



ST ANDREWS CHURCH OVER HULTON

**GROWING IN CHRIST, ROOTED IN LOVE
EMPOWERED TO SERVE**

THE VOICE



**‘Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace
to those on whom his favour rests’
(Luke 2 v 14)**

Christmas 2023

Free

St Andrews Church Update:

Here is an update on what is currently happening at St Andrews....

Weekly Church Services

Sunday 9am Holy Communion
Sunday 10.45am Family Service (including children's groups)
Sunday 6.30pm Evening Service

Thursday 10am Holy Communion

Activities at St Andrews

Tiny Tots

Mondays 10.30am-11.30am

Meeting in the Fellowship Room during term time.

Open to all parents/carers and babies and pre-school children

KTJC Youth Group

Mondays – 7pm-8.15pm

Open to all young people at Yr 6-9 at school, meet during term time.

Contact Emma Bonfield for more information

Urban Outreach Food Donation Point

Tuesdays 10.30am-12pm

Don't forget you can still donate food items (tinned food, cereals, UHT milk, tea, coffee, shampoo, toothpaste etc.) every week at St Andrews for our church charity partner, Urban Outreach.

Open Door

Alternate Wednesdays 1pm-3pm

Games, Quizzes, Tea, Coffee and Fellowship for over 50's at St Andrews Church.

Ladies Guild

First Tuesday of the month 7.30pm

Art Group

Alternate Tuesdays 2pm—4pm

Men's Group

Meet once a month for social and fellowship

Christmas 2023



‘The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness, a light has dawned’ (Isaiah 9: 2)

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus, our thoughts once again turn to the events of that 1st Christmas that happened in Bethlehem, the town of David. Yet this year our thoughts also turn to Bethlehem today, and the terrible events which are happening in the Holy Land, where thousands of innocent civilians, both Israeli and Palestinian, have lost their lives, people have been taken hostage, and throughout Gaza and the Holy Land there has been a devastating amount of human suffering over recent months.

In 2006 I had the privilege of visiting modern day Bethlehem which today is part of the Palestinian West Bank. It was a wonderful place; to visit the shepherd’s fields where shepherds still work and sheep graze today and of course to visit the Church of the Nativity in Manger Square. Yet the saddest sight was to see a great security wall built around the perimeter of the West Bank, cutting off Bethlehem from Israel. I experienced first hand what it was like to go through the military checkpoint. And as tensions rose in the Holy Land whilst we were there – I saw the harsh reality of life where the border was closed and local Palestinians unable to get home or get to work who commuted over the border. Although the situation in Bethlehem is nowhere near the scale of events that are happening in Gaza, the borders are closed today and even in Bethlehem tensions and concerns are running high.



I suspect the reality of Bethlehem life today is similar to the reality of Bethlehem life at the time of Jesus’ birth. We often like to paint a rosy peaceful image of Bethlehem and the Nativity Scene characterised by the carol ‘O Little Town of Bethlehem’. The reality is that Bethlehem at the time of Jesus’ birth was anything but still and silent. Tensions were running high as people were forced to gather for the Roman census, with large crowds gathering. Bethlehem life would have been equally as chaotic then, and we know tensions did spill over as Herod, outwitted by the Magi, gave orders to kill all male babies under the age of 2 in Bethlehem in order to stop rumours of a new born king.


Yet it was in the chaos and unrest of Bethlehem that God chose to send His Son Jesus to bring light and hope. It was this dark place that God first revealed his great light – the light of the world. As John puts it in John 1 v 9 ‘The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world’. That is why we celebrate the birth of Jesus at Christmas. In Jesus we find light and hope. It is easy to become disheartened when we see what is happening in our world today. There are times when our own lives are tough and we go through dark periods. Maybe 2023 has been a difficult year for you personally and you are not interested in any of the festivities at this time of year. Yet even when we are disheartened, or life is a struggle, when we look to Jesus this Christmas, we find that in Him we find light and hope to hold on to.

