

The meeting started with a DVD of Dick Moorhouse taking a group on a history walk through the village and the fields around. Many of those who have lived in the village for a long time, remembered Dick – a keen rambler whose mission was to ensure that the public footpaths in the area remained open. This DVD led very neatly into the main topic for the evening which was Steve's well-researched and very interesting talk about a one-time villager – and Dick's stepson – Geoffrey Moorhouse. Geoffrey came to the village when his mother married Dick and attended Bury Grammar School, before taking up a post as a journalist with the Bolton Evening News, and later on with the Manchester Guardian. He was a well-known, prolific and diverse writer, whose books reflected his interests – travel, Christianity and sport (especially cricket and rugby). He travelled widely, often writing about the places he had visited, and he seems to have been especially fond of India. He was an adventurer and, at the age of 40, decided to attempt the first solo west to east crossing of the Sahara, some 3600 miles, which he felt would be a voyage of self-discovery. However, dysentery and the death of 3 camels forced him to abandon the journey after 1600 miles, so the main discovery was that it was probably not a sensible project.

Steve came across one of Geoffrey's books when he visited an exhibition at Durham Cathedral and found that Geoffrey had been asked to write about the history of the Cathedral itself. This sparked Steve's interest in the man and so he did extensive research which resulted in this excellent talk. The presentation ended with a snippet from Desert Island Discs, where Geoffrey was the guest of Roy Plomley - his luxury items were a recording of curlews and Indian spices.