

Conversation Club

Issue 19- November 2019



Conversation
CLUB

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Welcome



A warm welcome to the 2019 edition of the Conversation Club Sheffield's 2019 Newsletter. We hope you enjoy reading it. Hopefully it will bring back memories of the many outings, walks and trips that we organised during the year.



Our thanks to Jim and Ahmed for editing the newsletter and to Sam for designing and printing the newsletter. Special

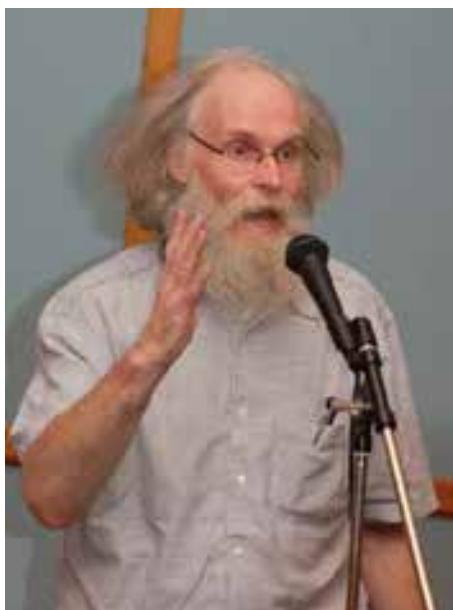
congratulations to Pamela and Sam on their wedding this year. We are sure everyone from Conversation Club wishes them happiness in their future together.

Finally thank to all of you who have been part of the club this year whether as members or volunteers.

Brian Helsdon and Christine Barltrop (co-chairs)

A (NOT VERY) RETIRING CHAIRMAN – RALPH HANCOCK

By Brian Helsdon and Christine Barltrop



At last year's AGM Ralph announced that he was retiring as chairman after nearly ten years in the post. He remains a trustee and continues his involvement with the club. It is absolutely true that without Ralph the club would not be what it is today, thriving and active.

He steered the club through its early years as a registered charity, single-handedly taking on the paperwork burden that came with the undoubted advantages of being a registered charity.

He made sure that we had enough money, through grants from many different organisations, including the National Lottery, to expand what we do.

Through his initiative we are now part of annual festivals in Sheffield like Migration Matters. We have a walks programme that helps many of our members, not to mention the seaside trips and visits to places like Lincoln. We have become an integral part of the

asylum and refugee community in Sheffield. Much of this is down to Ralph's drive and persistence.

Many readers will know that Ralph has not been in good health this year. He had a fall and subsequently a hip operation. This has meant that he has not been able to visit the club recently.

It shows the high regard in which he is held that many people have visited him and his wife Helen at their home near Chesterfield. They really appreciate these visits.

We all wish Ralph well in his continuing recovery and hope to see him again soon at the club.

Obituary - John Simmonds

By Brian Helsdon and Christine Barltrop

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of John Simmonds on 20th September 2019.

John and Chris, his wife, have been stalwarts of the club for many years. They were always there, helping people with their English, helping in the kitchen, doing what was needed.

John was born in Chesterfield and retired there after a lifetime of service to the Methodist Church. He was a Minister in many different parts of the country, including the Shetland Islands.

He was a radical in the church and an unstinting champion of the underdog and for equal rights for the many different groups in our society.

His cheerfulness and willingness to help people with their problems will be greatly missed.



On the 24th August we went on our annual trip to Penistone village on the outskirts of Sheffield. Luckily it was a nice, warm, sunny day and after a short walk from Penistone station we arrived around lunchtime at Christine's house. We then sat around relaxing and chatting in her beautiful garden whilst Conversation Club regular attendant Quais and his friends prepared a barbecue.

After a great barbecue, Christine then provided a fantastic array of cakes. Yet again a lovely outing to Penistone, enjoyed by everyone.

ANNUAL TRIP TO PENISTONE



ART WORKS – PRODUCTION AND DISPLAY

By Elizabeth Birks

Where can the people of Sheffield admire some of the art work produced by members of Sheffield Conversation Club?

Well, at a Friday afternoon session when they might see something being produced at the art and craft table. At the time of writing people were able to see a display of art work on the second floor of the Central Library building.

There is a glass cabinet displaying a tiny selection of pictures while there were more exhibited throughout the year. In the summer, the window of 'The Sanctuary' had some sculptures and other images in it.

Also, in the sanctuary of the Central United Reformed Church itself, there's a sculpture by the window still on display.



You, Me and Those Who came Before

By Linda Lee Welch

On June 20th this year members of Conversation Club gathered at Theatre Deli to share their stories as part of Refugee Week.

The festival was called Migration Matters, and those performing showed that, indeed, it does!

