



Editorial

There are times when we are reminded of our mortality. This edition of The Brigand opens with the reports of two recent deaths each of which touched us deeply. The first, announced minutes before a meeting of our Book Club, was of Her Majesty, and David Hoskins was able to lead us in an immediate and moving tribute. The second was of Honorary Member Ray Kidd, a founder of our Club, a keen former stalwart of our walking group, someone who attended the occasional meeting until relatively recently and a Sunderland supporter to boot.

As a clear reminder of the fact that we are all getting older, three of our number, myself included, passed the eightieth milestone this year. While we are setting forth on our ninth decade resolutely and in reasonable order, there can be no doubt that we are at an age when things begin to go south. Nothing daunted, a niche group still manages to set the golf course on fire each week and it was memorably chastening to find myself the youngest member of a recent foursome. I can scarcely remember when I was the youngest member of anything.

Another passing which has touched us in a different way is that of Denis Smith. Denis, a neighbour of the late Howard Rayner, came to some of our meetings and although he never joined the Club he continued to take an active interest in what we did. So impressed was he with our ability to "Make a Difference" that he left us a most generous legacy to help us to continue with our work of supporting communities.

This presents us with both an opportunity and a challenge. The opportunity is obvious and timely. As we all get older and perhaps lack the fund-raising energy of our salad days, Denis has given us the chance to continue and even extend the work we do. The challenge is to make the legacy work for our communities in the most productive way. It forces us to look afresh at what we do, at what our priorities are and at our ability to arrive at a solution which, in the spirit of Denis' bequest, will enable us to do the most good for the greatest number of people. Rightly used, it is something which will give our Club a timely shot in the arm.

It is an opportunity we must not waste and a challenge we must meet

Peter Wood

Ray Kidd

One of our founder members, Ray Kidd, passed away in September. Until relatively recently we were able to welcome Ray, who remained an Honorary Member, to our Tuesday meetings. Alisdair Stewart, who is now our remaining founder member, gives an appreciation of Ray:



Ray Kidd, a Past President and founder member of Brigantes, died shortly after his 90th birthday on the same day as Her Majesty's funeral, September 19th .

Born in Ferryhill, Co. Durham, he graduated from Leeds University and rose to become MD of Farnell Electronics. Ray was part of Brigantes' Inaugural Dinner and the Charter Presentation in the Cairn Hotel in 1980 when twenty nine members launched our Rotary Club. His classification read 'Electronic Manufacturing' and his first contribution was to recommend that one meeting per month should be a business meeting. In 1994-95 he was Club President, the year when Barry launched support for 'Essential Needs' and David Russell set up Santa's Grotto at Asda. Ray always supported the annual Technology Tournament. Light relief for Ray and Dorothy came from the Scarborough District Rally and a 60s Night for our own Teddy Boys! He continued to give long and active support to Carers' Resource and Crossroads.

A main relaxation and hobby was a weekly walk into the Dales and introducing friends to his love of Langdale in the Lake District. Many holiday expeditions included walking in Austria, Oregon and Tuscany as well as the Levada walks on Madeira.

Ray passed away at home, cared for so well by his three daughters, Tricia, Susan, and Julie plus latterly the district nurse. It was sad that he had lost his sight in recent years, but not his sense of humour!

Alisdair Stewart

Her Late Majesty

It was perhaps serendipitous that we had to cancel our speaker at our first meeting following the death of Her Majesty the Queen for it gave members a chance to reminisce about their particular memories of our longest-serving sovereign. Graham Chilvers reports:

Guy had the closest contact while curator of the Armouries when he had a private dinner with the Queen in the Tower of London. He had also led several royal parties around historic buildings in London.



Memories of Her Majesty

I also had a face to face conversation with the Queen when she visited a trade show in Fort William on the celebration of the 250th Anniversary of the granting of the town's Royal Charter when I had to explain in an interesting manner the uses and benefits of a great lump of Banavie Granite.

Tony, while in the RAF, was a member of several parades which were inspected by the Queen or other Royals but never had the privilege of speaking to them. His principal claim to fame was that on a picture of the Queen attending the Air Force Royal Annual Parade, which hangs in the RAF Club in London, he was "almost on it" by being just to the right of the last person shown on the bottom right.

President Les also related how on a couple of occasions he attended the Royal Garden Party in the grounds of Buckingham Palace along with several thousand other people. He said the most memorable thing was the quality of the catering!

All in all it was a very convivial evening.

