

THE BRIGAND



Editor : Peter Wood

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Editorial

Summer can be a bit of a fallow time in Rotary. Despite the best efforts of whoever it was stuck a pin into the donkey's tail of a calendar and decided the Rotary year should end on 31st June, members still do inconvenient things like visiting family and going on holiday. We were delighted that Bill and Diane agreed to stay on for a further year as President and Secretary respectively, that Mike Hammond agreed to take over as Treasurer and that David Cresswell joined the Club Council for the first time.

Tony has continued to put on a rich and varied programme of Tuesday evening speakers from D Day to Life in Oz taking in The Brontës, Northern Powergrid and Harrogate Convention Centre. He also managed the Ultimate Impossible Quiz in which the winners struggled to 17 out of 50 as well as another bowls evening with our friends from Harrogate Bowling Club.

The Book Club has read its way through the summer months and sampled the delights of Oakdale Golf Club's cuisine. The Walking Group strode out amid the summer beauties of Copgrove and Burton Leonard while the golfers have had to forsake the delights of Spofforth for the challenges of Wyke.

But the Ballon d'Or must belong to the Legacy which has moved on to the point where we have now allocated the first £50,000 to local good causes. There have been distinct phases. The first was the completion of the new website which went 'live' at the end of April. Alongside this was the construction of the application form and further details which could then be accessed via the website. Organisations were given the entire month of May to complete their applications and we were delighted to receive over sixty. The range across the community was remarkable as were the amounts of money requested – from three figures up to the allowed maximum of £10,000. The Selection Group then took over and, as a result of several sieving stages, came up with a list of fourteen recommended successful applications which they managed to shoe-horn into the prescribed £50,000. They did a remarkable job and members were happy to give their unanimous approval to the recommendations. Much remains to be done before we can move on to request applications for the second £50,000.

Our thanks are due particularly to those members of the local community without whom we simply could not have managed as well as to a number of Brigantes members who put in a stint in areas of work with which they were not necessarily familiar. Thanks to them all we can look forward to the second stage with a lot more confidence.

Finally, personal thanks to those members who write reports when I'm not available – in this issue Moya Prichard, David Cresswell and Guy Wilson. Thanks also to Guy who glides around at meetings with his camera and produces the evidence that what we write about really did happen.

Peter Wood

David and Liz Down Under

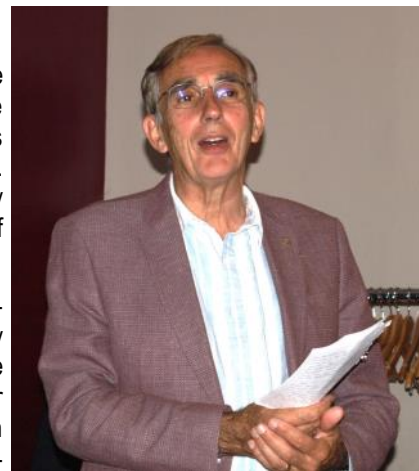
David (ex-President) and Liz Hayes have two children living in Australia and they want to emigrate so that they can be with their family. However, this is proving a very slow process as there are 140,000 people on the waiting list and priority is being given to people of working age and students wanting to study. They have been on the list for several years and may be so for a few years yet. Currently they are splitting their time between here and Oz, summers here and winters there. They have sold their house here and are looking for an apartment. In their talk they gave us a flavour of Rotary in Perth, Western Australia, and how life in Oz differs from the UK.

Swan Rotary in Perth is of a similar size to Harrogate Brigantes with slightly younger active personnel and a Chairman who makes no secret of his convict ancestors. They meet every Monday and if there are five Mondays in the month the last is a social event. They organise and manage monthly markets in the area which generate about £1000 on each occasion. Sheep shearing for people who have a pet sheep, of which there are many, is also an annual event but you can't turn up with the wrong type of sheep (those bred for meat) or one that is wet. Profits go to charity. Caravanning is also a popular social event, going north in the winter and south in the summer and making use of very well-serviced campsites. David and Liz used theirs to travel east 10,000 km across the Nullarbor plain (Nullarbor = No Trees) to see their other offspring. Fuel is cheaper (petrol £1/litre) and food costs are about the same as in the UK, but eating out is more expensive. Drugs, alcohol abuse and obesity (due to junk food) among the indigenous Aborigines is a common problem resulting in a higher percentage of them ending up in prison even though they represent just 5% of the population. Attitudes to this differ widely.

