert, who also figured in Brian's pantheon of heroes.

Royalty was prominent. Edward 1st improved the castle. Edward 2nd improved it further for his 'favourite', as Brian decorously put it, and John of Gaunt allied it to the Duchy of Lancaster. Things also stirred among the low life. Mother Shipton, famous for her posthumous prophesies, warned that the world would end in 1881. It didn't and the prophecy has been updated every year since. Eugene Aram, schoolmaster, allegedly murdered Daniel Clark and when a body was discovered at St Robert's cave, it was said to be that of Clark. Though modern opinion doubts it, on such slim evidence poor old Aram was hauled off to York Assizes and hanged.



Three characters – Mother Shipton, Eugene Aram and 'Blind Jack'

The Slingsbys were a great local family for centuries. They have their own memorial chapel in St John's church and Brian told the tale of Sir Charles who, in 1869 was drowned in the Ure while out hunting. No less famous was 'Blind Jack' Metcalf whose assorted skills include playing the fiddle, running a carriage business, road-building and running off with the daughter of the Granby Hotel owner on the eve of her wedding. A modern much-celebrated son of Knarborough was Philip Inman who was a noted philanthropist and who rose from humble beginnings to become Lord Inman and Chairman of the BBC. His other claim to fame is that he was a relative of our own Peter.

At which point Brian signed off. But with another fifty to go, it may not be too long before he's back.

Homeyra Karimivahed

Homeyra – she introduced herself as Homi – is from Iran. She's the second of the Rotary Peace Fellows from Bradford University to talk to us in recent weeks and both have been absolutely fascinating.



Homi with President Les

Homi admits that, as an Iranian, she has three pretty big disadvantages. She's a Sunni Muslim, which is the minority population in that country. She's a Kurd and the Kurds are looked on with suspicion from Iran to Syria and Turkey as an ethnic group which seeks independence. Finally she's a woman, which can be a disadvantage in many Muslim countries. She's from the city of Sardasht which is in Northern Iran, close to the border with Iraq and that's where her story starts. During the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s Sardasht was targeted with chemical weapons of mass destruction. In fact Homi told us that it is the third most populous city in the world to have suffered from such weapons after Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The chemicals affected eyes and lungs. She told us of three women and how they were affected. Mehri, aged 17, was in hospital four times in the first year after the attacks and she lost her baby. Faride suffered serious burns and had no support from her family. Homi's Aunt suffered 80% burns and was left with only 25% lung capacity. Homi said that their suffering and that of others since has been made worse by the imposition of US sanctions and the consequent shortage of medical supplies.

In her talk and in answer to questions she played down the political aspect of the situation in Iran. Her focus was on people and on what she could do to help relieve their suffering and to speak up for peace. Perhaps wisely, she would not be drawn on the politics of war and peace. The sanctions, she said, don't hurt the government; her message is that they only hurt the people. She has three priorities. The first is to work to make a sustainable peace wherever there is war. The second is to work in this regard as an ambassador for peace. The third is to try to make the public more aware of the use of non-conventional weapons.

There were, of course, unanswered questions. Some would claim that the Iranian government have brought sanctions on themselves through, ironically, their nuclear programme. Some might also say that the same government has had a part in fomenting unrest in the Middle East. Understandably these were questions Homi didn't want to confront and from her perspective there was no reason why she should. In the final resort her nationality is irrelevant. Here is a young woman who has seen the worst of war and has dedicated herself to work for peace.

Would there were more like her.

A Yeoman's Course Round

The May walk was in Guy's back yard, so to speak. Always a highlight of the summer season, it was a pity so many walkers were spread around the world (well Ireland, Scotland and possibly Australia) or had other pressing matters. As it was, the Wood boys gathered round Guy's kitchen table for pre-walk cuppas. Then we were off along his lane, through Oulston and away in the direction of Crayke Castle which remained a dominant pre-lunch landmark.

The rolling Wolds countryside is perfect walking terrain and we were blessed with a fine day and dry ground. Given that there were only three of us, there was a minor route adjustment which led us to a fine seat with a view of the castle and which could accommodate three bottoms. Or so we thought. Part way through our sandwiches there was an ominous crack. Further examination revealed that the seat had previously been patched up and that under our combined weight it had given up the ghost. Guy made valiant efforts to stabilise it with stones but more radical surgery was clearly needed.