(A note from the Editor: Jean and I were also privileged to attend a Buckingham Palace Garden Party in the 1980s. It was a fine affair and I concur with Les about the catering. Such sandwiches! The entire Royal Family was there. My abiding memories are of the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh stopping to chat and of the Duke having a long conversation with the chap next to me about the D of E Award scheme, as well as the Queen Mother stopping for no one but making a beeline for the royal refreshment tent doubtless to down an early G&T.)

Graham Chalmers



Graham, Graham and Les and not a custard pie in sight

Graham is now the only full time member of staff on the Harrogate Advertiser in Harrogate. There is not even a photographer. A dramatic change has taken place in the newspaper industry and he outlined what has happened in his talk.

He began by saying that as a Scot he loved both Edinburgh and Harrogate as they were both splendid places to live in.

The Herald buildings in Harrogate were once a hive of great activity and he has been part of that for decades. He has done most of the jobs at the paper and his passion for the work has not diminished. He said there used to be a drinking culture there but it never interfered with the work, and it was normal back in the day. He also remembered with affection the custard pie fights but when the editor Jean passed by they decided not to throw one at her.

He was asked if the Stray Ferret had affected the Advertiser and he said it was an irritant, but that was all. He said that the Advertiser always had several stories that the Ferret never got. He maintained that the printed word has more impact, and that the online Advertiser was very good too. He was sure the paper was relevant and significant in the life of the community.

Although the Advertiser now has a circulation of only five thousand it is still profitable, which seems quite remarkable. He said that Covid had been a disaster for the paper. Not everyone is a supporter though; he has been harassed by a member of the public who shouted at him, "Bloody Harrogate Advertiser". He is sad that in the past as a reporter you could pop into the police station, or a local school and always be welcomed but those days have passed. "No one talks to you anymore," he lamented. "My job is to paint a picture through facts. That is what a reporter does," he said.

Graham clearly has a passion for the printed word in local newspapers and a massive commitment to their future but some might have been left wondering for how much longer?

David Hoskins

Supporting Older People



Kate with a representative older person

There was a good turn-out to hear Kate Rogata from Supporting Older People, perhaps because some of our number might have had an interest to declare. If so they can only have been reassured.

Founded in 1982, SOP is essentially a local organisation serving Harrogate, Knaresborough and the surrounding villages. It has three part-time staff and a board of eight trustees. 28% of the population of Harrogate and District are over 65 and the Covid pandemic, with its associated lockdowns, has increased the sense of social isolation and anxiety among many in this group.

SOP offers a range of activities and support. Free long-term befriending is a crucial area of work and can be rewarding for both volunteer and client. There is a whole range of social activities including a 'Tea and Talk' monthly meeting at the Crown with speakers and entertainment. There's a monthly 'Dining Out' and various outings, most recently to Scarborough, Masham and Skipton. There's a weekly 'Music and Movement' group, a Christmas party at the Crown supported by Round Table, and regular cinema visits to the 'Everyman' in town. Covid was obviously a difficult time but phone befriending, meals deliver-

ies and gifts (including some sponsored by Brigantes) helped to make it more bearable.

SOP has an annual turnover of around £70,000. It is given £11,000 by North Yorkshire County Council but this is likely to end in March. Otherwise it relies on donations from individuals and businesses and on its own fund-raising initiatives. It costs around £60 to recruit and induct each new volunteer, of whom there are currently 150 serving around 300 clients. Each volunteer is asked to offer a minimum of an hour a week. Referrals can be made from a range of sources such as GPs, Social Workers and Occupational Therapists and volunteers and clients are carefully matched. Kate quoted a few of the many success stories in which people have been given a new social life, new interests and even been reunited with family members.

Kate is keen to talk to local groups and there's more information on SOP's website and on Twitter and Facebook. She was very grateful for the help we've been able to give and, now that we know more about SOP, I'm sure it'll be added to our list of regular beneficiaries.

Witches and Stiles

A fine Monday in August was a unique day for walking in and around Galphay, fringing Azerley and Kirkby Malzeard as well as taking in 'The Witch of the Woods'. This was an old cottage well refurbished and uninhabited, which suggested, we should look out for the 'witch'! We travelled some six and a half miles in beautiful countryside that revealed some seven challenging stiles and, to say the least, took us through some dense vegetation. The scenery was spectacular, including many acres of wheat and oats. In case we got lost our leader was John Wood who never put a foot wrong as indeed neither did John Benedict! A fine warm day with much peace and tranquillity. It was a walk not to be missed.

