

TOC^H



Welcome To Your Spring Newsletter

This is our third newsletter and updates members and friends on progress with our strategic plan and what is happening at Toc H more widely.

These have been a busy few months as we have recruited new staff members and made a start on our social enterprise work.

Do send me your comments pch@toch.org.uk or drop me a line.

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Launde Abbey Awayday



The Board of Trustees had an exhausting, though productive, overnight stay at Launde Abbey in Leicestershire in January. There was a review of current progress on our strategy, some good conversations about Toc H's purpose and mission and then a useful conversation about Branding (which we will come back to later in this newsletter).

We have moved to a meeting arrangement which sees us meet three times per year in person and then three times a year online.

Thoughts from the Chair

‘May you live in interesting times’, is one of those sayings that is produced on very different occasions.

In many ways, the present time is an example of what might be understood in the context of the life of Toc H.



To begin with the country enters a new era with the Coronation of King Charles on May 6th, whatever we feel about monarchy, it represents a central part of the culture of the United Kingdom. It is also an important element of the life of Toc H, because our governance document is a Royal Charter.

In the light of this fact, we receive a small annual donation in the name of the monarch, in addition, I write (as did my predecessors and no doubt those who follow me), a letter of loyal greetings before the AGM, for which we receive a reply that is read at the meeting.

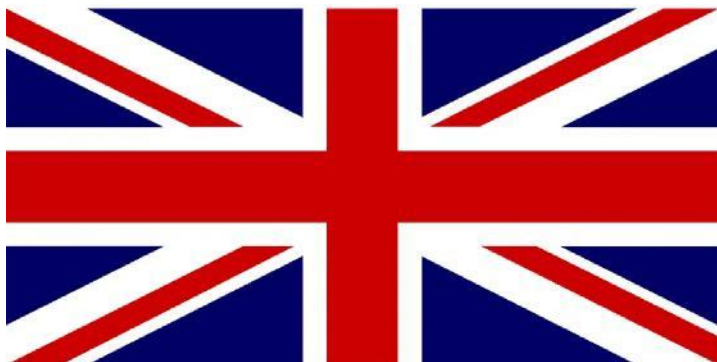
In the days before the coronation, I sent a letter on behalf of the Board and membership with loyal greetings for our new King.

Interesting times indeed, for the nation and our new Monarch.

The interesting times for Toc H, is seen in the news that we are in the process of opening 10 shops that will promote our work and be an important source of fundraising. This is a new initiative, that is being well prepared by Paul Hackwood and the staff, interesting times can be seen to be both positive and negative, it is my hope and that of the Board that the shops will be both a creative and financial success.

The importance of living in interesting times, is that we face the future with a creative vision and a willingness to take risks for Toc H and in doing so contribute to the Common Good of the communities we serve.

Terry Drummond
Chair Toc H Board of Management



Congratulations to King Charles III and Queen Camilla on their Coronation.

Terry Drummond as Chair of Toc H wrote to the King offering the congratulations of Toc H on his coronation.

High Brooms Community Centre

Work has been underway in the last few months at High Brooms Community Centre to update the building and make essential repairs. Repairs have been made to the roof to make the building watertight, internal paintwork has been touched up and the kitchen has been given an overhaul. We thought you would appreciate a picture of the now fully functioning urinals which have been out of service for many years and have now been returned to service.

A small management committee is taking shape which will lead locally on the development of new work at High Brooms and we have made a couple of funding applications with the hope of recruiting a part time community worker. We will keep you posted on developments.



Easter Half Term Family Fun Day

A wonderful day was had by all on the 4th of April 2023, when the Toc H High Brooms Hub held an Easter Fun Day. We invited parents and children from the community to join us for a day of arts and crafts. Elizabeth, Sally, Margo and Zoe each had a stall with a separate craft activity for those that came along to join us.



Elizabeth's stall was set up to make pretty Easter cards. Margo showed the families how to make some amazing Easter baskets. Zoe's stall was all about painting pebbles and making cute Easter bunny pockets out of paper plates. Sally hosted the colouring corner. There was also an Easter Bunny Velcro game where the children could stick the bunny's facial features and basket on to its body. Sally made lots of tea for the parents and kept the refreshment table topped up with snacks and drinks for the children.

