

HEATH LIVES

Number 9

December 2023/January 2024



EDITORIAL

We wish a joyful Christmas season and a prosperous year in 2024 to all our readers. We hope that you will enjoy the selection of articles in this issue and we would like to thank all who share their thoughts or experiences with us, including Halifax's Town Crier (pictured) who has given us an idea of his calling on pages 14 and 15. There are so many people and occupations that make Halifax the interesting place that it is and it is lovely to hear about them and about the history of the town and its people (I speak as a newish arrival!).



We have different 'new years' in the course of twelve months such as our birthdays or the start of Advent, but December 31st is the one that somehow feels most significant as we turn to a new diary or calendar and see blank pages stretching ahead, full of promise that we will do all we have planned and the hope that things will improve on the world stage. We continue to pray for peace in the world as we step once more over the threshold of a new year.



CHURCH CONTACT DETAILS

Services are held on Sundays at 10.30 a.m. We are always pleased to welcome visitors.

Minister: Rev Heather Pollard. E-mail: ministerhalifaxgroup@gmail.com
Or ring: 01422 248957

Church Secretary: Mrs Jane Simmons: heathchurchhalifax@gmail.com

Website: heathchurchhalifax.org.uk

Dear Friends,

As I write this letter it's less than seven weeks to Christmas Day, and my thoughts have turned to all the things that I need to buy before the "Big Day". Browsing the internet recently, looking for inspiration for those difficult-to-buy gifts for the people who seem to have everything they could possibly need or want, I came across a Google link to a store that promised "Everything you need for Christmas". Well, I thought, perhaps that will make my shopping easier than anticipated.



When I clicked on the link it took me to a well-known retail store which sells, amongst other things, Christmas trees, decorations, lights, candles, gifts, wrapping paper, a limited range of festive food, kitchen equipment and tableware. There was a lot to choose from, but it soon became apparent that despite the promise that I would find everything needed, my search for appropriate gifts would require more effort, and I would also still need to visit the supermarket in the days leading up to Christmas.

I began to think about that advert: "EVERYTHING you need for Christmas". It's disturbing to think that, for some people, the entire focus of Christmas is on things that can be bought in a shop: glittering decorations, brightly wrapped gifts, turkeys, mince pies and a favourite tippie. Of course, there's nothing wrong with any of those things, but I suspect that if that was *all* we had at Christmas our celebrations would feel incomplete.

For many of us, family and friends are an important part of our celebrations. Our enjoyment is greatly enhanced by sharing our festivities with others and we might go as far as to say that Christmas wouldn't be right without them.

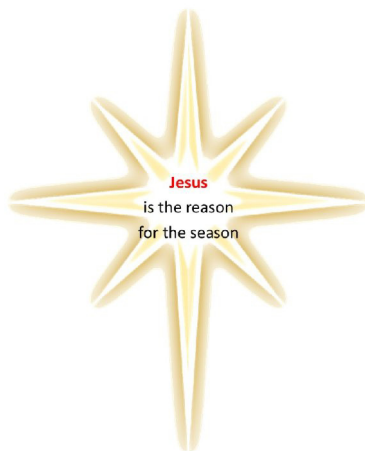
All the trimmings, and family and friends to share them, sounds like a great Christmas. But, I wonder, is that really all we need? Some of us would feel that there was something lacking about Christmas if we didn't have carol services and other special events in Church.

Three years ago, when pandemic restrictions meant that Church activities and time with family and friends were severely affected, we experienced



what it's like to miss out on these important aspects of our Christmas celebrations. However, even if we can spend Christmas with our loved ones and attend Christmas services, there can still be something missing.

It's all too easy, in the midst of all the excitement and celebrations of Christmas, to forget about Jesus, who is the reason for our festivities. If we do that we'll miss the real meaning of Christmas and the personal encounter that God offers to us. We can even sing about Jesus, read about him and hear about him in Church, yet fail to receive, personally, the greatest gift ever offered to humankind. Without him we really don't have everything we need, and we can easily be left wondering why it hasn't quite felt like Christmas.



Please don't let that happen to you. Whatever you choose to buy, in shops or online, and whomever you may decide to share your festivities with, don't forget the one whom Christmas is ultimately all about. Let him be at the centre of your celebrations: take time to think about him, to meet with him and to respond to him, and so may your Christmas be complete.

Martin joins me in wishing you a happy Christmas.

