

# THE BRIGAND



Editor : Peter Wood

Issue 136 August 2023

Publisher: Graham Chilvers

## Editorial

Summer's a curious time for Rotary. What with bank holidays and coronations, quite a few meetings are cancelled. People go on holiday, are subpoenaed for childminding, tear limbs or go sailing. Then there's the oddest quirk of all – the Rotary year, which someone at some time decreed should end on 30<sup>th</sup> June. Answers on the back of an envelope.

So it's a time of farewells and welcomes. Sadly Peter North, who has given over forty years' service to Rotary, including a period as District Treasurer, has decided to hang up his boots on health grounds. We're inviting him to be an Honorary Member so hopefully we'll still see him from time to time. David Hayes, who stepped nobly into the breach at short notice two years ago and went on to serve as President for eighteen months is off Down Under – though on this occasion for a year – so we look forward to seeing him e'er too long. On the credit side we have welcomed new member David Cresswell whose 'job talk' article is in this edition of The Brigand.

And, of course, it's all change at the top. President Les followed his predecessor by doing a further eighteen-month presidential stint for which we are all most grateful. He is succeeded by Bill O'Rourke to whom we give our best wishes for a successful year. It's all-change at the secretariat as well. Moya Prichard has weathered a busy year at the helm, for which many thanks, and is succeeded by Diane Stokes. Since Diane will be President from next July we'll need a new Secretary at that point. Nothing like early an warning: We'll need a new secretary from July 2024. A club can't function without one. Could it be you?

As you'll see from this edition of the Brigand we remain busy. We have a rich and varied programme of speakers and activities. The golfers golf, the walkers walk and the readers read and we've done our best twice this year to disfigure Harrogate Bowling Club's hallowed turf. Our cafés at the Wesley Chapel and St Peter's give us a steady income for charitable causes and of course we'll soon be deciding on the process for distributing the legacy. We're continuing to develop our work with local schools and we're liaising with Dave Calvert in designing our new website.

So here's to a new Rotary year and all that it promises. And I would add "Here's to summer" but I'm not sure where it went.

*Peter Wood*

## Handover

On a fine June evening Les relinquished the chain of office and handed over to Bill. We are much indebted to Les who undertook more than the customary twelve-month stint and has been a firm hand on the tiller in that time. He spoke about his term and thanked those who had supported him. Bill outlined his priorities for the coming year, there were reports from various Club projects and it was good to hear from Susan Rogers, Retiring District ADG and her successor Jeremy Twigg.

Many thanks to Les and all good wishes to Bill for the year ahead.



*Vive le Roi!*

## THE BRIGAND

### Little Almscliffe Round

On a fine May morning four of us assembled – Graham (our leader with mascot Jet), John Benedict, John Wood and your editor – all primed and primed for a return trip to Stainburn. The walk promised a 6½ mile round though ominously we were told the first half was mostly downhill. Short of a re-alignment of the landscape, we all knew what that meant for the return.

The first mile took us through a Somme battlefield. What had been a large portion of Stainburn Moor wood had gone, logged to perdition. Stumps, a few branchless runts and a lot of water remained. We picked our way through it and, once clear, had marvellous views to admire on all sides – from the White Horse in the east to the Dales in the west and the power stations on the horizon to the south.

Coffee stop proved a challenge. We were unwilling to take it standing so we perched precariously on some ancient branches and were thankful to arise unharmed. Then it was on to the glories of Stainburn. Of the churchyard seat only the mountings remained so we perched on a tombstone, thanking the occupant who had been there since 1667 for accommodating us. We couldn't resist a peek in the church which was as wonderful as ever and on the way out we encountered a native whose mother is buried amid the grasses and bluebells and who was brought up "just down the road".

Which led us down to the former chapel and further down a bridleway and then the hard work started. By the time we emerged onto the main Beckwithshaw-Leathley road we were blowing and even Jet had slowed to a reasonable pace. The hard work done, a straightforward track led us back to the car park and journey's end.

Thanks Graham for a great walk and for ordering a lovely day.



