

Editorial

There are carpets of snowdrops at Fountains, the first crocus are peeping through the Stray and the daffodils along Beech Grove are sprinting towards Spring. OK so that probably means we'll be blanketed with six inches of snow next month but there's unmistakable evidence that the seasons are on the move. Winter is loosening its grip and, if we aren't barbecuing yet, we should at least be checking gas and charcoal.

So it is with Rotary. As I write we're not far from the Technology Tournament, the first since Covid, and there are schools wanting to take part and give students the unique experience it provides. Alongside run the preparations for Kids Aloud with 400 primary children (200 each night) ready to sing their hearts out in songs they've helped to write alongside the book they've illustrated. We're used to a St Aidan's student tackling the RYLA course; this year we'll also be selecting one from Ashville with whom, additionally, we'll be helping to plant trees. We'll soon be planning the 2023 programme of cafés at St Peter's and the Wesley Centre. The walkers, golfers and book clubbers are all up and running for the new season. Planning is under way for our exciting new website. Green shoots are everywhere.

And of course one of the most significant is the legacy donated to our Club via the generous bequest of Denis Smith. As is right, we'll be taking our time to decide what should happen to it and, following preliminary discussions, we await the report of the group chaired by Bill O'Rourke which will review the various options open to us.

So there is much to be positive about in 2023 but challenges remain. Not the least of them are the perennial need to attract new members and the necessity for all members to share in the work of the Club. It's no secret that many people have no idea what Rotary does. We're trying to address this by working in partnerships within the local community, by 'working clever' at publicising our activities and by creating an attractive and user-friendly website which will demonstrate not only what we do but that Rotary can be fun as well.

Which hopefully is all reflected in this edition of the Brigand. With Spring and Summer just around the corner we hope you'll enjoy it and the promise that a new year holds.

Peter Wood

Me? I'm off to try and find my lawnmower. Ah yes, the shed.

A Ripon Ramble

Ripon, the smallest city in Yorkshire and second-smallest in England, is a gem. It may be on our doorstep but we tend either to drive through it or, since the advent of the bypass, round it. Like all ancient cities, it boasts old buildings, narrow thoroughfares and little paths all over the place. Given the bitter December weather (over thirty degrees down on our summer jaunt to the North Yorks Moors) and the likely underfoot conditions, John Wood, late of this parish, suggested a walk round the city. It was an inspired choice.

With few exceptions this was not the Ripon of traffic, nor the market square nor the cathedral. This was the city of little paths between houses, alongside rivers and through hidden entrances. We walked by three rivers, the Laver, Skell and Ure. We skirted fields and back lanes and the cathedral graveyard. We inspected the old railway station and the Spa Baths. We walked through the Spa Gardens and marvelled at the statue of the first Marquis of Ripon and the number of government posts he held. We mused on the history and architecture of the Chapel of St Mary Magdalen, the so-called Leper Chapel though the door was barred against us. We admired the elegance of the former Williamson's Varnish and Enamel Works, now apartments, and even passed their diminished modern premises. And, so unerringly were we led, that we debouched barely a stone's throw from our cars just on the cusp of lunchtime.

It had been a walk with a difference – our first urban encounter. But so successful was it that Guy promptly promised us another next December, this time round the walls of York. So we're already booked in for what promises to become a pre-Christmas tradition – the Brigantes City Walk



Four Ripon Ramblers in front of the Leper Chapel– with Guy behind the camera

THE BRIGAND

The Last Dragon

“Just imagine it! A brand-new musical with a cast of 200 playing to full houses in a stunning Edwardian theatre.”

“It has to be the West End. A new Lloyd Webster? Les Mis - the Sequel? Miss Ho Chi Minh City? Joseph and His Very Interesting No?”

“No.”

“Well then . . . Birmingham, Manchester, Edinburgh – oh I give up!”

“Harrogate.”

(Pause)

“Harrogate?”

“Harrogate”

Collapse of stout party.

But it really is. It's Harrogate. More to the point it really is Rotary as well. Would you Adam and Eve it? In the annals of the amazing things Rotary does, this must stand pretty high. So here's the thing: Harrogate Brigantes Rotary is putting on 'The Last Dragon' for two nights amid the gilded splendour of the Royal Hall. The cast is 400 local primary school children (200 different children each performance) having a night they'll never forget.

And there's more. This is the eighth of these shows Brigantes has staged, going back to 2009. Like some of the others the story's been written by Guy Wilson of Brigantes with music this time by composer Roland Fudge – with the help of lots of the children. And there's a book to go with the show with marvellous illustrations by some of the cast.

