

# CONNECTIONS

**The Community Benefice Magazine of  
Richmond with Hudswell,  
Downholme and Marske**

**February 2025**



**Price £1.80**

**National  
Silver Award 2024**

**THE BENEFICE OF RICHMOND WITH HUDSWELL, DOWNHOLME  
AND MARSKE**

[www.richmondhudswellparish.org.uk](http://www.richmondhudswellparish.org.uk)

[www.facebook.com/StMarysRHDM](http://www.facebook.com/StMarysRHDM)

**MINISTRY TEAM**

**RECTOR**

The Revd Canon Martin Fletcher  
[martin.fletcher@leeds.anglican.org](mailto:martin.fletcher@leeds.anglican.org)

The Rectory, Church Wynd, Richmond  
07762 440094 or (01748) 821241

**ASSISTANT CURATE**

Revd Lorna Heatley [lorna.heatley@leeds.anglican.org](mailto:lorna.heatley@leeds.anglican.org) 07783 903156

**HONORARY CLERGY**

Bishop John Pritchard - Revd Jennifer Williamson - Revd Pauline Shepherd  
Revd Martin Clarke

**OCCASIONAL PREACHER**

Paul Perry

**PASTORAL ASSISTANTS**

Graham Pearson (07455) 943875 Sharon Digan (07791) 426659  
Sharon O'Connor (07704) 467833 Jan Jack (07725) 574188

**PRAYER REQUESTS**

Prayer requests to Anna via [boyceadl11@gmail.com](mailto:boyceadl11@gmail.com)

**CHURCH OFFICERS — ST MARY THE VIRGIN, RICHMOND**

Mayor's Warden	Peter Trewby	(01748) 824468	24 Hurgill Road, Richmond
Rector's Warden	Wendy Pritchard	(01748) 850854	
Warden Emeritus	David Frankton	(01748) 823531	8 Allan's Court, Richmond
Director of Music	Colin Hicks	(07498) 299061	
Bell Captain	Susan Welch	(01748) 823700	8 Maple Road, Richmond
Head Verger	John Welch	(01748) 823700	8 Maple Road, Richmond

**Parish Administrator & Secretary to the PCC**

Colin Hicks (07498) 299061 [admin@richmondhudswellparish.org.uk](mailto:admin@richmondhudswellparish.org.uk)

**OFFICERS OF THE PCC (AND OTHERS)**

Lay Chair	Peter Trewby	(01748) 824468	24 Hurgill Road, Richmond
Treasurer	Paul Carnell		<a href="mailto:stmarys@paulcarnell.co.uk">stmarys@paulcarnell.co.uk</a>
Magazine Editor	John McCormack	(07866) 033263	<a href="mailto:connections.ed24@gmail.com">connections.ed24@gmail.com</a>
Magazine Advertising	Jim Jack	(07754) 283161	
Magazine Distribution	Keith Robson	(07866) 325843	
Bookings	Martin Clarke		<a href="mailto:stmarys.mgc@gmail.com">stmarys.mgc@gmail.com</a>
Publicity	Andy Lovell	(07974) 766020	<a href="mailto:skeeby@skeeby.com">skeeby@skeeby.com</a>

### CHURCH SERVICES — St MARY THE VIRGIN, RICHMOND with Hudswell

8.00 a.m.	Holy Communion	Every Sunday
10.00 a.m.	Parish Communion Worship for All	Every Sunday apart from 1st Sunday (no communion) Every 1st Sunday
4.00 p.m.	Café Church Fun-Key Church	3rd Sunday (every 2 mths — Jan, March etc) Last Sunday each month
6.30 p.m.	Choral Evensong	Second Sunday each month
9.15 a.m.	Holy Communion	Every Wednesday

