

THE EDITOR, The year has not started well with two fierce storms wreaking havoc around the country causing major damage by flooding along with the effects of high winds. Misery for many people. Abroad there is even greater suffering with the continuing war in Ukraine and the terrible death toll in Gaza as a result of the battles between Israeli and Hamas forces. In all of this we seem to be merely helpless onlookers, but are we, and is there anything we can do, apart from donate to emergency appeals? One recent event demonstrated the beneficial effects of strong public opinion - the TV drama: *Mr Bates v The Post Office*. For over 20 years hundreds of postmasters and have suffered a terrible injustice being wrongly accused false accounting and theft. They had suffered two decades without fair redress - and now suddenly with this drama bringing the full horror of this injustice to public attention - we see sudden government action to put things right. What the justice system failed to do in 20 years the public outrage produced government intervention within weeks. Strong public opinion, on matters of importance, can force governments to act.

Such public outrage seems totally ineffective in stopping the war in Gaza. This conflict is just another event in the long hot and cold war Israel has endured since its formation, as a state, in 1948. From that time war has been seen as a means of solving the problem of acceptance as a country by its Arab neighbours. War has clearly failed as a means of solving a political problem. But there is a tiny hope, from within this area, for peace.

For a number of years small groups of Israeli and Palestinian women have met together in friendship groups across the divide between the two nations. Having lost a husband, a brother, a son in this long conflict they sort to come together as an act of reconciliation. By engaging in a variety of practical or educational activities they able to understand and appreciate each other's culture. Sharing traditional cooking menus, making clothes together or through music they were able to get to know and understand each other better. This was their hope, as others joined them, for a journey. Peace is still a mirage in the distance - but this is surely the way forward with ordinary people leading.
Ray Tunnicliffe.

Guisborough Fellowship News In October last year Guisborough Church celebrated the 225th anniversary of our foundation with a Saturday Coffee Morning, which included a historical exhibition and performances of a

short play illustrating a significant event that took place around the time when the fellowship came together in Guisborough. This celebration has now been extended by the publication of an article in the December edition of the Guisborough Business Directory.

The Directory it is distributed around Guisborough and the surrounding area and so covers a large number of houses -providing some welcome publicity for the church in the town. A greater awareness of our presence in the area may provide some benefit to the community

Reflecting on the church's long history I noted a surprising connection with the past, for in the first eighty years of our existence the fellowship was a completely independent church until joining the Congregational Union in the late nineteenth century. Today, being in a vacancy for over seven years it seems, in practice, like the same situation - being an independent church. But, like other congregations in the Group, we have managed to cope well over such a long period of time, through the work of the pulpit supply secretaries, Jenny Reynolds - succeeded by Madge Baird. and other members contributions to the spiritual life of the fellowship,

In fact, in many ways it may be a good thing, and ties in well with the U.R.C theology of the priesthood of all believers. In our occasional Guisfolk services all members and friends have the opportunity to offer their spiritual insight into the message we can discern from the Bible readings of the day. In this way we may follow the path to biblical truth that our forbears suffered and fought so hard to gain: that every person can have direct and equal access to God. It is a sure way to strengthen faith and encourage enthusiasm in living the Christian life.

In this New Year we are faced with so many things in the world that are going wrong. The continuing war in Ukraine, the terrible conflict in Gaza - now spilling over into attacks on shipping in the Red Sea from Houthis rebel forces in Yemen presents to us a terrible general situation over which we, as ordinary, people would appear to have no influence for change. But is this, in fact the case?

In an early January Thursday Coffee Morning Prayer Meeting the Bible reading delivered was of Psalm 29. The Psalmist said in a thunderstorm with all the terrible sounds and effects and damage this could cause. It's a good reflection of how in the world appears to us today and then all of this where do we find God. The first suggestion was that we find him in the still small as heard by Elijah when the storm abates. It is our conscience awaking and speaking to us. But the question is: how does this help us out of

difficult, wrong, unjust situations? A good example was of the Post Office scandal where many postmasters were wrongly accused of theft. A recent TV drama about this injustice brought the matter into focus in the public's mind and so placed irresistible pressure on the government to take action to right this wrong.

Although there is much that is wrong in the world today we need to remember all the good that is done by the goodwill of the majority of people. The Guisborough Bridge (Association) is it good example of this. For over 20 years it has been there to provide care and support to the people of Guisborough and surrounding area by providing: Foodstop (a food bank). Youth and children's clubs and initiatives: Guisborough lunch club - A weekly lunch for the elderly; Christmas Day meal; Monday Friends, Soup & Roll lunches and Coffee Mornings; Bridge2Parents etc. in their January newsletter new volunteers are announced as beginning to work with these activities - showing the goodness that exists in the community - good will that has been harnessed in various ways.