God bless,
Heather

(Christmas tree overleaf designed by pch.vector / Freepik" and below, pro-church-media MGOuRiwXAMGunsplash)



JANUARY COLD DESOLATE

January cold desolate;
February all dripping wet;
March wind ranges;
April changes;
Birds sing in tune
To flowers of May,
And sunny June
Brings longest day;
In scorched July
The storm-clouds fly
Lightning-torn;
August bears corn
September fruit;
In rough October
Earth must disrobe her;
Stars fall and shoot
In keen November;
And night is long
And cold is strong
In bleak December.



Christina
Rossetti

WHAT IS SHELTERBOX?

Heath Church has donated funds to this organisation. Here's why.....

ShelterBox **believes** that “everyone deserves a place to call home.. It is a human right and the first step towards recovery after disaster. But it's more than just a roof. It's the foundation for life for families and communities.....It offers protection from harsh weather, privacy, and helps to preserve dignity. It is a space to heal from trauma...and from diseases like coronavirus and malaria....recovery doesn't happen overnight, but a dry and warm place to sleep, prepare meals and be with your family is a vital first step.”

ShelterBox **started** as a Rotary International project in Helston, Cornwall, in 2000. Since then, it has provided emergency shelter and disaster relief in 98 countries, including some of the most remote communities in the world, helping 2.5 million people get back on their feet after hurricanes, earthquakes, conflicts, droughts, cyclones etc.

For example, after the **South East Asian tsunami on Boxing Day 2004** it was the first relief organisation allowed into countries impacted by it, because it is politically and religiously neutral and a trusted organisation. In **2022**, it supported 100,000 people after **Super Typhoon Rai** devastated whole communities. Its Cebu warehouse and experienced inter-country team were ready to move at once. In **Ukraine**, in February it set up three projects helping people fleeing to Moldova, and also people staying in damaged homes and collective centres. It started a programme in **Yemen** and worked in Pakistan, Mozambique, Syria, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso and Nigeria.



What is a ShelterBox?

It is a tough and specially designed container for new, durable essential items like family-sized tents, ropes, tarpaulins, toolkits, solar lights, water filters and carriers, blankets, cooking sets and mosquito nets. Needs on the ground are

assessed by operations teams and because circumstances and needs vary, so help is tailored to fit e.g. equipment to help repair damaged buildings, or temporary funds for daily survival. ShelterBox has 'response criteria' to guide tough prioritising decisions. Aid is delivered by any means possible, and teams travel by foot, boat, helicopter or even tuk-tuk. Whatever it takes.



70 pence in every pound goes on these items for the families to create a home after a disaster (£8.1 million in 2021). 30 pence in the pound is invested to create future funds and for running the charity e.g. safeguarding training, strong leadership and skilled teams strategically placed around the world, technology and finance systems and insurance (£2.69 million in 2021).

ShelterBox is supported by their global network of affiliates and partners, including Rotary International.

Here is **ALEU'S STORY**: Aleu lives with her husband and two children - one-year-old Beste and four-year-old Boris – in Azurs, Turkey. After the earthquake in February 2023, ShelterBox visited Aleu's family in March, when they were living in a small camping tent. "In that tent we couldn't move, and my children couldn't lie down. Beste is asthmatic, so the constant humidity made her feel worse. This tent is much bigger, more comfortable. Now, their health is better and they're not feeling cold. We are constantly shaking. We don't feel the shaking much in the tent, but we fear that if we go into the house, we will feel much worse. It happens daytime, nighttime...it happens constantly, the shaking.....If another big earthquake happens again, we will be relieved that we already have a tent to take shelter in."

A final word from ShelterBox itself: "Disasters are not natural: let's stop saying they are". Now there's a thought!

More information, or to donate, via their website: <https://shelterbox.org> or The ShelterBox Trust, Falcon House, Charles Street, Truro, TR12 2PH, or by phone +44(0)300 0300 500.

John Seagar

SNOW, SNOW AND MORE SNOW

The weather is of perennial interest to us all, as it has been over the years, and several local diarists commented on it regularly.

