



from Garth...

Lifeline of Hope



*Dr Jeremy Reynolds, Founder, Joy Junction
Albuquerque*

Remembering Jeremy Reynolds - Founder of **Joy Junction**, Albuquerque, New Mexico

I wrote the tribute below to Jeremy when we heard the sad news of his passing – I was grateful that he had heard the song I had written about his work, *Lifeline of Hope*, which is on the new album *Against the Grain*.

I actually finish my memoirs talking about Jeremy and Joy Junction (pages 132 and 133).

My tribute to Jeremy

When I heard the news of Jeremy Reynolds passing on it was with shock and a feeling of emptiness. I knew he had been very ill but one always hoped against hope. It's interesting how much today I want to talk to Jeremy. I realise how much of an inspiration he has been to me - his extraordinary commitment to the homeless and those who are so easily forgotten; and it was his faith that motivated him to action. Jeremy took seriously the challenge of Jesus and the example of Jesus to make a difference in this world. He allowed the voice of the homeless to be heard. He built a place of hope and sanctuary.

I wrote a song about Joy Junction and used words about Joy Junction being 'a sanctuary and a living prayer', and that was Jeremy's touch. In the song, *Lifeline of Hope*, I wrote a verse about Jeremy. We were out on the streets together with the Joy

Junction truck, and as I stood and watched Jeremy talking with people I wrote this:
“I stand and watch the founder - he’s a quiet and humble man,
He’d felt the cold and hunger many years before,
Now he gives his life for the poor and the needy,
But he keeps a humble spirit - I like it best that way.”

He gave everything to serve the community of the forgotten. He lived out the challenge of Jesus to serve others.

I had a lot of laughter with Jeremy - I think he was a man of hope. I am so grateful to have known him, and now he is in the presence of the loving God that he served so faithfully.

So today I remember Elma his wife, who brought Jeremy so much hope, love and companionship. I remember his children and his grandchildren, and all the members of his family, and of course the community of Joy Junction, who will be in our prayers.

And I thank God for Jeremy, for his witness and commitment, for his friendship and fun, and for his example of what it means to follow Jesus faithfully.

We’ve put the song [Lifeline of Hope here on youtube](#) as a tribute.

Bill Latham – my ex manager and good friend at 80

Also in my memoir [Against the Grain](#) I mention Bill Latham (page 50) who was my Manager for a key period of time.

Just recently it was his 80th birthday and we joined him, his wife Linda, and other friends for a trip on the Thames at Windsor. It was good to celebrate with Bill - he has always been full of good fun and good advice, and in fact he prompted me to write

the book when I was uncertain about it. As you can see in this photo Cliff Richard was there – he had just won his court case against the BBC and it was very moving to see him so relaxed after that awful ordeal. It was great to reminisce with him about memories of touring, for instance in South Africa - and also recording. There are three tracks on the *Against the Grain* CD on which he does backing vocals - *Goodbye to all the Heroes*, *Did he Ever say he Pushed*, and a love song called *Physical*



Garth with Bill Latham and Cliff

to all the Heroes; Did he Jump or was he Pushed; and a love song called *Physical Pain*.

Hearing the love song *Physical Pain* again after so long Gill was very taken with it and especially Cliff's vocals, so my PA Isobel has put it on youtube with some great pictures – all very romantic! See the story of this song in the book, p 55. **You can see it and listen to it on Youtube here**

The witness of Sister Swee



Dr Swee Chai Ang

Those of you who came to the Advent Concert (with the Wild East) or the book and CD launch at St. Botolph's Aldgate will remember Dr Swee Ang as I introduced her at both events. She is a surgeon at the Royal London Hospital, but also dedicated to taking a stand for the Palestinians. She was in the Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra

and Shatila at the time of the massacre in 1982 where over 2,000 Palestinians were brutally killed. She has never failed to tell their story since then, and she has been down to Gaza to help out in various hospitals.

Most recently she joined the Freedom Flotilla to Gaza. This is a group of four ships originating in Norway and Sweden, taking humanitarian aid to Gaza. Before they left, Swee wrote, "**We are not likely to be killed and we have trained hard to be non-violent. But we can be tasered, man-handled, threatened and beaten up of course!**

But spirit and morale of all the participants on Awda, Freedom and Palestine are high knowing that we are doing this for the people of Palestine and Gaza, for justice, freedom and to bring hope to the Palestinians of Gaza living under military blockade."