As we move into the new year these people and beneficial activities must give us hope for the future. We must give thanks for this in our prayers. Give thanks to a loving God and his son, Jesus for being alongside and among us. A Happy New Year to you all.

GUISBOROUGH BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

Jan 24. It is already the 11th of January so happy New Year! I suspect we're on all wondering what we should do with that extra day we get this year!

We welcome Alex to the staff team in an administrative role: She will be working for she will be working for one to 2 hours each day and is already settling in. Alex was already familiar with some of our projects through volunteering in the FoodStop, but she has a real attitude for computing ICT so this will be very valuable behind-the-scenes.

We have already had her first Musical Memories and Elderly Lunch club at Kemplah. For the foreseeable future Music and Memories will be on the second Wednesday of the month. If you love singing and a cuppa - we even go as far as biscuits - do come along and bring a friend. Trish Trish McLean is wonderful

musician and players and sings a wide array of styles. There really is something for everyone. She is our version of Kate Rushby / Clara Dillion but with a Northeast accent. She is a bully assisted with harmonies by Bridge volunteer, Ngaire.

Last week I met with a landscaper/grounds person and Bridge volunteer, Jon. to firm up make plans more concrete, pun intended) plans for a central path; footing for a shared large enough to allow parking up in inclement weather, comparatives and rays beds. Hopefully by March/April there can be a progress report.

Volunteering Opportunities

We have quite a few gaps in our soup and roll rot. Can you help with serving which is a top priority? Soup making which can be on site on the day from 10 am? Providing baked items? Minibus drivers and escorts. (volunteers who help clients on an off the bus and walk to the venue) for the T2 Fridays. Contact staff at Guisborough bridge.org.uk for a volunteer form. Wednesday Cook once a month/ once every **five weeks for to join our community luncheon.**

ST PAULINUS

Cause Hamper Campaign 2023 As in previous years St Paulinus TC parish has supported CAUSE (Catholics Against Unemployment.& Social Evils) to collect goods for Christmas hampers, as part of the Diocesan project. This year Guisborough volunteers and parishioners collected 40 bags of foods and Christmas presents to support the CAUSE Christmas had the campaign for 2023. On Sunday morning (December 10) many of the bags were displayed on the altar as Canon Michael Baildon came out of retirement to say mass, along with Deacon Len Collins. After mass Guisborough's CAUSE Organiser, Mrs Maureen McLean, thank all the volunteers would work to collect, wrap and bag all the items, following several weeks of collections. Brian Gleason.

Hello, I am a retired Church Related Community Worker (CRCW) and have recently made an audio book of my autobiography called.

DARK HOLY GROUND

A Journey into Activism to give voice to the voiceless and hope to the hopeless

Part of it includes my work as a CRCW. At the moment the **audio** book of DARK HOLY GROUND can only be accessed on my website. linda-granville.com

If you go to it and **scroll down** you can listen to some chapters for free including the introduction with an option to buy the whole audio book. I'm only asking for people to pay what they can so the poorest of us can access it.

Last year National Church Action on Poverty put it on their blog as recommended reading for International World Book Day. However at that time it was called 'A Journey into Activism' and was published as an e-book on Lulu and Amazon. However I have since changed it's name to DARK HOLY GROUND. It is the same book

but with just a few minor alterations and a new introduction explaining why I changed the name.

I'm sincerely hoping that people will see the faces of the marginalised, those who experience the brunt end of this top down social and economic unjust system we are all simply trying to survive today. I hope people find just a few clues to change this chaotic world for the better. I'd love to start discussion groups around any chapter. I would appreciate if you can pass my website onto your friends to get the issues I write about out there.

Linda Granville
linda-granville.com 07951062609

SERVICES FOR FEBRUARY at 10.00am

4th Rev Ray Angelsea Synod

11th Maranny, Jones. Darlington
18th Dr Donna Moore Guisborough
25th Bill Reynolds Guisborough Christian Fellowship

Everyone will be welcome at our services. Come to worship, or to learn more about faith in Jesus, or simply to find some good friends.

COFFEE MORNING AND PRAYER MEETING

every Thursday there is a coffee morning in the church hall from 9.30am to 11:30 am, Followed by a prayer meeting at 11:30 am until noon.

Please pop in whenever you can, on market day, and you will find a cheerful welcome.

February 2024

GUISBOROUGH UNITED REFORMED CHURCH



Founded 1798

56, Westgate, Guisborough.

News Letter

February 2024

Secretary 01287 637273