David Crowther



The well-used John Benedict commemorative tree trunk



The loneliness of being a leader

THE BRIGAND

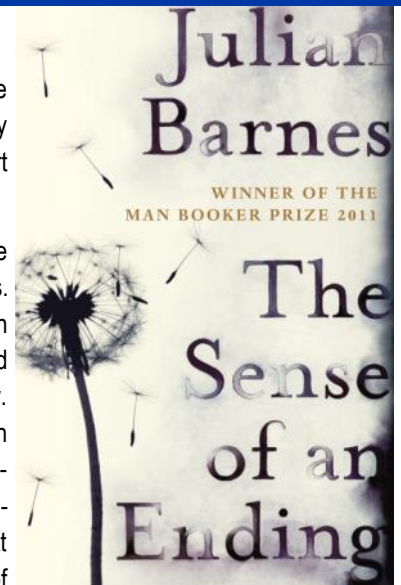
Book Club - The Sense of an Ending

This was an appropriate title for the September meeting of the Book Club. Less than an hour before we met the death was announced of Her Majesty the Queen. The atmosphere was understandably subdued and we were grateful to David Hoskins who spoke of the day's events and led us in a short prayer and a few moments' silence.

We recovered to do full justice to Oakdale's excellent cuisine and Julian Barnes' book, which won the 2011 Booker Prize, provoked a lively discussion. It's essentially a book of two inter-connected halves. The first features a group of four adolescent schoolboys one of whom, Tony, is the narrator. It is, in part, an account of his singularly unsuccessful affair with the seemingly frigid Veronica, remembered from the viewpoint of his sixties. Thus it becomes an examination of memory and its unreliability. When another of their number, Adrian, has what appears to be a more productive relationship with Veronica, Tony is furious and writes an angry and personal letter. Adrian commits suicide though nobody seems to know why. In the second part, Tony has moved on, married, had a daughter and divorced. However a solicitor's letter brings the past back into focus and starts a chain of events that neither Tony nor Veronica could have predicted and there is, moreover, a massive twist at the end of the book. Any more would constitute a 'spoiler'.

It's a short novel – only 150 pages – but very concentrated. There was general agreement that it is beautifully written and that it evokes the world of the fifties and sixties peopled by pretentious and over-sexed teenagers with clarity and humour. Some of our group found the ending a bit mystifying and felt the need to go back over the book to check various details. In truth, it is a book better read twice, when, at a second reading things fall into place. And at 150 pages a second reading isn't all that taxing.

If you'd like to give it a go I know where you can borrow a copy.



RYLA

This year we sponsored Emma Boyd from St Aidan's for the RYLA (Rotary Youth Leadership Award) programme and she came with her parents and Rotary Mentor Chris Redfeam to talk to us about her experiences.

Getting up at 6.00am doesn't normally figure on Emma's schedule but she had to do it every day for a week and be ready for the obligatory PT session. And that was only the start. Emma said she felt like every day was a week pushed into 24 hours. Right from the start everyone was "bundled together" in a variety of icebreakers which stressed the importance of being close to one another without feeling embarrassed and of learning to trust and respect each other. Team activities included building a 'bivvy' and sleeping in it, creating and using a 'traverse' – a zip wire across a river – and a 'murder hunt'. Emma's photos showed how well the groups bonded and how their teamwork enabled them to succeed.

Emma paid tribute to the support and guidance she and her fellow participants received, the feedback given to her and the sense of independence and development of teamwork skills which the course enabled her to develop. It's a privilege for us to be able to sponsor young people for this course – and we've been doing it for a number of years. This is Keith Prichard's last year of involvement in RYLA so particular thanks to him for all he's done and to all those members who have supported him.



L to R Mr Brian Boyd, Mrs Alison Boyd, President Les, RYLA Awardee Emma Boyd, Mentor Rotarian Chris Redfeam

THE BRIGAND

Bowling Along

Members of Harrogate Bowling Club were once more the most hospitable and long-suffering of hosts as Brigantes novices and their partners were let loose on their hallowed turf. They patiently offered coaching as the wilder of our members sprayed bowls with the wrong bias around the green or dropped their bowls like depth charges as their tutors winced. Good humour prevailed as the skies darkened, rain began and the sport concluded on a soggy note. However spirits soon revived when the bar opened and emergency rations from Olivers Fish and Chip emporium arrived.

It was a thoroughly enjoyable evening and we are most grateful to our hosts.



The enthusiastic amateurs . . .