Generally Australia is somewhat behind the times, with double glazing, solar panels and electric cars almost non-existent. Rural house building also differs with wooden houses with tin roofs built to last about 30 years being very common. Outdoor life is very sport-orientated. Ozzy rules football is the most crazy sport to see and understand. Career opportunities for the young are better than in the UK and employers are more open to new ideas; generally there is a 'make do' attitude. Medical services are more efficient than in the UK because it is based on a hybrid system of payment and government support.

Hopefully their wait will not be too long and the Brigantes members wished them well in the usual manner.

David Cresswell



David back in Blighty

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D Day

We're fortunate in Brigantes to have our own eminent military historian and, just two days before the 80th anniversary of D Day, Guy was on hand to give us his assessment of the momentous day and the unbelievably detailed preparations that preceded it.

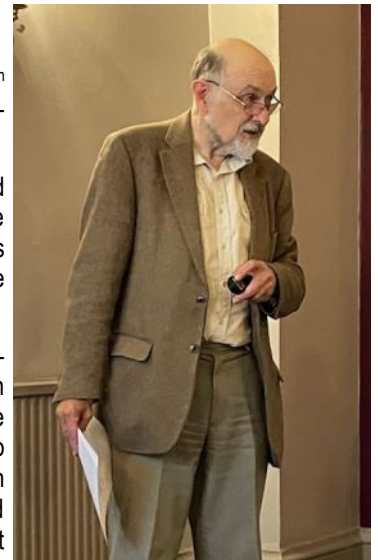
These included the inevitable bombing of German defences, the development of floating harbours and amphibious tanks and a variety of distractions to keep the Germans guessing as to where and when the assault would come. There were dummy vessels and tanks and even mini submarines whose occupants stole up to the beaches in the dark beforehand to take samples of sand and earth which would help the allies to know where best to land their heavy weaponry.

There was a lot of confusion on both sides. Both Churchill and Allanbrooke were concerned that the invasion could be "a ghastly disaster" and weren't as enthusiastic for it as Eisenhower and the Americans. On the German side there was disagreement among the top generals. Rommel felt it best to try to drive the invaders off the beaches before they gained a foothold. Von Rundstedt wanted to draw the allies on into France where the Germans had numerical superiority. Neither was absolutely certain where the invasion would take place. To make matters worse from the allied side, the weather caused a postponement and Guy focussed on the heavy responsibility of the forecasters in advising the generals. They had to get it right.

Guy used his experience at the Armouries to focus on the events of the day itself and how we can commemorate it. He had access to individual accounts of men who were first off the landing craft. There were many fatalities but fewer than had been anticipated. There was tragedy, horror and, oddly, instances of comedy. We heard from Walter Downs, who had been interviewed by Guy, about his experience of the events of D Day+5. The whole thing was unbelievably awful and, as Guy said, films like 'Saving Private Ryan' even with its realistic opening, can't really convey the full horror.

Closer to home we have a piece of D Day history on our own doorstep in Ripon. Guy is Chair of the Ripon Military Heritage Trust which is trying to preserve Deverell Barracks where Royal Engineers trained. It was here that the Bailey Bridge was developed, where "Hobart's Funnies", adaptations of existing machines, first saw the light of day and where the first V2 rocket that had failed to explode was brought for examination.

The story of one of the greatest days in our history is as inspiring as it is tragic. As Guy said, "We owe it to the troops to ensure that we don't forget."



Guy in full flow

Frances Elliot – Harrogate and District Community Action

Frances is an old friend of Brigantes. Some ten years ago she spoke to us about the HELP project, to which we made more than one donation. Now she's CEO of HADCA and, more than that, she's one of the Selection Group which will decide who will be the beneficiaries of our legacy. So she was doubly welcome as she spoke to us about the many ways in which HADCA supports local voluntary and community action.

It's based at Community House on East Parade in Harrogate which has 15 charities as its tenants plus several offices and meeting rooms. Frances sees HADCA's role as one of connecting and collaborating. With over 200 local members, it acts as an advocate for voluntary and community action, enabling organisations to maximise their effectiveness by working together and sharing information. It has 13 part-time staff and over 80 regular volunteers plus a website which is always kept up to date. One of its functions is to match up volunteers with organisations. Some people have a particular skill or experience they want to use. Others may want to work with a particular project then withdraw. So the volunteering directory which HADCA produces is vital in matching experience to need.