### CHURCH SERVICES AT HOLY TRINITY CHAPEL, MARKET PLACE , RICHMOND

**10.30 a.m. Holy Communion                      Every Thursday**

### PARISH OF ST MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS, DOWNHOLME

#### CHURCH OFFICERS

Reader	George Alderson	(07487) 257646	68, Brompton Park, Brompton on Swale DL10 7JP
Church Warden	Jean Calvert	(07902) 753246	Home Farm, Downholme, Richmond DL11 6AE
Church Treasurer	Phil Ham	(07920) 884103	'Sundale', Reeth, DL11 6TX <a href="mailto:philip.ham@outlook.com">philip.ham@outlook.com</a>
PCC Secretary	Andra Sisons Ham		<a href="mailto:andrakrumins@gmail.com">andrakrumins@gmail.com</a>

#### CHURCH SERVICES AT DOWNHOLME

**9.30 a.m. Morning Prayer                      Every second Sunday**  
**9.30 a.m. Holy Communion                      Every fourth Sunday**

### THE PARISH OF ST EDMUNDS, MARSKE

#### CHURCH OFFICERS

Church Warden	Ruth Tindale	(01748) 823371	Skelton Lodge, Marske
Organist	Jennifer Wallis	(01748) 822930	1 School Terrace, Marske
Treasurer	Peter Coates	(07801) 521954	Orgate Farmhouse, Marske <a href="mailto:peter.coates54@hotmail.co.uk">peter.coates54@hotmail.co.uk</a>
PCC Secretary	Andra Sisons Ham		<a href="mailto:andrakrumins@gmail.com">andrakrumins@gmail.com</a>

#### CHURCH SERVICES AT MARSKE

**11.00 a.m. Holy Communion                      Every Sunday except 2nd (& 5th) Sunday**  
**11.00 a.m. Morning Prayer                      Every 2nd (& 5th) Sunday**

And a rather belated Happy New Year to all our readers: may 2025 bring you peace and joy. Having just got rid of the January snowfall, however attractive it was at the outset, I hope the cover picture isn't a portent of things still to come.

In this issue, Canon Martin looks ahead to Lent and the various groups which will be meeting, and also points us to an episcopal letter from Archbishop Stephen of York and to a personal reflection from Bishop John about the recent difficulties within the Church of England. For those of you, like me, who are unfamiliar with the convention, a single cross before a name is apparently the designation for a bishop, while two crosses denote an archbishop. One lives and learns!

We also have articles from Judith MacLeod, who has visited Kirkdale Minster; Jane Hatcher contrasts recent political protests with events 500 years ago; and Carole McCormack allows herself to be interviewed by a class of 8/9-year-olds about her faith and offers another Grand Day Out. Apart from his Personal Reflection mentioned above, John Pritchard continues his series of Bible Pointers and, having posed the question 'Why go to Church?', suggests some reasons. Jim Jack has been busy, not just with a report on past and future 'doings' of The Friends, but also with some fascinating facts about February. We have our Charity of the Month – the Paul Curran Celebration Trust; a new feature – Poet's Corner – which we hope will encourage more of you to put pen to paper and submit your efforts; and, finally, a pictorial conclusion of the Step-free Access project.

We are grateful to all those who have kindly subscribed to receive Connections for another year, but, at the time of writing, there are still some who have yet to renew their subscription. Perhaps it has slipped your mind with the busy Christmas season, so, if this applies to you, please do so without delay so that we don't over-order on the printing. More order forms for this purpose are available on the table at the back of the church.

Lots of dates for your diary or calendar in various parts of this issue, so do make a note of them now.

*John McCormack*

**Cover photo by Wendy Pritchard  
Richmond in the Snow**



## Martin's Message February 2025



### Looking towards Lent – and beyond

Ash Wednesday is now not far away: 5<sup>th</sup> March! Lent offers us a good opportunity to be intentional in seeking to draw closer to God, to make more time for prayer, reflection and study, and for supporting neighbours in need.