The return trip included the walk's one serious hill but that was offset by stunning bluebell woods and by the time we made it back to Yeoman's Course we were all a trifle peckish. Cue the Wilson summer tea with chocolate cake, oatcakes and repeated mugs of tea.

A fine day's walking – but if you're in the environs of Crayke, take care where you sit. Sorry officer. We're prepared to deny all knowledge of it.



Unconvincing stitch of the three walkers – and an equally poor re-run of the breakage

A Spring Saunter

You know when spring has really arrived: daffodils, lambs, bursting hedgerows, even an optimistic smudge of suntan cream. Our April walk had them all. The magnificent seven, including new signing David Hoskins and led by Graham and Jet, having squeezed onto the Leathley car park, set off up towards Riffa Wood and a few early bluebells. Here, along an ancient paved way, we encountered a carved stone. Was it an eye? Or a sheep? Or prehistoric? After all we were close to 'cup and ring' territory. Hereabouts we flirted with the idea of an early coffee but Graham drove us on further, across the stepping stones of Thrispin Beck and on to a grassy bank where we took our elevenses with a magnificent view across the Wharfe valley to Otley Chevin and Ilkley Moor.



Some of the ancient glories of Stainburn

Lunch was taken amid the graves of St Mary's, Stainburn. This delightful building, now in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust, was open. It's a gem. Much of it – font, chancel arch, roof beams, several windows – is Norman and there even a suggestion in the stonework of an earlier Saxon church. It is built with rough stone and whitewashed inside, which gives it a unique atmosphere. It was a memorable lunch stop.

Then it was on to the village of Braythorn from which, via various paths and holloways, we dropped down into the delectable Washburn valley, close to the original Emmerdale Farm location, and the trout farm at Lindley. The path, running alongside the river, produced the only crisis of the day, a face-off between a confused Jet and a curious cow. This was resolved in Jet's favour and, via a late detour which involved an unanticipated and not entirely appreciated bit of uphill, we returned to Leathley to find the village green getting its spring mow.

Hearing Dogs for the Deaf

Guide Dogs for the Blind – yes. But Hearing Dogs for the Deaf? What on earth can they do? Well quite a lot as it happens and fortunately Helena and Diane – and Clyde – were on hand to tell us.

The organisation itself is forty years old, having been announced at Crufts in 1982. It was inspired by Bruce Fogel (Ben's father) who had heard of something similar in America, 'The Hearing Ear'. It tries to address the hidden disability that is deafness. This can be much mocked because people who are profoundly deaf can appear rude or unintelligent when in fact they are simply cut off from sounds around them and are often lonely and withdrawn.

Once the dogs have completed their training they can act as a bridge between a deaf person and the world. When the general concept of 'Assistance Dogs' was accepted it meant a whole range of conditions could be mitigated by enabling properly trained and identifiable dogs to access areas normally closed to animals. Initially stray dogs were used but these were of varying suitability and once the best breeds had been identified only these – labradors, cocker spaniels and poodles – were used. Their training begins at eight weeks and they continue in service until they are eleven years old. Then they can still function and be kept on as pets but they lose their special status and their official coats.

Helena had brought her Labrador Clyde with her. Once he'd got used to the atmosphere and realised there were no treats to be had, he lay down and remained motionless throughout dinner. But when the talk began, his eyes never left Helena. She told us how he wakes her in the morning and how he will lead her to a ringing bell, be it door or phone. But above all he is her companion, he understands intuitively how she is feeling and can match what he does to suit her mood. He is the perfect companion and when, later this year, he loses his official status, she is in no doubt that she will keep him on even though she might get another 'official' dog.

There are many deaf people in our society and those who acquire a Hearing Dog are truly fortunate. As for Clyde, he kept raising his paw to Helena. "What does he want?" we asked. "Oh, just to play," she replied. Rotary meetings can be so boring when you're a Hearing Dog.



