

HEATH LIVES

Number 23

April/May 2026



EDITORIAL

Welcome to our Spring issue. Our Easter message comes from our Church Secretary: thank you, Jane.

As usual, we are grateful to all our contributors, especially to Derek Bridge who has provided something of interest in every issue since our beginning, over three years ago. However, my 'bank' of items awaiting publication is getting very empty: may I plead for you to write your stories, or suggest people whom I could contact who contribute meaningfully to the life of Halifax and might be prepared to share their stories with us.

As you will see on page 16, we have two more concerts planned and there will be others in the months ahead, as well as our Summer and Harvest lunches. Dates will be published in good time. Everyone is welcome.

We wish all our readers a very happy Easter celebration and a joyful Spring and Summer.

Ed.



CHURCH CONTACT DETAILS

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

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

Website: heathchurchhalifax.org.uk

Facebook: Heath URC in Halifax

Dear Friends



This April-and-May edition of Heath Lives spans three national holidays, beginning with Good Friday (April 3rd) and Easter Monday (April 6th), then two in May. Plenty of time to relax and enjoy reading this magazine.

The word Easter conjures up many different understandings. A few years ago, I overheard a conversation between a couple in the aisle of a supermarket in which one said to the other “Tomorrow is Easter egg day”. To me, as a

Christian the following day was Easter Sunday, the day we celebrate the risen Christ, a day that had, and still has, the potential to turn the world upside down, to change it for the better.

There is a long held belief, including amongst Christians, that aspects of Easter as we celebrate it are of pagan origin, relating to Eostre, a pagan goddess of light and fertility; hares, rabbits and eggs being symbols of fertility.

There is now a counter argument, based on extensive historical research, to Easter being at least in part pagan. It seems that this idea emerged in the mid 1800s through the writings of Alexander Hislop, an anti-Roman Catholic, fundamentalist, Presbyterian minister who claimed that everything Roman Catholic (pre-Reformation) was related to paganism. With today’s archaeological and historical knowledge Hislop’s work has been debunked, not least because he used the only known documented reference to Eostre, an unreliable account by the monk Bede. There is wide agreement amongst modern historians, that there is little evidence that there was worship of a goddess Eostre.

Aspects of Easter have become very commercial – just take a look around any supermarket. As our society becomes more secular and culturally diverse, it suits businesses very well that the likely myth of the pagan origins of Easter continues so as to protect the sale of Easter eggs, hot cross buns, simnel cakes and much more.

Across Europe, apart from the English, German and Slavic languages, the name for Easter is a variation on the Hebrew word Pesach, meaning Passover. Old English also used a variation on this and it even crops up today in events such as the Heptonstall Pace Egg play. We know from the New Testament that Christ was crucified on the day before the Passover and rose again on the third day after the beginning of Passover. The English 'Easter' and German 'Ostern' have their origins in a word meaning 'light' and the Slavic languages generally use words meaning 'Great Night' or 'Great Day'

So what of today's Easter traditions and images? The simnel cake, with its marzipan balls, represents the 12 apostles who ate with Jesus on the night he was betrayed. Some simnel cakes only have 11 balls, leaving out Judas, the betrayer. It is much harder to arrange 11 balls evenly around the cake, though!



Hot cross buns, of course, remind us that Jesus died a cruel death on a cross although many lovers of them remain unaware of that symbolism.

Traditionally Christians didn't eat meat or animal products during Lent, the 40 days before Easter. Pancakes were made, the day before, on Shrove Tuesday, to use up eggs before Lent. Many of you, Christians or not, will have enjoyed pancakes on February 17th this year. On Easter Saturday children would be given eggs in preparation for a feast of egg-eating on Easter Day. From that, chocolate manufacturers developed the chocolate egg that we all know and love.

The New Testament shows the Easter story as a continuation of Jewish tradition, celebrating Christ as the new Paschal lamb. In his gospel John refers to Jesus as the 'Lamb of God' and that symbolism is found in the Book of Revelation too.