Motivation is important so the 'Power of Ten' has been developed to give a small reward for each ten hours donated. The Skell Valley Project gives young people a chance to volunteer for an environmental project in the Ripon area. 'Community Fit' is largely for working people who want to stay fit while they volunteer – so they run or walk to their project. 'Help Out' gives people a chance to give one-off help without having to make a regular commitment. There's an opportunity for everyone.

Frances also talked about the Local Fund, launched in 2018 as a partnership between Harrogate BC, HADCA and the Two Ridings Community Foundation, which has given out £330,000. Add that to Local Lotto in which 60p from every £1 goes to local charities and which has raised £260,000 over the past six years and it's clear that without HADCA local charities would be hard pushed to maintain their work.

All of which means Frances is well qualified to help to allocate our legacy funding. Her knowledge of the local charitable and community network will be invaluable in helping us to match resources to need and we're delighted she's helping us.



Frances with President Bill

Open Arms Malawi



Suzie just back from Malawi

Suzie Thomas was just back from Malawi. As one of four part-time 'Open Arms' UK staff she had been meeting workers and families there and was able to give us first-hand feedback on the success of the charity. Open Arms is Harrogate-based. It was started by a teacher at Ashville who founded a home for infants affected by Aids/HIV. It has now expanded and is Malawi-led. It supports orphans and vulnerable babies in that country.

The figures are horrendous. 74% of Malawi's population exists below the international poverty line of \$1.60 per day. 2,000 babies are born every day of whom 320 will be orphaned and 87 will die before their first birthday. Babies are vulnerable from a variety of causes – maternal death, multiple births, poverty and abandonment. Formula milk is expensive so many make do with glucose water or sweet beer.

'Open Arms' support comes via a community-based care programme which comprises short-term intervention to support families, guaranteed formula milk to age 2 and a welcome pack comprising such commodities as nappies, soap and clothes. It also provides monthly visits and weight checks, advice on baby care and access to medicine and medical care. The aim is to encourage families to be self-sufficient through a process of empowerment. One of the local workers was herself supported as a baby. Currently 40 babies are being supported. The aim of the charity is to increase that number to 100. The problem, unsurprisingly, is money.

The difficulties facing such families in Malawi are barely credible to us. What Suzie brought home was that they are happening now, today and furthermore that, as a relatively small operation, 'Open Arms' relies entirely on the generosity of sponsors and donors. As a Harrogate-based charity with very clear aims and a proven record of success we may feel it has a special claim on our generosity.

Impossible Quiz Night

On 16 July after an excellent and filling meal members were entertained by a fiendish quiz, courtesy of pitiless quizmaster Tony Doveston. With the extra points awarded a score of 50 was achievable, but David Hayes' winning team managed only 17 with the others trailing in at 16, 15 and 11. All this proved that those attending had very little knowledge of US television series, astronomy, and human anatomy, and a pretty poor memory for when things happened.

Mind you, scores might have been one higher for some had Tony read the full question "How many thoracic vertebrae are there in the human body?" Sadly, missing out the word "thoracic" caused widespread confusion, and some teams were awarded for what was the right answer to the question posed – 33, because the answer to the question he should have asked was 12. Still with me? But on the bright side, and no surprise to me, who is fully cognisant of the international importance of such knowledge, the questions on West Ham United and Essex County cricket were answered correctly by all.

So, despite the humiliation, all thoroughly enjoyed the evening and thanked Tony sincerely for his efforts to entertain us. Some even looked forward to the possibility of another session of mortification and self-flagellation in the near future. Perhaps we'd do better with questions on Chinese literature, Hungarian folk music and the flora and fauna of Alaska.

Well, we couldn't do much worse.

Guy Wilson



The winners – and their pitiless quizmaster

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Yorkshire Day

What better way to celebrate the great day than to trawl down Memory Lane and select what makes us proud to (for the chosen few) have been born amid the broad acres and for others of us (the offcumdens) to live here?

There were lots of eulogies to the Dales, their beauty, their wildness and their proximity to Harrogate. Indeed our town came in for some encomiums of its own, though to label the sea as one of its attractions might have been pushing things a bit. We ranged the county from West-vale to Leeds and Sheffield to High Force. There were brass bands, dialect (kecks and spice), the Mouseman, and even the Poet Laureate.

Thanks to Tony for a great idea and to all contributors for baring their inner tyke.