Clyde with Helena, Diane and President Les

Medieval Stained Glass in York

Medieval York had forty churches. Some are no more but many remain. Not all are still used as churches but all have one priceless asset: their stained glass. Paul Medforth shared with us the knowledge of a true enthusiast, not only explaining the meaning of some of the windows but the actual process of manufacture of stained glass. The molten glass was blown into a sphere, elongated into a cylinder and then cut and flattened. The colour was added with the use of metal oxides. Designs were drawn to scale and then manufactured accordingly.



Paul's favourite is All Saints, North Street which is built over Roman remains. The three windows he showed us comprise themes which are repeated elsewhere, the Resurrection, the Seven Acts of Mercy and the Pricke of Conscience which depicts in fifteen cheerful panels all the dreadful things which will happen at the end of the world.

Detail from All Saints

All these gave, of course, powerful messages to medieval viewers, many unable to read, who believed in the literal realities of heaven and hell.

Often it's the small details which are most fascinating. Tucked away in one window is a man wearing spectacles, a sign of wealth. In another John the Baptist is shown wearing a rough garment of camel skin and to prove the point, the camel's head is included as part of the footwear. The portrayal of the Resurrection is notable for the sleeping Roman soldiers, graphically depicted in a variety of somnolent postures. The element of creative fantasy doesn't stop at Biblical history. A window in St Michael le Belfry, opposite the Minster, makes all sorts of claims about the parents of Thomas a Becket, including that his father was a crusader and his mother a converted Muslim princess. As Paul pointed out, it's all nonsense, but since when did truth get in the way of a good story – or one which might have encouraged pilgrims?

There are other churches on Paul's itinerary – St Martins Coney Street, St Denis Walmgate and my own favourite, Holy Trinity Goodramgate. They're all fascinating buildings, part of the heritage of a wonderful city and it's our good fortune that they're on our doorstep. Hopefully Paul whetted our appetites to pop in to one of them when next we're in York and the good news is that he's preparing another talk which he shamelessly trailed and for which I'm sure we'll book him in.



Paul with Ruth and President-Elect Bill

Friday Golf

Every Friday morning Royal and Ancient Spofforth (Old Course) plays host to a group of young up-and-coming Brigantes golfers. When all are present there are eight of us but anno domini, indisposition, holidays and family intrusions can wreak havoc with our schedule so around half of that is our usual complement. Anyone wishing to join us will be most welcome and will almost certainly lower the average age and perhaps even the scores. Par is frequent enough to excite only mild congratulation and though birdie is virtually extinct, bogey and its larger progeny are all too commonplace. The main ingredients of our morning (nine holes only) are serious effort, controlled frustration and lots of laughter. Tea, coffee and a world put to rights are our reward.



LIV Golf couldn't afford them. When we remembered to take a photo, our Captain, David Crowther was missing. Sorry David.

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Charity Dinner



As we know, Covid and its aftermath has robbed us of some of our main fund-raising events, so we were delighted to arrange a Charity Dinner in aid of Ukrainian refugees.

The venue was the Cedar Court at the end of the hottest day of the year so far. There were ninety of us, including sponsors, friends, members of other clubs and of course a good slice of our own membership. The theme was the Queen's Jubilee so we had stirring music, the national anthem, lots of bunting and, of course, the Loyal Toast. The food was delicious, our guest Harry Gration gave a fascinating and amusing account of his 42 years with the BBC, ranging from fund-raising with the Look North team to

reporting on the withdrawal from Camp Bastion, and then he and President Les conducted an auction with skill and aplomb.

There was a lovely atmosphere throughout the evening, people were very generous and we made over £5,000 in aid of Ukrainian refugees.

Thanks to Mike Hammond, Tony Doveston, the President and the entire team who worked so hard to ensure the evening was a success.



Postscript

It was with great shock and sadness that we learned a week after the Charity Dinner that Harry Gration had died suddenly. The Club issued the following statement:

We are shocked and saddened to hear of the passing of Harry Gration MBE, who was guest speaker and auctioneer at our Charity Dinner last week, helping us to raise over £5,000 for our Ukraine appeal. Our thoughts are with his family, friends and former colleagues at the BBC. Rest in peace Harry and thank you from all of us.