. . . and their long-suffering tutors

Cheque Presentation



In recognition of their customary hospitality and unfailing patience, President Les presented Judith Chappel and Frank Devaney from Harrogate Bowling Club with a cheque for £100 to be donated to a charity of their choice.

Charter Night

This was a Charter Night with a difference. Gone were the black ties and the swish of medals. Lounge suits were de rigeur though, in a nod to formality, Chains of Office glinted amid the splendour of the Bronte Room. This was a meeting of three clubs, Knaresborough, Harrogate and ourselves and our main guests were our new District Governor Malcolm Tagg and his wife Judith, Assistant District Governor Susan Rogers and the Presidents of our sister clubs, Ann Percival (Harrogate) and Jim Moorhouse (Knaresborough). It was also an evening tinged with sadness. We were meeting the day after the late Queen's funeral and with that event uppermost in our minds we toasted Her Majesty, stood in silence and then sang the national anthem. Additionally we also received the sad news of the death of Ray Kidd, one of our founder members and a Club stalwart for many years.

Introduced by the ADG Susan Rogers, our new governor immediately endeared himself by promising to be brief and not to 'hammer' Membership. What he did do was to congratulate Brigantes on their forty-plus years of service, observing that we must be doing something right. He encouraged us to reflect on "Is it fun?" which chimes exactly with what we've been trying to do. He also touched on the fact that only 19% of Yorkshire and North Lincs. members are women (which I suspect is a lot more that it would have been ten years ago) and did let slip that the membership of his own Denby Dale club is in the low twenties. He also focussed on help for Ukraine; £130,000 has been raised across the District and we have made our own sizeable contribution to that. He also highlighted RYLA, having visited and seen the value of the courses, which gave the President the opportunity to announce that we were doubling our participation next year. His overall message was "Do Rotary the way you want to do it" and there can be no doubt that is where the future lies.

As we emerged from the Crown it was not yet 9.30. That must rate as the shortest Charter Night on record but we had dined with our fellow-Rotarians, enjoyed an evening of conversation and laughter and met our new DG – confirmation if it was needed that Rotary in our town is alive and well.



*L to R: Jim Moorhouse (President-Elect Knaresborough RC, Susan Rogers (Assistant District Governor),
Brigantes President Les Ellington, Judith Tagg, Malcolm Tagg (District Governor), Ann Percival (President Harrogate RC)*

THE BRIGAND

Louis Armstrong

Louis blew for us on a Tuesday in September. If I had to take one of his recordings to the mythical desert island it would be 'West End Blues' with its wonderful opening cascade of notes that, back in 1928 left fellow trumpeters bewildered and disbelieving. Sure enough Roy Tate, a fellow Rotarian from Otley, included it in his talk on Louis and outlined how the jazzman's life mirrored much of what happened in the US in the twentieth century.

Born into abject poverty in New Orleans in or around 1900 (nobody is really sure) Louis learned to play the cornet in a Waif's Home before honing his craft on the riverboats that plied the Mississippi. Eventually King Oliver summoned him to Chicago where he played second trumpet in Oliver's band before going on to make the legendary Hot Five and Hot Seven recordings. It is no exaggeration to say that they completely revolutionised the notion of jazz and had a lasting effect on 20thC popular American music.

Although he didn't meet the early death of many jazzmen, his life was not without controversy. His mother was probably a prostitute and his first wife certainly was. He was married four times. He was a daily smoker of marijuana and he could not, as a jazzman and via his hustling manager Joe Glazer, escape links with organised crime and gang warfare. Throughout his life he had problems with his lip owing to the fact that he had essentially taught himself how to hold the trumpet and had to stop playing for months at a time to allow it to recover. Nevertheless he achieved worldwide fame as an instrumentalist, singer (many regard him as the finest-ever jazz vocalist) and all-round entertainer. He was often criticised for his persistent high-register playing, for clowning around onstage and for playing up to 'Uncle Tom' caricatures. He ignored it all and even when late in life he suffered from chronic heart problems, he insisted on continuing to play for his adoring public. His ability to turn his hand to anything was fully realised in 1964 when his recording of 'Hello Dolly' not only topped the US Hit Parade but knocked The Beatles off top spot in doing so.

Louis Armstrong died in 1971 having left a remarkable musical legacy. There are some who maintain he should have made more of his unique talent, that he should have continued to develop as a jazz trumpeter rather than settle for being simply an entertainer but that was not in the nature of the man. He loved being on stage, revelled in the adulation of his audiences and is remembered with enormous affection throughout the world. We are grateful to Roy for pointing us in his direction and highlighting his eventful life.



