



HUDDERSFIELD ROTARY CLUB BULLETIN – JULY 2020



President's Message

July 2020

With a brief heat wave over, we seem to be back into a more cooler and wetter spell and I hope that as we move into our fourth month of lockdown you are all well and bearing up.

Our Zoom meetings are getting better as I and others are learning these new ways of communicating. The one last Monday was quite a success as we had our AGM.

I would like to thank all members for the trust you have put in me to do an extra year as your President.

The issue of face masks has been thoroughly explored and my grateful thanks to Bright and Ian F who spent a lot of time exploring design and costs. The clincher was that washable face masks were too expensive and Knaresborough Rotary Club had a surplus amount they were having difficulty in distributing. Face masks now are easily available at chemists, supermarkets and online at prices we could not match.

The next few months are uncertain for all of us and I am afraid that it might be some time before we can be meeting again at the Keys Restaurant. However, I am keen to develop our ideas and thoughts for the next twelve months as we will be celebrating 100 years as a club. We are setting up a separate fund to support our celebrations.

It does seem that the peak of the pandemic is passing and gradually the restrictions we are all under will be relaxed but we still have to follow the guidelines set by the Government and their scientific advisors. In the meantime, let us plan how we can work together in the future.

Yours in Rotary

Ann.

MY YORKSHIRE

The surveyors and engineers who designed and built our canals were never put off by the terrain. They crossed valleys with aqueducts. They climbed hills with locks and even bored through mountains and seemed never to worry about the nature of our countryside. So, we have the longest canal tunnel that starts in Marsden and finishes three miles later in Lancashire. The run up to Marsden on the Huddersfield Narrow canal needs 42 locks to get up the Colne Valley.

The men who did the hard work digging out the channels, building the embankments and tunnelling through rock for the tunnels were called Navigators or, for short, "Navvies". They were mainly of Irish extraction and lived in camps alongside the canals and were paid extremely poorly and had to buy their food from the canal masters.

However, though these canal builders were never put off by the terrain, they were not daft and where possible the canals followed the contour of the land and in Yorkshire we have one of the best examples of this technique.

The Leeds Liverpool canal does what it says. It is from the centre of Leeds to the centre of Liverpool and winds through the hills. Ann and I have sailed most of the length when we owned a narrow boat and I have covered it several times with the Safe Anchor Trust taking out community parties. The canal follows the Aire Valley and there is one of the wonders of the canal world at Bingley, called the Bingley Five Rise and is five straight locks without a pound or a water pond between each lock. As a boat owner it is not for the faint hearted the first time you navigate them either up or down. Fortunately, there is a lock keeper on hand to help but you must read the instruction at both ends carefully so there is a smooth rise or descent. It can go wrong!

Having reached the top you need the café to soothe your troubled nerves and then you are faced with 35 miles of tranquillity with only one lock as the canal follows the contours of the hills. It is the extreme example of a contour canal for the rest of the time it runs through Yorkshire. The canal winds round the hillsides of the upper Aire, through Skipton and then on to Gargrave where there is the one lock on the 35-mile stretch.

There are still barriers to overcome in the form of swing bridges where roads and farm tracks need to cross the canal, They can be fun as you hold up motorists as you manipulate the swing bridge, so the boat can go through and then the bridge has to be swung back so the road can be used. That stretch is one of my favourite bits of canal.

This poem has been regurgitated from a very old Welsh Guards magazine.....At the time it was applauded by all ranks and I was wondering whether it would amuse our Rotary members?

My best wishes to all

Alan.

MY LIFE IN VERSE

I was born in nineteen thirty one
My folks said that my nurse
Was absolutely confident
That I learned to talk in verse.

A woman getting on in years
She was quite prepared to swear
That I never really spoke a word
Until I'd learned a pair.

Even in my rompers
I couldn't walk or climb
But they said my infant prattling
Came forth as simple rhyme.

It seems I was a source
Of great amusement to my brother
He insisted I'd inherited
The talent from our mother.

Yes, our mum Meretta
With her amazing way with words
Wrote lovely poems and stories
About animals and birds.

So that's how it all started
The story has been told
I joined a local prep school
When still not four years old.

Miss Major was the Governess
A lady of great taste
Who said that my inheritance
Must never go to waste.

Her assistant was Miss Canning
And they tutored me in turns
When I was only five years old
I was reciting Burns.

My parents kept some verses
That I wrote about that time
The subjects were quite infantile
But they paid regard to rhyme.

Then in March of nineteen thirty eight
I moved among the champs
My poem about Saint David
Won me five bob in savings stamps.

From then until I reached my teens
I wrote poems by the score
On myriad sheets of foolscap
Which went for salvage in the war.

At Grammar School my poetry
Acquired a certain "polish"
Which my dear old English tutor
Did her utmost to demolish.

In January nineteen ifty
A letter from King George
Advised that "National Service"
Would my youthful talents forge.

They sent me off to Caterham
A hell hole down in Surrey
My poems written in short sharp bursts
Most often in a hurry.

I was not cut out for soldiering
And comments on the food
Oft appeared in my verse
Some of which became quite rude.

From Caterham to Purbright
Our way of life then changes
For intensive weapon training
On Brookwood's rifle ranges.

Little time for poetry
Either frivolous or sermony
'Cos within a month or two
They'd shipped us off to Germany.

Now sitting here in Wuppertal
Life is just a caper
A most efficient typewriter
And loads of buckshee paper.

I write a poem every day
In atmosphere sublime
And nearing completion
Is my "Welsh Guards Pantomime".

Most good things come to an end
And I've just had a warning
That the adjutant wants to see me
At 9.30 in the morning.

I feared that he may stop my pay
Or put me on a charge
For wasting army paper
On my daily badinage.

No such thing.....the Adjutant
With Captain Hedley-Dent
Wished to enlist my services
For a Battalion event.

They wanted me to write some stuff
(They couldn't find a Lytton)
For the Welsh Guards celebration
Of the Festival of Britain.

I was absolutely chuffed
But couldn't shout hooray
So, I enquired if my efforts
Would result in extra pay.

Not a chance in hell they said
Though I didn't take that hard
Because those officers appointed me
"The Regimental Bard".

Captain Kearsley shook my hand
And so did Hedley-Dent
I felt that I was ten feet tall
As back to work I went.

All that happened yesterday
To you it may sound queer
But I'd rather be the "Welsh Guards Bard"
Than be a Brigadier.

Last night I was at "The Grunewald"
With my friends celebrating
So, I'll have to end this nonsense here
My brain box is vibrating.

Alan Parry-Booth...Wuppertal-Elberfeld
BAOR 4 Thursday April 12th 1951

Tale Piece

Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but
by the moments that take our breath away.

Editor Barrie