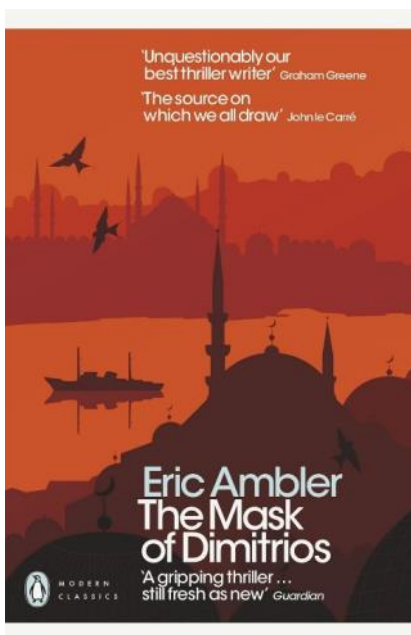


Question: How many born and bred
in Yorkshire? Answer: Not Many
(??)



Book Club - The Mask of Dimitrios

Published in 1939 and written by the then-popular but now largely forgotten Eric Ambler, this was the Book Club's July offering. Eric Ambler is much vaunted on the cover by no less than Graham Greene and John le Carré so his literary credentials are impressive.



It was one of those books which divided opinion. Some loved it, some liked bits of it and some never really got going with it. It concerns the eponymous villain about whose crimes and deceptions we learn more and more as the book goes on. The vehicle for this discovery is Latimer, an English writer of murder mysteries, who, despite his better judgement, is drawn into the web of Dimitrios' life. There's a major twist near the end (no spoilers) and a bloody conclusion which leaves Latimer very frightened but unscathed and free to continue, as the book ends, planning his next thriller.

The writing is superb, polished and, at times, very funny. Ambler clearly knows his way around the places and events of inter-war Europe; he could not be found wanting on any detail. As the plot unfolds we are transported to many European capitals and we meet an assortment of characters, from the sinister Peters, to a Turkish General, a retired spy, and a selection of mid-European low-life. Some of us felt that the plot creaked at times though most of us felt that, particularly with chapter-end revelations, it invited us to read on, as a good thriller should. There was always the sense of something remaining to be revealed.

So, at 225 pages it's not overly long and if you're a le Carré aficionado I suggest you might enjoy it.

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The Brontës of Haworth

We've all been to Haworth. We've seen the parsonage where Emily, Anne and Charlotte plus the errant Bramwell and their odd father Patrick lived in a creative hothouse. We know the story of how their mother died when they were children, how they all died in relatively early adulthood and how Patrick was left alone and bereft. Denise Aldred took us back before all that to the story of how Patrick met and married Maria Branwell and in particular how, after Maria died, her sister Elizabeth came up from Penzance to look after the children for a few weeks and stayed for twenty-one years.

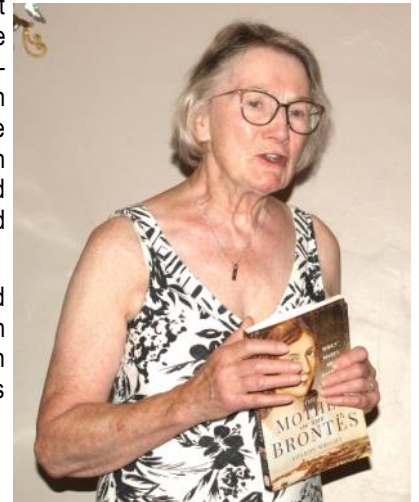


Patrick Brontë as a young man

There are different versions of how ambitious Irish lad Pat Prunty, the oldest of nine children, achieved an education which transformed him, via St John's College, Cambridge into holy orders in 1807 and ultimately to Haworth as Rev Patrick Brontë. The tale told by Denise also revealed the background of his wife. She came from a wealthy family in Cornwall and met Patrick when she came to work at Woodhouse Grove school. She was very small, elegant, intelligent and well-read with a ready wit – but she wasn't the first lady he set his cap at. His first engagement had been broken off because the couple would have been "unequally yoked" which actually meant that she wouldn't go to church. However there were no such problems with Maria. She produced six children but she died in 1821, less than two years after her last child Anne was born and only eighteen months after the family had moved from Thornton to Haworth.

At this point Elizabeth Branwell took over from her sister and she was largely responsible for the children's education which led to their childhood writing of the tiny books of adventures in imaginary kingdoms and eventually to Emily, Anne and Charlotte becoming not only published writers in their own right but well-known in spite of their relatively modest output.