This event brought people together and gave us the opportunity to hear about the types of events and community groups they would like to see happening in

the Toc H Hall in the future. We have received some amazing feedback about the day from some of the attendees:

"We will be attending more events, and helping out wherever we can, we feel that Toc H can and is bringing our community together again in a positive way, which is very much needed here in High Brooms."
Hannah T. (Parent).

“This is great, needs to be more variety, maybe a youth club or something more for the teenagers? Laci-Mai. (Age 15).

“It is so difficult to find pre-school placements at the moment; these types of events and activities give my three-year-old daughter a chance to socialise with children of her own age.” Local Mum of three.

The day was extremely successful with more than 50 happy children able to take home all the items they had created.

Zoe Styles – Volunteer



Tunbridge Wells Shop

We have identified shop premises in Tunbridge Wells on the High Street close to easily accessible parking. Sally Simms will be our shop manager and bring her significant experience of charity retail and of the organisation's history to the task of making the shop a success.

These are some of the first items we have collected for sale stored in the upper room at the community centre.

If you have any clothing or bric-a-brac items you might want to donate to the shop in Tunbridge please take it along to the centre or make contact with us so that we can try to arrange a collection.

Toc H Memorial



Damaged grout work

Many of you know of the Toc H memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas in Staffordshire. It was one of the first memorials to be constructed on the arboretum site. Which has over 300, 000visistors per year. The memorial has stood the test of time but repairs are currently underway mainly to the grout work of the main panels that make up the Memorial. When the work is complete we will be arranging for the brass and stone work to be cleaned. We have come to an arrangement with the trust to clean and maintain the memorial every year. Donations towards the repairs and ongoing maintenance would be gratefully received.



Paul and Rowena's Visit to Talbot House



In February Paul Hackwood and his wife Rowena made a first trip to Talbot House in Poperinge and were given a very warm welcome by Simon Louagie, the Warden, and Filip Coutigny a member of the management committee and himself a veteran.

It was an opportunity to share plans and to look for ways in which we could be mutually supportive. At Toc H we are looking at ways we might help to facilitate groups of young people to visit Talbot House as an essential part of exploring and

understanding the First World War and the importance of international relationships for the maintenance of peace. This is part of the National Curriculum in the UK so we will do what we can to ensure that schools do not simply visit the battlefields and the Menin Gate but also become aware of the positive work of Talbot House.



Paul Wright and Howard Benge of the Old Talbot House Association



Both Simon and Filip were excited to hear about our plans for Toc H and there was a general agreement that we should work to support each other where possible. This was echoed in a meeting with Paul Wright who is Chair of the Talbot House Association and Sub Dean of the Chapel Royal, and one of his fellow trustees Howard Benge. Paul invited the Trustees of Toc H to visit and we will be having our July meeting this year at the Chapel Royal in St James Palace.

It was an opportunity for Paul to visit the grave of his great uncle John (his mother's uncle) who was a regular in the

British Army. He died in the first months of the war (though Paul discovered that his great uncle's remains were buried in a German cemetery some way away and so this stone was actually a memorial).



Paul and Rowena also visited Ypres and were present for the Last Post at the Menin Gate with over a thousand other people from the UK, the Commonwealth and across the world. There were a contingent of Army Cadets present, as well as a number of UK schools who laid a wreath as part of their visit to the battlefields of Flanders.

Toc H's New Brand

Deciding on a brand which reflects the life and culture of an organisation is always difficult especially when it leaves a much-loved logo behind. After much deliberation the trustees agreed to move to a new brand which clearly indicates the Toc H name. There were five possibilities that were reviewed and they are set out below:



Figure 1 shows a wood cut; if trustees had decided to go with this one the birds would have been replaced with a lamp. This image would have evoked our heritage but also had the capacity to develop a narrative that is current and relative. Trustees felt this was too fussy and complicated to look at which might have left people wondering what sort of organisation we were.



Figure 2 uses two key elements associated with Toc H the flame and the cross of Lorraine, between the C and the H so as to create a single unit. This maintained the Christian heritage of the organisation and linked to the light-giving of the flame. Again, trustees felt this was too fussy.