If you want to know more about the light and hope that Jesus offers; we'd love to see you at any of our Christmas services here at St Andrews over the Christmas period. You'll find details of all our Christmas services here in this newsletter. As a church we are also delighted to be involved again this year in the Over Hulton Community Carol Service; with our friends from St Vincents RC Church and the Over Hulton Community Group on Monday 18th December at 6.30pm at St Vincent's Car Park, as we reflect the light and hope of Christ with our wider community. Again we'd love to see you there if you are able to join us.

In the fields above Bethlehem, the angels appeared to the shepherds and sang 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests' (Luke 2 v 14). Please do take a moment this Christmas to pray for peace in the Holy Land this year, and may the peace of the Christ-child born at Christmas fill your lives and homes and bring hope and light to you this Christmas.

Vinny

PRAYER FOR WORLD PEACE



**O LORD GOD, WE PRAY FOR PEACE & LOVE
IN ALL THE NATIONS, AMONG ALL THE PEOPLE
THAT ALL WARS AND HATRED WILL END.
WE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO SUFFER FROM
WAR, INJUSTICE, & INTOLERANCE, FOR THE
CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE, THE POOR &
NEGLECTED ONES. WE PRAY FOR PEACE IN
OUR LIFE, LANDS, NATIONS, FAMILIES &
IN OUR HEARTS. LORD GIVE US WORLD PEACE.
WE ASK YOUR MERCY IN THE NAME OF OUR
LORD JESUS CHRIST. AMEN.**

Christmas Services at St Andrews Over Hulton

Sunday 17th December 6.30pm Carols by Candlelight
Followed by mulled wine and mince pies

Sunday 24th December, 4pm All-Age Nativity Service
Led by our children and young people

Sunday 24th December, 11.30pm Midnight Communion
Join us as we welcome in Christmas

Christmas Day, 10am All-Age Christmas Celebration
Celebrate the birth of Jesus!



St Andrews Primary School Update

Christmas is almost here again and the preparations have started for our end of term celebrations, as we continue through all the learning that Autumn Term brings.

Our extra-curricular experiences have continued. Year 6 visited the museum to participate in a Rainforest workshop and then art appreciation activities. Year 5 have learnt about life in Tudor times at Smithills Hall. Year 4 found out lots about the Romans in their day out at Chester. Year 3 have visited Bolton Museum for Egyptology and 'Bolton' workshops. Year 1 enjoyed their local walk too. All the school enjoyed a session of Flower Pot Drumming (including a staff after school session...great fun!). We await the end of term pantomime in school – Sleeping Beauty this year. Rehearsals have begun for our infant Nativity – Born In A Barn.

We have also held the elections for our School Ethos Council who are now 'chomping at the bit' to get going with their meetings so they can help share their views on how we can all make our school even better. Our children enjoyed lots of learning during Multi Faith Week prior to half term – Year 3 visited the Jewish Museum and Year 5 welcomed visitors who delivered a workshop about Islam. As always, please follow our Facebook page to keep up to date with the activities our children experience in school.

We continue to provide children with opportunities to take part in a number of Before/ During/ After School Clubs this term including football, athletics, dodgeball, dance, Ju Jitsu, Shining Stars and 'outdoor and adventurous'. We have taken part in a Boccia tournament, in which the team came third and the Bolton Primary Cross Country meetings at Moss Bank Park, where the girl's team came 11th in the whole of Bolton primary schools – a super achievement.

We met some lovely children and their families at our Open Morning and Evening events, in preparation for the September 2024 Reception admissions....yes...we're already planning a year ahead! We welcome Mrs Farzana Musaji who is supporting Mrs Bainbridge in our Year 4 class at the moment and Mrs Shabana Kola who is working with Mrs Shawcross with our Year 3 pupils. We are currently looking to recruit a further Teaching Assistant to support some of our additional needs in Year 1 and Reception class.

Mrs Hunter has resigned her position at the end of this term after 28 years dedicated service to St Andrew's and 35 years in education. We are eternally grateful for her dedication but she now intends to retire so we wish her every happiness in doing so. The recruitment process for a replacement will begin in January for September 2024 but in the meantime, Ms Partington will be our full time EYFS teacher for the rest of the academic year.