*A Grave Lunch*

### A Biased Evening

The fact we were able to play bowls at all was a tribute to the drainage at the Harrogate club. Not only had it rained for days before but on that very day the skies had opened. Yet here we were at 6.00pm with members prepared to put their hallowed greensward to the test and allow the amateurs and beginners to plonk down their bowls from a great height with (hopefully) the correct bias. All survived.

It's always a great night at the Bowling Club. They make us welcome and their mixture of tuition and encouragement banishes any self-doubt we might have in delivering the wood to the jack. Inevitably the occasional wrong bias left a wood careering across the green but by and large we all got our little disc on the inside. For those who didn't, Oliver's fish and chips (with optional mushy peas) more than made up for it afterwards.

Many thanks to the Bowling Club for their unfailing hospitality and good humour. We look forward to our next visit.



*Straight from the English Bowling Association's Coaching Manual*

### Peace Fellow Mille

Anne Mimille Guzman is twenty nine and from Manila, Philippines. Mille as she prefers to be known spoke to us in May. She is currently taking a Master's in International Development at the University of Bradford as a Rotary Peace Fellow. Prior to her UK studies she worked as a non-profit Director in a United Nations organisation.

She told us how, since the age of twenty, she has been immersed in the culture of giving through her family's initiative to serve the most vulnerable. A lot of her work has been with children, using storytelling, art and play therapy and development/medical projects. Mille told us what it was like to work with people who actually lived in a rubbish dump. When it rained what had to be walked on was unspeakable so money was raised to buy them 'rain boots' (wellies). The only problem was that they were so pleased with them that they wore them indoors and didn't want to get them dirty.

It was good to welcome Mille to Brigantes and we wish her well for her time in Bradford.



*Mille with President Les*

### A Story from Ukraine

We all know about Harrogate District of Sanctuary. They're the group to which we donated the money we raised at last year's charity dinner. At the beginning of June John Hart from HDS came to speak to us and he brought with him two special guests. Vova Matsarski and his son Stasha joined us. Vova with his wife and four children was able to flee Ukraine over a year ago and told us his story.

John gave us some context. Ukraine is much bigger than I for one had imagined. It comprises 233,000 sq miles; the UK by contrast has 93,000 but its population is only two-thirds of the UK's. 9.9m people have been displaced since the Russian invasion in February 2022.

Vova's family lived just outside Kyiv. He woke up on the night of 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2022 to the sound of gunfire. He imagined he was dreaming. It was only when it continued and was augmented with flares and flashes that he realised it was for real. He started making Molotov cocktails and was joined by Stasha. The Russians were stopped only 22km from their house. Over two days Vova helped to construct a checkpoint.

The Matsarskis were fortunate that a family friend was able to accommodate them in Harrogate, though the form-filling was tortuous. They finally landed at Leeds-Bradford airport and Vova's first impression was of the size of the trees. He had somehow imagined England as a country of sparse vegetation and still marvels at the height of the trees around Harrogate. Stasha is now settled at Harrogate Grammar School where his English is rapidly improving.

One of Vova's regrets is that he has lost his Russian friends. He told us that all Ukrainians speak Russian and that he had a lot of friends in Russia. Now, when he contacts them they simply parrot the government line about rooting out fascists. He isn't sure whether they believe it or are too scared to say otherwise.

As for the future he hopes to continue to live in the UK but has not given up on the possibility of returning to Ukraine one day. We were grateful to Vova and Stasha for sharing their experiences with us and to John for bringing them along. It certainly brought the reality of the conflict home to us.



*Vova and Stasha with John Hart and President Bill*

## THE BRIGAND

### Desert Island Discs

The gorgeous, pouting Lauren Doveston presented a Special Limited Edition of the famous radio programme, now in its eightieth year. His subject was our own Guy Wilson, a man of many parts. Born in 1950 and a Rotarian via his father-in-law, Guy grew up in Essex and has remained an avid West Ham United supporter. Music must have been in the genes for his father played the double bass and had a passion for jazz and Guy learned the violin. Guy's first selection, the Rutland Boughton piece, brought together memories of his childhood.