The story recounts how the kingdom of Rubovernia falls on hard times when the royal family is ousted, the dragons who guard the realm are wiped out and evil spreads over the land. But, tarraa, help is at hand. Deep in a cave a single dragon has survived and he's discovered by two children, Pip and Ella, who may not be all they seem. In a world fraught with danger and some very nasty people, they set out to right a wrong. But can they do it?

Sorry – no spoilers here. But, whisper it, yes they can.

And the details? The show is on 1st and 2nd April at 7.30pm at the Royal Hall, Harrogate. Tickets (£15, under 17s £5) are available from: Harrogate Box Office, Harrogate Theatre, Oxford Street, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, HG1 1QF; www.harrogatetheatre.co.uk ; phone: 01423 502116; email bookings@harrogatetheatre.co.uk If you live near Harrogate you might like to come and join us. If you can't, then at least you know Brigantes is alive and kicking.

Oh dear. He's back.

“It's Lloyd Webber. Andrew Lloyd Webber.”



THE BRIGAND

Christmas Party

Our Christmas Party (seems a long time ago now) was celebrated at the Crown. There were welcome drinks as well as the usual party hats and crackers and Mike Hammond was presented with his Paul Harris Award. In and amongst there were Christmas readings, musical entertainment by Terry Harrison and Mandy Jule, our favourite carols and David Hoskins' seasonal message before we all trooped off into the night with Christmas well and truly under way.

Thanks to everyone who helped to arrange a great evening.



THE BRIGAND

HHCC

That's Harrogate Hospital Community Charity and Yvonne Campbell, who organises the volunteer team, told us all about it. There are over 50 volunteer roles and over 350 volunteers. Their mission is to enhance provision that goes beyond what the NHS can provide. So the HHCC supports fund raisers, bids for grants, recruits and supports volunteers and, most importantly, generates income though, as Yvonne admitted, this is increasingly difficult in the current economic climate.

They are always looking out for volunteers. These fall into three categories or 'pathways'. The first, the Standard pathway, comprises people with general interests. The second, the Career Enhancement pathway, is for those who wish to pursue their education or professional development and seek to enhance transferrable skills, while the third, the Enhanced Support pathway is for people with special educational needs or disabilities.

Yvonne gave us examples of the way HHCC has made a difference. They have enabled a refurb of the Intensive Therapy Unit, introducing better lighting and graphics. They have made the children's Woodlands Ward more colourful and attractive. They have raised money for a new Gamma Scanner which cost over £600,000 and have improved various outdoor spaces. It was interesting that informal conversation at the end of the meeting revealed that one of our members had benefited from the ITU and another had been through the scanner. This is what brings the work of HHCC close to home.

There are various ways we can support our local NHS. A few include attending the many events HHCC put on and which are well publicised on their website, volunteering for them, donating, shopping on Amazon's 'Smile' and by signing up to the newsletter and following HHCC on social media. There's no doubt they fulfil their mantra of "adding value and sparkle" and if in days to come we are looking at local charities through which we too can make a difference, HHCC could be high on our list.

"Value and sparkle" sound good to me.



Yvonne with Tony and Bill

An Evening with a Difference



This was the promise and so it proved. Jean provided tables with toilet rolls and invited everyone to fold tickets for all they were worth. It was labour-intensive – but with a purpose.

And lo! Here it is – a variation on the tombola/bran tub idea. Simply pluck a ticket from the generously be-feathered duck and if it has a number on it, you're a lucky prize-winner. The said duck made a quacking contribution to the £800 subsequently raised at the Wesley Christmas Event.



Well done to all concerned!

Henshaws



Kate with Ruth and President Les

I had no idea that Henshaws had its origins anywhere but in these parts. I knew about the centre in Bogs Lane and I'd walked past the Arts and Crafts Centre in Knaresborough but that was about it. Kate Simpson put me, and probably a few more of us, right. It's one of the oldest charities in the country with a history going back 185 years. The Henshaw in question was Thomas, originally a farmer, who made his money in the hat trade. He was always inclined to charitable acts, setting up a Sunday School and health care for his workers in Oldham and in 1810 leaving £20,000 in his will to establish an 'Asylum for the Indigent Blind in Manchester'. In 1837, after a protracted dispute over the will, the original 'blind asylum' opened its doors in Old Trafford. Nowadays the college has moved over to Harrogate but the charity still offers a range of services in Manchester and has hubs in other northern cities.