Lamb is often eaten at Easter, a reminder of the close link to the Passover festival. Lambs are born in early Spring following the bleakness of winter, so also represent new life just as Jesus' resurrection heralds a new beginning following the bleakness of Good Friday and the cross. The daffodils and other flowers we associate with Easter have a similar symbolism. In the Protestant tradition, the crosses in our churches are usually empty crosses, reinforcing the risen Christ, the Christ of new beginnings summed up in his commandment to love God (and therefore creation) and to love your neighbour as yourself. Whatever one's personal beliefs, no one can go far wrong in doing their best to follow this.

Jane Simmons, Heath Church Secretary

Hallelujah!

We enter into all that this day brings;
we join your Church rejoicing and amazed.
We come with all there is within our lives,
And find you, waiting, watching, welcoming.
Saviour, Holy One,
let this day and every day be touched with your rising.
Amen

(Neil Thorogood, Touching God, 2026)

Happy Easter!



Image by Andrzej Wallis from Pixabay

GOD IS FOR YOU!

There are copies of a helpful little booklet on the table in the foyer at Heath

Church entitled *WORD FOR TODAY*, and they are free to anyone to take away! It has a short paragraph of wise words every day for three months, each based on a one-line quote from the Bible. You are most welcome to take a copy or just ask anyone at Heath to get you one: why not try it out if you feel it might help you through the ups and downs of life? I do, though not always does the topic seem to quite fit my situation or need at the time.

Here is a recent *Word*:

Be optimistic (1):

*“God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good.”
Genesis 1: 31*

Before the age of two, Helen Keller lost her vision and her hearing. In an instant her world went dark and silent. Then a godsend named Anne Sullivan broke through Helen’s solitary confinement and touched her soul. As a result, Helen became the first deaf/blind person to earn a Bachelor’s Degree. She also wrote a dozen books, including a manifesto on her philosophy of life, *Optimism*.

“No pessimist ever discovered the secrets of the stars” she wrote “or sailed to an uncharted land”. The last page of her book echoes the first page of Scripture: “Optimism is the harmony of man’s spirit and the spirit of God pronouncing his works good.”

If God’s spirit is within you, optimism is the order of the day. Optimism isn’t at odds with the reality all around us. It simply means we’re anchored to another reality – the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ - that is deeper and stronger and longer than the reality we can perceive with our five senses. Helen Keller proved that with an optimistic spirit, even the most difficult of circumstances cannot define you. And even if you cannot change them, you can overcome them.

She proved that, amazing as the human eye is, there’s something more amazing – the mind’s eye that enables us to imagine the unthinkable and believe the impossible. It’s why she said, “The only thing worse than being blind is having sight but no vision”. Or, as Paul put it: “Brothers and sisters, think about the things that are good and worthy of praise”. (Philippians 4: 8). In other words, be optimistic.

John Seager

Ed: The publishers, UCB (United Christian Broadcasters) are on radio (DAB 1&2), have a website (UCB.CO.UK) and a UCB Prayerline, or you can enquire on 01782 911000. Or write to: Freepost RLTX-ABUL-GRAR, Westport Rd, Stoke on Trent ST6 4JF

TREES

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

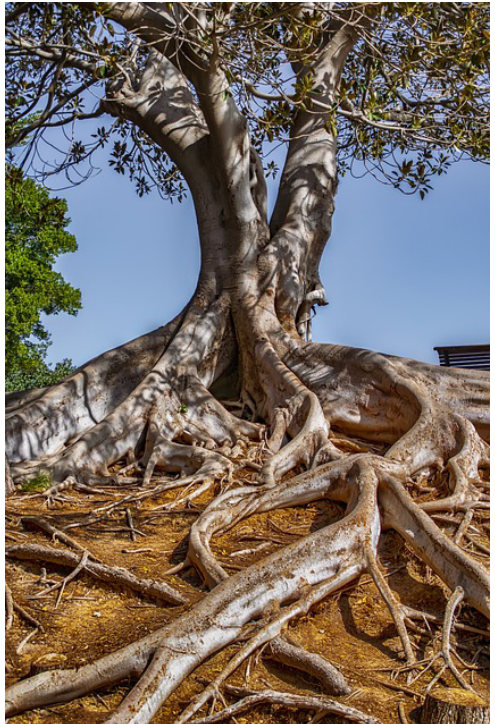
A tree that may in Summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

Joyce Kilmer

(Joyce Kilmer was born on December 6, 1886, in New Brunswick, New Jersey. He was killed in 1918 while fighting in World War I).