Later, of course, his musical interests burgeoned, culminating in his choral exploits and particularly his partnership with Karl Jenkins in 'The Armed Man', commissioned by Guy as Master of the Royal Armouries for the Millennium celebrations and for which Guy selected the texts. There were several vocal selections, illustrating Guy's belief that "the greatest musical instrument is the human voice." He owned up to being a musical Romantic and liking good tunes – of which there were many. His choices varied from the quiet and reflective to the frankly emotional – he admitted that music could move him to tears – and thence to the Mendelssohn which he called "the jolliest piece I've ever played."

Which book apart from the Bible or Shakespeare? The Complete Works of JRR Tolkien, if such exists. His luxury – a computer, so that he could write and look back over what he had written. And his final piece? Tchaikovsky's 5<sup>th</sup> Symphony which would so content him that he could put two fingers up to the rest of the world from his island.

Guy's full selection was:

Rutland Boughton, Symphony 3, slow movement

Brahms violin concerto, slow movement played by Isaac Stern

Duet "Au fond du temple saint" from Bizet's *The Pearl Fishers* – Robert Merrill and Jussi Bjorling

Vaughan Williams – "Dirge for two veterans" from *Dona Nobis Pacem*

Mendelssohn, Italian Symphony, first movement

The range of the human voice: Jessye Norman singing Dove Son from Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro* and Joni Mitchell singing *Both Sides Now*

*Les Misérables* – Colm Wilkinson singing *Bring him home* and the chorus *Do you hear the people sing*

Tchaikovsky Symphony No 5, finale

Thank you Guy – and Lauren – for sharing your music with us.



*A Last sighting of Guy*

## THE BRIGAND

### President's Night

Moya and Keith kindly hosted President's Night for Les and provided a wonderful evening with superb food. Many thanks to them for their unwavering hospitality.



## THE BRIGAND

### Artizan International.

Susie Hart MBE has a fascinating back story. Living in Tanzania for ten years from 2003 to 2013, she founded the social enterprise Neema Crafts with three deaf trainees and a budget of just £400. Its mission was to provide training and employment for differently-able people who would otherwise need to beg to earn a living. The centre has now grown to employ over 120 people with a huge range of disabilities all of whom are able to support their families with dignity and pride.

Back in Harrogate she set up Artizan International to enable her to pass on this model to other developing countries where people with disabilities are still living in poverty. There are now bases in Ecuador and Peru and Susie introduced us via video to some of the people Artizan has helped.



*Susie with the first deaf trainees in 2003*



*Chonillo with some of his creations*

One such is Chonillo who had a motorbike accident when he was 18. "I was devastated to become disabled. I found it so hard to leave the house, finish my education and keep up with my friends. I feel really happy to work with Artizan Ecuador, life has changed and I am able to keep my mind busy doing what I love which is making cards and jewellery"

This work is supported in Harrogate by a café on Cambridge Road which offers training and work experience for young adults with disabilities. There's also a shop on Oxford St. which sells artifacts made by disabled people overseas and enables them to have a regular income, often for the first time in their lives. Among their newly-acquired skills are papermaking, screen printing, textile manufacture and jewellery-making. Susie brought some examples with her and they were absolutely superb. There are various ways we can help. The most obvious for a Rotary club is to donate or fundraise but you can also become an 'Artizan Angel' by making regular contributions or indeed call into the café or shop as a customer. A recent addition to the list is to remember Artizan International in your will. There's also a need for volunteers for the shop – so there's plenty to go at.

And if you want to find out more about Artizan International, there's a superb website.

More than one of our number suggested after Susie had spoken that this was precisely the kind of good cause – a local charity with an international dimension – that we should be looking at when we come to consider who might benefit from Denis Smith's legacy.

How about it then?



*Susie Hart MBE with President Bill*

## THE BRIGAND

### The Remains of the Day

Those of you who haven't read the book by Kazuo Ishiguro may have seen the film starring Anthony Hopkins and Emma Thompson. Some of our Book Club group had done both and rated both.

The story centres on a butler, Stevens who, in 1956, embarks on a journey in his master's impressive Ford car. The journey takes him into the West Country and a pre-arranged meeting with a lady who was Miss Kenton when she worked with Stevens at Darlington Hall in the thirties but is now Mrs Benn. During the course of the trip we learn a lot about Stevens through his reminiscences of a time when his then master Lord Darlington hosted important meetings with influential people who were attempting, as they saw it in the interests of peace, to appease Hitler's Germany.

