



Rotary club of Farnham

## Newsheet June 2023

### In Memory of Roland Davies

Roland was a long-time member of and great supporter of Rotary. He much enjoyed taking part in its activities and spending time with its members, enjoying nothing better than a good debate. His career was in teaching, first of all in schools and then in adult education in Farnham, finishing as head of adult education. One of his passions was for the music of Bach. Sadly in his later years he was unable to join us at our Rotary lunches. We wish his family all the very best.



### Events through May

**KidsOut** this year was again a hugely successful event with, as always, participation and support from Clubs across the District. Up 1300 disadvantaged children enjoyed a huge range of activities under a cloudless sky at the Army Rugby Stadium, Queens Avenue, Aldershot. Our golf game, made many years ago by John Holton, continues to be very popular and drew in both boys and girls over the day. And this year, borrowed from Farnham Town Council, we introduced a beautifully made wooden oversize Connect 4, which also proved very popular.

And as in previous years Weyside organised face painting with our own Ann Foster helping them. As a result, numerous children were seen on site disguised as lions, tigers and more.



## Williams Club Tea

As we have traditionally done, we were there at the above to ensure the event went smoothly. Members helped at the beginning of the day with opening of the centre and setting up of tables and chairs and ensured that all were put away at the end of the day and the centre left as we had found it. We also helped with transport and ensured the local Hoppa bus delivered and returned a number of Williams Club members safely. Bake, Natter and Roll, the Farnham WI, provided the sandwiches, cakes, scones and strawberries and cream - and of course there were plenty of cups of tea to help wash it all down. There was a very good turn out with up to 40 present and we were honoured with a visit from the town mayor, Alan Earwaker, and his consort.

Feedback suggested all had thoroughly enjoy the afternoon.



## Sustainability Festival

On a VERY hot day, we once again had a presence at the Farnham Community Farnham Sustainability Festival, sharing the stall, as in previous years, with Plastics Free Farnham. Boudica, our Mascot made with waste plastic, put in another appearance by courtesy of Graham Mollart, and was as usual a conversation starter. Many of our visitors, which included the Mayor and other Councillors, participated in the various challenges we set them, one involving thinking of alternatives to the plastics they might be using.



## President's Dinner

Rotary members and guests gathered in the relaxing ambience of the Hog's Back Hotel on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> June to enjoy good company and food. There were two recipients of the Paul Harris Award – honorary member, Ian Lynch, Town Clerk and Peter Duffy, Rotary member. Kate Larmer received a community award for her work in supporting the journey of about 100 Ukrainians to the UK and their integration into South Farnham.



Kate Larmer with partner and Roger Jude, Rotary Secretary



Retiring President, Jacquie Priddle with Ian Lynch, Town Clerk

# Talks Through May

## Simon Porter – Penn Croft Farms



Simon started by acknowledging that farmers have a mixed reputation, but are now facing new challenges and that is through regeneration which has the potential to save the world and the universe – a large claim, the reasons for which he explained in what he went on to say. Regeneration involves growing crops in such a way we soak up huge amounts of atmospheric carbon and deposit it into the soil and in much more effectively than in planting trees. Our soils can store 3x times the amount of the carbon that is in the atmosphere.

To regenerate means to recreate, reconstitute or makeover in especially a better form – that's what we are about. It is all about the soil - for many years soil has been ignored and unloved by farmers for far too long. Only now are we beginning to understand the tiniest fracture of what it is, what is in it and what it is all about – similar to how we now view the oceans in that we recognise there is so much more to discover. He pointed out that there are about 1m living organisms in 1 teaspoon of soil and that there are more living organisms in the soil than there are above the soil. And, a salutary message, scientists have estimated there are only 60 harvests left in Europe because of degradation of the soil.

Erosion, pollution (through such chemicals as sulphates and nitrogen run off from the land) and desertification are serious problems throughout the world. Regenerative farming provides opportunities to reverse this.