Our regular Prayer Group, Home Groups, and Book Group will continue to meet in Lent. These are led by respectively by Anna Boyce on Wednesday evenings, Martin Clarke on Tuesday afternoons, Bishop John on Wednesday evenings, and Isobel Short on Thursday afternoons. Alongside these, the following **Lent Group** sessions will be available:

#### **'Alive in Christ', led by Martin and Lorna**

Tuesday evenings, 7.00pm at the Rectory, from 11<sup>th</sup> March  
Wednesday afternoons, 2.00pm in church, from 12<sup>th</sup> March

Over five sessions we will explore the nature of God's unconditional love, identifying any areas of our lives that may be preventing us from knowing it ourselves. All are welcome.

For details of this inspirational course please contact Martin or Lorna, or see:

[www.resourcingrenewal.org/alive-in-christ](http://www.resourcingrenewal.org/alive-in-christ)

The Lent Group will be supplemented by a range of other **resources**, details of which will follow later this month. They will include a **Parish Retreat Morning, led by Bishop John**.

'**Alive in Christ**' will be followed in June and July by another short course entitled, '**Your SHAPE for God's Service**'. Whether or not we will have attended 'Alive in Christ', these sessions are designed to help us to discover our God-given **SHAPE**:

- |                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>S</b> piritual Gifts | God's unique gifts to you                                |
| <b>H</b> earth's Desire | What motivates and excites you                           |
| <b>A</b> bilities       | Your talents, knowledge and skills                       |
| <b>P</b> ersonality     | Your character, personal qualities and strengths         |
| <b>E</b> xperience      | Your life experiences and all you have gained from them. |

For details of this transformative course please contact Martin or Lorna, or see:

[www.resourcingrenewal.org/shape-course](http://www.resourcingrenewal.org/shape-course)

Between these two courses, Lorna and I will be running a **Confirmation Course**. Whilst this will be in preparation for those to be confirmed by Bishop Nick (on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> June, 3:30pm at Ripon Cathedral), it will also be an excellent way to learn more about our faith – or to refresh our knowledge.

If you would like to be confirmed, or would like to join the Confirmation Course, Lorna or I will be delighted to hear from you. There will be six weekly sessions, held on Tuesdays, 4.30pm at the Rectory, from 15<sup>th</sup> April.

All are very welcome to the above sessions or courses.

### ***Yorkshire Speak Their Name*** **Suicide Memorial Quilt to be displayed at St Mary's**

*Speak Their Name* is a national movement offering those who have been bereaved or affected by suicide a creative arts space to support each other.

The [Yorkshire Speak Their Name](http://www.speaktheirname.org) Suicide Memorial Quilt project was launched in 2022 and now extends to 31m<sup>2</sup>, made up of 10 inch squares. Each square is individually designed by those who have been bereaved by suicide and represents the memories of the family member or friend who died. The Quilt is not only a beautiful memorial to those lost, but a gentle way of starting those much needed conversations about suicide that can save lives. Crucially, wherever it is displayed measures are in place to encourage safeguarding and signposting to supportive people and organisations.

Please visit <https://speaktheirname.org/our-purpose/> for further details of the national *Speak Their Name* movement. The website is in effect a digital version of the Quilt. It enables people to create a digital page where they can share photos, words and videos rather than a fabric square to remember someone they lost to suicide. The website and the Quilt project share the same values.

The *Yorkshire Speak Their Name* Quilt project is ongoing and anyone is welcome to create a square for someone they have lost to suicide. Whenever there are enough new squares, a further panel is put together and added to the travelling Quilt display.

The Quilt will be displayed in St Mary's on **3<sup>rd</sup>—15<sup>th</sup> March**. For many of us in Richmond and at St Mary's, this will be poignant: on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024, Martin Dando, a frequent visitor to the church, took his own life. His wife Edith had died after a

short illness a year earlier and Martin was heartbroken, becoming progressively more withdrawn in his grief. Some of us may feel we could have done more to support Martin, and, even if we did not meet him, as Mental Health Awareness Week (12<sup>th</sup>—18<sup>th</sup> May) approaches, we may wish to learn a little more about suicide and how it can affect those who are left.