Kate is the Community and Events Organiser whose daughter Tess has benefited from the help and support of Henshaws and is now able to live independently. It isn't just visual impairment that is addressed. The focus is on helping people to overcome a whole range of disabilities including autism. The emphasis is on supporting families and encouraging young people to acquire skills which will help them, for example learning to cook simple meals and finding a job. The college on Bogs Lane has both day and residential accommodation and accepts students from all over the country.

The Arts and Crafts Centre is at Knaresborough on the site of the old Knaresborough Zoo. Activities here include drama, music, woodwork, pottery and horticulture and funding is a permanent headache, with an annual shortfall of £100,000 at the Arts Centre alone. A lot of funding comes from the local authorities which send students and some are able to self-fund. Beyond that it's down to various trusts and grants, organisations such as the Arts Council and a lot of fundraising.

It turns out there's a lot more to Henshaws than meets the eye and that they need all the support we can give them.

Water Water Everywhere

And so it was. It poured the day before, the week before, the day after, the week after but on 9th January it was fine. Most of the time.

First stop was at Linton falls. It was hard to know which was the more impressive, the cascade pouring over the rocks or the deafening roar. It was made for a photo, with John Benedict having to be restrained from taking the fatal two steps backwards just before the shutter clicked. Then it was on down the Dalesway to the suspension bridge. Here, fortified by elevenses, we essayed the bridge with Guy perched at the far end to video our tottering progress as we tried not to look down at the churning water. The rest of the river down to Burnsall was equally spectacular but as we turned onto the path to Thorpe there was another challenge – stiles.

Bearing in mind the recent fall of David Crowther, still etched on our collective memory, we addressed each one with extreme care. We were solicitous, considerate, watchful. There was even a move to re-name them 'Crowthers'. You can imagine the conversation: "I've done all the Wainwrights in the Lake District" "Oh that's nothing. I've been through every Crowther between Burnsall and Thorpe." And there are a lot, as every narrow field boasts a crossing point to the next narrow field – but none so treacherous as the one that saw off our erstwhile companion.

Stiles behind us, we descended into the tiny village of Thorpe, which the Scots never sacked because they couldn't find it. Lunch was a truncated affair as the rains descended and we hitched on our rucksacks and set off for Linton with a variety of ablution stops en route. Four hours after departure, damp but undaunted, we regained Linton where the stream was a torrent, the ducks had gone home and we were deeply satisfied with what had been a lovely walk.



Guy (he's the one behind the camera): "Just a couple of steps back please."

And the next day it was raining again.

THE BRIGAND

Hazel and a Legacy

Many of us have known Hazel Haas for years. She's the lovely lady, a Past District Governor, who has been part of the Knaresborough and the Rotary scenes for a long time. But she had a particular reason for talking to us in January. We have been left a legacy but Knaresborough RC were there before us. They got theirs in 2019 and it was a lot bigger than ours. So we wanted to pick her brains. How had Knaresborough dealt with such an unexpected windfall? What changes had they needed to make and what were they doing with the money?

In spite of the fact that our situations are different – their bequest was so large that they had no option but to invest it – there were pointers along the way that we would do well to note. Their donor had included 'Expressions of Wishes' which limited them, morally if not legally, as to how they could spend the money. So nothing on sports, health or conservation but town regeneration, helping with education, restoring public buildings – that's what it was about. They had to look at updating their Charitable Trust documentation and ensure that their trustees were properly protected. They reviewed their giving process to ensure it met Charity Commission standards. They revised their application forms to make sure they had done due diligence on potential recipients. Above all, they tried to include all members in the process. As Hazel said, keeping unity in the Club is more important than any legacy. And she encouraged us to beware of complacency. "It's easy for a Club to become lazy and a members' dining club rather than a Rotary Club."

Hazel and Knaresborough RC are developing their priorities – she told us of one scheme that could cost as much as £200,000. They're taking it steadily, not rushing anything but able to look ahead to a time when the money will have been spent and they'll be able to point to the differences they've made. It's early days for us but it's good to know we have a fund of good advice right on our doorstep.



Hazel Haas MBE

Martin House

Martin House is a remarkable place. Just how remarkable we found out when Becky and Manraj came to talk to us.