Harry Gration 1950 – 2022

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Club Assembly

The highlight of the Club Assembly at the end of the Rotary year in June is normally the Presidential handover. However circumstances are such that it happened in February this year but, even so, tributes were paid to David Hayes for his stewardship of the Club during difficult times. There was a secretarial changeover. Thanks are due to Ruth Townrow for her tour of duty while Moya Prichard was wished well for her incumbency.

President Les outlined some of the coming year's activities, both fund-raising and social and informed the Club that Peter Inman had been delighted to accept honorary membership.

That apart, it was full steam ahead with reports on all the things detailed in Council minutes. Our guest for the evening was ADG Susan Rogers who had some novel ideas on attracting new members and stressed the importance of a lively and up-to-date website. She expressed herself impressed by the amount of fundraising in place and the enthusiasm shown by our members.



President Les with ADG Susan Rogers and with Past President David and Past Secretary Ruth

Carers' Resource



President Les is shown presenting a cheque for £500 on behalf of Brigantes to Alison Wragg of Carers' Resource

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A Swainby Saunter (Should that read 'Sauna'? Ed.)

Q. What do you do when it's hotter in Yorkshire than the Canaries?

A. You go for a long walk with boots and rucksacks over the hills.

Thus it was that the tough got going on a Monday in June when the thermometer hovered just below 30°C. Our leader was John Wood, late of this parish, with willing followers Guy Wilson, John Benedict and your editor. To be fair there was a choice: an eight miler which took in a couple of steep climbs or a six-miler with just one hill which coincided nicely with a midday sun as high as an elephant's eye. The point of decision was reached at coffee time, two miles out from the delightful east Yorkshire village of Swainby. The outcome was inevitable though it was not made easier by an immediate entry into a dense thistle field and a splitting of forces to try to decide where the hell we were.

Once reunited, our leader directed us to Whorl Hill. As we puffed up it we were doubly glad we'd chosen the lesser option but its ample slopes afforded a lunch stop with views across to well, we weren't entirely sure where, but it looked mighty fine as it gently baked under the Azores high. And there was more. The village of Whorlton may be gone, possibly seen off by the plague, but it has left behind not only its wonderful ruined 11thC church but the remains of its castle keep. Both were inspected before a back path returned us to Swainby.

And John had done his homework. The Rusty Bike café, the glory of Swainby and the area's cyclists, welcomed us for a cuppa and afternoon fancies. So as we turned our cars towards the rigours of the A19 our band of heroes had the quiet satisfaction of a day well spent in congenial company in the torrid heat and eventually thankful that we were not walking seven days later when the temperature almost reached 40°C.

Next walk: Death Valley.



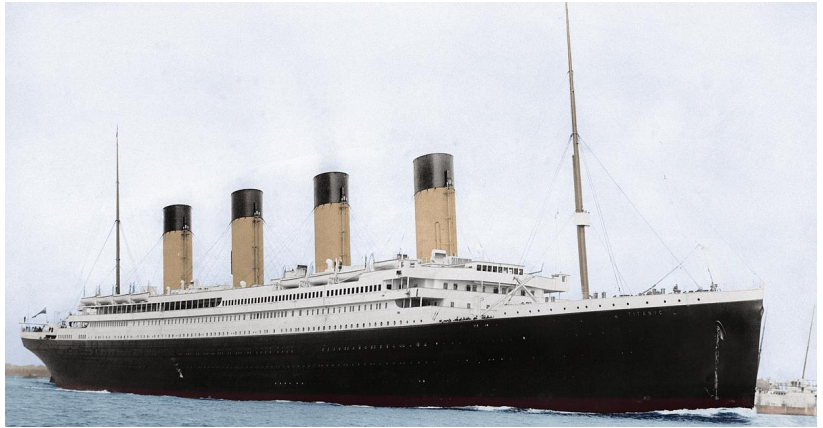
Another abysmal stitch. There were actually four of us, not five.

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RMS 'Titanic'

We were treated to an excellent presentation by one of our own, Bill O'Rourke, who confessed to being hooked on Titanic's history from the age of thirteen when he went to see the first film made of its tragic sinking.