It's a fascinating, unique tale and Denise was able to give it a new twist by focusing on the Brontë parents. She has other talks available about the family so I for one will look forward to her return



Denise tells us about Maria Branwell

July Walk

A fine walk on the last day of July was laid on by John Wood, late of this parish. The sun shone on John, Guy, Manuel (somewhat later of this parish) and your editor as we set off from John's splendid home across the fields in the direction of Copgrove. Assured that there was not a nettle to be found anywhere on our route, two of us managed shorts and, by and large, emerged unstung heroes. First coffee having been taken at John's, second coffee was delayed until we entered the remains of Burton Leonard quarry, an enormous hole, entirely overgrown. Fortunately someone had scythed a path through the jungle but our search for a convenient tree trunk or stone to sit on proved fruitless so we collapsed on to the ground, drank and ate and then went through various contortions to stand up.

The ground was dry throughout the walk and there were some wonderful views, especially of the North Yorks Moors and the White Horse in particular.

This was essentially a morning walk of 5-6 miles with lunch being taken chez Wood as we sat by the pond admiring the coots and the dragonflies. Christine's specially-baked chocolate cake was memorable and overall our expedition was about as idyllic as a summer walk can be.

Thanks John.



Amid the wildflowers of Burton Leonard quarry. (No prizes for spotting the join.)

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People, Wine and a Bit of Poetry

On Tuesday 20 August members were treated to an entertaining and informative talk by Reece Howard, Operations Manager at the Crown Hotel. Unusually, perhaps for someone in the hotel business he is an Art graduate. Born in Middlesbrough he started his career as a waiter and has risen to Operations Manager of the Crown. On the way he has worked at many of the region's most prestigious hotels and leisure complexes including the Swinton Estate, Goldsborough Hall and Rockliffe Hall.

His job is to manage the staff and look after the visitors. He is also a fully qualified sommelier, so someone well worth knowing! He works alongside the General Manager who deals with business and financial issues, leaving Reece free to concentrate on providing the best possible service for guests.

He admits to being aspirational, with a drive to improve what he is doing and delivering for the guests. He explained that the Crown is now one of 11 hotels in a group but is managed through another company which runs 90 hotels owned by a variety of companies and consortia. This gives each hotel a breadth of knowledge and experience to fall back on, which can be very important in challenging times. And he made no bones about the fact that these are challenging times for hotels – energy, food and wage costs have risen steeply in recent years and the Eastern European labour on which they used to rely heavily is not so abundant since the fall in the relative value of the pound made working in the UK much less attractive. So now much time and effort has to be put into training a largely short-term workforce.

Undoubtedly his job has its challenges, but he wouldn't want to be doing anything else and he loves working at the Crown in one of Harrogate's oldest and most important hotels. He ended by quoting lines from Lord Byron's poem 'To a Beautiful Quaker', which he believed to have been written while Byron was staying at the Crown. Whether true or not it's easy to see why it would resonate with a person dedicated to serving those he will mostly never see again:

Sweet girl! though only once we met,
That meeting I shall ne'er forget;
And though we ne'er may meet again,
Remembrance will thy form retain.

Members showed their gratitude for an engaging talk by warm applause. But there is one other thing we have to thank Reece for. His very presence at the meeting inspired the chef to produce a superb meal. If that standard is maintained it will no longer be possible to say that we don't go to Rotary for fine eating!

Guy Wilson



Reece Howard of the Crown Hotel



A talk by Northern Powergrid – what would that be about – pylons, electric cables, power cuts? In fact, Nikki Pickard, Proactive Responder for Northern Powergrid, gave us a very interesting and helpful talk on Priority Service Membership. As the electricity distribution network operator for the northeast, Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire, they are responsible for delivering electricity safely to around eight million customers across 3.9 million homes and businesses. They operate a Priority Service for people with particular needs: the elderly, serious illness, disabled, households with children under five, trouble communicating, reliant on electricity for medical reasons, etc. They do this by providing extra help during a power cut, regardless of the time of day or night, by text message, mobile or landline, 24/7, 365 days a year. They have a team of Proactive Customer Responders who support customers during unplanned and planned power cuts, offering portable generators, charging facilities, hot drinks, torches and a friendly face to provide the latest updates. It was amazing to see what was provided in the emergency pack: hot water bottle, powerful wall light, hand warmers, socks, gloves, hat, battery pack, flask. Someone suggested a battery radio be included.