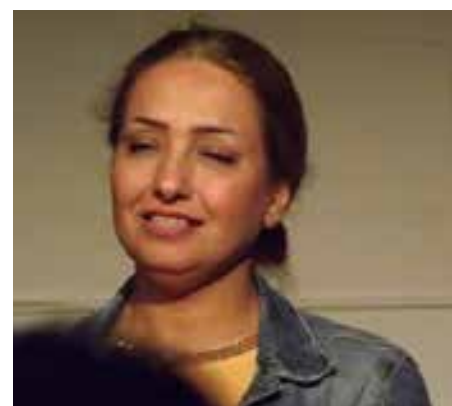
People from around the world, who have made their homes in Sheffield, came to listen and tell their tales.

The show was compered by Babak with his drum, a brilliant

punctuation to the proceedings. Those performing included Mojdeh, Habib, Shahla, Masume, Sahira, Farhan, Pedro, Sheida, and Babak himself. There were stories about everything from donkeys and Farsi idioms to getting lost in Sheffield and Chile under Pinochet. Habib's short story, Pity of War, was so moving. There were tears and plenty of laughter, and a very appreciative audience.

As the organizer, and an immigrant myself, I listened

and learned and felt again how privileged and delighted and proud I am to be part of this amazing community, and to belong here in Sheffield, as we all do.



CONVERSATION CLUB SCULPTURES

Conversation Club took part in the annual Migration Matters Festival that ran from 14 June - 22 June 2019 in different locations across the city.

Mr Farhan Mordi, a regular member of the club contributed some of his paintings and sculptures to exhibit as part of the club's efforts to promote community cohesion.

The items were exhibited in Theatre Deli at the bottom of The Moor. Farhan attended the stand for 4 hours each day to explain and answer questions about his art. The response to his installation was very positive indeed and was described as "magnificent".



Trip to Hathersage

Saturday 22nd of June saw Conversation Club's first organised trip to the surrounding countryside of Sheffield this year. It was guided by Sue Owen aided by several volunteers.

We took the morning bus to Hathersage village centre and headed to the fields where we climbed a peak to enjoy wonderful open views of the village and the surrounding areas.

The group headed down back taking the scenic walk by the river heading to Grindleford and the same way back by to the village. After that we enjoyed a lovely refreshing break in the cafe by the village heated swimming pool.

The group assembled at the bus stop and headed back to Sheffield having had a lovely day out.



HALF MARATHON RUN FOR CONVERSATION CLUB

Conversation club member Sam Naz ran the Sheffield half marathon to promote it to the wider Sheffield community and to promote its role as a multi-cultural hub in the city.

The race started and finished in the city centre while passing through designated routes across the city on 14th April 2019. The winner this year was Jamie Hall.



Sports Day in Millhouses Park

By Elizabeth Birks

Remember your school sports day? Did you have egg and spoon races, hopping races, three-legged races? Well, so did Conversation Club volunteers and guests on one grey (fairly dry) day in May 2019! We set out our field on a patch of grass near the junior cycle track and the adult gym.

We hired a tennis court and the more experienced helped the less practiced to have a go with bashing the ball over the net.

Table tennis and football were other activities that people enjoyed.

By the time we were ready to approach the basketball court, the rain was too insistent, so we called it a day! Next year, we may even have the sun joining in!





Trip to Bakewell

Conversation Club was invited for the 3rd time to visit Bakewell by Jane and Barry, who are regular attendees at Conversation Club.

We were met off the train by them with their friend Pat, then taken on a short trip around the town to see the lovely well dressings, ending up at Costa Coffee, where they treated us all to a drink. Jane and Barry then departed in order to prepare an afternoon tea for everyone back

at their home.

Meanwhile the group then split up to have a leisurely wander around Bakewell, eat their packed lunches and watch the many lively dance and musical performances going on all over the town.

We then met up again to go to Jane and Barry's where they hosted a lovely afternoon tea of sandwiches, cakes and fruit salad. Everyone enjoyed relaxing, chatting and admiring

the beautiful views from their bungalow on a sunny afternoon. Thanks to Jane and Barry for hosting another very enjoyable trip to Bakewell.





A visit to Longshaw Estate

By Jim Dimond

Saturday 14th September 2019 was the date for this year's Conversation Club outing to the Longshaw Estate located in the beautiful Peak District National Park.

Around fifteen of us made the trip with most people taking the bus from Sheffield Interchange at 10:30 and meeting up with others arriving by car at Longshaw.

This year we completed an easy circular walk that everyone could easily manage, passing grazing sheep and cows, and ending up at the cafe for a picnic and refreshments.

The weather was sunny and warm and whilst the walk was a gentle one, some of the more adventurous club members climbed trees and rocks, and balanced on fallen tree trunks.

