

# HEATH LIVES

Number 11

**April/May 2024**



## **EDITORIAL**

Thanks, once again, to Jim Walker for our cover picture. It is much more satisfying to use the talents of our readers than to take material, however beautiful or interesting, from the internet. We also thank Dorothy for sharing her early recollections with us and our resident poets, Michael and Merle, for their contributions.

The photo of the oil painting of William Milner on page 17 is by kind permission of Calderdale Libraries, who hold the copyright of the digital image.

As shown in the article in our last issue and the one on page 12-14 of this, the work done at Noah's Ark Safe Haven in Ovenden has far-reaching and very positive outcomes for its clients. If you would like to contribute to this work, please send your contributions (cash, cheque or bank transfer to 40-52-40, 00030950) to our treasurer, Gill Brook, and mark your envelope or bank transfer reference 'Welfare Fund.' If you are a tax-payer, please state this, too, so that Gift Aid may be added to your donation. Any of the church members and Jude, our caretaker, will be happy to pass it on for you if needed.

If anyone would like to help with the refreshments after the services, please let Lesley know, and she will add you to the rota. Those on the rota, usually help once every 6 weeks or so, entirely flexible.



### **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](mailto:ministerhalifaxgroup@gmail.com)  
Or ring: 01422 248957

Church Secretary: Mrs Jane Simmons: [heathchurchhalifax@gmail.com](mailto:heathchurchhalifax@gmail.com)

Website: [heathchurchhalifax.org.uk](http://heathchurchhalifax.org.uk)

Dear Friends,

As I was considering what to write about this month, my attention was caught by television news reports about the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, which celebrated its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 4<sup>th</sup> March.

Halifax can hardly be described as a coastal town, so you may wonder why I was particularly interested in these reports and this anniversary. The reason is that I worked for the RNLI for a few weeks in 1977.



In the recent news reports there were interviews with former and current lifeboat crew members, most of whom are volunteers, and I was reminded of their courage and the vital role they play in saving lives at sea.

Before you start trying to imagine me in a yellow drysuit, life jacket and helmet, at sea on a lifeboat, or on a beach in a red lifeguard's uniform, I must tell you that my role was clerical and was undertaken in a small office in Glasshouses near Pateley Bridge.



The people we immediately think of when we hear about the RNLI are reliant on numerous others, many of whom are volunteers. Some work in the RNLI shops in coastal towns, some teach water safety and life-saving skills to the public, others give practical support to those who go to sea. My work at the RNLI regional office involved writing thank you letters to what seemed like an army of people, mostly women, who organised coffee mornings in their homes and other fundraising events, and contacting local councils to request permission for street collections. This was necessary because, like hospices, air ambulances and mountain rescue services, the RNLI is dependent on donations and fundraising for its day to day running costs.

I remember being quite amazed that such a vital service was so dependent on volunteers, most of whom were working quietly behind the scenes. Without the volunteers and the fundraising, a lack of boats and vital equipment would prevent the lifeboat crews and lifeguards from saving lives, and the situation is no different today.

We'll soon be holding our Annual Church Meeting, when we'll hear reports about different church groups and activities and appoint people to serve in different roles. In some ways we're rather like the RNLI. Some roles are high profile, but the vast majority are behind the scenes. I'm reminded that St Paul wrote that the church is like a body with many different parts, with distinct abilities and functions but dependent on each other. Our eyes and our ears have different functions, but we would soon notice if either stopped working, and some tasks would become much more difficult if not impossible. Whilst much of the work in the life of the church goes unnoticed, our activities would be severely impacted if it wasn't done.

The same could be said about many of the community groups in our town and across the country. Often there are one or two high profile leaders or organisers, but they are supported by many more people who make the activity viable by volunteering their time and skills or by donating money in support of the work. They are sometimes forgotten, but are so vital.

A few weeks ago I was building a Lego model vehicle with one of my grandsons. We soon had something that resembled the picture in the instructions, however the wheels didn't steer as they should. It was then that I spotted a small cog on the floor. Once it was in place it couldn't be seen, but then the vehicle wheels functioned well. It was a reminder to never undervalue those whose efforts are largely unseen.