Anne Lister (1791-1840), usually busy about the affairs of Shibden estate, recorded 'Storm of thunder and lightning, with heavy rain and hail, between one and two p.m. Two tremendous loud peals of thunder just over our heads. The electric clouds burst over Mr. Walker's house, between Whitehall and Mr. Hudson's, rent the south end chimney, penetrated into the house, struck dead a man of sixteen standing near the fireplace, severely injured a young woman and stupefied for some minutes an old woman, both of whom were washing in the same room with the young man.' On Christmas Day 1832 her diary records: 'Xmas Day, very stormy...' Towards the close of December 1836, there had been a severe snowstorm referred to as 'the heaviest fall of snow we ever recollect to have seen', which rendered the roads almost impassable, and the papers alluded to the great difficulties the coaches had to encounter, and the sufferings the coachmen, guards and passengers had to endure. Miss Lister wrote: 'You will have heard of our snowstorm, mail coaches buried fifteen feet deep in snow, etc.'

On another occasion, when the bridge was covered in several inches of snow, it is said that Miss Lister, impatient to be home, climbed onto the foot-wide parapet and walked across in that way without setting her feet down. At Christmas 1860 there was a great frost, followed by heavy snow. The River Calder and the canal were both frozen and for several days people were to be seen skating there. On Christmas Eve a member of a brass band which set out in the snow and frost to play carols, found that the valve of his instrument had frozen down while he was playing, producing very discordant notes. Before he could continue, he was obliged to warm his instrument by the fire of a local resident.

It is well-known that during the building of Halifax Palace Theatre in 1903, the weather was so cold that difficulty was experienced with the mortar freezing and sugar was mixed in to remedy this. Hence the oft-quoted phrase that it was 'the sweetest theatre in England.' The theatre opened on the 30th July of that year. 1903 was the year when 'Buffalo Bill' (Colonel William Frederick Cody) brought his Wild West Show to Savile Park in pouring rain and the Halifax Guardian reported on the 8th October 1903 that the weather 'could not have been worse'. In fact, that October

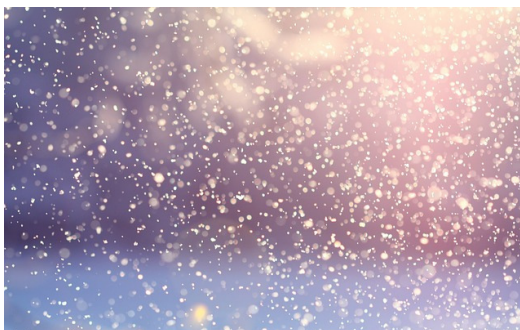
experienced the heaviest rainfall on record locally with 10.08 inches measured during the month compared with the average of 4.46 inches.

On the 3rd December 1920, a double-deck tram was blown over at Catherine Slack, several people being injured, and while rescue work was being carried out, a second tram was blown over nearby. Catherine Slack was known to be the wildest point of the Halifax tramway system. In September 1933 there was an 'unparalleled drought' which did not break until the 18th November. A week-end blizzard in 1933 commencing on the 25th February brought havoc to Calderdale with drifts of snow six feet even in central areas and reaching ten feet in outlying parts. In the year of King George VI's coronation, 1937, a strong gale in January blew over the statue on the South African War Memorial at West View Park and it was only prevented from crashing to the ground by a thin strip of metal near the heel which held the heavy statue suspended upside-down until it was made secure, and eventually replaced.

The bitter freeze-up of 1947 brought unprecedented conditions to Calderdale: a time when snow fell heavily and remained through February and into March, forming deep drifts up to six feet deep and closing roads in the outer districts where farmers and the residents of remote villages were completely cut off and supplies had to be taken in by sledge. On the moorlands around Calderdale, many sheep, caught in blizzards, died from the extreme cold when farmers were unable to get to them.

But in fair days and stormy, the resilient people of Calderdale have carried on bravely, disregarding the vagaries of the weather and struggling doggedly forward as, no doubt, the world's population will continue to do, regardless of changes, and adapting to them.

Derek Bridge



SHEPHERDS IN THE FIELD ABIDING

Shepherds in first-century Palestine would have been attuned to the wonders and ravages of nature: star-lit nights, cold and heat, storm and calm, and the unwelcome attention of predators, both animal and human. They would have been more aware than we of human dependency on the seasons, and more respectful than we of the precarious nature of existence. Fear, as well as appreciation, would have shaped their religious sensitivities.

Some think the shepherds near Bethlehem may have been guarding sheep for the Jerusalem Temple, which used them as part of the sacrificial ritual of Judaism in those days. Yet the kind of work shepherds did and the hours they had to keep barred them from orthodox religious observance; they were regarded as uncouth and untrustworthy and were not allowed to give testimony in law courts.