A GLIMPSE BEHIND THE CURTAIN

Drawing back the curtains I could see the changing of the guard. However, this wasn't London with its red-uniformed soldiers but armed, grey-fur-coated, members of the Militsiya outside my Moscow apartment block in 1975. These police were posted outside 24 hours a day, supposedly to keep unwelcome visitors away but, perhaps it could be mooted, to keep an eye on foreign diplomatic inhabitants. It seemed alien at first but one soon got used to them and exchanged a friendly word now and then. They certainly never intimidated us but kept us safe.

How was I there? Just before I left New Delhi, after four years split between there and Calcutta, I had been informed that I had been posted to the British Embassy in Moscow for one year following a spot of leave in England. (You may have read my earlier piece on my travel back to the UK by overland bus in a previous edition of "Heath Lives") .This time I decided to travel by train but had to wait for transit visas through East Germany and Poland as well as a diplomatic visa for the USSR, which took time. The journey started well enough though the passage through the Berlin Wall with its watchtowers and armed guards was slightly uncomfortable but the East German officials who inspected my passport couldn't have been more friendly. Two days later in the early morning, the train entered the USSR in what is now Belarus, the compartment door banged open and I was "invited" to leave the train and accompany a security official to an office on Minsk Station. Bearing in mind that I spoke not a word of Russian and it was the middle of a cold night, it was disconcerting to say the least when the train apparently started leaving without me. However, it transpired that it was only a temporary departure to enable changing of the bogeys due to a difference in rail gauges in Russia from Poland. The officer in charge reassured me that they just wanted to check my visa was in order. Phew! I was soon back on board, unscathed, and continued safely on my journey reaching Moscow in the early afternoon to be greeted by some new colleagues.

In 1975 the British Embassy was located in an old and beautiful pre-Revolution building literally just across the Moscow river from the Kremlin. It was said that this location really irritated Josef Stalin, in particular, and he spent some years trying to evict the British presence there without success. It was only in 2000 that a new Embassy was established about 3 miles away from the original building, which is still retained today as the Ambassador's residence. The Embassy not only housed the usual diplomatic offices but also a Doctor's Surgery and, best of all, a tennis court which, in winter, was iced over and a sport called Broomball was played. This was, I believe unique to Embassy circles at the time, and was a variation on ice hockey but using a

short stiff bristled broom and a ball replacing sticks and a puck. It got quite rough at times and elbow and knee pads were essential!

After a brief spell in the main building I transferred to a vacancy in the Commercial Section which, fortuitously, was located very handily for my flat. At that time there was not a huge amount of commercial business between our two countries but what there was seemed to favour bartering rather than buying and selling. For the final six months of my posting I worked in the Cultural Section which was far more enjoyable for me as it dealt with arranging visits to and from Russia by well-known musicians. For example, we fixed the first visit to Moscow by Cliff Richard in 1976!

My small, slightly shabby flat was within a similarly shabby, grey coloured, apartment block built, we were told, by captured German POWs at the end of what the Russians call "The Great Patriotic War" but which had obviously never enjoyed better days. It comprised a bedroom, living room, kitchen and a bathroom, none of which would have graced a Home and Gardens magazine page unless it had been published in the 1920s. It did have very good central heating, though, which was very handy when the temperatures dropped below 20 degrees C which it frequently did during the winter of 1975/6.

Daily Life. There is no doubt that being part of the diplomatic circles had great advantages over the local populace. We had our own reasonably-stocked supermarket, barred to locals, and we paid for our groceries in Pounds Sterling rather than Russian roubles. If you wanted tickets or a meal out you had to apply in advance through the local Russian-manned administration