Stevens is proud of the part he has played in the organisation of a major household at such a crucial time. However it comes at a cost. In his efforts to be the perfect butler he sacrifices much of his humanity. His emotions and feelings are subordinated to his work ethic in a way that can only be described as tragic. Even though, for instance, he carries on with his job rather than attend to his dying father, we can nevertheless see that, try as he might, he can't entirely disguise his feelings for Miss Kenton or his sadness at his father's death. Yet you sense that he is afraid of what giving in to his feelings will do to his well-ordered life.

In the end, of course, he sees Miss Kenton/Mrs Benn who is clearly unhappily married and who you sense would, with a bit of encouragement, return to Darlington Hall with Stevens. But it never happens and at the end Stevens is left facing the 'remains of the day' in his own well-ordered but limited life.

We all liked it. It is superbly written. It has pathos, humour and a sensitively-drawn character at its centre. We would strongly recommend it and, as it happens, there are a few copies floating around if you're interested



The Panel of Judges

### David Cresswell

David, our newest member, gave what used to be known as the 'job talk' but made it much more entertaining by making it his 'life talk'. So we learned that he was brought up in Walsall, that his family ran a greengrocery and poultry business and we even saw a picture of the shop. David is proud of the numeracy skills he learned serving at the family stall on Cannock market.

We had a succession of photos – David with his parents on holiday in Blackpool, as a schoolboy, as a student (with obligatory pint) and with his wife. His education took him from school to Salford College of Technology (later University) where he gained a degree in Chemistry and then to Keele University and a teaching qualification. He soon realised teaching wasn't for him and he went on to study Biochemistry at Cardiff University where he gained a PhD. He got a job with the Huntingdon Research Centre and then in 1979 at Hazelton Labs in Harrogate where he stayed, albeit in a variety of roles, for the next 36 years. He retired in stages, finally embracing full freedom in 2014.

Then Action Man took over. Knee problems put an end to tennis and squash so he began cycling. Scuba Diving became important, judging by the list of places around the world where he's joined the fish, often with David Read. He's skied, para-glided (with hair-raising photographic evidence), para-sailed as well as having lessons on the guitar his father bought for him when he was sixteen. Oh, and I almost forgot. You can add photography and calligraphy to that lot.

And then, for a man clearly with time on his hands, he joined us!

So welcome to Brigantes David.



David with President Bill

### Young Carers

You might imagine we know all there is to know about Young Carers. We've supported them now for a number of years but it was a revelation to listen to Linda King as she updated us on what they're up to these days.

For instance I had no idea about the area the Harrogate operation covers. It extends out to Dishforth, up to Ripon and across to Pateley Bridge. It deals with over 300 young people. Or perhaps we should say that Linda and a colleague deal with them. That is their caseload.

Young carers have more than one issue. The main one of course, is that they're the carer for someone else, usually a family member. That means they have very little time to call their own, very little opportunity to play or have a day out or have new experiences. They may encounter problems at school. They may be bullied because they are perceived to be 'different'. Linda gave us real-life situations: the boy who worried so much about school that he actually dropped out for a year. The girl who was criticised for a poor 'mock' result without the school realising that her bi-polar mother had had an 'episode' during the night before the exam. The boy who was virtually mute but who now chats happily.

How does Linda deal with her caseload? Clearly by working very hard. She goes into schools to see young people because they will often talk more freely there than at home. She has a range of specialist agencies she can call on to help. And she organises activities, lots of activities, some of them enabled by our donations. Paddle-boarding, kayaking, snake familiarisation, learning to cook at Harrogate College, Go Ape (look it up), nature trails, visits to Flamingoland and Harrogate's Pantomime – and that's just in the last year.