God bless,  
Heather

## **THE GLORY OF THE GARDEN**

Our England is a garden that is full of stately views,  
Of borders, beds and shrubberies and lawns and avenues,  
With statues on the terraces and peacocks strutting by;  
But the Glory of the Garden lies in more than meets the eye.

For where the old thick laurels grow, along the thin red wall,  
You'll find the tool- and potting-sheds which are the heart of all,  
The cold-frames and the hot-houses, the dung-pits and the tanks,  
The rollers, carts and drain-pipes, with the barrows and the planks.

And there you'll see the gardeners, the men and 'prentice boys,  
Told off to do as they are bid and do it without noise;  
For, except when seeds are planted and we shout to scare the birds,  
The Glory of the Garden it abideth not in words.

And some can pot begonias and some can bud a rose,  
And some are hardly fit to trust with anything that grows;  
But they can roll and trim the lawns and sift the sand and loam,  
For the Glory of the Garden occupieth all who come.

Our England is a garden, and such gardens are not made  
By singing:—"Oh, how beautiful!" and sitting in the shade  
While better men than we go out and start their working lives  
At grubbing weeds from gravel-paths with broken dinner-knives.

There's not a pair of legs so thin, there's not a head so thick,  
There's not a hand so weak and white, nor yet a heart so sick,  
But it can find some needful job that's crying to be done,  
For the Glory of the Garden glorifieth every one.

Then seek your job with thankfulness and work till further orders,  
If it's only netting strawberries or killing slugs on borders;  
And when your back stops aching and your hands begin to harden,  
You will find yourself a partner in the Glory of the Garden.

Oh, Adam was a gardener, and God who made him sees  
That half a proper gardener's work is done upon his knees,  
So when your work is finished, you can wash your hands and pray  
For the Glory of the Garden, that it may not pass away  
And the Glory of the Garden it shall never pass away!

## **COMMUNITY GARDEN NEWS**

The Manor Drive Community Garden, alongside the church building, was set up following a very enthusiastic meeting in 2023, attended by members of the congregation and the community. Our first working party made excellent progress on Saturday 4th March.

There was a lovely atmosphere as everyone worked together and enjoyed conversation over an endless supply of coffee and cake. We were pleased that Councillor Colin Hutchinson came to help, and Councillor Mike Barnes sent his apologies. We increased the growing areas by building a large raised bed, used a local social enterprise to make us two benches, and recently installed a water butt fed from the church roof downpipe, materials donated by church members and fixed by a local resident (worth 20 Gold Award points!).

Setting up the garden is a visible part of our Environmental Policy in action e.g. in welcoming people in our local community to enjoy space to relax and chat, to help by getting their hands dirty, sharing its produce – and maybe coming to “own” the garden. Importantly, the garden promotes environmental biodiversity around our buildings and recognises the needs of wildlife.

Please don't be put off by the gate: that is to stop litter blowing in and not to keep people out! We will be delighted if you use the garden for rest and relaxation.

We owe thanks to our church caretaker, Jude, for the idea, for her enthusiasm, for her coordinating skills on social media and for securing a Community Forum Grant of £500 to help fund the benches and timber.

John Seagar



# A ROCHA UK'S EASY ECO TIPS 2024

## APRIL

*Fit more active travel into your day and daily routine. Re-evaluate your journeys: explore walking or cycling options, or modify your route to include some form of active travel, perhaps disembarking a stop early and completing the remaining part of your journey on foot, indulging in a leisurely stroll, or opting for a bike ride along a cyclist-friendly route. Consider connecting with your local Ramblers or cycling group for shared experiences.*

*Use the extra steps or the changed travel arrangements as a prompt to pray for God's creation, nature's preservation and the reduction in fossil fuel usage.*



## MAY

*Say no to the mow. Mowing your lawn less and letting parts grow long saves you time and helps give nature a home.*

*If you want to make an even bigger impact on wildlife, wait to mow your lawn or a section of it until August to support even more animals. Contribute to citizen science and get to know what (and who!) lives in your church's green space - sign up to take part in Churches Count on Nature (8-16 June 2024) at [caringforgodsacre.org.uk/churches-count-on-nature-faqs](https://caringforgodsacre.org.uk/churches-count-on-nature-faqs)*

## **SAILORS' CHILDREN**

When Mum died, I asked for donations to the Sailors' Children's Society and a lot of people said that they had never heard of them, so I thought it might be nice to write a bit about them.