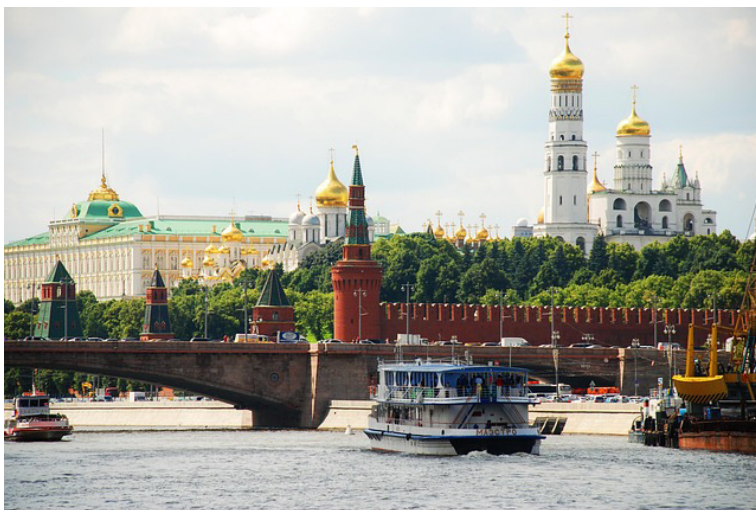


Image by LENA15 on Pixabay

office who was housed in a separate building just inside the Embassy gates. The choice of restaurant you would be granted was often, for reasons only known to them, different from what you fancied so a desired Chinese meal could end up with a Georgian or Moldovan one instead. Literally pot luck! If we wanted to go to the Bolshoi Ballet, the opera or sporting events such as football or ice hockey (my favourite) we paid very little and we were always given good seats. This, of course, was viewed as good propaganda on their part.

The Embassy had a much-used social club in my apartment block, which was open most nights of the week, where we enjoyed drinks, darts, dances and occasional concerts from visiting musicians. Here we socialised with colleagues from other friendly Embassies, most of whom had no similar clubs. The American Embassy Club used to put on film shows at the weekends which, although you had no idea what film was going to be shown, were always well attended and enjoyed. Cokes and popcorn were freely available.

In terms of transport most junior staff members were able to buy a cheap Zhiguli (Lada) car which separated us even more from the locals who, in the main, would have to save up for 10 years to afford one. One idiosyncrasy was that you couldn't order a particular colour but had to take what the factory delivered on a particular day. My first one (oh yes, I bought a second!) was mustard-coloured, not exactly what I would have wished but it never let me down the whole year and, despite being parked outside, always started first thing even in the coldest days of winter. We were restricted where we could travel to and there was a boundary around Moscow (as similarly there was for Russian diplomats around London) which you could not breach without authorisation. The only exception was for travel to the Embassy's wooden dacha, or weekend countryside cottage, very much a la Doctor Zhivago, surrounded by beautiful birch trees. It looked quite stunning amidst the winter's snowy landscape. I remember parties being held there with huge log fires burning in the enormous grates. I also spent an interesting weekend, using overnight sleeper trains, travelling around Latvia and Estonia, then largely unknown by tourists other than those coming by day ferries from neighbouring Finland and Sweden. It seemed to me that the locals were more relaxed and friendly than those where I lived. Local Muscovites were discouraged from social intercourse with us so the Baltic States provided a pleasant and surprising change.

This is just a taste of what it was like for me there in the mid '70s. Although it was a particularly difficult time, with the Cold War very much present, it was an experience I look back on with some fondness. Luckily afterwards I was posted to Copenhagen where I met Gemma. Things could, and did, only get better!

Stephen Wassell

BLOWIN' IN THE WIND

Sixty-three years ago, on 27th May 1963, the folk/blues album *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan* was released. It included the hit song *Blowin' in the Wind* and marked the start of an amazing singing-songwriting career.

It was in fact Bob Dylan's second album, but the first to contain all his own songs. He came to prominence in the protest movement of the 60s, latching on to the prevailing atmosphere with a catalogue of songs that were not only perceptive but revealed an entirely different kind of talent, from the manner of his delivery to the poetic invention of his lyrics.

Dylan's birth name was Robert Allen Zimmerman, and he was born in Minnesota, descended from Jewish immigrants from the area of Ukraine and Lithuania. He started using guitar and harmonica in folk fashion, but he soon 'went electric', to the consternation of the purists but to the delight of everyone who enjoyed his originality, range and sense of humour.

His career stalled for a short while when he was involved in a motorcycle accident in the mid-60s, but he came back strongly and unexpectedly with the wonderful country-tinged album, *John Wesley Harding*. In the late 1970s he became a Christian and issued several overtly Christian albums, starting with *Slow Train Coming*, but he eventually reverted to a more open style, though he never renounced his faith: it seems evident in his recordings up to the present day.