Louis Hits High C



Roy with President Les and Tony

Titus Salt and Saltaire

David Shaw has considerable knowledge about the history of the Titus Salt empire which spans from 1803 to 1876 including five separate textile mills with 2,500 workers who were provided with houses, ensuring their loyalty to the surrounding village of Saltaire. This area boasted Alms Houses, School, Church, Hospital and a large Community Centre, thriving for 160 years and ensuring a large workforce for Salts Mills. Unfortunately Titus Salt Junior took over from his father with a gift of £60,000, that was frittered away, thus creating the liquidation of Saltaire in 1892. James Roberts was part of a management team between 1848 and 1935 and was responsible for building 850 houses for an existing workforce. In 1987 Jonathan Silver carried out regeneration of the mill complex until 2011. It still sports a number of David Hockney paintings. David Shaw provided information about a further factory at Dayton USA during the Salt Dynasty which mined coal and iron developing a large site, with a main line railway. History research shows links between Harrogate (West Park Church, Dr Barnardo's (1910), Milne Field Mansion, 20 Spring Grove) and members of Titus Salt's family. But that is another story!

This was an excellent presentation by David, showing the enormity of the overall project. Everyone at the talk, at some stage of their lives had visited Salts Mill!

David Crowther



David with President Les and Tony

There's a Dragon About!



A story missed by all the media was that on a Saturday in October a dragon – could it be the Last Dragon? – found its way to Harrogate and was spotted at various places around the town. Fortunately our intrepid cameraman was there to capture key moments which will be used to publicise the forthcoming Kids Aloud concert. This particular dragon found time to put a coin into our Wishing Well, have a game of tennis in the Valley Gardens, join our sister club's Rotary Wood campaign, locate a fire engine to dampen unnecessary flames, do a bit of shopping at ASDA, spot a road named after him, chat up the ladies, have lunch at Wetherspoons and then relax on a comfortable couch at Smith's The Rink. Not bad for one morning!





President Les and Diane with John Harris

We're used – though perhaps we shouldn't be – to pictures of refugee camps across the world and illegal migrants crossing the Channel. According to John Harris from Harrogate DoS there are 100 million refugees world-wide. What we're less aware of is the problem in our midst, here in Harrogate and Knaresborough. But John knows all about it because he and his organisation are at the sharp end, trying to co-ordinate provision for people who, for one reason or another, have been forced to flee their own country. Somalia, Eritrea, Syria, Iran – these are familiar names to us but of course recently another has been added – Ukraine. Here at Brigantes we have raised thousands of pounds via the dinner and auction and St Peter's café to help Ukrainian refugees in this country.

According to John eight million people have been internally displaced in Ukraine and six million have left the country. So in addition to the 25 families already in Harrogate and District from various other countries, there are now approximately 250 Ukrainians, more than half under the age of eighteen. In addition to a government re-settling scheme, there is also a hosting scheme operating for Ukrainian families. This is normally a twelve-month arrangement and these are usually one-parent families since men with three or fewer children are required to stay and join the army.

Local provision by Harrogate DoS includes weekly drop-in sessions at the Acorn Centre near Waitrose, English Language sessions (some are quite fluent while others have virtually no English) and social events such as a day at the seaside or a communal viewing of the Scotland v Ukraine football match. But there are difficult issues. HDoS is a charity and all its members are volunteers with, inevitably, limited time to offer. While most hosting arrangements work really well, some don't and at least a quarter of them won't be renewed after six months. It seems inevitable that, eventually, some will be consigned to B&B accommodation or hotels. But on the positive side 75% of hostings have gone well and there is now a full-time co-ordinator for North Yorkshire. Schooling arrangements for the children seem to be going well and, while the migrants can claim benefits, many have found employment. A few have, via the marvels of technology, even been able to continue working on their old jobs in Ukraine – online from Harrogate!

John's main appeal to us covers two areas. Firstly volunteers – more are needed if organisations like HDoS are to cope. Equally importantly they need money to continue their current provision – and that's something we might just be able to help with.

Three Craven Villages

A fine Autumn day brought us to the duckpond at Rylstone, home of the Calendar Girls, for our October walk. The sky stayed blue all day, the views were as clear as a bell and, with David with us, God was most certainly in his heaven.