Anna Scott and Karen Sykes, who co-founded *Yorkshire Speak Their Name*, will be coming to St Mary’s for an open discussion on **Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> March, 9.30am – 12noon**. They will tell us their stories and the stories behind the Quilt, and will facilitate a discussion on the stories we may wish to bring. As Anna herself has said, “The importance of community and support in the darkest times cannot be overstated.”

Please come along to the discussion on 8<sup>th</sup> March, and, in the meantime, if you wish to discuss anything at all then please, please contact any member of the Pastoral Care Team.

**The Marske Community Choir to sing at St Mary’s**

I am delighted to say that the highly-acclaimed Marske Community Choir will be singing at St Mary’s on two occasions in the coming months:

on **Sunday 9th March** the 6.30pm Choral Evensong will include chorales from **Bach’s motet *Jesu, Meine Freude***

on **Good Friday, 18<sup>th</sup> April** at 7.00pm a Sung Meditation will feature extracts from **Bach’s *St Matthew Passion***.

Please look out for further details on the Website or in the Pew Sheet.

**Crisis in the Church of England?**

Elsewhere in this issue, under the above headline, you will find a personal reflection by Bishop John in the light of recent events. I fully endorse his views.

Archbishop Stephen Cottrell has also written on these matters, in a pastoral letter to the people of the Church of England. It is a letter which demonstrates deep humility and clear leadership, an acknowledgement of past failings and a commitment to action. Do read the full text, which can be found here: [www.archbishopofyork.org](http://www.archbishopofyork.org)

With every blessing as we journey towards Lent – and beyond,

*Martin*

## CELEBRATING CATHEDRALS

Although not a Cathedral as such, Kirkdale Minster is nevertheless generally regarded as one of the finest historic churches in Yorkshire and its designation as a 'Minster' reflects its importance as the 'mother church' of the area. **JUDITH MacLEOD** paid a visit and tells us more about it.

### An Architectural Gem



The approach to Kirkdale Minster

My mother sketched it recently, capturing the rather awkward looking angle of the tower when looking from above.



It is named after St Gregory the Great, Pope from 590 to 604, who initiated the conversion of the Anglo-Saxon people to Christianity by sending Augustine to King Ethelbert of Kent in 596. Paulinus, one of Augustine's fellow missionaries, brought Christianity to the north a generation later.

I have a special fondness for St Gregory's, because my sister chose it as the focus for a measured survey when studying architecture at university. It does not have the lofty dimensions of York Minster, but is, in fact, a Grade I listed Anglo-Saxon church built around 1060. Our modern word 'minster', from old-English 'myenster', is derived from the Latin *monasterium*. For the Anglo-Saxons it



denoted a small community of clergy who discharged pastoral functions over a wide area in the period 1000 to 1150. The areas were later fragmented into smaller units, which eventually became parishes in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

The Minster was built on an earlier church which can be dated to the eighth century due to the presence of an Anglian or pre-Scandinavian tomb slab. There are 2 such slabs, but the other dates from ninth century. Certain features of the design suggest that the people buried beneath them were of very high status. The original church may have been more imposing than the existing one, for fragments of inscribed lead plaque and intricately patterned glass rods found in the vicinity of the church suggest a link with the former monastery at Lastingham 7 miles away.

In the outer wall under the porch above the south doorway there is the rare and famous Anglo-Saxon sundial. It is very well preserved through having been covered by plaster for several centuries prior to 1771. On the panels on either side of the dial, an inscription in Old English relates that Orm Gamalson



**Sundial above doorway, now enclosed by porch**



**Nave of the Minster**

bought the church when it was 'broken and fallen and made it anew from the ground ... in the days of Edward the King and Tosti the Earl'. This is reference to Edward the Confessor and Tostig, who was defeated by Harold, his brother, at Stamford Bridge — the same Harold who was subsequently defeated by William the Conqueror at Hastings in 1066. It is this inscription which allows the Minster to be dated at between 1055 and 1065.