Although now in his 80s, he has never stopped performing or writing, usually to the highest standards. His more recent albums, such as *Time out of Mind* and *Rough and Rowdy Ways* (his 39th studio album, issued in 2020), show just as much invention and creativity as ever.

Tim Lenton

TRADITION

I wonder if you remember the song 'Tradition' in 'Fiddler on the Roof'? Tevye certainly believed in the concept and so, I think, should we. There are so many interesting traditions in this country which should be preserved. Unfortunately, in the eyes of many younger people nowadays, anything remotely old-fashioned should be consigned to the rubbish bin.

May is a month which seems to lend itself to tradition in many ways. People in earlier times spoke of going a-maying, which meant walking through the woods of Spring gathering may blossom, or hawthorn, to decorate the house. It also often included a picnic and perhaps games and races. This was the month for dancing around the maypole, an event which gave its name to numerous inns. This was an event which was often carried out in schools and I remember having one in my Infants' School. Of course it was not easy to train small children to dance in the correct pattern without completely entangling the coloured ribbons.

Another fine tradition was the May Day celebrations at the beginning of the month. The chief feature was the trimming of horses. The huge Shire horses which were used by all the local breweries, looked at their very best on this occasion, painstakingly groomed so that their coats gleamed like satin, with their manes and tails plaited with ribbons entwined and their hooves polished, they were a picture! Their harness was highly polished and the ornamental brasses on them shone brightly. Sadly, there are few horses around these days.

'The Pace Egg' play is a tradition which is still continued, particularly in the Calder Valley where it began. This mumming play includes such characters as St George, a doctor, Bold Slasher, The Black Prince of Paradine and Hector and in essence it demonstrates the perpetual fight between good and evil. The theme is clear and simply explained, but the production is not to everyone's taste.

In Cornwall, a well-known event of this kind is the 'Floral Dance' or 'Furry Dance'. This, like others of its type, is a celebration of Spring and a return to the green growth of nature after the bleakness of winter. It commences with the participants, all local people, wearing bright ceremonial costumes, dancing outside the village of Helston, after which, led by the band playing 'The Floral Dance' they process down through the streets. A very picturesque and happy time.

A more sombre occasion is Guy Fawkes Night. The historical event itself was one of desperation and of cruel retribution but thankfully this has been transformed over the years into an evening of childish entertainment and happiness. More widely celebrated in earlier times, the displays of fireworks are extremely attractive and bright and the bonfire, giving forth a welcome warmth in the dark November chill, is used too for the delicious baked potatoes which can be provided from the outer embers. Add to this the possibility of toffee and parkin and the evening is complete.



The sending of Christmas cards unfortunately seems to be declining, due to the cost of postage and the growth of e-cards online. This is, I feel, rather sad for not only did a written card give a personal touch but the sight of them all ranged along the mantelpiece and furniture was a happy reminder of this glorious celebration.

There are so many other traditions to discuss if time permitted, many of which are dying out. Traditions in dress codes, for instance, and in attending church regularly even when people do not regard themselves as very religious – a strong conviction can easily grow. It is extremely sad that Morning Assemblies are no longer held in schools as this was often an early introduction to the Christian faith which promoted growing interest.



Derek Bridge

BETHLEHEM CARE AND HOSPICE TRUST (BCHT) -

Comprehensive and Compassionate Palliative Care

The Bethlehem Care and Hospice Trust (BCHT) is a registered Yorkshire charity providing end-of-life care to people in Bethlehem: the city of Our Lord's Nativity. Professor Phil Hopkins KHS is Professor of Anaesthesia at the University of Leeds and is the Chair of the Trust's Board of Trustees. The Bethlehem Care and Hospice Trust is the first, and still only, palliative care service in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and was launched on 1st August 2023. The Trust was set up in response to an urgent request from the Christian community in Bethlehem, a city with one of the highest reported incidences of cancer in the Holy Land. Alarming, seven out of every ten cancer diagnoses in the region come too late for curative treatment. Before the service began, palliative care simply wasn't available, leaving many to face terminal illness in pain without the dignity or comfort of appropriate care. The Trust developed a home-based care model. A solid operational structure was quickly established in Bethlehem. Licences were obtained, medical staff were recruited and trained, and the service officially launched. This is in a region where nearly 30% of people survive on less than £1.34 a day, with soaring unemployment. Restrictions on movement added another layer of difficulty to delivering a healthcare service. Now in its third year, the service is currently supporting well over 150 patients, of all faiths and none, and building compassionate communities across Bethlehem. But the need is still far greater. There are many more suffering without access to palliative care—not just in Bethlehem, but throughout the Holy Land. Funds are only spent on delivering palliative care. The Trust urgently needs financial support to maintain and expand its services and reach those who are still going without care.