So what is regenerative farming? 5 main principles:

1. Minimisation of soil disturbance – every time it is disturbed carbon is released;
2. Covering of the ground at all times – you often see brown soil in vineyards and olive groves as you travel through Europe – this means the soil is open and rain will erode or consolidate it, with result small particles and organisms disappear;
3. Living roots are kept in the soil as much as possible;
4. Maximisation of diversity as much as possible;
5. Integration of livestock,

At the family farm in Crondall – Penn Croft – they are lengthening diversity of species and increasing the number, and including livestock – healthy and safely produced meat. Through doing this they are protecting, feeding and protecting carbon in our soil – soil without biology is geology. He said their main livestock enterprise might surprise us as he is here talking about earthworms. These are key and at Penn Croft there are about 750,000 – 1m earthworms/acre. They consume 13,000 tons of roughage pa, can add 100 kg of nitrogen per hectare and as a result the soil is richer in potassium, nitrogen and calcium than the surrounding soil. Darwin said we would not survive without humble earthworm.

He told us that if all USA dairy farmers were regenerative they would be capturing all carbon since the industrial revolution. Soil is SO important and what we do with it and we are only just beginning to understand this. We could see the invention of the plough as the worse thing than anything we ever did.

Each percentage point of increased organic matter in our soil can hold another 100,000 litres of water. So regenerative farming is learning from nature; regenerative farming in Africa is mimicking the movements of wildebeests or in US the bison, where they roam across the soil grazing, crushing, dunging, eating and moving on and leaving it to recover – putting organic matter into the soil, rather than having animals in the one place grazing and grazing, giving it no chance to recover. Estimated that in all the years' bison roamed the prairies 6-8 feet of new soil was laid

down as a result of their grazing and fertilising of the ground. In the same way, regenerative farming builds soil depth, increasing biology through extra organic matter, creating healthy roots, leading to healthy plants creating healthy food, improving resilience to drought, rain and flood and at the same time we are storing large amount of carbons.

At Penn Croft for more than 20 years they have not ploughed and there has been no turning of the soil (cultivation) for 8 years. They do 'no-till' planting and so seeds are planted with as little soil disturbance as possible. Grow 'cover crops' after harvesting such as wheat or oil seed rape. They will immediately put new seed into stubble eg legumes, cereals, brassicas, clover. These start to grow and break up the soil through their roots. Life is feeding off the roots exudates that are expelled. They also have companion crops as happens in nature (there might be 20 different species in a metre of hedgerow) where there is a synergy between the plants. Native Indians knew about this system – the 3 sisters – maize/corn, with beans, which released nitrogen which feeds the maize, and pumpkins/squash (its broad leaves provided ground cover). At Penn Croft they plant beans with rapeseed and linseed and leave beans to grow with wheat. Also oats with peas.

Alongside the synergy created disease is kept down, meaning the need for less pesticides. The farm uses living mulches eg clover which they put on the vines. They grow barley and clover together – roll it flat and cover the vineyard with it as a thatch. It captures moisture and keeps the warmth in. Over time

the worms pull down the thatch. Within 7 months earthworms will have taken it all into the ground. Then in August they will plant another cover crop which will grow for next year's vines and put minerals into the ground. Will again be pulled down by the earthworms so building organic matter and pulling carbon into the soil.

The colour of soil over time at the Farms has changed – now lighter because it is full of humus. They are using less inorganic nitrogen which leads to healthier soil and healthier food. They look at the whole farm together - coppicing hazel woodlands and getting a whole lot of new life in them because of this. They plant wild bird food and pollinating plants and wild flower strips - and care for woodlands and plant hedgerows (a mile pa). Have decreased use of herbicides and inorganic nitrogen. All has and is leading to an increase of flora and fauna eg 13 hares the other day; lapwings; plus smaller birds. decrease in atmospheric pollution.

In answer to some of the questions asked he said: The soil Association sets standards for organic farming. Some of the products he wouldn't use are allowed – eg copper sulphate

Their yield and therefore income is about the same.

About 10% of farmers farm this way.