It was typical of St Luke (the only New Testament writer to refer to the shepherds) to put them in the forefront of his narrative. Luke is the writer who favours the underdog: tax collectors, sinners, women, old and poor people and non-Jews all figure favourably in his account. Deliberately he sets before us shepherds as the first Christmas worshippers. They already knew how to *wonder*.

William of St Thierry wrote: "A man who has lost his sense of wonder is a man dead." The 19th Century scientist Michael Faraday wrote: "Let us consider... how wonderfully we stand upon this world. Here it is that we are born, bred and live, and yet we view these things with an almost entire absence of wonder..." This is no plea for anti-intellectual faith, but rather for the discovery of an extra dimension. Wonder is the prime ingredient of worship, and we need to recover it and use it. It takes practice.

William Blake encouraged us to look into the ordinary and see the extraordinary:

"To see a World in a Grain of Sand,
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower:
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand,
And eternity in an hour..."

The late Michael Mayne, Dean of Westminster wrote, "A sense of the sublime leads to a sense of awe, which is I suppose that combination of

wonder and fearfulness you may feel in the presence of what takes your breath away. It is not 'afraid' in the sense of feeling scared, but rather an awe-struck sense of amazement that the ordinary is rather more extraordinary than the extraordinary... it is not the rabbit out of the hat but the rabbit out of the rabbit that is so surprising..."

So, in the astonishing story of heaven-come-to-earth in Bethlehem, of divinity in a cowshed, it is *shepherds* who receive the revelation. Not priests, not presidents, not philosophers. "An angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified." For all they knew it might have been bad news. "But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see – I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord'."

The response of the shepherds was to go and see. Not to question or even to reason. The main constituent of their belief was already *wonder*. They were accustomed to marvelling, for they were surrounded by a world of marvels. So, they went to look. And as they looked, they marvelled. Later, they were to return "glorifying and praising God for all they had seen and heard."

The Ven. John Barton



A HAPPY OLD AGE

A little more tired at the close of day
A little less anxious to have our own way
A little less care for gain or gold;
A little more zest for the days of old.
A broader view and a saner mind;
A little more love for all mankind.
A little more love for the friends of youth,
A little more zeal for established truth.
A little more charity in our views,
A little less thirst for the latest news.
A little more leisure to sit and dream
A little more real the things unseen.

(Author unknown)

LIFE CHANGES AT NOAH'S ARK

Louise is a young mum of 3 (2 boys aged 12 & 7 and a daughter aged 5). One of the children suffers from cystic fibrosis and has significant additional care needs. Louise was referred to Noah's Ark by a friend (who'd used our service) after she broke down and confided in her.

Initially we spoke with Louise on the telephone: she was extremely upset, very tearful and unsure if we'd be able to help her. She gave us the background into her situation: she'd had a very difficult few years due to her child's ill health and living in an abusive relationship. Her ex-partner had subjected her to domestic violence, emotional and financial abuse. Her story is one we've heard many times: the solution is one we've delivered hundreds of times. By the end of the phone call Louise was happier, she understood we could help her, she had hope and a belief that her problems could be resolved.

Louise completed our standard referral form, which includes questions about her emotional and financial well-being. Her emotional well-being scores demonstrated she was quite low and stressed about her situation and her overall mental health was definitely being affected by her money problems. Similarly, her financial well-being scores showed us she was struggling financially and worried about the future.

We always ask clients to tell us how their money problems are making them feel. Louise told us, *"I just don't know what to do. At times I feel like giving up, but my children need me, it's so so hard some days to get up and be motivated. I can't believe the mess I'm in, I'm just praying you can help me."*

When we carried out our checks, we found that Louise was almost £28,000 in debt to 26 different creditors. Much of this was due to financial abuse by her ex-partner. She had no means of paying her debts and was insolvent. A major factor in debt-related mental health conditions is the aggressive collection practices used. The more debts you have, the more letters, phone calls and text messages you'll get. Louise was being hounded on a daily basis.

When we prepared her budget, it was significantly overspent with her energy costs being particularly high. Her disabled child needs her home to be properly heated and damp-free due to the risk of lung-related infections. Her travel costs were also quite high and erratic as she often

has to make unplanned trips to Leeds General Infirmary. She was losing 25% of her benefit income to pay debts to utility companies, the Department for Work & Pensions and HMRC.