As the only organisation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories providing palliative care, BCHT is dedicated to bringing exceptional and holistic end-of-life care to people who would not otherwise have access to it. BCHT's expert services encompass a wide range of support to ensure the comfort and dignity of patients, addressing both their physical and emotional needs.

BCHT Services:

- Nursing Care: Professional and compassionate nursing services to manage health needs.
- Pain Management: Effective strategies to alleviate pain and improve comfort.
- Symptom Relief: Targeted treatments to ease various and complex symptoms.
- Emotional Support: Providing a compassionate ear and counselling to help navigate emotional challenges.
- Assistance with Daily Activities: Helping patients with everyday tasks to maintain their independence.
- Spiritual Guidance: Respectful and personalised spiritual care to meet individual beliefs and needs.

Further information on BHCT is available at:

<https://bethlehemcareandhospicetrust.org/>

Image by [Gerd Altmann](#) from [Pixabay](#)



FORTHCOMING EVENTS AT HEATH

THE FLASHBACKS

Jazz Band

Saturday 25th April 2026

@ 2.30 p.m.

TRANSPENINE HARPISTS

Saturday 20th June 2026

@ 2.30 p.m.

£10 including refreshments



CICS
Christians in Calderdale Schools

VISION EVENT

BUFFET & PRESENTATIONS

Free buffet followed by an exciting update on the work of CICS in Schools across Calderdale. All are welcome!

TO BOOK - CICSCALDERDALE.ORG.UK

Wednesday 13th May 2026,
5pm for buffet, 5.30 – 6.30pm for presentations
Heath Church, Halifax, HX3 0DW
(use Manor Drive entrance)

It's Your Move
Primary Assemblies
Faith Panels
Mentoring
Lessons
Chilli Tuesday
Support for Staff

THE MESSIAH

The original idea was not Handel's, but his collaborator's, Charles Jennens, a passionate Christian who wanted to demonstrate that Jesus really was the 'Christ', or Messiah. This was being denied by Deists in the 18th Century, who believed God created the world and then stayed distant from it.

Jennens combed the Old Testament for texts which anticipated God's continuing activity in the world, with the expectation of greater things to come: *Comfort ye my people; Every valley shall be exalted; And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed ...* and so on. Then there were poignant passages anticipating suffering, with deep significance for Christians: *Behold the Lamb of God; He was despised; Surely He hath borne our griefs.*

Throughout the work, there is the strong sense that God is both omnipotent and also intimately involved with the human race: *How beautiful are the feet; the kingdom of this world is become the Kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ.* The Hallelujah Chorus, the best known of the work, concludes the second part of 'Messiah', before the focus shifts mainly to the New Testament and Christ's resurrection and triumph: *The trumpet shall sound; Death where is thy sting; and finally, Worthy is the Lamb.*

Handel composed the music in 24 days, writing across the final manuscript, "To the glory of God". As he finished the Hallelujah Chorus, he said, "I did think I did see all Heaven before me, and the great God Himself."

The work caused a stir by being presented in concert halls, rather than churches where some felt sacred works belonged. The first performance was in Dublin in 1742 and raised funds for charities. One of the soloists was Susanna Cibber, a woman of questionable reputation, whose rendering of "He was despised" so moved the Revd Patrick Delaney, that he cried out, "Woman, for this be all thy sins forgiven thee".

German-born Handel, who became a British subject and whose finances were sometimes precarious, didn't always get on with the wealthy Jennens, but the two men shared a single mission. The oratorio 'Messiah' is the result.