Nikki suggested that we all become members as we none of us know what is round the corner and it is better to be organised just in case. To join is free and to register, complete an application form at northernpowergrid.com/care, call them on 0800 169 2996, Textphone users call 0800 028 9507. If there is a power cut, call 105 free of charge.

We hope there won't be any power cuts, but it is good to know what help there is out there and if Nikki is anything to go by, it could be an experience far less daunting because of the help offered.

Moya Prichard

The Future of the Convention Centre and Royal Hall

Paula Turner, Director of Harrogate's Convention Centre, talked to the Club about the challenges facing the Centre, which includes the Royal Hall, and reported on her proposals to make the Centre profitable which will soon be debated by North Yorkshire Council.

Paula is an experienced administrator who, before coming to Harrogate, had run Manchester's convention centre (GMex) and turned it from a loss-making into a profitable organisation. Determined to do the same in Harrogate where she arrived in 2019, she then suffered eighteen months of frustration as the Convention Centre became a Nightingale Hospital during the Covid pandemic. Since then, and despite very serious cost increases largely through the rise in fuel prices (which have risen from 17% to 34 % of turn-over), she has overseen a considerable improvement in commercial performance – this last year has been the best since 2012. There is still much to do to bring the centre to a sustainable position in which surplus income over expenditure can be fed into a sinking fund to maintain the Royal Hall and the whole complex can be run independent of public subsidies except those required to promote community use of the Royal Hall, which she sees as vital to the Centre's responsibility to local people. Its other and dominant role is to provide a stimulus to the local economy. Current estimates suggest that the Centre delivers an economic benefit to Harrogate of just under £40m each year, making it a vital part of the town's economy.



Paula Turner,

An analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the Centre and its future shows the key strength as its location in such an elegant and vibrant town as Harrogate, well served by road and rail links. On the other hand, the most serious weakness is the 40 years of neglect of adequate maintenance which needs to be addressed promptly to sustain customer satisfaction and repeat bookings. Paula has prepared a turn-round plan which NYC are shortly to consider. It asks for investment, a new corporate structure independent of the Council for the management of the Centre, and subsidies for community events.

She is optimistic that this will be approved and, if it is, plans for cost neutrality within three to five years. I'm sure Brigantes wishes her well. A solution to the price increases that are driving community groups away is essential if the Royal Hall is to deliver what it could and should for Harrogate in the future. Two more certain and immediate pieces of good news – we are offered a tour of the whole facility if we would like it, and Paula also offered storage space at the Royal Hall should we ever need that. All food for thought.

Guy Wilson

The Legacy

While Brigantes went on its merry way during the summer, there was a lot of legacy paddling going on under the surface. The new website sprang into life at the end of April and, amongst its other glories, it advertised the legacy and invited applications throughout the month of May. And my, did we get some – sixty five in all! We had to discount some for various reasons but over forty made their way into the final reckoning. Matthew Stamford from Verity Frearson and his Selection Group (Frances Elliot from HADCA, Sharon Canavar from Harrogate International Festivals and our own President Bill and David Read) then got together and made the final selection of fourteen good causes which are going to benefit from the first £50,000 tranche of legacy funding.

Council unanimously approved their choice and then Matthew, together with Matt Reeder from the Big Bamboo Agency which is handling all our publicity, gave a presentation to members, outlining how the group had come to its decision and giving an idea of the next stage in the process. Members not only gave the Selection Group their unanimous backing for its recommendations but thanked them for all their hard work in assessing so many bids and spending time coming to such well-considered conclusions.

Thanks are due to all members of the group, to Tim Grainger and Charlotte Gale from Brigantes, to Nicola Stamford and Matt Reeder from Big Bamboo and to everyone who helped in any way to make this exercise such a resounding success. We now move on to the next stage of letting everyone know the outcome of their applications, publicising their work and that of Brigantes and reviewing how we have managed this first tranche. Then we move on to the second tranche – and it was good to know that the Selection Group has agreed to stay on board for that exercise.



Matt S and Matt R in full flow

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Three Clubs Meeting

Pity the District Governor. It goes with the job that they visit all the seventy or so clubs in the District early in their tenure to make their mark and show their face. So we make it easy for them by inviting the Harrogate and Knaresborough clubs to join us for a sumptuous repast at the Crown and to welcome them to address us, thereby killing three birds with one stone.

So it was, with the rattling of chains, that the good and great of local Rotary assembled to hear the word from above. It also makes sense for us to meet together now and then. We are colleagues not rivals and it's good to find out what our friends are up to.