Cattle are not a problem if in the fields, as there less methane is created. DEBRA are slowly being brought into understanding benefits of regenerative farming and looking at giving bonuses to bring about change.

## Talk by Peter Duffy on Chartres



Recently, the art historian, John James, in his detailed study of the construction of the cathedral, "The Masons who Built a Legend", wrote, "Chartres is one of the few cathedrals to have been preserved almost intact. It gives us a tantalising glimpse into what much of Christian Europe must have been like in those days. About the year 1200 over a dozen cathedrals like Chartres were being built in the regions around Paris, as well as some 400 churches, thousands of abbeys, and bridges, town walls and houses. It was one of the greatest ages of building the world has ever seen. For four generations a frantic and insatiable urge to construct consumed the riches of France. ...As the most authentic example of the spirit of the 1200s, which was itself one of the most spiritual periods of European civilisation, (Chartres) has naturally excited people of all persuasions."

So, I begin with Chartres as a Christian site, and as a Christian site that had a very special meaning in its time. We have to go back and try to understand the purposes for which it was built and the way of thought of the society that built it, so different from our own.

Cathedrals were literally Houses of God, as described in the Book of Revelation. "I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God, out of Heaven, prepared as a bride, adorned for her husband...and her light was like unto a stone, most precious...and the building and the walls of it was jasper and the



city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones, (12 in all, like the 12 tribes of Israel). I heard a loud voice proclaiming from the throne, - Now at last God has His dwelling among men, and they shall be his people and God shall be among them." They were places where God, Christ, Mary and all the apostles and saints came physically close to earthly man. This was through the service of the Mass, where the sanctified bread and wine became the actual flesh and blood of Christ. This closeness was further evidenced by the physical relics of Christ, the Virgin, the apostles and saints; every cathedral, indeed every church was the custodian of relics of its patron saint, usually in or on the main altar. Death was not the end, Christ, the Virgin and his saints continued to act in this world through their relics; to inspire miracles, often physical cures. Mary's and the saints' intercession with Christ could save a plaintiff from purgatory or from Hell in the Last Judgement.

Churches vied to have the most powerful intercessor, for example, the body of St. James, Christ's brother, made a miraculous journey to the coast of North Spain and was brought to Compostella. A phial of Christ's blood was given to the crusader Thierry of Alsace by Baldwin III of Jerusalem and brought back to Bruges. And the tunic worn by the Virgin as she gave birth to Christ had been sent by the Eastern Empress from Constantinople to Charlemagne. His descendant, Charles the Bald, seeking the support of the Church in his efforts to consolidate his realm, gave it to Chartres cathedral in 876. This became the jewel in the Cathedral's crown; intercession by the Virgin Mary with her son Christ, was deemed to be particularly efficacious—he would never refuse her.

Alongside the growth of the belief in the efficacy of relics as intermediaries between man and heaven, grew the phenomenon of pilgrimages as an expression of Christian piety. We can see this expressed in Chaucer's "Canterbury tales" which begins, as you all know, "Whan that Aprille with his shoures soote The drought of March hath perced to the roote And bathed evry veine in swich licour Of which vertu engendred is the flour... Thanne longen folks to go on pilgrimages..."

Pilgrims went to the Holy Land, the scene of Christ's life and Passion; to Rome, for the relics of St Peter and St. Paul and for the early Christian martyrs; and to Compostella in northern Spain where the body of Christ's brother, St. James had miraculously been brought ashore. Gradually a network of pilgrim routes built up in western Europe, thronged with eager pilgrims. Again, Chaucer has this, in his description of the Wife of Bath: "And thrice hadde she been at Jerusalem At Rome hadde she been and at Boloigne In Galicia at Saint James and at Coloigne" Chartres, with its holy relic of the Virgin, stood at a nodal point in this great network, where pilgrim routes to Spain from England, the Netherlands and Germany joined.