The Society began in 1821 when they formed an organisation to champion the religious and moral welfare of seamen. They purchased and converted a boat called the Valiant and held services on it. From then they started a school and became the Sailors' Orphans' Institute for clothing and educating fatherless children of seamen. In 1863 the Society took six children whose fathers had died at sea and cared for them. That number grew to 206 and they were cared for in a big house in Hull that Sir Titus Salt had founded. In 1893 the Society purchased six acres of land and built a model village called Newland. There were ten houses, a school, an infirmary and a church, and they were able to look after 300 children. The houses were named after benefactors, Sir James Reckitt being the main one. At that time, they were called The Port of Hull Sailors' Orphans' Homes but in 1950 the name was changed to the Sailors' Children's Society. At the beginning there were about twenty five children living in each house with a house-mother but when I visited in about 1964 the number had gone down to about eight and some had a house-mother and -father.

The people of Halifax sent donations all through the years and then in 1947 a committee was formed and the first H.M.S. Jamboree was held at the Alexandra Hall – a two-day event with dancing displays, mannequin parades and folk-dancing by the children from the Homes. There was even a concert by the Band of the Coldstream Guards. I was three years old at the time and presented a bouquet to the Mayoress who had opened the event. The next year, they had an even bigger Jamboree with five days of events and, over the years, they made a lot of money for the Society. In 1953 the name was changed to the September Cruise and in 1970 moved to the Victoria Hall. Eventually, the Cruise became a smaller event and in 1991 moved to St Jude's Church Hall and sadly, in 1996, it finished.

Each year the Mayoress was invited to be the President of the Committee and quite a few stayed on the committee when their term of office was over. Mum was the Treasurer from the start to the finish and was made a vice-president of the Society. One of many highlights was a visit to H.Q.S. Wellington in London where we met the Princess Royal, who took over as Patron when the Queen Mother died.



## Committee of the Sailors' Children's Society



Newland is no longer a home for children but, I believe, a lot of the houses are used for university students. The school continues to be used by the LEA and the swimming pool also. The Society's

headquarters are in the Francis Reckitt house, so they still have a connection to Newland. They provide help for any family, connected to the sea, who needs it so this is a very worthy cause, as it always has been.

*Elizabeth Riley.*

## **SEMPER**

There is no change of season  
In the climate of my love  
Fickle frosts to blight the flowers  
Winter winds to black the grass;  
The leaves of my caring for you  
Will not curl, or fall, or crawl  
Like caterpillars, as the wind whirls  
They are green  
Evergreen.



*Merle Wilson*

## ***KEEPING THE MEMORIES ALIVE***

Miss Jessie Bishop died in 2009 but she will still be remembered by many of my generation as the Headteacher of Salterhebble Primary School in Halifax in the 1950s and 1960s and as an active member of Heath United Reformed Church for many, many years. Jessie was a good friend of my parents and was a great help to me when my mother suffered with dementia in her later years. I continued the friendship with Jessie when my mother died in 1999, and I look back fondly on the time I spent listening to the many fascinating stories she so eloquently brought to life from her memories. On clearing out the contents of her flat at Trinity Fold Care Home when she died, I came across a bundle of manuscripts, many hand-written, some laboriously typed out on an old-fashioned typewriter and, on closer inspection, these proved to be scripts of all the interesting, well-researched and informative talks Jessie gave around Calderdale in her retirement, becoming a well-known local figure. I have recently revisited these documents and it has occurred to me that they might be appreciated by a wider audience, so I am currently typing them out in the hope of collating them into a book for the enjoyment of future generations. Her talks are based on newspaper articles, containing a wealth of local information; scenes from novels, based on her love of reading; interpretations of the scriptures; seasonal musings . . . all demonstrating a rich and inspirational take on life. They cover topics as diverse as Travel, Love, Food, the Weather, Christmas, Horses and Donkeys to name but a few and include excerpts from a wide range of literature. If I can find a publisher for this collection, I would be very happy for Heath United Reformed Church to take ownership and receive any income from future sales.