RMS Titanic was built in Harland and Wolfe's shipyard in Belfast, one of a sister group of three liners designed for comfort not speed. The concept was one of extreme elegance, as desired by the owners the White Star line. They wanted their first-class passengers to cross the Atlantic in style, to want for nothing and to enjoy the experience. There were three classes for passengers, first, second and third. There were seven decks and there was capacity for 3,550 people, with approximately 2,600 passengers. There were coal fires in every first-class suite.



RMS Titanic in her prime

The building of the Titanic started late and was upset by many delays, prompting thoughts that the ship was cursed from the start. There were many health and safety issues during construction. Bill described the process for assembling the hull and how red-hot rivets were prepared on the completed deck and thrown up for catching and hammering into the metal plates of the hull. The owners regarded the ship as unsinkable to the point that they were against equipping it with lifeboats; the Board of Trade thought otherwise. However the installed capacity of the lifeboats was for 964 people, just over 25% of the total passengers.

Titanic finally left Belfast on 2nd April 1912 en route for Southampton with many of the internal fittings still to be completed. It subsequently picked up passengers at Southampton, Cherbourg and Queenstown before setting sail for New York on Thursday 11th April at 1330 hrs. An emergency practice was cancelled.

Its route took it through an area of the Atlantic where there were significant warnings of ice floes coming in from ships in the area. These were mainly not passed on by the radio operator who was busy making money from sending and receiving messages from passengers on board. Consequently Titanic maintained its cruising speed of 22 knots.

On Sunday 14th April three church services were held. At 11.40am ice floes were sighted and, despite taking evasive action Titanic hit a large ice floe which ripped a hole below water, damaging six water-tight sections. Titanic's designer, travelling on board for its maiden voyage, told the Captain it would sink. At 2.17am on Monday 15th the Titanic split into two parts and sank. Most of the lifeboats had been launched, saving 700 people and two dogs but the remainder, some 2,600 souls, drowned. Only 306 bodies were recovered. There were some scandalous stories of the rich and privileged gaining unfair advantage by commanding lifeboat space and thus being saved. Some of these were subsequently shunned by society. The owner of the US retail store Macey's was one such example. For the record, some 60% of first- and second-class passengers were saved but only 25% of those in third-class. The subsequent formal inquiries which took place turned out to be something of a cover-up. In the UK the Board of Trade concluded that the main factor in the vessel's sinking was its speed. This protected the owners and Captain from being found liable on safety grounds. In the USA there was a similar whitewash, thereby protecting the US banks who were major investors in the Titanic.

The wreck of the Titanic was finally located in 1984 and it still lies there today. Of its two sister ships the first one, the Olympic, served as a liner until scrapped in 1934, producing many items of memorabilia. The revolving doors from one of its lounges, the dining room and a staircase can now be found in the White Swan pub in Alnwick. The third ship, the Britannic, was launched in 1914 and became a hospital ship for WW1. It sank in 1916 having hit a mine.



This was an excellent presentation and much appreciated by the Club.

Barry Pollard

And at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean

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Peter's Quiz

Your editor having recently passed the eightieth milestone, the wine flowed on every table. Whether it helped with Peter Wearmouth's quiz is a moot point but it certainly aided the general bonhomie. Peter led off with, appropriately, a 1940s round, a period too many of us remember. Hence there were some high scores, with only the electrical kitchen item invented in 1945 stumping everybody. Diane won the prize for the best 80th ditty before we put our IQs to the test (not much there) with teasers like this:

Two girls were born to the same mother on the same day, at the same time, in the same month and year and yet are not twins. How is this possible?

Or this:

If you multiply all the numbers on your mobile phone what is the answer?

David Read's team won, with Diane, Tony, Barry and your editor taking home the chocs.

Thanks Peter for a great evening.

The answers – as if you needed any help!

The micro-wave.

There was one more – they were triplets.

Zero. Everything multiplied by zero is – zero.



Four of Peter's 1940s answers: the jeep, the microwave, the United Nations and . . . the Andrews Sisters

Solar Panels

Andy Morrison of this parish talked us through the technological wizardry of the recent re-vamp of his home with particular reference to solar panels. This was no minor upgrade. It involved digging down below ground floor level to accommodate underfloor heating, doubling the ground floor size, removing the roof, re-wiring the entire house and installing solar panels on the roof front and back.