So, in looking at Chartres cathedral, the fundamental point that we have to consider is how it, and the other great French contemporary Gothic cathedrals, were designed to be fit for purpose, and that purpose was to enable numerous pilgrims to be able to focus their worship, using the relics. This required passage ways, ambulatories, aisles, to move through the building, with focus points at reliquaries for masses and prayers to be said. It required colour and light and decoration to recall to the worshippers that they were in the House of God. And it required illustration, through the stained glass windows and the sculpture programmes at key points in the building, for the many who could not read, to tell the story again and again, of the role of Christ and his Mother in the redemption of fallen man, foretold in the Old Testament and achieved in the New. Malcolm Miller, a famous historian of Chartres wrote, "If the architecture is compared to the binding of a book, then its encyclopaedic text is written in stained glass and sculpture."

So let us see how all these needs were addressed at Chartres. Firstly, the footprint of the building that we have today, built largely in the 30 years after a fire burnt down its predecessor in 1194, was based on that predecessor, itself built on the remains of its predecessor, burnt down in 1120. There had been a cathedral on the site since the mid fourth century. After the 1194 fire all that remained of the 1120 cathedral were the West Towers with the Royal Portal and in the east, the earlier crypt where the Virgin's tunic had been miraculously preserved from the conflagration. These marked the limits for the new cathedral.

The crypt was probably the oldest part of the building, parts of the foundations dated back to its Gallo-Roman predecessor. In the apse of the crypt, there was the holy well, the well of the Saints Forts, the Strong Saints. Pilgrims could receive the holy effect of this water by drinking it, as is done to this day at the shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham. Those who were ill could be cared for in a hospice in

the long aisles of the crypt, which ran under the cathedral, for its full length. Part of their cure could be their being bathed in the holy water from the well. Such hospice care was common in the Middle Ages, you will all know such examples as the great hospice at Beaune, the Hospital of St John in Bruges and less possibly, the hospice in the Great Hall in Norwich.

Now, let us try to imagine the passage of a pilgrim through the Cathedral. It is likely that he or she would have arrived from the north and would have seen the roof and the twin towers of the cathedral from a long way away, as it stands on a bluff, dominating the fertile plain below. Arriving at Chartres, accommodation and refreshment could have been found either in the town, or, for poorer pilgrims, in the cloister of the close attached to the cathedral. On their way into the cathedral, pilgrims would have had to pass by the money changers in the cloister; they would have had to convert their own currencies into the local one to make donations to support the cathedral's work, to pay for Masses to be said on their behalf, and to pay for accommodation and provisions.

It is then likely that they would have entered the cathedral through the North porch. There the sculpture programme stressed the role of Mary as the mother of Christ; as the key figure between the Old Testament, and the New; in the fulfilling of the prophecies in the Old. For this, she is assumed into heaven, where she sits beside her Son, as Queen of Heaven, interceding with him for the souls of mankind, especially in this, her church.

From the North porch, pilgrims would have entered the dark passageway into the crypt, mirroring Christ's descent into Hell. There they could have taken water from the holy well, prayed at the three reliquary chapels and then climbed up from the dark of the crypt to the light of the South Porch, mirroring Christ's rising from the dead. There they would see Christ Triumphant. In the company of the saints, beneath his angels, and the signs of

his Passion, with Mary and John the Divine, he sits in the Last Judgement, with the saved on his right, going to Abraham's bosom, and the damned on his left, condemned to the everlasting fires of Hell, unless his mother intercedes for them.

Then, moving in to the cathedral, pilgrims could have begun by processing through the ambulatory, behind the high altar, which would have been sheltered from them by a choir screen. There would have been reliquaries in the chapels off the ambulatory, for focused prayer and Masses. For the culmination of our pilgrim's visit to the interior of Chartres cathedral, he would have moved into the main nave of the cathedral. There he would have been immersed in the light and the colour brought into the building through the stained glass windows that were, and still are, the glory of Chartres.