We were clear in the support that we could offer Louise:

- Enter her into a Debt Relief Order (DRO) to clear her debts and stop the debt related deductions from her benefits.
- Attend a budgeting course.
- Provide short-term food support until she got back on her feet.
- Referral to the Green Doctor service for help and to reduce her energy costs.

Louise came for her appointment: it was quite emotional as she was nervous and didn't know what to expect. She was scared we would judge her, that the process would be very formal and 'stiff' (her words). Our appointments usually last less than an hour as we try to minimise the time to reduce stress on clients. At the end of the meeting Louise confided she was relieved and that she finally felt she might get closure on her past life (the debts were what connected her to that).

After each client appointment, we send an evaluation form for clients to complete. Louise completed hers and said:

“Andrew put me at ease and made me feel welcome. I thought I'd be judged but I absolutely wasn't. Like an angel he dealt with all my debts and gave me my life back. Thank you very much Andrew and Noah's Ark. Me and my family will be able to breathe a little bit easier because of this charity and I can focus my energy on giving my children the support they need.”

We'll follow up with Louise in the coming months to see how she's managing and how she's feeling. Most of our clients report huge improvements in their emotional health and well-being, so hopefully Louise will be the same.

Louise was helped with the £90 cost of the Debt Relief Order by Heath United Reform Church. They kindly donated £3,000 which has helped Noah's Ark to help 33 Calderdale families just like Louise to become debt-free. An amazing gesture that's helping these families live a more fulfilling life without the negative effects that being in debt can have.

CRYING FOR HALIFAX

What is a Town Crier and how did it all start?

A very good question. The Crier is a messenger, so you could say that the disciples were Criers, the Greek Spartan runners or the Roman Stentorians, but the link most historians use is normally 1066, when William the 1st came to Britain and used his heralds to spread the word. Being French, he needed to get out his messages to the English-speaking people and heralds speaking English could do this.

Many years later we had the bellmen, whose tasks included acting as night watchman, knocker-upper and candle-lighter as well as making proclamations in the street about taxes, markets, or lost children. Two interesting books have been published by the town crier of Chester, Mr David Mitchell: (*For Crying Out Loud and Word on the Street*). He is also known for doing talks on the subject, which I do, too. David is the only town crier to go out and proclaim every day during May and August at the cross at 12pm.

My own journey started back in 2001, when the town centre management were looking for a crier in Halifax. There was already one in Huddersfield at the time. I went for the interview and got the job; my first Cry was outside Square Chapel. In 2003 I held the Loyal Company of Town Criers' British Championships here in Halifax and again this year, to celebrate the twentieth anniversary. As of 2022, I am chairman of the Company.

After the event in 2003 I became the Bellman of the Borough of Calderdale, which meant that I was made an official Crier by Calderdale Council. In 2012 I became Crier to the town council of Hebden Royd. I have three sets of livery: Halifax, blue in colour; Calderdale, blue and green; and the Hebden Royd livery in black and gold, colours of the council.

Over the years I have been in many competitions up and down the country, but the best was in Almelo in Holland, where I came third in the European championships.

The purpose of the role is to be an ambassador for your town or area, so promoting Calderdale when I am in competitions is what I do.

Some criers do commercial work, shop openings, events, etcetera, some choose not to. I enjoy doing the commercial work and over the years I have worked for Marks and Spencer, Lidl, and many independent shops; my work also involves cries at birthday parties, weddings, anniversaries and leaving do's and I also do talks for any organisation which needs a speaker.

OYEZ OYEZ OYEZ
GREETINGS FROM THE HALIFAX TOWN CRIER
BELLMAN OF THE BOROUGH OF CALDERDALE
EXCEPT THE LORD KEEP THE CITY
HALIFAX THE PLACE TO BE
FULL OF LIFE AND VITALITY
MUSEUMS, SPORT, PARKS AND ALL
WHY NOT VISIT THE TOWN HALL
WITH ARCHITECTURE FOR ALL TO SEE
HALIFAX THE PLACE TO BE
AT THE TOP OF THE WOOLSHOPS SHOPPING CENTRE
THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON MEMORIAL STANDS PROUD
IT REALLY DOES DRAW A CROWD
THE BOROUGH MARKET, DEAN CLOUGH,
THE MINSTER, WAINHOUSE TOWER
SOMETHING TO DO HOUR BY HOUR
SO DON'T JUST SIT THERE, START MAKING TRACKS
AND COME AND VISIT HALIFAX
GOD SAVE THE KING

LES CUTTS HALIFAX TOWN CRIER EST 2001

SEEING DIFFERENTLY

Part two

There is plenty of equipment available to those with impaired vision or no vision at all, to help with daily life, such as talking watches and small tactile stickers called bump-ons, which can be placed on any item in the house. For example, one of these can be placed on your oven, so when a VIP (Visually Impaired Person) turns the cooker dial say to 180 degrees, and the dial meets with the bump-on, you know that the cooker is working at the correct temperature.