It would be a pity if these treasures were lost. Watch this space!

*Margaret Earnshaw, nee Pagett*



## **JESSIE BISHOP IN HER OWN WORDS**

April 7<sup>th</sup> 1935 has always been a very significant date for me. It's because on that particular Sunday I was accepted into membership of Heath Congregational Church on profession of faith.

Several of my friends had already taken this decisive step three or four years earlier. I had declined because I was hoping to leave Halifax for a two-year teacher training course and wanted to use this time to gain some insight into church life elsewhere and also to make sure I was not just following family tradition. My father had become a member after coming to Halifax as a youngster, whilst my mother started attending Heath Sunday School soon after it opened in 1890. She subsequently became a church member and during a long life was diligent in work and witness. So there was strong family influence – but no pressure!

After training in Portsmouth I was fortunate to get a job here in Halifax. Naturally, I resumed regular worship at Heath. Soon afterwards, it became clear to me that I should seek church membership as the next stage of my Christian journey. The minister at that time was Rev Stuart Craig. He and his wife Audrey became family friends. After a short ministry in Halifax they left, along with their baby daughter Alison, for service in China. All too soon World War Two caused them internment and many privations.

Over the years, I have served to the best of my ability as Deacon for quite a few years, as Sunday School worker until the change to Junior Church, as Elder for a short period and in other less onerous positions.

The earliest change to the church building that I remember occurred during the pastorate of Rev W S Rosie. He was lame following a boyhood accident and wore a surgical boot. He found the steep staircase from the Choir Vestry (now the kitchen) very trying. He came to our house with plans for a small vestry, these to be submitted to the Finance Committee via my father who was the secretary at the time.

As well as the building, there have been many other changes. For example, our present church service on Sunday mornings differs significantly from when I was a girl. Chants are rarely included – if ever! Smiles may well be invoked at some point and occasionally a hearty laugh! In short, the whole service now is much more relaxed. I shall always be grateful for the spiritual nourishment and for the happy friendships I've formed as a result of my decision so many years ago.

# LIFE CHANGES AT NOAH'S ARK

## CHELSEA – A STORY OF RESILIENCE

Noah's Ark was approached recently by the BBC News Channel to film a piece about third-party debt deductions (TPD) from Universal Credit (UC). Predictably, they always want to film one of our clients talking about their experience. The challenge for us is thinking of a client who's been negatively affected, has a good ending to their story and who's confident enough to talk to camera. Chelsea...

I hadn't spoken to Chelsea for a while: I wasn't sure how she was doing but she hadn't been in touch asking for help so that's always a good sign. Over the last couple of years, we've filmed quite a bit with the BBC, ITV, Sky and others: we don't get anything for doing it but if it's something important to us we'll put the effort in trying to find the right client. TPDs from UC and the injustice of them, has been the single biggest driver for me over the last 6 or 7 years of working at Noah's Ark. I really wanted to be involved with this.

I had a long conversation with Chelsea, during which she broke down in tears recounting how life was for her before she came to us and how things are completely different now. She wants to tell her story and wanted others to hear so that they might receive the help she did. I knew I'd found the right client for this, provided Chelsea didn't lose her nerve and get cold feet.

We had previously filmed a piece with ITV Calendar about bi-polar and how it impacts people's ability to manage their money. Chelsea saw that film and it was the catalyst for her to contact us for help. Chelsea recounted to me her tearful conversation with me when she rang, how she felt a little better after the phone call and her agreeing to attend a budgeting course that week. I remember her attending BLAB!!!! and emotionally telling everyone how she felt a failure as a mum: how she couldn't provide for her children or pay her bills.