And here we must pause following our pilgrim for a while, to explore why and how the evolution from the earlier Romanesque church architecture into Gothic enabled the opening up of the great windows which were at the heart of Gothic style and were indeed its rationale, and which are the glory of Chartres

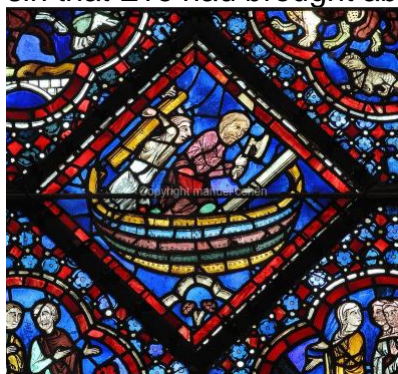
In a Romanesque church, such as Durham, in order to carry the weight of the roof, there had to be thick columns inside the church and thick walls, pierced only with small windows.



In a Gothic church the rib vaults-transfer the weight of the roof to the columns in walls and then to the buttresses-and the flying buttress; opening up space for the windows. But these windows did not just introduce sacred light



and colour, particularly the colour blue, into the church, they were used to tell stories—stories analogous to the sculpture programs that the pilgrim saw in the North and the South porches. The main themes again were the concordance between the Old testament and the New; that repeatedly in the Old testament, the life, teaching and miraculous saving power of Christ, as recorded in the New Testament were foretold; and that it was His mother, Mary, who formed the bridge between the two. It was Her acceptance of Her role to be the earthly Mother of God, that enabled the redemption of mankind, reversing the downfall into sin that Eve had brought about.



We can take as an example, one window, called the “Noah Window”, where the story of the Flood and Noah’s Ark is shown. “Noah as a saviour is a Christ prefiguration, and the Ark, as a means of saving, is a symbol for the Church. ...the flood symbolises both Baptism—cleansing through water, and the Last Judgement”. So the stories told in the windows and the sculpture carried both a literal and an allegorical meaning.

But the windows open another vista for us today. They give us an idea as to how the work of rebuilding the Cathedral was financed. In 42 of the windows there are images of 125 tradesmen from 25 guilds of different occupations, including those such as the money changers, fish mongers, vintners, bakers, apothecaries, farriers, wheelwrights, shoemakers and butchers. It was these guilds of workmen, it is thought, who each financed the cost of the glass in “their” windows, and thus gained merit for their members. It was, for example, the carpenters,

as you would expect, who financed the window of Noah, the Ark builder.



Now, let us return to our pilgrim, who after having trod the Labyrinth of Chartres, considered to be the equivalent of a pilgrimage to a symbolic Jerusalem, the Holy City, is then kneeling in the middle of the nave; gazing towards the choir and the altar. The nave was for the lay people, the choir was for the priesthood, the altar was for God. A pilgrim thus was there in the midst of the parade of pillars and vaulting, bathed in the colours of the light from all the windows, including that from the great West rose window. This illustrates Christ coming as a judge at the end of time and is the final chapter in the foretellings of the Old Testament, His life and passion in the New Testament, His death and resurrection and his ascent into Heaven. Our pilgrim has now has come to the most important moment of his visit to Chartres cathedral, the celebration of the Mass at the High Altar. The celebrating priest would have consecrated the bread and the wine, when they became the body and blood of Christ. In the Middle Ages it was very unusual for a lay person to take communion in both, or even one kind—that was reserved to the priesthood. Rather, it was believed that power came out of the eyes of the viewer and went out to objects, in this case the bread and the wine, changed miraculously into Christ’s flesh and blood and were then reflected back to the viewer, entering through the eyes and thus into the soul. The impact would have been doubly powerful in Chartres, where the Virgin’s tunic, most likely displayed on the altar in a reliquary, would have been seen simultaneously.

After the Mass, the pilgrim would leave the cathedral, probably through one of the smaller doors at the west end. And here we come to one of the most difficult contrasts for the modern mind to understand. The whole of the west end of the cathedral, the two towers, the doorways that formed what is now known as the Royal Portal, and the sculpture programme, are all survivors from the earlier 11<sup>th</sup> century cathedral and not the later 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> century one. The sculpture programme, with over 200 figures, is focused on Christ. In the tympanum over the north portal He is shown ascending into heaven. Over the southern portal it is His birth, presentation in the temple, and him being seated on the Virgin's lap. In the central portal, he is shown again seated in heaven inside a mandorla, at the End of Time, and the Last Judgement.