A short field path led us to Hetton and past the famed 'Angel' which was above our pay grade for coffee on this occasion. However a delectable green way led us unerringly to a strategically-placed seat with views stretching as far as Pendle and the Trough of Bowland. The seat was solidly built and mounted on concrete, built to last, unlike the unfortunate Wolds variety which we successfully trashed in the summer. Photos were taken against a background of mid-Wharfedale before we powered on (bit of an exaggeration – ed.) through the tiny hamlet of Flasby and on to our lunch stop where the more modest seating comprised nothing more than a few desultory stones unearthed by the farmer. But it served.

Then it was on through various boggy bits – not had those for a while – and then, via an enormous highland cow, a railway arch in the middle of a field and a stile which it took your editor several attempts to scale, we regained Rylstone.

And still the sun shone.



Some of the ancient glories of Wharfedale

Coincidences

Life can be stranger than fiction. "Who'd have believed it?" is a common refrain when it throws up events which are, quite literally, incredible. They can scarcely be believed. Had they not actually happened no one would think them possible. What makes the mind boggle to its roots is a gathering of such coincidences. One you might believe. Two could be . . . well, a coincidence. But fourteen? You kidding?

Yet that's what we were treated to on a Tuesday in October. Several involved meeting someone not seen for many years. So there were Keith and Moya's unlikely repeat meetings with Jack and Marigold everywhere from Ruislip and Brixham to the Isle of Wight. David Russell's brother's best friend turned up in Cambodia and John Butterworth's long-lost ex-colleague and friend turned up walking round the harbour in Ayios Nikolaos in Crete – as you do!

Les had a friend who left Summerbridge when they were both twelve – so it must have been a long time ago – only to come across him on a French campsite and for good measure to meet again on the homebound Channel ferry. Tony spoke of two families in New York discovering that their children went to the same school in Australia. Your editor came across, in a field in Nidderdale, a hitherto unknown fellow Rotarian, only to discover entirely by chance that their grandmothers had been sisters.

Some were recent. Liz Bukinshaw parked next to a car she thought looked like one they had just sold. It did – but the number plate was just one digit different. And David Hoskins had found himself that very morning ringing someone he'd never spoken to before only to find that the guy was taking the call, as chance would have it, directly in front of David's house. There were others – but you get the idea. The less likely something seems, the more likely it is that it has happened somewhere at some time.

And then, of course, there's the famous Birthday Paradox whereby in a room of just 23 people there's a 50-50 chance of at least two people having the same birthday and in a room of 75 there's a 99.9% chance.

Oh, come off it!

Rotters!



Did you know that 4.5m tonnes of edible food is wasted in the UK every year? Or that it would fill 90 Royal Albert Halls? Or that the average household throws away the equivalent of eight meals a week? Neither did I but I do now thanks to Ian Clare, for Ian is a Rotter.

North Yorkshire Rotters were set up by NYCC and York City Council sixteen years ago. The scheme is co-ordinated from the Council offices in Northallerton and its mission is to reduce the amount of household waste in the area. Ian has been a volunteer for ten years and his role is to spread the gospel with groups like ours. He has two simple messages. The first is that we throw away too much food. The second is that we should compost more.

The food problem can be addressed in various ways. Clearly publicity is important and waste has been steadily falling in recent years – it is now down by 18% since 2007. The 'Love Food Hate Waste' website offers recipes to help cut waste. Landfill has been reduced by 90% since the opening of the Allerton Park Waste Recovery Plant. There are also things individual households can do such as date checking (you can freeze food up to 24 hours before the 'use by' date), planning meals more carefully, storing food correctly and using leftovers. It's all common sense but lots of us don't do it.

Ian has a 'thing' about composting – and so he should have when you consider that more than 30% of biodegradable waste can be composted. There are the 'browns' such as egg boxes, straw, hay, wool, card and paper – even the contents of your vacuum cleaner bag. And there are the 'greens' – grass cuttings (not too many), peelings, cut flowers, tea bags, coffee grounds and even nettles. Then there are the more obvious items like autumn leaves, brassica stumps (chop them first), fruit and the less obvious like hair and conifer clippings. There's an art to composting and Ian showed us examples of the various ways it can be done.

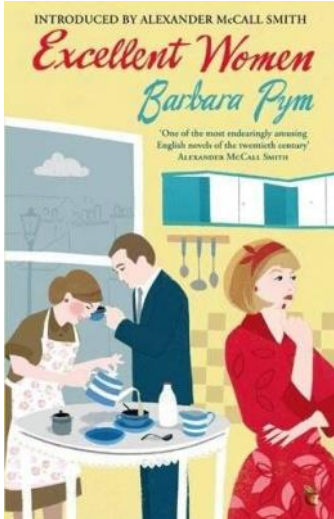
Many of us were amazed at the sheer amount of wasted food which is neither eaten nor composted. We have rarely listened to so much rot in one evening and it certainly gave us all plenty to think about.