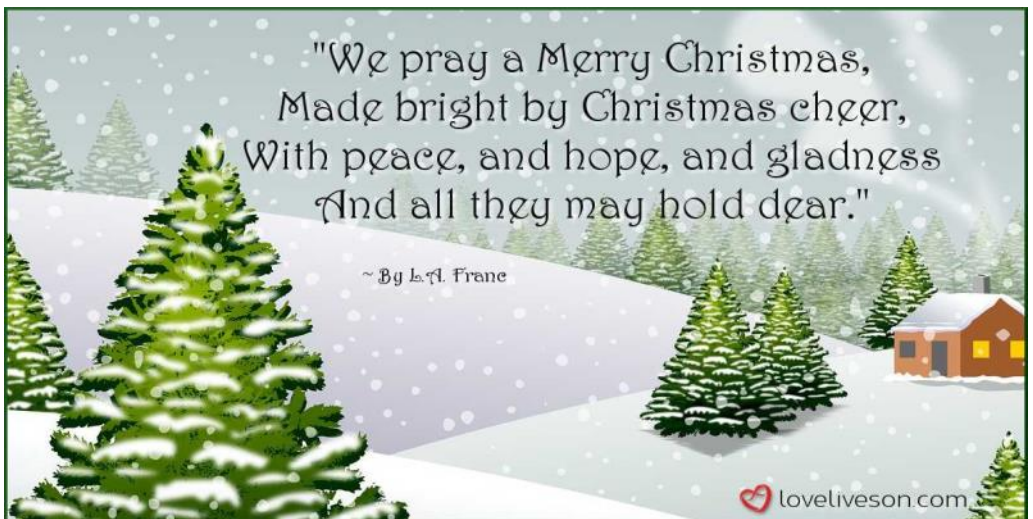
We have raised over £250 in aid of Children in Need. We will support Bolton Hospice with a Sponsored Reindeer Run before the end of term.

We would again like to thank the PTFA who are always looking for more help, especially at committee level (the 'F' stands for 'Friends' so opens up our membership to anyone who can help). Please contact school if you are able to help in any way. They continue to raise further funds and our ever successful 'Rainbow Hamper Raffle' is running again for our Christmas Fair. We will have 7 (maybe 8) hampers, all made up of items of a certain colour. We have gratefully accepted a number of other generously donated prizes too. Please ask at the school office if you would like tickets which are available for £5 a strip. The raffle will be drawn at the Christmas Fair on 1st December from 5:30pm for which arrangements are well under way.

On behalf of the staff and children at the school, although still quite early to do so, we hope that everyone has a very safe and peaceful Christmas.

Kind Regards

Simon Charnock (Headteacher)



Explore life's biggest questions

#TryAlpha
Alpha.org

Want to know more about the Christian faith?

The Alpha Course is a great opportunity to explore the Christian faith in an informal way.

Each session lasts just over 1 hour
and includes a short film,
and time to chat and discuss the film
over coffee and homemade cakes.

We have a new Alpha Course starting in
January! For more information or to
book your place contact Vinny (01204 658921)



Ladies Guild

Our Christmas Ladies' Guild event was a meal held at The Hulton Arms on Tuesday 5th December.

Please note that there will be no Ladies' Guild meeting in January 2024.

On Tuesday 6th February Mervyn Saunders will give us a talk entitled "The History of Entertainment". This will be at the usual time of 7.30pm in The Fellowship Room at St. Andrew's Church.

The Ladies' Guild members wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Please do join us.

Heather Daniels



ART GROUP

"The Art Group has been meeting alternative Tuesdays afternoons in the Fellowship room at St Andrews this autumn.

The members enjoy a peaceful afternoon concentrating on their painting with good friendship and refreshments. Whilst originally a watercolour group the range of materials used has been extended to acrylic paint or pencil colour.



There will be a display of our work, with a Christmas theme, in the Fellowship room over the Christmas period for you to enjoy whilst having your refreshments after the service.