So we heard from the District Governor, from the three Presidents, from two of our recent Paul Harris recipients who received their jewels and from Guy Wilson who was awarded a sapphire enhancement to his Paul Harris award. The DG spoke about how he sees his role and particularly about the North Star initiative and the need to recruit more members. The three presidents each gave an update on their club's activities which, when added together, demonstrate that Rotary is a significant player in the life of our area.



Clockwise from top left: District Governor Richard Greenwood, Brigantes President Bill O'Rourke, Mervyn Darby standing in for Harrogate RC President Chris Whapples, Graham, Peter and Guy (Brigantes) and Helen Westmancoat (President, Knaresborough RC)

RYLA

It goes without saying that RYLA is a wonderful concept. It gives young people an opportunity to develop their leadership skills while having fun and making connections. Equally we always compliment our awardee whose course and qualification are not complete until they have spoken to their awarding Rotary Club about their experience. They invariably show a maturity beyond their years and speak of how the course has changed them.

This year Robert Kidd from St Aidan's CofE School was no exception; indeed by general consent he was one of the best RYLA speakers we've had. He told us about his course with a PowerPoint presentation but no notes and then went on to answer questions like a veteran. He told us what he had contributed to the course, what he had learned from it and was frank about the mistakes he had made.

With his proud parents and his Course Mentor joining us, the evening was an eloquent testimony to the ability of Rotary to support young people – and long may it continue.

It was also an opportunity for us to thank two people who are indelibly associated with RYLA. Lucy Hodgson has co-ordinated our District RYLA course at Hebden Hey and has been a frequent visitor to our RYLA evenings over the years. She is standing down from the post, and, although she was unable to be with us, we sent her our best wishes and thanks. Closer to home, Keith Prichard, who has led Brigantes' RYLA initiative for as long as I can remember has decided to retire although he will still be available to navigate drivers through the challenges of getting to Hebden Hey.

Thanks Keith.



L to R: Alistair Kidd, Rtn Rosemary Wilkinson (Course Mentor), Robert Kidd, President Bill, Kerry Kidd

Book Club - The Memory of Midnight

I always think books with a local flavour have a lot going for them. Our Book Club's latest offering, Pamela Hartshorne's 'The Memory of Midnight', is set in York but there are two Yorks – medieval and modern – and two stories with a lot in common, united by a single character Tess (modern) and Nell (medieval).

As the story develops, Tess keeps slipping back to being Nell. Both are subjected to tyrannical husbands, both are in love with another man and both (the coincidences keep on coming) happen to live in the same house in Stonegate. Moreover Tess, like the author, is a medieval historian who comes across in her research some of the people she meets as Nell. Keeping up?

In fact it isn't as complex as it sounds. Some of us felt the shifting time frames succeeded while others found it hard to take. Some of us roared through the book and enjoyed it while others found it hard going. In other words it was an ideal Book Club book. How boring would our meetings be if we all agreed about everything? In fact, along with an excellent Oakdale dinner, we had a lively discussion which went beyond the book into the realms of exorcism and time-travel and, as ever, we enjoyed each other's company and look forward to our next meeting in December.



The critics in benevolent mood after a fine Oakdale meal

Desert Island Discs

This time it was David Hoskins in the hot seat and the gorgeous Lauren LaWilson putting the questions.

The production, while not quite up to BBC standards (we were surprised by a rogue 'Blaydon Races'), soon settled. David spoke about his parents and childhood including the problems associated with being the son of a local 'bobby'. After working as a barber and then a steel buyer at Redhead's shipyard and getting his 'O' and 'A' levels at South Shields Marine College, David felt the calling to be a minister and enrolled at the Northern Baptist College in Manchester.

By now married to Tricia, he began his ministry at Westfield Baptist Church near Elland where he remained for seven happy years and, aged 27, joined Rotary before improbably removing to Trinidad and Tobago for four years under the auspices of the Baptist Missionary Society. He and his growing family then returned to the UK and moved to Harrogate where David served as minister at the Baptist Church for eighteen years. In and amongst he was asked to do half a day a week as Hospital Chaplain and eventually that became his full-time role until he retired five years ago.

As Guy said, David's has been a life dedicated to others and we all have much to thank him for, not least his friendship and his role as Club Almoner.

David claimed to be less than the ideal desert islander – not fond of his own company for long periods of time. For his book he chose his well-thumbed Greek text and for his luxury a heap of paper and a pen.