Chief Rotter Ian Clare with President Les and Diane

THE BRIGAND

Excellent Women



This was the Book Club's last choice of 2022, selected by Chris Graville, late of this parish. First published in 1952, it was Barbara Pym's second novel and is one of her best-known. Her reputation has suffered the ups and downs of outrageous fashion. A chronicler of the intricacies of suburban life, her writing draws on a restricted palette and was widely read in the 1950s. However things changed with the Swinging Sixties and all that followed and poor old Pym was sunk with ne'er a trace, hopelessly out of tune with the times. However come the 1980s she was championed by, among others, the poet Philip Larkin and enjoyed a renaissance which continues today, though with more than a flavour of attached nostalgia.

The book is a tale of life in a London parish. To be honest, not a lot happens. The narrator is Mildred Lathbury (some of the names say it all), a thirty-something spinster whose condition is due to her not having a clue about how to acquire a husband and not being sure if she wants one anyhow. Her world is peopled by some pretty faceless men and some quite idiosyncratic women. It's less the characters and more the little snatches of humour – the description of a jumble sale, the conversations with a garrulous Welsh cleaner, Mildred's fear of Winifred, the vicar's sister coming to live with her – which stick in the mind. It's all very small-scale and the humour is very English but several of our group found that its attraction.

This isn't a book for those who prefer stronger meat in their reading. But it's beautifully written, with a balance and elegance that verges on self-indulgence. And why not? There was a majority view that it gave great pleasure on a restricted canvas and this was reflected in our final marks out of ten. It wasn't my cup of tea but I fear Barry and I were out of step with our colleagues.

Barbara Pym

I was surprised (and so was Chris) at how popular it proved. Why not see what you think? Give it a try and see if you join a growing list of Barbara Pym fans.



Thruscross in the Mist

"Go west and the fog will clear," said the forecast. We did and it didn't.

Nothing daunted David Crowther, our nominated leader for the day, Guy Wilson, John Wood and your Editor braved the elements. Actually they didn't take much braving. OK, it was a bit murky but it was lovely squelching through the woods and observing how, in spite of recent rains, the water level of Thruscross reservoir was way down.

Our walk was a circumnavigation of the entire reservoir and all went well until a path slippage forced us to take a detour. This involved a difficult wall stile from which the bottom step was missing. Three of us landed safely. The fourth, our leader, put his weight on what turned out to be a loose stone and fell. His wrist became painful and swollen but he had lunch, smiled for the camera and carried on – true grit!

Inevitably the route back was quieter. Where there should have been views there were none. The vegetation dripped and we picked our way with care, not wanting to risk a second tumble. It was a fine walk, slightly spoiled by the weather but much marred by David's injury which was later confirmed to be a fracture.

We wish you well David for a swift recovery and trust, come 2023, you'll be striding out with us again.



*A misty day at Thruscross
with John Wood behind the camera and David smiling through the pain*

Hand to Hand in Gaza

There can be few grimmer places to live than Gaza. Under permanent blockade from Israel, run by Hamas who are intent on making it an Islamic state and with only two entry points, one from Egypt, the other from Lebanon, which are open infrequently, its people are impoverished, disenfranchised and isolated. Several Rotary Clubs, our own included, have considered sending money but, without any guarantee it would be used properly or even get there, have hesitated to commit.

Les Bown has tried to do something about that. He's a Rotarian but not a conventional one. A member of the Rotary Global Hub which boasts members from all over the country and farther afield, Les has hosted and worked with Rotary Peace Fellows since 2004. He has a seemingly endless range of contacts all over the world. I'm not actually sure how he remembers all their names. Only once in his entire talk did his memory falter.

Historically there has been little help for people in Gaza from outside agencies. There isn't even a single Rotary club there. But at the Bradford Rotary Peace Seminar in 2020 the message went out that Rotary should get involved in Gaza and that is when 'Hand in Hand' was launched. Initially its aim was to try to address some of the problems caused by soaring Covid infection rates by providing Covid awareness to 250 families including food baskets and hygiene kits. It was decided to appeal for money via 'Crowdfunder UK' and quite quickly £1,000 was raised but it proved impossible to get it into Gaza. 'Hand in Hand' was even on the verge of returning it to donors when, after a year of frustration, an organisation called 'Save Youth Future Society' which promotes Youth Community Support in Gaza agreed to help. They have an account with a bank in Gaza City and audit all donations. So far food has been secured for 50 families for one month.