The Ven. John Barton

WHO WAS MONICA CLAY?

Monica Clay was the daughter of Howard and Elizabeth Clay who were the Mayor and Mayoress of Halifax between 1917 and 1919. They lived at 21, Savile Road. The family had a strong non-conformist tradition and attended the Unitarian Northgate End Chapel, which stood at the bottom of Broad Street. In later life Monica also attended Quaker meetings and took part in arranging floral displays at the Parish Church (now Halifax Minster).

Monica's mother, Elizabeth Fisher Clay, was a distinguished painter from Massachusetts and Monica inherited her artistic talents and skills. She started her studies at Halifax School of Art, then went on to Leeds College of Art, followed by a course in textile design at Bradford College of Art. I don't know if her love for colourful designer clothes was the motivation for this course, or if her studies kindled her love for her extensive flamboyant wardrobe.

Monica taught art at Halifax, Newark, Tiverton and Poole Schools of Art, and in the decade up to her retirement held the post of senior lecturer in historic costumes at Alsager and Crewe College of Education.

Monica loved to travel and most of her paintings were created during painting holidays, away from her busy professional life. Many of her paintings were inspired by the landscapes of Greece, Italy, Spain, America, China and India. Though she travelled the world, her roots were firmly anchored in Halifax. She served as a committee member of the Halifax Art Society, was a committed supporter of the Halifax – Aachen Society and Dean Clough. She was a knowledgeable music lover and historian.

It was at Halifax Antiquarian meetings that I met Monica a few times. After her sudden death on 22nd September 1996 a large quantity of her prints and sketches was donated to organisations she supported and I was fortunate to obtain a print of a cottage in France, a sunflower, a floral arrangement and a and a landscape water colour. Monica loved children and was always drawn to young people. She presented a little oil painting of an elephant to our then 4 year old daughter.

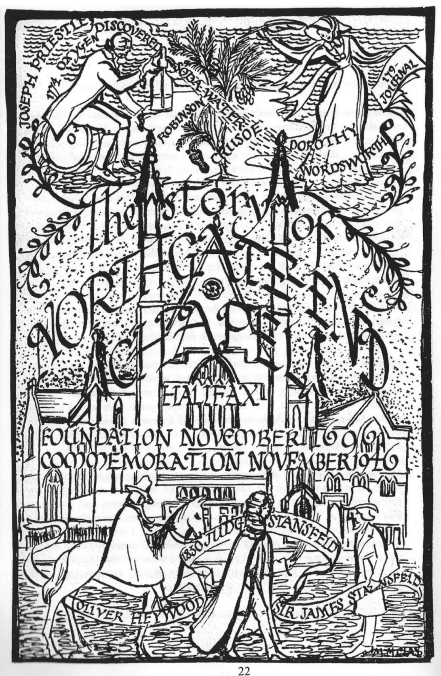
Monica worked with a wide range of mediums, inc. oil, water colours, pen and pastels. Her pictures were widely exhibited in the UK, from Halifax, via

Leeds and Wakefield, as far away as Exeter and Bournemouth as well as in France. Some of her local scenes depicting the Piece Hall and Halifax Town Hall can be viewed online (artuk.org)

In a short statement entitled “Art and Life” (1993) Monica wrote: “The serious study of Art opens up a whole new universe and excitement in observing with wonder, amazement and surprise. I want to put down my excitement in the visible world so that others can share it, too. It is not just a nice pastime, it’s fearfully difficult to analyse shapes, colour, line and depth of tone. Every moment you must concentrate so as not to lose unity, balance and vitality. All these themes have to be seen in terms of light falling on the flat surface. Also there is volume and some linear perspective to consider.”

Her obituary mentions Monica’s tremendous zest for life and her sense of fun. She inspired everyone who met her.

Gunhild Wilcock



EASTER CHICKS

In Norway it is a tradition to bake Easter chicks using a bread dough.

Mix 1 lb of strong white bread flour with a sachet of fast acting yeast and 1 tsp of salt.

Melt 2 tsp of margarine or butter and mix with 1/2 pint (300 ml) of lukewarm milk.

Combine all ingredients into a dough and knead vigorously for 10 mins.