New members are always welcome and help will be given if needed.

The new session will commence on the 9th January 2024.

**For more information on joining our group contact Margaret Bryan
01204 774146.**

OPEN DOOR



Already the time has arrived again when Alan and Carole would like to wish all our members a peacefully and happy Christmas. The year has gone extremely fast and we have been very pleased to welcome many new members to our group.

We have enjoyed fish and chip lunches delivered by Olympus in Bolton and Carrs have provided us with pasties for our Pasty and Cake afternoons. We celebrated Rebecca's 21st birthday and all our members made her feel really special and we are very grateful to them all.

Our annual Christmas meal is again at the Brookfield Hall in Westhoughton. We can always depend on Brookfield to provide us with a beautiful venue and a delicious Christmas lunch.

We return in the New Year on the 10th January at 1pm and we hope that you might come to join us, you will always be welcome.

Have a wonderful and blessed Christmas and maybe we will see you at one of our Christmas Services at St Andrews.

Love from Alan, Carole and all our willing helpers who make it possible for us to continue Open Door.

Carole and Alan

01942 878695



Introducing St. Andrew's "Eco" Church status and how we can be involved

We are pleased at St. Andrew's to be taking part in the Church of England "Eco Church" initiative of which I have been nominated our "Eco Champion". Together with Glynn Heywood and Vinny, our small "committee" will meet every now and again to assess which choices we are making at St. Andrew's and whether or not we are meeting eco guidelines. We are being asked to consider our place in, and responsibility towards God's wonderful creation, and how as a Church we can put this into practice. The better we do with this, the more likely we are to gain "silver" or "gold" eco status. We are currently at "bronze" level. We are all aware of climate change and the devastating effects of this. We are also told that the UK is one of the most nature-deprived countries in the world. We are also being told how much waste is generated every year from consumers – annually in the UK we produce almost a tonne of waste per household. We can all do more to protect the planet and its precious resources for future generations.

We are starting to consider immediate changes we can make at Church; such as things like the use of recycled paper products and less plastic waste on Church premises, which includes areas like the toilets, kitchen etc. So we are considering the use of refillable plastic dispensers for handwash, and toilet paper made from recycled paper, for example. It is important to shop around for eco products as they can be over – priced and we also want to be able to support organisations like FairTrade whilst supporting eco-friendly initiatives. It is also important to check as to whether goods labelled as "green" "eco friendly" etc are what they purport to be, as it can be a marketing gimmick without substance. Legally, using the term "green" is allowed. But our responsibility to the wonderful planet we call home should be part of what we do at home and at work as well as during our time at Church.

So what can we as consumers do to make more sustainable choices? I like the phrase "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" which originated in 1970s America around the time of the Vietnam war. It was originally aimed at waste reduction and better use of resources following the war but I think it can be taken on board more broadly, for example "Reduce" doesn't necessarily have to refer to buying goods in paper instead of plastic packaging but could mean reduction in the temperature on your home thermostat for example, or the number of car journeys you choose to make.

The average rate of recycling from municipal tips in UK is 44% but in Greater Manchester this has now risen to over 50%, from 47.7% in 2020/2021. This is largely down to the improved recycling facilities for the public but also hopefully reflects broader thinking as part of the "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" initiative.

Reducing, Reusing and Recycling is not always convenient or cheaper, but there are ways to do it. Here are a few;

- A lot of major supermarkets now accept plastic wrapping from household items eg frozen vegetable bags, biscuit wrappers etc and have containers to put them in. This can easily be done every time you shop. I use a home-made bag with a drawstring to put these in which I hang behind the door in the kitchen.
- Think about turning your thermostat down by a degree on your central heating panel. This will reduce your bills by 3% on average.
- Turning off electric appliances including lights when not being used saves on average about 10% on fuel bills every month. This totals on average about £100 per year in today's prices.
- If you are going to the tip to recycle rubbish, there are some that now accept re-usable items which you might otherwise donate to charity. These are being resold and the money made is benefitting community groups which work towards eco projects. This would save several car journeys to charity shop AND tip.
- Old favourite clothes can be repurposed into new items – memory blankets, cushion covers etc. This is quite an upcoming business idea now and some businesses make tablecloths out of old ties for example. Not always cheap but worth Googling if you have items belonging to departed loved ones or baby clothes you don't want to get rid of.