The panels themselves are relatively cheap at around £100 each. The expense is in the batteries which cost £1,500 a pop. Andy has three which can provide, at 20kw, power for the entire house for three days. There is no doubt that, having made the initial outlay, there are considerable savings available, not only in the house but also on charging the Tesla on the drive. Andy's advice is that, amid the increasingly complex world of solar energy, it's important that anyone contemplating investing in it should do their research and understand the facts. It's also important to invest in new interior lighting and new appliances in order to drop electricity loads in the house and, of course, to install batteries to store power. After all that Andy still has around 30% excess power. He doesn't sell it but instead puts it into his hot water tank.

Andy also did an extremely effective commercial for IBM Node Red, an artificial intelligence which will, for instance, send an email when the sun is out so that a device can be switched on and can even ask the Met Office when the sun is likely to shine tomorrow so that charging can be adapted to suit.

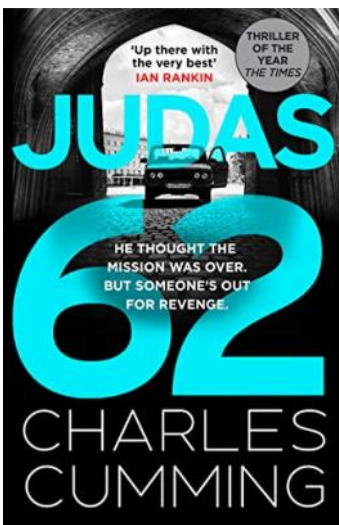
As a vision of tomorrow's world it was compelling. The reality on the ground, however, is different; unfortunately the majority of new builds have neither solar panels nor charging points so it seems there's still a lot of catching-up to be done amid the current building boom.

But not chez Morrison.

Not Andy's house but you get the idea



Judas 62 by Charles Cumming



'The Thriller of the Year' trumpeted the Times and, having read it, our Book Club chose a glorious July evening at Oakdale to discuss it.

It's a good yarn about a British agent who is sent to Russia in the 1990s to bring out a scientist. All the elements are there. He's young but not inexperienced. The scientist is self-centred, eccentric and tricky to handle. Our agent takes on the persona of a teacher of English to adults and lo! one of his students turns out to be a gorgeous Russian with whom he proceeds to have a torrid affair. He even has to allow himself to be beaten up by some Russian heavies because a wimpy teacher wouldn't know how to fight. (As his real self he would have dispatched them with a single blow.) The situation gets complicated when his ex-girlfriend turns up and even more complicated when said scientist insists his pregnant girlfriend must escape with them. All of which sets up a serious car chase led by the villainous Gromik. You'll need to read the book to find out what happens.

Fast forward to 2020. It's bang up to date. We even have Putin and Covid, plus Gromik (yes, he survived the chase) and our erstwhile schoolteacher now under his real name, Lachlan Kite, a hoary veteran of the security service. The action shifts to Dubai and Kite, now on a Russian assassination list, lays his plans to trap Gromik. You'll need to read . . .etc.

It certainly has a dramatic opening. The plotting is intricate and well-researched. We felt that at times the first part might have moved faster but the second part certainly speeded up. Indeed the two parts were almost like two separate books and it was unusual to have a clean twenty-five year break in the middle with many of the same characters assembling for the run-off. It was certainly a page-turner from an author who already has several best-selling thrillers to his name and, to quote the Times once more, "This has all you would want from an intelligent contemporary spy thriller."



And the critics

Richard Cooper

Richard, the leader of Harrogate Council, has spoken to us several times in recent years, but none has been quite so poignant as this. For the Council is to be abolished on 31st March 2023 and, after 23 years as a councillor, the last nine as Council leader, Richard will be hanging up his political boots.

Two years ago it was made pretty clear that the government wanted a single council based on North Yorkshire. Richard favoured unitary local government but not one encompassing North Yorkshire and indeed he spoke to us last year about precisely this. He now accepts that he lost that argument. One of the effects of the change is that North Yorkshire will end up with a mayor with wide powers. Richard has ruled himself out of standing for such a job and indeed he gave us the “you first heard it here” assurance that he won’t be standing as an MP. He did, however, make the point that the modern mayoralty can be successful and cited Ben Houchen as an effective mayor of Teesside even though he is a Tory and is surrounded by Labour councils.