Becky is the Regional Fundraiser. Having only worked there since October, she told us she is encouraged, as part of her familiarisation programme, to talk to groups like us. Her enthusiasm for her role and for Martin House shone through. Martin House, based at Boston Spa, brands itself as a 'Children's Hospice' but Becky emphasised that, although the idea of a hospice might induce negative thoughts, there's nothing negative about this place. It provides family-led care for babies, children and young people with life-limiting conditions. It allows families to access the expertise of the team of nurses, doctors and therapists when they need it most. Many children and young people are referred with degenerative conditions that cannot be cured, or with irreversible conditions which cause severe disability.

Martin House, which opened in 1987, has developed an impressive range of facilities. There are fifteen bedrooms where children and their families can stay, an art therapy area, a sensory suite and a state-of-the-art multi-media room for films, music and video games. There are ten family bedrooms as well as three cooled bedrooms where children and young people can stay after death. There is also a large garden with outdoor play facilities, walkways and quiet areas.

Manraj talked to us about her son Arjun. After he suffered a traumatic birth and a brain haemorrhage, Manraj and Arjun's father were told Arjun would remain in a permanent vegetative state and could die at any time. Manraj talked about her son in a way that was courageous and inspired but also very informative about the kind of support Martin House had offered her family. She emphasised that it is not just a hospice but also a safe haven. When things are really hard they will take over and provide high-quality care and support to the whole family. It had already been decided that Arjun would die at Martin House. He lived until February 2020 when he was 17 and when he finally passed away his parents were at his side. It is hard to describe the effect Manraj's story of Arjun's life had on us. Quite simply, we were in awe of her courage and composure. As she said, she would not have been able to do it without the care, compassion, support and counselling she received.

There could have been no more moving tribute to the work of Martin House.

And the challenge: It takes £9m a year to run it, most of which comes from voluntary donations. Anything we could help with there?



President Les with Becky and Manraj

Ripon Cathedral

Godfrey Wilson, a member of the congregation at Ripon Cathedral and a Volunteer Guide gave an engaging and informative presentation on the history of the Cathedral. The pictures of the Cathedral brought to life the fabric and the nooks and crannies of the building, highlighting the journey from Church to Minster to Cathedral.

Going back to the 7th Century, when Ripon was part of Northumbria, we met Wilfrid who was born a noble and to some acclaim on a fiery night in 633 and started studying at the age of fourteen on Lindisfarne. This was a man on a mission literally and his journey took him to Rome via Canterbury, where he studied before moving on to Lyon and Marseilles. He was fascinated by the stone churches and places of worship along the way. He took holy orders and became a monk, returning to Northumbria in 660. He then became the abbot of a newly founded monastery in Ripon. In 664 Wilfrid acted as spokesman for the Roman position, advocating the Roman method for calculating the date of Easter which prompted the king's son Alhfrith, to appoint him Bishop of Northumbria. The contemporary politics of religion meant he was deprived of this post for several years but eventually he regained possession of Ripon and Hexham, his Northumbrian monasteries. Wilfrid died in 710. After his death, he was venerated as a saint.

Hence Wilfrid had a special connection to Ripon and saw the location as ideal for his church, bringing stone masons from all over Europe to construct the finest building. He dedicated the Church to St Peter and later it was dedicated to St Wilfrid. Completed in 672, it was reputed to hold holy relics from Rome in the crypt which made it a pilgrim destination and wealthy as a result.



Ripon Cathedral



Godfrey with President Les

The church was destroyed in 948 AD by the Saxon King, Eadred and again in 1066 after the Norman Conquest but then as part of the Normans' show of strength and piety the third Church was rebuilt by Thomas of Bayeux although little is known of this phase and then again from 1154 to 1181, by the Bishop of York, Roger du Pont le Vec on the site of Wilfrid's Church. This is when the church is generally acknowledged to have become a minster. In the early 1200's Walter de Grey improved the Minster but then a series of disasters unfolded. In the 1300s the east end collapsed and in 1450 the south east tower and central tower were replaced. In 1539 Henry VIII took all the rebuilding money and left the Minster penniless while in 1660 the west tower was taken down and rebuilt in its current form. During the Civil War a Parliamentary troop of cavalry, frustrated at the siege of Skipton, came to Ripon and destroyed much of the fabric of the Minster.

The Minster became Ripon Cathedral in 1836. Its carvings are renowned. The 1850s Mercy Seats, made in part by Lewis Carroll's father, are believed to have inspired the author in Alice in Wonderland in 1864; a major restoration ensued between 1860 and 1880, by Sir Gilbert Scott. Other points of interest including the 1923 War memorial and the oldest crypt in the country make a visit well worthwhile. Events include tours and concerts and there are plans for a new Visitors Centre.