One thing both Mark and I would say is imperative is keeping organised, whether this is at home or work life. Making sure things are kept in the same places, or in certain orders is something you will see primarily if you work with someone with a sight problem on a regular basis. So please, don't go and move things around for someone, even if you think you are being helpful: it may not work for them!

Often people with sight loss get asked whether their other senses are heightened in some way. Much as I would love to sit here and tell you that they are, you will find this is not the case. Senses are heightened, but this comes through years of learning and practising. If you lose one of your senses, you have to develop your others to work in an effective way to help you keep going smoothly and efficiently throughout everyday life.

Getting out and about can be challenging for anyone, and if you have a sight loss to some degree, it can add an extra difficulty. However, this does not mean you shouldn't go out and be active and independent. There is a variety of white canes available: some are short, which are a symbol that someone has some sight loss. Other white canes have red stripes around them, meaning someone has hearing loss as well. One thing to remember here, though, is that very few people are totally blind and totally deaf. They may have the combined sensory loss, but it does not mean to say they can't see or hear at all.

Mark and I use mobility canes, these are long canes measured from your sternum down to the floor, with a wheel or a ball on the end. These help us find low level obstacles, such as bins, or steps, which is very useful. Many people use guide dogs too, but the numbers are not all that high. This is an incredible partnership, and the relationships people make with their dogs are really quite unbelievable. Just to point out one quick misconception some people have about dogs: the guide dog does not know where it is going; it is down to the owner to learn the route. The guide dog is just there to assist in making sure the person reaches their destination simply and effectively. Dogs

are clever, but not map readers!

Often, though, Mark and I have sighted guides, people who help us get around. As someone who has never guided, I cannot speak on behalf of what it is like to guide, but I find this help invaluable and from what I've been told and witnessed from various courses I have attended in the past, not too difficult to learn. As a guide, just ask someone if they would like to take your arm; they take your elbow, and then you walk about a pace in front of them, so you become that guide dog or mobility cane in essence to keep that person with sight loss safe.

So, there are plenty of things out there for people with sight loss, and I hope you can see from this article how it works. Of course there are problems that we all have to face, but that is a fact of life rather than anything else.

Should you wish to find out more about us and what we do at the NNAB, please contact us on 01603 629558, or visit our website for more information. (www.nnab.org.uk).

Ed Bates



Mark and Ed

SUGGESTIONS, PLEASE!

The Heath Eco Group has suggested that we turn the little garden by the Free School Lane entrance into a wild flower patch. We will keep the wonderful spring flowers, of course.

Have you a favourite wild flower which you would like to see here? Please let our editor know. Thank you.

THE CONVERSION OF SAINT PAUL

(January 25th)

I hated that man Jesus.
He called us 'hypocrites'.
He called us 'whited sepulchres'.
He told the people,
That crowd of unwashed country folk
Who followed him everywhere like bedraggled sheep,
That they should be 'more righteous' than we
To see the kingdom of God.
Of course I hated him.
People who used to look up to us
Began to mock us in the street.
Those who used to come to us for teaching
Went instead to him and his band of rag-tag followers.
Of course I hated him.
He made me look deep inside myself
And I didn't like what I saw.
Not righteousness for God but self-righteousness.
Not charity but pride in being better than others.
Better? In what way was I 'better'?
When was the last time I came, unasked,
To the aid of the needy, the ignorant or the foolish?
When did I last serve God with grateful love
Rather than ritual observance?
When did I last pray from the heart and not
In formulaic phrases, rendered meaningless
By years of repetition?
When did I ever ask forgiveness for my failures
As a leader and as a man?
Of course I hated him.

But you, O my Lord Jesus Christ,
In your grace and your mercy, met me on that Damascus Road
And freed me from my fears and my despising.
You blinded me with the light of your glory so that
When my eyes were opened again I would see the world newly.
I saw then that all men were my brothers and my responsibility.
I saw that God was calling me to a new life.
I saw that my task and my joy was to tell the world
How I love that Man, Jesus.