I'd love to hear your favourite ways to "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" – send them to me at emma.hypnotherapist@sky.com and I'll include the best in the weekly e-newsletter together with tips and ideas to live a more eco-friendly lifestyle, and updates on what we are doing at St. Andrew's.

What one change could you make this week that helps the planet?

Emma Clegg



Carol Services I have known!

John 1:1-5 NIV In the beginning was the **Word**, and the **Word** was with **God**, and the **Word** was **God**. He was with **God** in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

When I was asked to write an article based around these familiar verses at the beginning of John's gospel my heart sank! Oh no! This was not, 'What can I say about this, but rather there is much too much to say and I can't do it justice, so here are a few random reminiscences!

My first living was a traditional 'Lancashire Low' church in Oldham - very 'traditional'. This included the Carol Service, which was the same every year based (loosely) around the Kings College Carol Service we watch on the TV. The service ran without any input from the vicar (like clockwork) until the end and the last reading was always the same John 1:1-14. This was the climax of the carol service always and only ever read by the vicar. What a privilege! And what a responsibility! I had 10 years of reading this passage at one of the most important services of the year, and then giving a 'thought' (my predecessor hadn't even done that) at the end.

This was my first thought, and my second was even further ago at theological college. As many of you will know, at heart I am a scientist, and read chemistry at university. Having failed O level French, you can imagine my trepidation when I was faced with learning New Testament Greek and Old Testament Hebrew. I ducked out of Hebrew, but couldn't do the same with Greek! In the very first lesson we looked at this passage! We were taught an important lesson, Greek, like English has three 'genders' ('he', 'she' and 'it'); I could never understand why we had a female door and a male gate in French! Turning to the passage our teacher said, look at verse 2 it says 'HE', not 'it', there is an important difference 'a word' (Greek - $\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ *logos*) should be neuter. but here it is in the male form, the **WORD** here is not an it, but a male person! Isn't that small difference of fantastic importance! **He** was there at the beginning involved in creation. It was a good Greek lesson - I never forgot!

Some people used to demote John's Gospel as 'too late to have been written by John himself', or 'not historically accurate'. As time has gone on archaeology has proved neither of these assumptions to be correct. The Ryland's Library in Manchester has a piece of the gospel dated to 90_{AD} and excavations (like The Pool of Bethesda) have shown the veracity of John's record. The fact that he chose to order and select his material differently, only shows his purpose and individuality.

So when you have your carol service and finish with this passage, please remember the depth of meaning in it!

Spoiler alert - quick summary coming up!

The LOGOS was:

Eternally existent (v1a,2), was a separate entity from God (v1b,2), was God Himself (v1c), was masculine (v2), was separate from God (v2b), was part of creation (v3,10), was the giver of life (v4a), became 'enfleshed' (v.9-11), is able to bestow 'sonship' (inheritance) (v.12,13), is the object of faith (v.12), was seen in the person of Jesus Christ (v.14).

It is obvious why this short passage concludes the carol service, as it encapsulates so much of the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ. All we can do is stand back in awe and wonder that God Almighty would deign to step down in such a manner to save the likes of you and me!

Canon Tony Butterworth



NAME THE CAROL—for fun only

Can you name the carol from only four words?

1. Down where He lay
2. Silent stars go by
3. Sleep in heavenly peace
4. With royal beauty bright
5. Shining in the East
6. Come and behold Him
7. With angelic host proclaim
8. Brightly shone the moon

Answers at the back of the magazine

Jerusalem

The visit of the Magi



I knew we shouldn't have gone to Jerusalem, however that also seemed the logical place to go to. You see, we had been following this new star that had arisen a few months back. We first saw it when we were doing our nightly stargazing, which we did to try and give our king or other nobles answers to the questions that they had for us. Of course they paid us well for our interpretations, but usually we were looking at the same old stars and trying to make sense of what this meant for the questions we were posed.