Godfrey's talk was detailed and well-informed and there can be no doubt – Ripon Cathedral is well worth a visit.

David Read

THE BRIGAND

Stethoscope Secrets

Carol Tetlow is a lady of many parts. A published novelist and the owner of a menagerie of animals, she is also a retired GP and that was the bit she was talking about. As a GP you aren't just a doctor. You can be social worker, confidante and comforter and Carol has been all these.

She worked in the practice we attend so I was gratified not to recognise myself in any of her stories. She was of course pleased and proud to be a doctor, indeed so proud that she walked up and down Kings Road so that she could admire the plaque by the door. She spoke of the characters she had met: the man who weighed his poo every day (average 7oz) or the woman who was so proud of her breast enhancement that she showed it (them) to the milkman or the house to which she was called only to find a couple "enjoying vigorous marital relations."

Carol believes that a doctor needs to be inherently nosy and to identify when there's something not quite right in a house in terms either of the people or the building or both. And she's well used to the range of attitudes the presence of a doctor can evince. Some patients believe the doctor's always right, others create a forced amiability, while of course there are those who know their own mind and, having gone to seek a doctor's advice, proceed to argue or even try to dictate.

But a doctor's life can be horrific. Carol was, for a time, a police surgeon and was called, as was David Hoskins as hospital chaplain, to a serious air crash at Dunkeswick, which some of us will remember. As she approached the cordoned area with her medical bag, a policeman said to her, "You can put that away. You won't be needing it."

You could tell that Carol relished two things: being a doctor and telling a story and it was pretty evident that she was very good at both. Entertaining, informative, fascinating, enlightening – her talk was all these. What particularly shone through – and it's important in these days of nurses, ambulance drivers and doctors striking – was her enduring concern for the people she had made it her life's work to help, support and treat. It was indeed a talk for our times



President Les with Carol

Ruined City

Nevil Shute's novel 'Ruined City', the Book Club's January offering, was first published in 1938 and has much of the 1930s about it. The story of how a rich London banker comes, in an act of unimaginable generosity, to rescue a northern shipbuilding town from the effects of the Great Depression and, in doing so, condemns himself to humiliation, was rooted in the economic circumstances of the decade. Indeed several of us saw clear parallels with the Jarrow Crusade of two years earlier and with a Tyneside shipyard being rescued in similar circumstances.

Nevil Shute is a born storyteller. The narrative bustles along and it is therefore a relatively easy read. It holds our interest throughout and covers a lot of ground in just over 200 pages. Henry Warren its hero separates from, then divorces, his wife, has some kind of breakdown, and finishes up in hospital in the desolate northern town of Sharples which is where he resolves to undertake his rescue act which is both a failure and a success (no spoilers – you'll have to read it).

Some of us felt that the book paid a price for the strong narrative thread, that the characters were relatively undeveloped, showing only a limited range of emotions. There was a lot of detail, which suggested Shute knew about the cut-throat financial world in which Warren deals and about the technicalities of setting up a major business. There is a limited romantic interest, which could perhaps have been developed more (the shades of DH Lawrence were invoked) but the ending in which the heroine runs off to find her hero rounds off a well-told yarn.

We'd recommend it, especially with fish pie and crumble.



The not-so-stern critics settle back after a fine Oakdale meal

“
The trouble with quotes on the internet is that it's difficult to determine whether or not they are genuine.
”
- Abraham Lincoln

A teenage boy had just passed his driving test and inquired of his father as to when they could discuss his use of the car. His father said he'd make a deal with his son, "You bring your grades up from a C to a B average, study your Bible a little, and get your hair cut. Then we'll talk about the car." The boy thought about that for a moment, decided he'd settle for the offer, and they agreed on it.

After about six weeks his father said, "Son, you've brought your grades up and I've observed that you have been studying your Bible, but I'm disappointed you haven't had your hair cut."

The boy said, "You know, Dad, I've been thinking about that and I've noticed in my studies of the Bible that Samson had long hair, John the Baptist had long hair, Moses had long hair, and there's even strong evidence that Jesus had long hair." (You're going to love the Dad's reply!) "Did you also notice they all walked everywhere they went..?"



When older people say, "Enjoy them while they are young," they are talking about your knees and hips not your kids.

When was the exact moment you realized humans were not going to make it as a species?



If you ever feel like your brain is inadequate... Think of this guy!