On her referral form Chelsea wrote: *"I'm praying you can help me because if you can't I don't know what I'm going to do. I can't go on like this and wonder whether my kids would be better off without me here. Please help me."* We hear that sort of sentiment a lot from our clients. Many of our clients, just like Chelsea, are desperate for a way out of their financial troubles and contemplate suicide as one of those ways out.

Chelsea's emotional and financial health and well-being scores were indicative of someone suffering from low mood, depression and anxiety with poor financial capability. Our project has seen this a thousand times (actually

over 1,600 times in the last 6 years!) and we know exactly what to do.

Chelsea was at her lowest ebb. She is a single mum of 3, including a 12-month-old baby. Her ex-partner provides no financial support for the children. The relationship ended badly because he was quite violent toward her and abused her emotionally and financially. Her referral form recorded that, after she'd paid all her priority bills and debts, she had £68 per week left. The average family of 4 spends over £100 per week on food alone. We also noted she was:

- Being treated for depression and anxiety, with a prescription of Sertraline (150mg daily).
- Weekly food parcels were being provided by Focus4Hope (another example of food parcels helping to perpetuate poverty).
- From her Universal Credit she had a Third-Party Deduction costing £114.10 per month including a deduction for Yorkshire Water for both her current bill and arrears of a previous bill.
- All her child benefit was being taken by Calderdale Credit Union to pay a loan.
- Foolishly, she had taken a mobile phone contract out with Sky at a cost of £109.00 per month.
- Her broadband package with British Telecom was costing £45.00 per month.
- Her home was cold and draughty, with poor insulation, no draught proofing and low energy efficiency. Her monthly bills were becoming untenable for her.
- She had total indebtedness of £25,000 which included priority debts such as council tax arrears, gas, electric & water arrears, as well as other non-priority debts. The aggressive collections practices of these companies were having a significant negative effect on her mental health.
- She found herself in a classic downward debt spiral which it would be impossible for her to break free from without expert help.

With so much going on it was no wonder she was feeling the way she was. Chelsea was insolvent, she couldn't pay her debts and had no assets she could sell to clear them. The solution to her problems was a Debt Relief Order

A very nervous Chelsea attended our office and a DRO was arranged. She didn't actually believe that the process could be so simple and the outcome so enormous. A DRO is a formal insolvency arrangement (similar to bankruptcy) and for those with little or no assets it can be a life saver. It costs £90 to arrange but for clients like Chelsea that can be a significant barrier. It's 'only' £90 but if you simply don't have it then it might as well be £9,000!

Our interventions for her included:

- Temporary food support to help survive for a few weeks until our interventions took effect.
- Attending our Budget Like a Boss!!!! and Cook on a Budget Like a Boss!!!! to show her how to manage her money, stay debt free and make better food choices.
- Arranging a DRO to clear her debts, stop the deductions from her UC, reinstate her child benefit and relieve the pressure she was under through the debt collection process.
- Luckily for Chelsea a local church had kindly agreed to fund this out of some money they had given Noah's Ark.
- Cancelling her Sky mobile phone contract and providing her with a free Vodafone SIM card to give her 6 months free internet and calls.
- Switching her to BT's home essentials broadband contract.
- Referral to the Green Doctor service for help with energy efficiency and support to reduce her energy consumption.

All our clients are asked to complete an evaluation of their appointment with us. Part of the evaluation is to provide qualitative feedback about the advice process, their advisor and how they felt. Chelsea told us: *"I feel like a different person. I nearly didn't come for the appointment because I was so scared and anxious. I thought you'd judge me, look down on me, lecture me. Instead, you lifted me up, you didn't judge or lecture, but you gave me the tools to move on in my life. I'm almost embarrassed to say that before I came to you, I was thinking my kids would be better off without me and I was having awful, awful thoughts, but like an angel you fixed all that. Amazing, just amazing people."*