However, one night I saw a new star, which was bright. It had started in the east and was travelling across the sky slowly quite unlike any other star we had seen. We knew from our learning that the appearance of a new star signified a great event, most likely the birth not only of a new king but it signified the coming of a new dynasty. I and my colleagues felt we had to follow this star so we could see this new king and honour the one that the star was foretelling was coming. Of course we made sure we had gifts fit for a king and took with us gold (as is fit to honour a king with), frankincense (the finest of perfumes) and myrrh (an oil that a king is usually anointed with).

And so we set off, following the star. We would travel by day and at night we would again gaze up at the stars and see where it was leading us. Invariably it would be in a westward direction. Our party was quite big as we did not know how long the journey would take and so we had provisions, and also we needed some guards to come along and protect us, though none of them was carrying spears as that would have been a provocation and indicate that we were looking to impress our will on people by force. No our intentions were merely to honour this new king.



Our journey lasted several weeks, however we knew we were getting close when we arrived in Israel, as the star had risen higher in the sky. So we travelled towards Jerusalem, with the star being almost but not quite above us. We debated what this meant, surely the king would be born in the most important city of the region but yet the star didn't seem to indicate that. We talked all night about it and decided that the next day we would go into Jerusalem and try to find him there.

As soon as we entered Jerusalem things didn't seem quite right. We expected a city in celebration, feasting and partying to celebrate this new birth, but as far as we could tell things were pretty much carrying on as normal. Also a group of our size could not enter the city without being noted, and soon after our arrival we were escorted to Herod's Palace to be greeted by him (which in other words meant that he wanted to know what we were doing there). So we went to his palace. As expected, he asked us what we were doing and we explained about the star we had been following and we asked if he knew where the new baby king was. There was no way we could not tell him, and the court went silent, Herod did not look happy at all, in fact it looked like he was about to explode in a rage. An age passed, and eventually he suggested he consult with his religious leaders to see if they knew what might be happening.

A little later, we had a further meeting with Herod, who suggested we travel about 5 miles south of Jerusalem to a small town called Bethlehem. One joker in the court told us to make sure we went to the right Bethlehem (as apparently there are 2 Bethlehems in Israel), but it didn't lighten the tone much. Herod asked us to come back to him after we'd visited this king so he could go and worship him also, of course we said we would – we are men of our word but at that moment we just wanted to get out of the palace and Jerusalem.

We made good time on this short journey, and arrived at Bethlehem not long after sunset. We looked up to the stars and saw the star we had been following directly above us, and also brighter than it had ever been. We knew we had arrived. I don't know how we found the house but we found it, we were full of joy at meeting the baby Jesus and his parents. There was such a presence of peace, Joseph and Mary told us their story, and we worshipped this King Jesus who was bringing in a new dynasty, we gave our gifts. One of us was warned in a dream not to go back to Jerusalem, and to be honest none of us wanted to go back there, and went home going widely around Jerusalem, ready to report of this new King in Israel to anyone who would listen to us.

Fact Check

- The visit of the Magi is only reported in Matthews gospel
- The timing of the visit is uncertain, Luke's gospel tells us that the shepherds were told of Jesus birth the day that it occurred, however in Matthews gospel the timing is put "after Jesus had been born in Bethlehem". Nothing more is known about when it could be, it has been thought it could have been any time from after his birth to up to 2 years after.
- The origin of the Magi is also unclear, however the word Magi comes from old Persian and therefore it is thought they were of Persian origin

Questions for Us

- Have you ever felt you needed to do something and there was a logical place for doing it but it didn't seem the right place?
- Can prayer and Bible study or something else help us to find the answer?



The Men's Social Group

Curry, Pool, Darts. Sounds like the ultimate man cave, right? Well in fact these have been our last two meet ups. Over 15 of us enjoyed a curry on a Friday night. More recently we enjoyed a night of pool and darts at Victoria Mill in Atherton.

