

SYFC sponsored Skydive 2nd June 2022

Swindon Youth for Christ (SYFC) have been working with young people across our town for many years. One of their recent projects has been to mentor some young musicians at Holy Rood Church. They have formed a worship band called "The Witnesses". SYFC came alongside them to help make it work. To show our appreciation for this support a small, intrepid, Holy Rood team of 4 took up the challenge to do a sponsored skydive.

Along with 4 other equally crazy people, including SYFC director Dave Clarke, we made our way to Honiton in Devon for "The Big Jump". We were heading for a 7000ft tandem skydive. On arrival we booked in and chatted about how long it would take to leave the airplane and land. 10 seconds freefall plus 5 minutes floating on a parachute. But then we were told that if we went to 15000ft it would be 60 seconds of freefall plus the 5 mins floating on a parachute. That was too good an opportunity to miss, but we all had to agree to go up to the extra height. That agreement didn't take long, even our most reluctant team member soon said yes. The level of excitement was palpable, our chatter got more and more animated, we were ready to go!

We were teamed up with instructors and kitted out with jumpsuits. The plane took us up 4 at a time as the plane only accommodates 16 passengers; 4 team members, 4 instructors and the UK ladies skydiving team with their photographic team. Yes, we were in excellent company. The ladies are currently world champions! On my flight it was exciting just to see the views as we climbed to 15000ft. Circling the airfield as we climbed, we were blessed with views to several coastal waters, Chesil Beach one moment then the Isle of Wight followed by Cardiff docks. Not to mention glorious Devon and Somerset countryside. Then we were there, 15000ft!

The door opens, the noise level goes up and the UK ladies team bid us farewell. We're next up, attached securely to our instructors we shuffle towards the door. One by one we assume the position taught to us and out we go. 15000ft to 5000ft, 60 seconds of exhilarating, wind rushing, breath-taking, cold descent. We soar, we turn, we whoop appreciation, well I did! I couldn't actually hear much of anything else. Then, all too soon the parachute is opened, total peace replaces the sound of wind rushing by. And now I can hear my instructor telling me I can take control of the guide ropes....briefly. We turned left and right as I pulled the ropes. Now pull and hold he said, WOW, a 360 degree turn. Now the other way he says, so I duly obeyed and we did a 360 to the left. 5 minutes seemed more like a few seconds and before I knew it we were assuming the landing position. Not terribly elegant, legs up and bump, a gentle landing in the sitting position. Adrenaline took over even before the plane took off, now, 15000ft later I think it's fair to say we were all very excited to say the least. What an amazing way to raise much needed financial help for the amazing SYFC team. Their work in Swindon is invaluable to all our churches.