Interspersed with his life story were his musical choices. Five he found easy and three difficult – with the usual impossible task of knowing what to leave out. His final selection was:

'The Blaydon Races' recorded for Beamish Museum and featuring Bill Elliott

'The Water of Tyne' sung by Jimmy Nail

'Fanfare for the Common Man' by Aaron Copeland

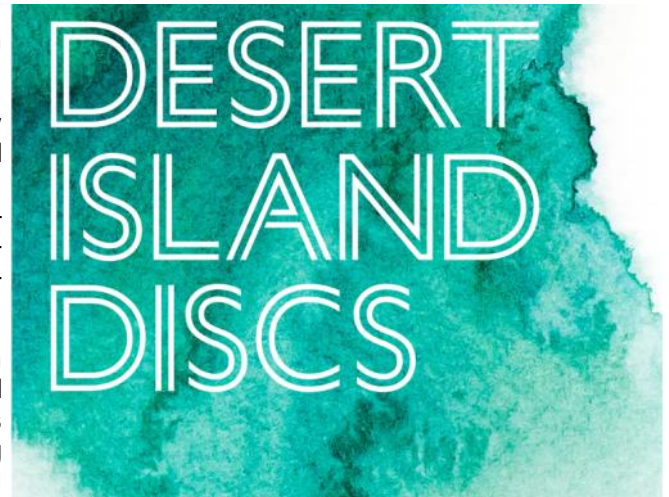
'Non Nobis Domine' with words from Psalm 113 and used in Kenneth Branagh's film of Henry V.

'Did You Not Hear My Lady?' by Handel and sung by Aled Jones.

Mozart Clarinet Concerto, second movement, played by Michael Collins with the London Mozart Players.

'Hallelujah' by Leonard Cohen, arranged by Tom Hodge and performed by Sheku Kanneh-Mason

'Give To Me Lord a Thankful Heart' – a fine hymn to the tune of Gatesgarth



Thanks to David and to Guy for a wonderful evening of memories and music

[first day as a pilot]

control tower: what are your coordinates

me: I'm by a cloud that looks like a lion

control tower: can you be more specific

me: simba

An Irishman is walking through a field when he sees a man drinking water from a pool with his hand.

Paddy shouts "Na ol an t-uisce, ta lan de chac bo" (Don't drink the water, it's full of cowshit.)"

The man shouts back, "I'm English, speak English, I don't understand you."

Paddy replies, "Use both hands, you'll get more in."

Disgusted that fireworks are being let off this early, not Halloween yet, And my poor dog is hiding under the Christmas tree.

Walking home they pass the bus station.

Murphy says, "Wait here Paddy, I'll steal us a bus!"

So for the next two hours all Paddy hears is buses starting up and stopping, start, move stop, etc...

Eventually Murphy appears on a bus.

Paddy says, "What took you so long?"

Murphy replies, "Well Paddy, the only bus that goes anywhere near us is the number 11 and they parked that bastard at the back!"

A young engineer was leaving the office at 5:45pm when he found the CEO standing in front of a shredder with a piece of paper in his hand.

"Listen," said the CEO, "this is a very sensitive and important document, and my secretary is not here. Can you make this work?"

"Certainly," said the young engineer.

He turned on the machine, inserted the paper, and pressed the start button.

"Excellent, excellent!" said the CEO as his paper disappeared inside the machine, "I just need one copy."

20

Just failed my driving test. When the examiner asked me "What sign would you expect to see down a narrow country road?", apparently "Fresh eggs for sale" wasn't the correct answer...

Sometimes it DOES take a Rocket Scientist!! (true story)..

Scientists at Rolls Royce built a gun specifically to launch dead chickens at the windshields of airliners and military jets all travelling at maximum velocity.

The idea is to simulate the frequent incidents of collisions with airborne fowl to test the strength of the windshields.

American engineers heard about the gun and were eager to test it on the Windshields of their new high speed trains.

Arrangements were made, and a gun was sent to the American engineers.

When the gun was fired, the engineers stood shocked as the chicken shot out of the barrel, crashed into the shatterproof shield, smashed it to smithereens, blasted through the control console, snapped the engineer's back-rest in two and embedded itself in the back wall of the cabin like an arrow shot from a bow..

The horrified Yanks sent Rolls Royce the disastrous results of the experiment, along with the designs of the windshield and begged the British scientists for suggestions.

You're going to love this.....

Rolls Royce responded with a one-line memo: "Defrost the Bloody chicken."

20:08