It's been over two years since we launched the men's group. So, it is encouraging to see new faces join, friendships formed and an outlet for men to socialise with other men when they may not have the opportunity to. Next year we intend to have some speakers to bring us back to the foundation of our fellowship, Jesus.

A couple of things we have lined up for the new year include a walk around Clifton Country Park and a Men's Breakfast with a speaker. We will share our full programme of events for 2024 in the weekly newsletter.

If you haven't come to any of our events yet, do consider them, we'd love to meet you.

**God bless,
Paul, Rob**



KTJC have had so many highlights over the last term.

Confirmation of 2 of KTJC was really special and empowering.

We have had new members join us.

KTJC have been exceptional in their support for each other and in celebrating 5 yrs of CCPP. Each person who took part in the celebration at Bolton Parish Church did so with confidence and joyful spirits.

THANKYOU to everyone who has supported KTJC over another year. We are so grateful for every prayer, every minute of volunteering and everything others do behind the scenes.

We hope you all have a blessed Christmas. We are looking forward to all that 2024 will bring.



Picture of our Christmas card designs.

NEWS FROM THE OVER HULTON COMMUNITY GROUP

Follow us on Facebook – “Over Hulton Community Group”

To be added to our mailing list email j.bullen1@ntworld.com

2024 Dates for Your Diary

OVER HULTON FOLK CLUB

The Over Hulton Folk Club Concert Nights take place on the first Wednesday in every month in the OH Conny Club. Doors open at 7.30pm for an 8pm start and there is nearly always a quality support act setting the scene for the main attraction. Corrie Shelley does a great job booking the acts and the sound system that she and husband Steve have acquired for us is second to none.

January 3rd **Houghton Weavers**

February 7th **Merry Hell**

March 6th **Corrie Shelley – debuts new album “Mines, Memories & Music”**

April 3rd **Anthony John Clarke**

May 1st **Craig Joiner**

June – to be announced

July and August – summer break for Folk Festivals

September 4th **Anna Rennae**

October 2nd **Sam Barrett**

November 6th **Bob Fox**

December 4th **Tennessee Waltz**

Go to www.overfolkclub.com for full details and to book

Folk Club Singaround Night – free admission. Come along and play, sing, recite or just sit and enjoy some of the quality talented people who regularly turn up to entertain us all. This happens on the third Wednesday in every month in the OH Conny Club at 8pm.

OVER HULTON HERITAGE GROUP

Our Heritage Group Guest Speaker Nights take place on the second Wednesday in every month in the OH Conny Club at 7pm. Admission is £4 with under 14s allowed in free of charge.

All bookings should be made with Carol 07932 242551

or email cgibbons361@gmail.com

January 10th **“Curtain Up – a history of Lancaster Grand Theatre”** Adrian Tayler

February 14th **“Bolton Mountain Rescue Team”** Dave Cook.

March 13th **“Crime City - The History of Manchester’s Victorian Underworld.”** Joe O’Neill.

April 10th **“She’s Airborne! She Flies” a history of Concorde”** Gordon Bartley.

May 8th **“Origins of Surnames”** Peter Watson

June 12th **“A Walk Back In Time Through Howe Bridge.”** Terry Daly

July 10th “**No Bravery Without Fear**” Julie McKiernan
August 14th “**The History of the Co-Operative Society**” David Lloyd
September 11th “**Nostalgia - The Life of a Lancashire Lad**” Stephen Sanders
October 9th Not yet arranged
November 13th “**Rock Hall**” Jayne Allman
December 11th “**Christmas Time**” Julie McKiernan & Corrie Shelley

2nd Biannual Bygone Over Hulton Exhibition Sunday October 27th noon until 4pm
Free admission.

John Bullen

Recently I was reading Parky's People by Michael Parkinson and one of his interviews had been with Muhammad Ali. Muhammad said he had associates rather than friends He said, I quote; ' A friend is one who has always got desire to give and keep back nothing. Always a desire to give and not look for nothing in return. Everybody you name are with me for money. And for what they can get. I don't have no friends.