Gemma Wassell

A VISIT TO THE HOLY LAND

When I was living in Bradford, a new pastoral visitor came to work at my church. She was a widow, like me, and we quickly became good friends. When she asked me if I would like to join her and a party of Christian friends from her previous church in Jersey on a visit to Israel I was delighted to accept and the following Spring found us on a flight to Tel Aviv. We then travelled by coach to Jerusalem, approaching via the Mount of Olives, where we were delighted to see the view over the city in the early evening light. Quite spectacular!

Next morning, after an early breakfast call, which we were going to have to get used to, we set off to visit the hill-top remains of Masada, accessible by cable car. This is a famous village site where a community of Jews held out against the Romans in the first century A.D. before committing mass suicide when defeat was inevitable. We spent a delightful morning there exploring all the nooks and crannies before descending to pass the caves at Qumran where a young shepherd boy discovered the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947. After lunch we went to the Dead Sea where we all donned swimsuits to have a dip. It really is amazing to lie on water so buoyant. Drownings do occur but usually when people try to swim and are dragged down by suction. It is VERY muddy and my friend and I needed help to stand as it was impossible for us to lower our legs into the water.

The next day was Sunday so we went to Christchurch for a service including Holy Communion. In the afternoon, my choice of available options, together with half the group, was the Holocaust museum.. To enter, we needed proof of identity but, as our passports were in the hotel, I seemed to be the only one with any form of identification so we were all admitted on the strength of my bus pass. The visit was truly harrowing, particularly the model of the gas chamber, with queues of tiny model people being herded inside and the crematoria waiting nearby. It really brought home the truth of man's inhumanity to man. The rest of the week in Jerusalem was spent visiting sites of special Christian interest including walking along the road Jesus entered Jerusalem on, on the first Palm Sunday (satisfyingly, we passed a small yard where two men tended a donkey); and past the church of Dominus Flevit ('The Lord wept') in the Garden of Gethsemane. We sat under the olive trees in the Garden and had prayers and sang hymns; and later visited an upper room furnished as for the Last Supper, where we took communion. We visited an archaeological site where steps had been excavated to their state two

thousand years ago when Jesus would have walked up and down them. Awesome!

We also saw the sites of some of Jesus' miracles, including the healing of the sick man at Bethesda ("Take up your bed and walk") and healing the blind beggars. We walked the Stations of the Cross on the Via Dolorosa before entering the Church of the Holy Sepulchre where we saw the places where Jesus had been prepared for his crucifixion. We did not enter the tomb as we were going to the Garden Tomb, which is a rocky area outside the city complete with cave, which could have been the one prepared for Jesus after his death. Later, we went to the Western Wall and I pushed my prayer, written on a slip of paper, into the cracks of the ancient stonework.

My time in Jerusalem had shown me sites which I had heard about since childhood and I spent most of the time in tears of emotion. We also visited the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and joined the long queue to see the actual birthplace marked on the floor by a silver star. It was sad to see the high barbed wire fence surrounding the town and our coach was boarded by armed soldiers who looked as though they should have been in school.

Dorothy Edmundson

(The story of Dorothy's time in Galilee will be told in our next issue).



View from Dominus Flevit Church

WHERE IS THE CHURCH?

If we were to stand in Hastings Way and I were to ask you where the church was, you would think I was blind. 'Over there, that big stone building at the end of the road.' But is it? That is certainly **a** church, built over a hundred years ago for worship and praise, but the church of God is right here in the street with us.

The church may be the person you buy from or sell to, the bus driver, the bank clerk, the man who reads your electricity meter; the doctor or nurse who treats you, the waitress in the cafe, the solicitor who drew up your will; the park-keeper, your child's teacher, the landlord of the pub you go to. The church is the people of God who walk among you, work with you, talk with you. You may not be a 'church-goer' yourself, but the church is all around you in your daily life.



The church is open to all, no-one will be turned away, there are no entrance exams or interviews to be endured; but this also means that we join the church while we are still far from perfect, still as prone to error as our next-door neighbour, still full, perhaps, of doubts and questions, but we are there to seek answers and to be part of a supportive community all striving for the same things.

You are in the midst of the church in the street: why not visit the building too and talk to us in 'our place' and see whether we can answer any of your questions or provide the support or companionship that you may need? Let's walk together and learn more about each other as we go.