Richard doesn’t sound too sorry to be leaving politics. In his time the nature of communication has changed dramatically. Whereas once he would have had a postbag of letters both supportive and critical he senses there has been a shift both in levels of tolerance and the nature of ‘truth’. He now receives masses of abusive emails – often sent late at night when presumably alcohol or drugs have worked their effect. Truth is now a slippery concept, so much so that if people are found out for being less than honest they are unwilling to apologise and even less willing to resign. It’s not all doom and gloom. Richard paid tribute to the ‘brilliant’ people he’s met – council staff as well as notable locals such as Sharon Canavar, Liz Hancock, Karen Weaver and the much-lamented Malcolm Neesam.

He left us with a few thoughts in answer to questions. The average house price in Harrogate is 17.5% higher than the average salary. Nimbyism has been succeeded by BANNA – Build Absolutely Nothing Near Anyone. And – and many of us would echo this – the fewer people on a committee and the shorter the agenda, the longer the meetings.

We may well see Richard again before he finally departs the political scene but for the present he remains a politician who, in his visits to Brigantes, has answered questions with good humour and candour and has always steered clear of party politics.



Richard with Ruth and President Les

BRIGANTES EVENING MEETING ROLLING DIARY & DUTIES ROTA

2019	Evening Meetings	Host to Speaker	Host to Visitors	Cashier
02nd - Aug		John Butterworth	Bob Tunnicliffe	Guy Wilson
09th - Aug	Graham Chalmers	Graham Chilvers	Peter Wearmouth	Ian Bainbridge
16th - Aug	No meeting			
18th - Aug	Bowls Evening			
23rd - Aug	RYLA candidate Emma & parents	Harry Dodds	Peter Wood	Kelvin Burkinshaw
30th -Aug	No meeting			
06th - Sept	Update meeting for Roy Tate on Sachmo	Tony Doveston	Ian Bainbridge	John Butterworth
13th - Sept		Charlotte Gale	John Benedict	Graham Chilvers
20th - Sept	Joint Meeting			David Crowther
04th - Oct		Jean Grainger	John Butterworth	Harry Dodds
11th - Oct		David Hayes	David Crowther	Charlotte Gale

"Is it me, you're voting for?"



Humberside police uncovered over 100 drums of fuel today. Estimated to be worth over 5 million pounds. The drums were hidden in a shipment of cocaine



GPs have threatened industrial action over working weekends and evenings.

If it happens, I'll join the picket line just so I can finally see my GP face to face again.

KATE BUSH IS AT THE TOP OF THE CHARTS, TOP GUN IS THE NUMBER ONE MOVIE AND WE'RE IN A COLD WAR WITH RUSSIA

IF BOBBY EWING STEPS OUT OF THE SHOWER, I'LL KNOW THE LAST 40 YEARS WAS ALL A DREAM

For English Language Lovers. What is the difference between 'Completed' and 'Finished'? No dictionary has been able to define the difference between 'Complete' and 'Finished.' But in a linguistic conference in England, Sun Sherman an Indian American, was the clever winner. His response: When you marry the right woman, you are 'Complete.' If you marry the wrong woman, you are 'Finished.' And when the right woman catches you with the wrong woman, you are 'Completely Finished.'

When God created Adam and Eve, He said to them: I have two gifts to give you - one is to pee standing up and... Adam, very anxious, interrupted him screaming: M E..! M E..! I want it, please Lord... please... please... please... This would make life a lot easier! Eve agreed and said those things didn't matter to her. So God gave Adam the gift. Adam was amazed, screaming for joy, running through the Garden of Eden, peeing on every tree. He ran along the beach making drawings with his pee in the sand. He lit a fire and played fireman.. God and Eve stared at the mad man with happiness until Eve asked God: and... what is the other present? And God answered: A Brain Eve ... The brain is yours...

I thought Monkee Pox was a hoax Then I saw their face, Now I'm a believer