Others took part in the more sedate pastime of feeding the many ducks at the lake.

We were very fortunate with the weather and some people chose to stay for longer to enjoy the sunshine whilst others left to catch the bus back to Sheffield town centre soon after lunch since they felt confident about the route and location of the bus stop.





Trip to Scarborough

By Jim Dimond



As usual the annual seaside trip proved to be hugely popular and successful. This year we once again visited Scarborough. Over 60 people joined and one volunteer (Rosemary Stow) reluctantly (but unselfishly) dropped out when the coach reached full capacity. Luckily Brian Helsdon was on hand and kindly took 4 people in his car so they didn't miss out.

Whilst the weather was mixed with periods of light rain interspersed with bright sunshine, good fun was had by all. There were games on the beach with Christine Barltrop's grandchildren;

some people paddled in the sea; and others took a boat trip around the bay and were lucky enough to see dolphins frolicking in the waves.

Some of us took a walk through the town for a coffee and window shopping and others enjoyed a fish and chips lunch for the very first time!

They say that "the camera never lies" and as these pictures show it was a most enjoyable outing and we look forward to going again next year.



COMMENTS FROM THE SEASIDE TRIP

“I am very happy about the trip to Scarborough. I enjoy it. I went by boat for about half an hour. I saw a dolphin and I paid just £3. It was amazing. Thanks to the Conversation Club and God bless you!

Tesfamichael

“It was a very special day. Seeing Scarborough and being in seaside made me really happy. Amazing trip. We had a good walk and delicious fish and chips. Thank you so much.

Name not given

“I want thanks everyone who organise the journey. It was a nice time to socialise with new people and chatting. It was such a good time to spend in beautiful sea. I hope you will continue to support people like that journey. Thanks.

Farhad

“I am happy. Thanks so much. I hope for next year.

Lemlem

“I felt happy (at the) seaside. I took a boat trip and enjoyed fish and chips meal. Lovely town.

Hassan

“We had a very nice time. Went to the north pier, saw the park and visited the cricket ground. We love going to the seaside.

Ann Marie and Thomas

“I had a great time today. It was partly cloudy and sunny and I really enjoyed because my daughters were with me.

Massoumeh

“This trip was amazing. We went on a boat for half an hour and it was beautiful. We went to the sea and went to different shops. To be honest it was a wonderful opportunity to see the sea. It was calm and peaceful.

Sura

“I had so much fun at Scarborough. I wish we could go again.

Siloam

“I enjoyed playing in the sand. I wish we went again.

Malak

Trip to Bamford

By Helen Roberts

On 7th September Conversation Club members took a trip to Bamford having been invited out there by the Quaker Society.

A group of us caught a bus from the station out to Bamford. On arrival near Bamford, we then took a short walk to the Quaker community centre and were met there by Margaret a volunteer at Conversation Club who had arranged the trip.

We were warmly welcomed by the members of the Quakers who took us into their community centre, a lovely old building, set in 10 acres of beautiful grounds. We were given lunch including a lovely

homemade soup made from vegetables grown in their garden. After eating lunch, relaxing and chatting, Margaret led a group of us on a lovely, scenic walk from the centre in warm sunshine.

We then returned to the centre and enjoyed tea and home baked cakes, courtesy of Margaret. After saying our farewells we walked back a short distance to catch the bus back to Sheffield.

Everyone appeared to have had a really enjoyable day out and thoroughly appreciated the warm hospitality shown to us by the Bamford Quaker community.



AGM 2018 REPORT

By Brian Helsdon

We held our Annual General Meeting of the Club on Friday 7th December 2018 at the CURC. This is something we have to do as a charity. There is a formal part where we talk about what the club has done during the year, thank people for their help and support, present the accounts, and elect Trustees. This can all be a bit dry and dare I say it a little boring but it has to be done.

And this year there was something a bit special. Ralph Hancock announced his resignation as chairman due to ill health. It is really down to Ralph where the club is today. It is his

drive and enthusiasm that has led to so much happening, not just our regular weekly clubs but all the walks and other activities. His vigour will be missed although he remains a trustee.

But really the AGM is an excuse for a big party. And this year was exceptional. Before the formal part we had an excellent series of songs from the One World Choir. They were very enthusiastically received by everyone present. After the formal part we had a visit from the Lord mayor of Sheffield, Magid Magid. He talked about his time as mayor, and about what he liked and disliked

about being mayor. He answered lots of questions.

There were lots of selfies taken with him both at the meeting and afterwards. People could see someone who like them, was a refugee, who had prospered in and embraced his new country.

Finally, of course, there was the food. Thanks to the members and volunteers there was plenty and such a wide variety of food from all over the world. People ate heartily and well.

All in all it was an inspiring and very successful occasion.





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