*All our clients are contacted after 3 and 12 months just to see how they're managing, whether they're up to date with bills, managing to save anything or back in debt again. On Chelsea's 3 month evaluation she wrote: "I'm doing brilliant! As soon as I get my money, I make sure that all my important bills are paid, rent, council tax, gas, electric, water. I will not be getting behind with them again. I'm managing to save £100 a month as well: I'm going to make sure Christmas this year is paid for with my savings, not another loan. This is all down to you guys. You change lives, save lives. Forever in your debt."*

## **MOSES AND THE SHEPHERD**

An old Hebrew legend has it that Moses was walking in the desert one day when he came across a shepherd. He spent the day with him and helped him milk his ewes; at the end of the day he saw that the shepherd put the best milk that he had in a wooden bowl which he placed on a flat stone not far away. Moses asked him what he was doing it for and the shepherd replied, 'This is God's milk.' Moses was puzzled and asked him what he meant. The shepherd said: 'I always take the best milk I have and I bring it as an offering to God.' Moses, far more sophisticated than was the shepherd in his simple faith, asked, 'And does God drink it?' 'Yes,' replied the shepherd, 'he does.' Moses then felt compelled to enlighten the poor shepherd and explained that God, being pure spirit, does not drink milk. The shepherd insisted that he did and they had a short argument which ended with Moses telling the shepherd to hide behind the bushes to find out whether God did, in fact, drink the milk. Moses then went out to pray in the desert and the shepherd hid; the night came and in the moonlight the shepherd saw a little fox that came trotting from the desert, looked right, looked left and headed straight for the milk, which he lapped up before disappearing into the desert again.

The next morning Moses found the shepherd quite depressed and downcast. 'What is the matter?' he asked. The shepherd said, 'You were right. God is pure spirit and he doesn't want my milk.' Moses was surprised at his mood. He said, 'You should be happy. You know more about God than you did before.' 'Yes, I do,' said the shepherd, 'but the only thing I could do to express my love for him has been taken

away from me.' Moses understood and retired into the desert and prayed hard. In the night, in a vision, God spoke to him and said, 'Moses, you were wrong. It is true that I am pure spirit. Nevertheless, I always accepted with gratitude the milk which the shepherd offered me, as the expression of his love, but since, being pure spirit, I do not need the milk, I shared it with this little fox, who is very fond of milk.'



*Adapted from 'School for Prayer' by Metropolitan Anthony  
By kind permission of Darton, Longman, Todd.*

## **WILLIAM MILNER AND HIS BOOKS ON WHEELS**

The present-day service of making special deliveries of books to household readers is a comparatively recent innovation, but an interesting variation on 'books on wheels' dates from the mid-nineteenth century when William Milner, a Halifax printer and bookseller, travelled the country with a horse-drawn van, similar to a gypsy vardo, packed with books from his own printing press. He would stop at county fairs and market towns, or wherever crowds gathered, and set up his stall, selling his wares in the traditional fairground manner, with a fluent line in patter which soon cleared his stock. So popular were his books, and so reasonable the prices, that they sold easily and found their way to all parts of the British Isles, and the story is told of a storm-bound traveller who came across one of Milner's little pocket-size publications in a shepherd's hut in the remote Scottish Highlands.

William Milner was born on the 30<sup>th</sup> October, 1803, of a poor family and received little formal education, but he was quick-witted and observant. He was apprenticed to a printer, but as a young man he earned his living selling pots and pans from a van – which set the trend for his book-selling business. His first publication, Byron's 'English Bards and Scottish Reviewers', was printed for him in 1834, but in 1836 he set up his own press at 40, Swine Market, in Halifax, where his first book was 'The Curse of the Factory System' by John Fielden, M.P. for Oldham. This was an age when books were too expensive for most working people and there were few newspapers. The first Public Libraries Act of 1850 was still to come and subscription libraries were out of reach of most people.