The building consists of a tall nave typical of the Anglo-Saxon style, a north aisle and a vestry added around c1200, a chancel (1881), a sanctuary and Romanesque and Gothic arches. The pre-Norman parts are in the south-west corner. The tower, added in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, is visibly undersized. It houses 2 bells, named Gregory c1300 and Peter c1500, which are still rung today. Services, many of them accompanied by a choir, are held there every Sunday.

An air of peace reigns in both the church and the graveyard, where the poet, Herbert Read and his wife are buried. Read's account of his childhood in 'The Innocent Eye' contains a few pages on his recollections of attending church at St Gregory's as a small boy around 1900. He also wrote a poem entitled 'Kirkdale', imagining Gamalson's thoughts on first seeing the ruins of the former church. Many of the hundreds of gravestones are covered in lichen, and in the church there is a list of the various species to be found.



**Kirkdale Minster, and part of its graveyard**

Kirkdale has another fascinating treasure to offer. Near the Minster there is a cave created by a quarry where, in 1821, a very large number of animal bones were found. William Buckland, Professor of Geology at Oxford at the time, concluded that it had been a den for nearly 300 hyenas, who had dragged their prey into the cave. There were lions, tigers, bear, elephants, bison, deer, reindeer, rhinoceros, boar, horses, wolves and other small animals. According to more recent dating, the bones are reckoned to be about 75,000 years old.

*Judith MacLeod*

## A PERSONAL REFLECTION

Safeguarding is a difficult, though nonetheless vitally important, issue and, in recent months, some controversial events within the Church of England have hit the headlines. Here, **JOHN PRITCHARD** shares his thoughts upon the matter.

### Crisis in the Church of England?

For those who notice these things, it's been a very hard few weeks for the Church of England nationally. It isn't often you get an Archbishop of Canterbury resigning; an Archbishop of York being challenged to resign; and a fellow bishop calling for both of them to go, all of it because of failures in safeguarding. The world moves on to the next news item, but to those of us who love the Church of England it's been deeply disturbing.

I'm offering these reflections in a personal capacity – how else could I do it? I know all the players well, because I've worked with them and count them all as friends. So, the 'personal' of my 'personal reflections' is deeply felt.

1. Our first thoughts have to be with the victims and survivors of abuse. That such abuse should have happened in a church context is doubly horrendous and absolutely alien to the gospel. Victims deserve justice and proper processes of accountability and transparency.

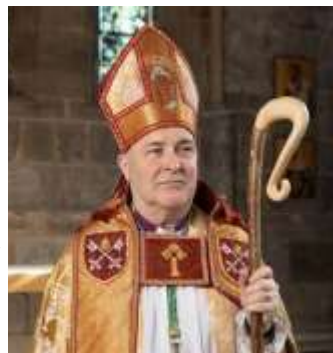
2. The resignation of the Archbishop of Canterbury was probably inevitable on the grounds of **institutional** responsibility. The Church is in a mess on safeguarding at national level, and the 'top person' probably needed to adhere to the doctrine of 'ministerial responsibility', as in government, and resign. I don't think, however, ++Justin needed to take **personal** responsibility. The Bishop of Ely had done all that was right in handling the Smyth case in 2013 by reporting properly to the police, social services, the church in South Africa where Smyth had been since 1984, and to Lambeth Palace. ++Justin would have seen the case had been properly handled and moved on to the next issue on his overcrowded desk. The



Archbishop Justin Welby

only other factor here, of course, is that ++Justin had some knowledge of Smyth through the Iwerne camps he had attended as a young man, though without knowledge of his abuse. This could have been the basis of the Makin report's claim that ++Justin didn't show 'sufficient curiosity' over the case.