But these works on the west front are not reserved to clergy and worshippers as are those in the cathedral interior, porches and windows. In fact they face onto the parvis, the large open space in front of the cathedral, which was the site of the town market and of four great annual markets, held on Mary's feast days, Her Nativity, the Annunciation, her Purification and Her Assumption, when buyers and sellers would have thronged there from all over France. This is the space where the cathedral and the Chartres townspeople and those from the surrounding countryside all joined together. In a way difficult for modern minds to comprehend. it was Christ overlooking the commercial world, that in turn contributed to the creation and upkeep of His house.

Sites on the market space were leased by the cathedral chapter to townsmen, as was the money changing site in the cloister; this was just one of the sources of funding for the cathedral. So, when in 1194 the cathedral burnt down, a chronicler recorded that "the people despaired because they believed that the precious relic was burnt and that therefore Mary's protection of the city was lost...however, after three days a procession

appeared with the relic safe, having been taken by the priests into the Carolingian crypt beneath the choir. ...this was a sign from Mary that she desired a more magnificent church..... People gathered voluntarily in thousands, praying and chanting and dragged carts laden with stone a distance of five miles to the building site. The bishop and the cathedral chapter gave up the most part of their considerable income for five years for the building of the new cathedral." Both the Chartres priesthood and the local laity were united in supporting this rebuilding; without it there was little hope for either.

Some 60 years ago I lived for a while in France, and have strong memories of taking the road south from Paris, and seeing, as the medieval pilgrim must have done, the twin spires and the great green roof appear of Chartres cathedral on the horizon, rising above the fertile plain. So, today, walking up to the royal portal, where the sculptures rival those of the Parthenon for their expressive capability, and then into the great nave with its forest of pillars and arches, stretching into the distance, and the flood of colour from the windows, one is constantly in awe. Even if I and present generations, no longer have the vocabulary to understand the full richness of the story that the building, the sculpture and the glass were designed to tell, yet I hope that I still have understood enough to make it possible for you to share some of the wonder of the medieval world and its people, seen through the lens of Chartres cathedral



## Ukraine

Judith Stephen's husband John is supporting the purchase of pickup trucks and 4x4 vehicles to send to Ukraine. It is being organised by Trinity Grain and so far 105 vehicles have been obtained which have already been delivered to Ukraine by volunteer drivers. Judith says: 'We are hoping to get another 100. They are oldish vehicles for use around the battlefields but are fully serviced etc before they leave the UK.'

## Update from Piotr D Kaczorowski, Rotary Club of Warsaw

Piotr was our contact in Poland when helping Ukrainians to reach Farnham and below is an update on their continued support for their neighbours.

*'Dear Rotary Friends and Donors!*

This Rotary year, we started Chapter 2 activities. It was mainly help in getting a job. As part of this project, we helped 733 refugees to find a new job.

Considering that in the previous area of operation (Chapter 1) we helped over 550, we estimate that since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, together with you, we have helped almost 1,300 refugees from Ukraine.'

They have been involved in organising camps for the children and are planning one in the near future for up to 50 children.



## Lunchtime Talks Through July

**Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> July** Please look at website for details.

**Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> July** Roger Jude (please look at the website for the subject)

**Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> July** David Wylde 'Another Proposed Conservation Area in Farnham', introduced by Ken Kent

If, as a Friend, you are interested in coming along to any of the talks and for lunch (£20) please email [lunches@rotaryfarnham.co.uk](mailto:lunches@rotaryfarnham.co.uk) on the Monday before, saying whether you'd like, fish, meat or vegetarian, pudding or fresh fruit. We start gathering at The Bush, Farnham from 12.30 for lunch at 1.00 and the talk at 2.00, finishing at 2.30 pm.