Figure 3 was an abstract design incorporating many of the features of the current logo. It is a simple and understated style and again links to the lamp and the cross. The view here was that this was difficult to interpret and was perhaps made up of too many lines that it would not translate well onto pens and lapel badges.



Figure 4 uses Morse Code to link back to Toc H heritage, a dash is the symbol for T and a H denoted by four dots. There are opportunities to use the image as an equal's sign thereby linking Toc H to linked ideas through the brand device.



Trustees were more mixed on this idea and it was firmly supported by staff members as offering some real possibility. We may use this as a secondary brand.

The firm favourite, however, was the simple device set out below. Here the representation of the H giving the idea of 'to the power of' that Toc H's task is the empowering and support of local communities building on their innate capacities and multiplying them. This reaffirms the name of Toc H which gives it a clarity and strength. This approach can have a number of attached narratives, but it is less about the heritage of Toc H and more about its relevance to today's audiences.



There will be lots of different views about this and it was a difficult decision, but trustees were keen to pilot this logo as our main brand.

Newport Shop and Centre



The photographs show the signage of our new Shop in Newport which is due to open on 17th May. The shop is located in the Kingsway centre which is the main shopping centre in Newport. It will sell second-hand clothing and bric-a-brac and will have a full time shop manager called Linda Shepherd. Linda has lots of experience in managing charity shops and will be an asset to the organisation. We already have a number of volunteers who will support Linda with the shop. The photos show the new brand in action.



New project work is underway We are exploring the possibility of applying to Newport council for what is called an Asset Transfer to shift the ownership of the Eveswell Community Centre to Toc H. More details to follow.

Thanks to a grant from Awards 4 All, we have started 2 new activities in the Toc H hall.



The first is a **Stay & Play** session every Thursday morning. This group provides an opportunity for both adults and children to meet new people and to enjoy play activities in a safe, informal and friendly environment. Through providing varied activities including creative, imaginative and exploratory play, books and stories, as well as other resources, we hope to develop children's physical, literacy, communication and cognitive skills. Also, we are seeing that for both adult and child, connecting with others has a real positive effect on their wellbeing.



The second activity is our **Saturday Family Hang Out** which runs for 2 hours on a Saturday morning and provides an opportunity for families to come together for a facilitated play session. This varies from week to week, from crafts, games, gardening and we with hope to do some trips to local parks/attractions. In this fast-paced world we live in, with constant digital distraction, we are providing a safe and fun space where families can spend time together and take part in meaningful activity. We trust that these sessions will strengthen family bonds and lead to increased self-esteem for the children and young people, as well as fostering good communication between family members.

High Brooms

Not only has there been lots of physical changes to the hall in High Brooms, but we've also been doing lots of community activity. In January we ran 2 open days, one aimed at the 60+ and one aimed at families in the

area. At both these open days we asked attendees to fill in a community survey, asking what activity they would like to see in their area, as well as asking people what they loved about where they live! Off the back of this we were able to hold a focus group and from that we've been able to form a Management Committee for the hall.

We ran a very successful Easter Fun Day, which was extremely popular, with over 50 families attending this event. However, we don't just want to run one off activities, so in April we started 2 new regular activities including:

Craft & Chat - for those wanting to start or develop their sewing and crafting skills. These sessions vary from simple repairs and alterations, beginners guide to patchwork, simple print making and much more. We have a community member running these sessions and slowly this class is gaining momentum, with much fun being had from those in attendance!

Chat & Chew – an opportunity for community members to come together and meet others in the community whilst enjoying a light lunch! Sally Simms has been running these sessions with a volunteer and has provided some wonderfully tasting soup!! These sessions are slowly building momentum and we are currently looking at how to make this session more widely known.

Recycling



We gave 110 pens to R.E.A.L Education, as part of our recycling drive. The pens had the old address on, so rather than throwing them away, we thought they would be put to better use by the teachers and pupils from R.E.A.L.

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Toc H is incorporated by Royal Charter and a registered charity: 211042 (England) SCO45491 (Scotland)

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