Milner cut production costs to the bone and, by reprinting books which were no longer covered by copyright, or occasionally producing a 'pirate' edition, he was able to market his pocket editions at sixpence (2 1/2p ) or a shilling (5p). This brought them within the reach of the poorer classes, even if it might mean denying themselves candles or other necessities, and so gave them access to literature and learning, for Milner was very selective and printed some of the best books available, including many classics. A regular feature of his books was the inclusion of a delightful little vignette on the title page, a small sketch which illustrated something of the contents. As business increased, Milner moved to bigger premises in Cheapside where as many as sixteen hand presses were employed. By 1842 he was a Town Trustee and lived in Bull Close Lane.

His most famous series was the 'Cottage Library', which began about 1837 and



became a profitable line. There was strong competition from at least eight other printers in Halifax, however, and one, William Nicholson, actually brought out a 'Cottager's Library' of his own.

The London and Edinburgh book trade was carried on largely through booksellers, but as the business prospered, a distribution centre was opened in Paternoster Row, London. By this time a traveller was employed to do the itinerant bookselling, a popular character named Tommy Ramsden, who invariably wore a black frock-coat and a broad-brimmed top-hat, in which he stored his accounts. When the Chartist paper, 'The Northern Star', was proscribed by the authorities, copies were brought from London and smuggled into Halifax hidden in a coffin conveyed by a hearse and it is said that Milner filled it with books for the return trip – a typical example of his enterprise.

Milner died on 29<sup>th</sup> November, 1850, leaving the business to his stepsons Francis Robert and John Edwin Sowerby, who in 1857 built extensive new premises in Raglan Street. Francis held the rank of Captain in the Halifax Rifle Volunteer Corps, and was a member of Halifax Town Council from 1859 to 1862. He died at Bowers Hall, Barkisland, on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1885. His brother John died ten years later at Green Hayes, Savile Park Road. In 1883 a limited liability company was formed as Milner & Co. Ltd when some of the oldest workmen were admitted as shareholders, but business declined and in 1910 it was decided to go into liquidation. All creditors were paid in full and efforts were made to put the firm onto a sound footing but in 1913 the business was wound up.



*Derek Bridge*

William Milner

## EARLY RECOLLECTIONS OF A CHURCH CARETAKER'S DAUGHTER

The landing in our attic flat was almost dark because the bedroom door stood firmly closed, cutting off the light from the window. I felt unhappy and a bit frightened because this meant that something not good was happening again. Something I was not allowed to see. I was shut out. What I was too young to understand was that my adoptive father, Henry, suffered from epilepsy. Until then, he had commuted daily from the suburbs to Central London where he had a clerical job. This was becoming untenable, mainly because he was regularly taken ill on the train to find he was yet again being taken to hospital. He was registered disabled: in 1950 there was little if any financial assistance so he and my mother found themselves in a desperate situation. But they had a very deep and real faith and handed the situation over to God.

Their prayers were soon answered. The caretaker of the church they belonged to, and which Dad had been a part of since a baby, decided to retire and the job was offered to Dad with the promise of a new flat to be built on the premises. It was very exciting to watch our new home being built. Meanwhile, we walked the half-mile down to the church each day where my parents set about their duties while I spent my pre-school days exploring the quirky old church. The rough patch at the back became my special place. We ate our sandwiches each day in the dingy church hall with whichever willing volunteers had arrived with their dusters. I remember one day, in a particularly thick pea-souper fog, looking up at the old hall windows and being frightened by the eerie gloom outside. It felt like the end of the world. I remember the newspaper collection stacked high in an ante-room next to the kitchen. It was all hands on deck for the stacking. This activity was quite lucrative but I can't remember why. But oh! The fire risk!



The church was of an octagonal shape with a tall roof which narrowed as it got higher. Seventy feet above the sanctuary was an area of stained-glass ceiling and above that, two long rickety ladders which wobbled their way up to the roof. Once on the roof the view was magnificent. Dad would sometimes take me up there for a treat. No other child ever went up. I couldn't do it nowadays! I think our guardian angel went with us.

Another great fascination for me was the Baptistry hidden by carpet under the communion table. I loved to go with Dad on a Saturday evening before a baptismal service to help fill it with water heated by an immersion heater. It is only in recent years that I have realised that baptism by immersion had nothing to do with the immersion heater! Play opportunities were plentiful with the Girls' Brigade vaulting horse and box and a large hall with a wooden floor to roller-skate on endlessly, and a fire-escape which gave access to our flat which made a great climbing frame. There were no other children nearby as the church was in the centre of the town behind the shops but my mother welcomed friends to come and play and to stay for tea.