Linda finds herself in the most difficult and depressing situations but, as she says, she's not afraid to challenge them, to enlist help and to negotiate deals for most of the activities. She's just what these young people need. She does a tremendous job and she and Young Carers deserve all the help we can give them



*Linda with President Bill*



*Young Carers' snake familiarisation class*



## THE BRIGAND

### An Unnecessary Assassin

Lorraine Stevens had a good idea. A member of Scunthorpe RC and crime fiction junkie, she decided to compile a collection of original unpublished crime short stories by famous authors including Ann Cleeves, the only British writer with two series currently airing on TV, Paul Finch who wrote 'The Bill' and Lee Child who is . . . well, Lee Child. Lorraine must have mighty powers of persuasion. What may have swung it is that all proceeds go to Rotary's 'Stop Polio Now' initiative. Each book costs £10 and for each £10 the Gates Foundation adds a further £20 so you can see that the book is a supreme earner.

We're used to thinking of polio as a disease confined to two or three third-world countries. Not so. Last year it was identified in the sewers of London and New York so it behoves us to keep our collective eye on the ball. Lorraine's collection of stories 'An Unnecessary Assassin' helps us to do just that.

As Lorraine pointed out, it takes a lot for a professional writer to compose a short story and then simply give it away. The fact that seventeen plus poet Jim Taylor chose to do so is not only a tribute to Lorraine's powers of persuasion but also to the recognition of the importance of Rotary's campaign to eradicate polio.

Lorraine brought along with her John Laurence, a charismatic and voluble American writer, editor and proof-reader who kept his table entertained throughout the meal and enthusiastically signed his story for those lucky enough to secure one of the ten copies Lorraine brought along with her.

The whole evening was a delight – very different from our normal presentations – but lively and memorable. Plus, with all ten copies sold, the evening contributed £300 to 'End Polio Now'.

Missed out on your copy? Not to worry. You can get it on Amazon.



*President Bill with Lorraine, John Laurence and An Unnecessary Assassin*

### Keane Duncan

Keane Duncan is a young man going places. Elected to Ryedale District Council in 2015 aged 20, he then became the youngest member of North Yorkshire County Council in 2017 and the leader of the Ryedale Council two years later. Last year he was elected to the new unitary NYCC and currently holds the brief for Highways and Transportation. He will be the Conservative candidate for Mayor of York and North Yorkshire in 2024 and he spoke to us on a wet August evening.

He's clear he's in the firing line on several issues. He took the Gateway project head-on, making clear that there is £11m of government funding available for it as long as it jumps through the right hoops; improved access to employment and education via travel is an important criterion. He admitted the scheme was controversial, with the 'for' and 'against' lobbies evenly balanced. He defended the proposed revised traffic arrangements on Station Parade, emphasising the improvements properly co-ordinated traffic lights and crossing signals will bring as well as the more aesthetically pleasing rail station entrance area which will result.

There are other issues. In spite of complaints from the meeting about the quality of bus services, both urban and rural, Keane maintained that very few routes have been lost. The need for a 'Park and Ride' facility is another Harrogate hobby-horse and it turns out Keane's department is "actively looking" at possible schemes. Provision for cyclists is another priority and Keane did admit that the 'crazy golf' Otley Rd cycle lane had not been a success and claimed credit for getting rid of the Beech Grove traffic filters – otherwise the wooden boxes with dying plants which blocked the road to cars. Inevitably potholes featured. The Council receives £40m pa for road maintenance and is constantly monitoring the state of roads – but clearly not those outside the front doors of Brigantes members.

Keane dealt well with questions on these and other topics though some were left hanging in the air. Will the Gateway project be given a final, irrevocable go-ahead? How will the various bits of cycle infrastructure tie up? Will there be adequate bus routes for all the new-builds? When will our prize potholes be filled?

And will Keane Duncan be the first Mayor of the new unitary authority? There's a £540m devolution deal for North Yorkshire and it's Keane's ambition, should he be elected (of course he will), that the area should be treated on the same basis as the large conurbations. It's a mighty ambition but I wouldn't bet against Keane Duncan achieving it.



*Cllr Keane Duncan with Mike and President Bill*



I asked my daughter to give me the phone book. She laughed at me, called me a dinosaur and lent me her iPhone. So the spider is dead, the iPhone is broken and my daughter is furious!



I'm so happy Formula 1 started using subtitles.