So they knew that the Israeli military might board them even though they were in international waters, and this is indeed what happened.

You can read Dr. Swee Ang's amazing and moving report of what happened here in

You can read Dr. Swee Ang's amazing and moving report of what happened here in [this link](#) – it is shocking behaviour by the Israeli forces – unnecessary brutality – it is an act of piracy, kidnapping and even in the end an act of petty thieving. Indeed Swee was attacked and ended up with two broken ribs. It is bewildering why this was not reported here by the BBC and by only a few UK news outlets.

Sister Swee ends her account of events with these words: **"BUT we will not stop, we must continue to be strong to bring hope and justice to the Palestinians and be prepared to pay the price, and to be worthy of the Palestinians. As long as I survive I will exist to resist. To do less will be a crime."**

Sister Swee, you are prophetic and courageous and an example to us all. Thank you so much.

Gwyl Coda Festival

At the end of July Gill and I attended the **Coda Festival** - this is a new festival held in Wales, with the title 'Gathering Hope'.

Having been at the first Greenbelt Festival, it was a joy for me to be at the first Coda. It described itself as "a celebration for all kinds of arts, comedy, talks, workshops... a place to rest and have fun, a weekend to think forward, a catalyst for change."

Karen Chalk had been one of the key thinkers and organisers for Coda and I want to pass on both thanks and congratulations to Karen and her team for putting on this festival. I liked the fact that it was distinctly Welsh and perhaps because in these early days it was a small festival I found that it was genuinely a place to relax and to rest as well as to enjoy and take in.

Gill and I had just decided that we would go to the first event, which was being held under a beautiful tree - it was an interview with, and poems by, our long time friend Martin Wroe - at exactly that point the heavens opened and the rains came down! Because it was in such a beautiful setting down by the riverside, somehow the rain didn't matter.

Other good friends Wisam and Rasha Salsaa from Beit Sahour/Bethlehem were there with their children. Wisam is known to many people who have been on pilgrimage in the Holy Land, because he was always our guide - and now of course he is the Manager of Banksy's Walled Off Hotel. My greatest joy of the weekend was to see their children, Leah, Sarah and Daniel (my godchildren) running around and enjoying the massive freedom of the beautiful countryside - Bethlehem having had 97% of its land taken by the Israelis including almost every green space. At one point

87% of its land taken by the Israelis including almost every green space. At one point I watched Daniel just running up and down staring at the grass. It was a vivid expression of the joy of freedom.

Prayer - Thank You for our Friendships

First some words of Pope Francis:

We may be sure that none of our acts of love will be lost,
Nor any of our acts of sincere concern for others.
No single act of love for God will be lost,
No generous effort is meaningless,
No painful endurance is wasted.
All of these encircle our world like a vital force.

From "The Spirit of St. Francis" by Pope Francis



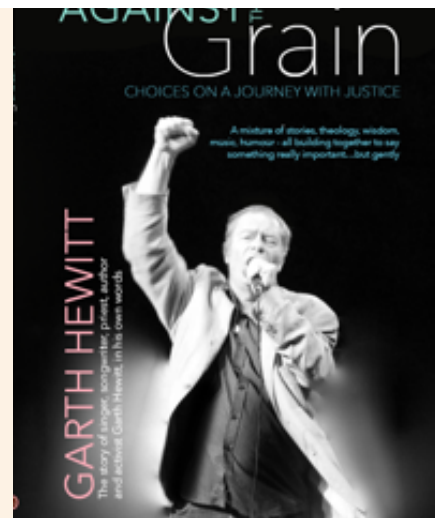
**Generous God thank you for our friendships
Thank you for lives that have encouraged us
and inspired us,
Thank you for the joy and the gift of creativity that brings hope,
Thank you also for those whose witness has been an example not only to
us
But also to all those they have supported,
Sometimes in situations of hopelessness and despair – and situations of
injustice.
Thank you for those who bring hope, against all odds and by their
courage.
Thank you for those who carry the cross and don't count the cost,
May they be reminded that no act of love is wasted – no act of love that
reflects the character of God is lost.**

Amen

G. H. Hewitt



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