Divide it into 10 to 12 portions, depending on how big you want your chicks to be. Roll each portion into a sausage long enough so you can tie it into a knot. Pull the thinner end a little bit through the loop to make a little tail. Pull the other end through a bit more and shape into a round to form the head. Use currants, pieces of sultanas or raisins for eyes and peel or candied cherries for a beak.

Place well apart on a greased baking tray and carefully brush with beaten egg.

Leave to rise in a warm place until double in size.

Preheat oven to gas 7 or 200 degree Celsius and bake for 5 - 10 mins.





Gunhild Wilcock

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK

Since 1957 Christian Aid has designated a week in May to raise funds that fight global poverty and injustice. It brings together faith and action to help families survive poverty and violence and helps communities to rebuild after crisis.

For more information see christianaid.org.uk
Heath URC will once again team up with the Scouts for the annual “Bacon Butties, Bakes and Books” event in support of Christian Aid in June. Look out for notices locally and join us at the Community Garden on Manor Drive and in the Church Hall.

We look forward to seeing you there!

EASTER WEEK

See the land, her Easter keeping,
Rises as her Maker rose.
Seeds, so long in darkness sleeping,
Burst at last from winter snows.
Earth with heaven above rejoices;
Fields and gardens hail the spring;
Shaughs and woodlands ring with voices,
While the wild birds build and sing.

You, to whom your Maker granted
Powers to those sweet birds unknown,
Use the craft by God implanted;
Use the reason not your own.
Here, while heaven and earth rejoices,
Each his Easter tribute bring-
Work of fingers, chant of voices,
Like the birds who build and sing.

Charles Kingsley

MAGAZINE DEADLINE

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

9 a.m. on Friday 8th May 2026

We welcome all contributions but publication is not guaranteed.

Send to: 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 those with 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 Spring 2026

All activities and hire times are subject to change.

TT = Term time S = Seasonal V = Variable O = Occasional

Day	User	Time	Location
Monday	Coccinelle French Class	11.30-3 TT ellie.fitzgerald1@outlookcom	Lounge
	Janet's Eazi Dance	2-3 janetfletcher5@yahoo.com	Hall
	Sing for Fun	2-3 no need to book	Upstairs
	Beavers	6-7 Beavers @49thhalifax.org.uk	Lounge & Hall
	Cubs	6.30-8 Cubs@49thhalifax.org.uk	Hall
	Halifax Symphony Orchestra	7-9.30 S roybiggs@halifaxorchestra.org	Upstairs
Tuesday	Community Coffee Club	10.30-12 (3 rd Tuesday) heathchurchhalifax@gmail.com	Lounge
	Yvonne's Tai Chi	1.30-3.30	Hall
	Kim's music lessons	4.15-8.15 pm TT	Upstairs
	Kim's dance class	6.15-7.15 07747 867706	Hall
	Scout leaders' Meetings	7.30 – 9.30 V	Lounge
Wednesday	Northern Lights House Group	10.30-12.30 fortnightly 07929 372498	Lounge
	Heidi's cardiac rehab	2-3 07791 869594	Hall
	St John's Ambulance Cadets	6-9	Hall
Thursday	Heath Study Group	10.30-12 V 01422 431424 heathchurchhalifax@gmail.com	Lounge
	WAM choir	10-12	Upstairs
	Kim's dance class	11-12 07747 867706	Hall
	Halifax Young Singers	6-9 TT halifaxyoungsingers2@gmail.com	Upstairs
	Thursday Club	7.30-9 (2nd Thurs) heathchurchhalifax@gmail.com	Lounge/visit
	Heidi's cardiac rehab	10-12 07791869594	Hall
	Kim's music lessons	4.15-6.15 pm TT	Upstairs
	Scouts & Explorer Scouts	7.30-9 Scouts@49thhalifax.org.uk	Hall & Lounge
	Kim's music lessons	9-11 TT	Upstairs
Saturday	Kim's music lessons	8.15-11.15 TT	Upstairs
	Calderdale Chess League	2.00 -7.00 07504 598590 O	Hall
Sunday	Heath's Worship	10-12 Service 10:30-11:30 07748988161	Upstairs
	Northern Lights	2.30-6 07970 256243 (Independent church, not linked to Heath)	Hall/Lounge