Les is hopeful but realistic about the future. Money continues to be needed for food but whatever programme is eventually developed must be sustainable; it must be able to keep going and develop. The main point Les wanted to make is that there is now an auditable path for charitable donations which, as far as Rotary is concerned, can be made in the first instance to the RC of Monmouth whose President happens to be an Egyptian with some of the right contacts. So, although we've been cautious about sending money to Gaza in the past, perhaps now is the time, with Les' help, to look at it again



. Les Bown with President-Elect Bill

THE BRIGAND

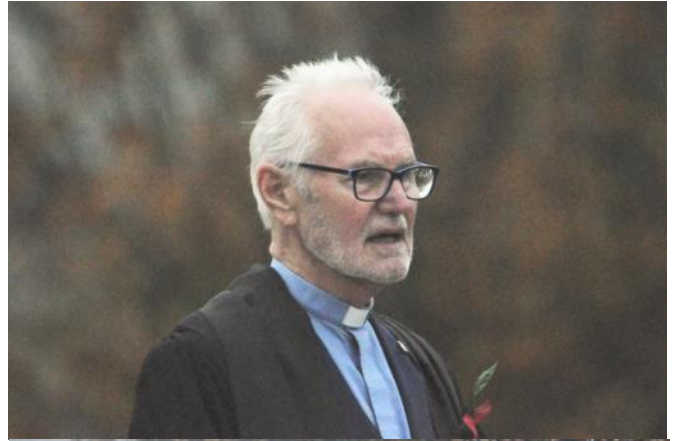
Remembrance Service

There's just something about our Remembrance Service. Cenotaphs and memorials are all well and good and they provide a public focus for remembrance of war dead which is entirely appropriate. Those we remember were part of communities and it is right and proper that those communities in cities, towns and villages across the country should come together in a central place and lay their wreaths where they can be seen by all who pass by.

At Stonefall on a foggy November Sunday David told the story of a WW2 air crew killed when their plane crashed in the south of England. One of them lived in Bower St in Harrogate. "And," said David, "he's buried here at Stonefall – just over there," and he pointed to a short line of graves. And that's when I knew what makes our service so special: its intimacy. The people whose sacrifice we remember are here around us; we are amongst them.

David's address and prayers, the accompanying music, the wreath layers drawn from all parts of our community, the soldiers and cadets, the young school students laying a single red carnation on each grave and the congregation – all joined the tribute in what was another memorable service.

Thanks to Guy and his team for all their hard work.



BRIGANTES EVENING MEETING ROLLING DIARY & DUTIES ROTA

2019	Evening Meetings	Host to Speaker	Host to Visitors	Cashier
Nov 29th	Cancelled			
Dec 6th	A Night with a Difference - Dianne & Jean	David Read	Andy Morrison	Barry Pollard
Dec 9th - 10th	Wesley Craft Fair , Grotto & Cafe			
Dec 13th	The Legacy - The Way Forward, Club members views & thoughts	David Russell	Peter North	Keith Prichard
Dec 20th	Christmas Party			
Dec 27th	No Meweting			
Jan 3rd	Noi Meeting			
Jan 10th	T B A	Ruth Townrow	Barry Pollard	David Russell
Jan 17th	T B A	Bob Tunnicliffe	Keith Prichard	Diane Stokes
				Page 13



A captain notices a light in the distance, on a collision course with his ship.
He turns on his signal lamp and sends, "Change your course, 10 degrees west."
The light signals back, "Change yours, 10 degrees east."
The captain gets a little annoyed. He signals, "I'm a US Navy captain. You must change your course, sir."
The light signals back, "I'm a Seaman First Class. You must change your course, sir."
Now the captain is mad. He signals, "I'm an aircraft carrier. I'm not changing my course."
The light signals back a final message: "I'm a lighthouse. Your call."

**People say that drinking milk makes you stronger.
Drink 5 glasses of milk and try to move a wall.
Can't?
Now drink 5 glasses of wine. The wall moves by itself!**

The cashier told me "Strip Down Facing Me".
By the time I realized they meant the debit card, it was too late.

Paddy goes on a First Aid course, the instructor asks, "What would you do if your child swallowed the front door key?" Paddy said, "Climb through the window!!"