I wrote a poem that says :

*Friendship is a priceless gift
That cannot be bought nor sold,
But its value is far greater than a mountain made of gold.
For gold is cold and lifeless,
It can neither see nor hear,
And in time of trouble it is powerless to cheer.
Gold it has no ears to listen,
No heart to understand.
It cannot bring you comfort or reach out a helping hand.
So when you ask God for a gift,
Be thankful if he sends,
Not diamonds, pearls or riches
But the love of real true friends.*

Let us hope we all can have and be a real true friend.

Pat Braddock

NEWS FROM WESTHOUGHTON LOCAL HISTORY GROUP



As 2023 approaches its end, Westhoughton Local History Group (WLHG) can reflect upon another busy and successful year, with the local heritage organisation going from strength to strength. An eclectic programme of monthly presentations (by in-house and visiting guest speakers) has been greatly enjoyed by average attendances approaching 80, and 7 fully-booked excursions to diverse places of interest have proved most stimulating and informative.

A graphic indication of the inexorably-increasing interest in the activities of WLHG is that, in recent weeks, two significant 'communication milestones' have been reached: *Firstly* the **2,000th** member of the *WLHG Facebook Group*, and *secondly* the circulation of the regular *Howfen Herald* e-newsletter (a record number of 25 issues in 2023) passing the **300** mark.

But undoubtedly the highlight of the year was the chosen project for the *2023 European and UK National Heritage Open Days* in September – "*THE WINGATES BAND STORY*" – which significantly augmented the 150th Anniversary celebrations of our nationally and internationally renowned local band.

Three very popular 'event days' were held during the Heritage period (Sept. 8th to 18th), which saw a unique and memorable official opening ceremony for a comprehensive exhibition telling the band's incomparable story since its formation in 1873, by happy coincidence the same year that Bolton Town Hall was officially opened by the Prince of Wales. The exhibition was opened by JIM BERRY, lead singer of *The Houghton Weavers*, who subsequently demonstrated his many wonderful talents for appreciative audiences on all three event days, which also featured appearances by an ensemble from Wingates, and by local folk singer CORRIE SHELLEY.

The exhibition continued throughout September and October, and was viewed by many visitors from near and far. The Group also supported Wingates Band in other aspects of its *sesquicentennial celebrations*, including the author of these notes 'crossing the border' to give a somewhat novel illustrated presentation (*'THE HISTORY OF WINGATES BAND IN 12 OBJECTS'*) to the November meeting of *Over Hulton Community Group*.

Throughout the year, WLHG has continued to play a full and active part in *Westhoughton Community Network* and *Lancashire Local History Federation*, as well as doing 'civic duty' in helping the community commemorate Remembrance Sunday, and the annual memorial services for the *Pretoria Pit Disaster*.

Looking forward to 2024, a full programme of monthly presentations is now in place, with the first meeting (on Thursday 18th January) being a presentation by DAVID LLOYD entitled '*The History of Bolton Co-op*'.

The first excursion of the year will take place on THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8th to Yorkshire's HAREWOOD HOUSE, and anyone wishing to participate can make arrangements via CINDY RITCHIE on 07818 212939

The group meets on the third Thursday of every month, in the CARNEGIE HALL (accessed via the upper level of Westhoughton Library) from 10:30am to 12:30pm, and admission is a modest £2 per session – and that includes a cuppa and a custard cream!

We conclude our report with an important message of thanks to the editor of *The Voice* for the much-appreciated regular invitations to report on our 'doings', and by wishing all readers a very happy and peaceful Christmas, followed by good health and good fortune throughout 2024 and beyond.



The deadline for any articles for the Easter edition of the The Voice is 15th
March

These can be emailed to Elaine - elainealmond22@gmail.com

Answers to the 'Name the Carol' Quiz

1. Away in a Manager
2. O Little town of Bethlehem
3. Silent Night
4. We Three Kings of Orient Are
5. The First Noel
6. O Come all ye Faithful
7. Hark the Herald Angels Sing
8. Good King Wenceslas



Thank you for reading this magazine. If you have enjoyed it, please pass onto
others.

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