Author unknown but adapted for local reference by the editor



YESTERDAY

When I cleared my mother's home
I found these oddments in a drawer -
an ammonite immortalised in stone,
wrapped in tissue with a bow;
two bits of polished tiger's eye
I knew I had never seen before
and a white shell flecked with brown;
I picked the shell up, turned it round
and cupped it in my hand.
When I was small I held it so:-
'What lived in it? I asked, 'a snail,
a tiny worm? Where did it go?"
Such a brief memory but it made me feel
that nothing in the years between was real.

Michael Collins



MAGAZINE DEADLINE

Please ensure that all contributions for the February/March issue of Heath
Lives are received by the editor before

9a.m. on Friday 5th January 2024

We welcome all contributions but publication is not guaranteed.

Send to: garnetnr@outlook.com
or hand to Gemma or to Anne Boyd

Please note that inclusion of an article does not necessarily mean that the
Editors agree with the sentiments expressed.

ACTIVITIES IN HEATH CHURCH

On the third **Tuesday** of each month at 10.30 a.m., a **Coffee Morning** is held in the Lounge (using the Manor Drive entrance). Everyone welcome.

On the second **Thursday** of each month in the evening, we hold meetings of the **Thursday Club** at 7.30 p.m. in the lounge.. We welcome new members.

Jason Whitaker Boxing Fitness.

Boxing padwork sessions available for all fitness levels and abilities including group classes, 1-to-1s and 2-to-1s.

FB: Jasonwhitakerboxingfitness

Tel:07929372498

Kim's Dance and Movement:

Tuesdays 10am - Adult Beginners' Tap Class. Suitable for complete beginners or a little bit of tap experience in the past and needing a basic recap.

Tuesdays 11am - Adult Intermediate Tap Class. Anyone from 18-80 with previous knowledge or experience in tap dancing. Fun class.

Thursdays 11am - Move & Groove Dance fitness. Over 18's Aerobic-style fitness class. A nice feel-good class with a mixture of songs/routines including salsa and Cha-cha. All abilities as you can take it at your own pace.

Contact Kim on 07747 867706 or Facebook @kimsmoveandgroove

***Move to Improve* standing and seated exercise classes with Heidi.**

Help Improve your balance and posture, and strengthen muscle & bone plus improve your overall fitness.

Wednesday 2pm Back to Basics Gentle keep fit.

Friday Gentle keep fit 10am & 11.10am.

Please contact Heidi 07791869594

Email heidimolle@googlemail.com



Regular bookings at Heath United Reformed Church

All activities and hire times are subject to change.

TT = Term time

S= Seasonal

V = Variable

O = Occasional

Day	User	Time	Location
Monday	Janet's Eazi Dance	2-3	Hall
	Steph's Comm. Choir	2-3	Upstairs
	Kim's music lessons	4-5.30 TT V	Upstairs
	Laurie's music lessons	4-5 TT V	Lounge
	Beavers	6-7	Lounge /Hall
	Cubs	6.30-8	Hall
	Halifax Philatelic society	7.30-9 (2 nd Mon.)	Lounge
	Halifax Symphony Orchestra	7-9.30 S roy-biggs @halifaxorchestra.org	Upstairs
Tuesday	Kim's dance class	10-12	Hall
	Community Coffee Club	10.30-12 (3 rd Tues.)	Lounge
	Yvonne's Tai Chi	12.45-3.45	Hall
	Kim's music lessons	4-8 TT V	Upstairs
	Scout District Meetings	7.30 – 9.30 V	Lounge
Wednesday	Kim's music lessons	10-12 TT V	Upstairs
	Heidi's cardiac rehab	2-3	Hall
Thursday	Kim's dance class	11-12	Hall
	Thursday Club	7.30-9 (2nd Thurs)	Lounge/visit
Friday	Sign and Sing	9.45-12.45 TT	Lounge
	Heidi's cardiac rehab	10-12	Hall
	Kim's music lessons	4-5.30 TT V	Upstairs
	Janet's Eazi Tap	6-7	Hall
	Scouts & Explorers	7.30-9	Hall /Lounge
Saturday	Kim's music lessons	9-11 TT V	Upstairs
	Calderdale Chess League	2-7 O 07504 598590	Hall
Sunday	Heath's Worship	10:30-11:30	Upstairs
	Northern Lights (independent church, not linked to Heath)	2.30-6 07970 256243	Hall/Lounge
Variable	Jason's 1:1 Boxing skills	V	Meeting Rm 2

For further details, see page 23

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