There would be occasions when Dad was unwell, which meant mum kept things ticking over by setting up for meetings, opening and locking up, and if it was late at night I insisted on going with her as I couldn't bear the thought of her doing the rounds on her own in the big, dark building. We used to say a prayer together before we set out. Caretaking was very much a family affair.

*Dorothy Campling*

## **SPRING TIME**

People smile more when the sun is shining.  
Today we are not hunched against the cold  
In our thick coats,  
Swathed with scarves and  
With bobble hat and gloves,  
Struggling to reach shelter from the cruel wind.  
No. Today the air is balmy,  
And the breeze a gentle caress  
As the sun beams benignly down  
From a clear blue sky.  
There are people walking their dogs, children  
Playing on the Moor,  
Runners and someone  
Posting a letter. With straightened spines,  
Shoulders back, head held high,  
We stride out,  
Rejoicing.  
We acknowledge one another with a new warmth  
Born of the warmth  
Of this bright Spring day.

*Gemma Wassell*



### **ALABASTER GIRL**

Alabaster girl so smooth and cold  
a cold breeze froze your hair,  
Your eyes devoid of any life,  
as cold as ice,  
with no trace shown of any smile  
on lips too perfect to be kissed;  
what impulse made you so?  
Were you first formed  
from residues of love long gone,  
countless promises proven wrong,  
yet did a tiny spark of hope  
once flicker in your icy look  
before you turned to stone?

*Michael Collins*

## **MAKE YOUR WISHES KNOWN**

My name is Angela Thorp and I am a solicitor.. I was born and am still living in Halifax. I have a farming background and am the mother of 15-year-old twins

I am often asked why it is advisable to have a Will. There are several reasons to do so, not least as it ensures that you can pass your estate (your money, property, and possessions) on to your family, friends or others in the way which you choose.

You can also give instructions as to your funeral wishes.

It is also possible for a Will to include inheritance tax saving mechanisms and other devices for saving on potential future care home fees.

Many people assume that if you die without having a Will (which is known as 'dying intestate') that your property will be shared out equally amongst immediate family. However, this may not be the case. The law surrounding estate administration is complicated. If you die intestate, then it is left to the law to stipulate how your estate will be distributed. Currently, there is an amount of £322,000 (called a Statutory Legacy, which came into effect on the 26<sup>th</sup> July 2023) which would automatically pass to your surviving spouse or civil partner. The remainder of your personal belongings or estate would be shared between any spouse/civil partner and any children.

Put simply, the most effective way to protect your family's future is to ensure that you make a will.

In addition, you can further protect your estate by having a Lasting Power of Attorney which would ensure that your family or close friends can keep control of your estate and well-being should you lose mental capacity. This will cover both your medical needs and your financial affairs.

If you would like to talk about either a will or LLP, please phone me on 01422 330601 or e-mail [angelathorp@chadwicklaw.co.uk](mailto:angelathorp@chadwicklaw.co.uk) and I will be happy to have a conversation with you. There will be no obligation to proceed once we have spoken.

## A SCOTTISH GAELIC PRAYER

As the rain hides the stars,  
As the autumn mist hides the hills,  
As the clouds veil the blue of the sky,  
So the dark happenings of my lot hide the shining of thy  
face from me.

Yet, if I may hold thy hand in the darkness,  
It is enough, since I know,  
That though I may stumble in my going,  
You do not fall.

*Anon: Submitted by Anne Boyd*

### **MAGAZINE DEADLINE**

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

**9a.m. on Friday 10th May 2024**

We welcome all contributions but publication is not guaranteed.

Send to: [garnetr@outlook.com](mailto:garnetr@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 at 7.30 in the evening, we hold meetings of the **Thursday Club** 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](mailto: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 <sup>nd</sup> 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 <sup>rd</sup> 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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