3. The Archbishop of York had clearly been aware of the Tudor case and rightly regrets not handling it better. It was only when there was a new charge against Tudor, that he felt he could act in suspending him, eventually prohibiting him permanently. Tudor, however, clearly should not have been made Area Dean by ++Stephen's predecessor, or given the honorary canonry that automatically went with it in Chelmsford diocese. Nor should those positions have been renewed by ++Stephen. The difficulty comes with suspending a priest without due cause. I well remember being given properly cautious legal advice, that I couldn't act outside church law without laying the diocese



**Archbishop Stephen Cottrell**

open to charges of unfair dismissal in an employment tribunal. Suspension, however, could have been risked at certain stages and ++Stephen admits the mistake. Nevertheless, to me this was not a hanging offence, but rather demonstrates the need for more training of bishops in the right of suspension, and the need for changes in church law – which are indeed coming before General Synod this month in a new Clergy Conduct Measure.

4. Sadly, I find the interventions of the Bishop of Newcastle ill-judged, destructive and disloyal. The place for robust debate with your archbishops is in private, not in the media. The collegiality of bishops is like the doctrine of cabinet responsibility – you argue privately, but don't criticise publicly. Moreover, to publish a private letter from the archbishops asking her to reconsider her hasty removal of Archbishop Sentamu's Permission to Officiate two years ago, and to call it coercive, was also an astonishing breach of confidentiality.

6. The resignation of one archbishop, and calls for the resignation of another, have been hitting the wrong target. The fact is that the Church of England's attempts to set its house in order on safeguarding have been badly inadequate. Ironically, ++Justin has done more than any other archbishop to tackle the structural issues, in particular the need for a fully independent Safeguarding Board. These efforts, however, have consistently failed and another attempt to

sort them out and to establish a transparent, accountable system incorporating the excellent work being done in each diocese is due to come to General Synod this month. We have failed victims and survivors far too long.

6. I remain unhappy that society, as a whole, judges past actions by the standards of today. We know incomparably more about abuse, grooming, and the need for wall-to-wall safeguarding than we used to. I knew virtually nothing as a vicar; started learning as an archdeacon in 1996; and learned more again as a bishop from 2002, but we continue to judge the ignorance of a previous age unfairly. We've been playing catch-up ever since, and still have a way to go.

7. I'm delighted that in Richmond we have such robust safeguarding provision and that Martin, Jan and Pamela are proactively 'on the ball'. That's increasingly the case across the Church of England. Sadly, it's in the national structures that we have much more ground to cover.

I say again, these are personal reflections. Each of us will have our own 'take' on all this, and, of course, I'd be happy to talk over anything written here, as I'm sure Martin would be happy to talk over the issues too. In the meantime, let's enjoy being part of the local family of our church!

*John Pritchard*



**We give thanks for the lives of those  
who have died.**



Olive Harrison	3rd December '24
Bob Woodings	5th December '24
Rodney Isaac	17th December '24
Mark Whyman	22nd December '24

***May they rest in peace and rise in glory.***

*Whatever we were to each other, that we are still.*

*Speak of me in the easy way in which you always used..*

*Let my name be ever the household word that it always was.*

*Let it be spoken without effort, without the ghost of a shadow in it.*

*Why should I be out of mind because I am out of sight?*

*I am but waiting for you, for an interval, somewhere very near...*

*All is well.*



# VOX POPULI TO THE WILD

Choral music celebrating the natural world

Saturday 15 February | 7pm  
St Mary the Virgin, Richmond  
Free with retiring collection

## FRIENDS OF ST MARY'S

First of all, a big 'Thank you' to everyone who has supported the Friends events in any way in 2024. It has enabled your committee to offer significant financial support to the completion of the Step-free Access project in time for important pre-Christmas events, particularly St Mary's role as a civic church. The annual service of Remembrance and the Mayor's Carol Concert, both heavily attended public events, were enhanced by the easier access to the church, whilst other community users of the church such as the Richmondshire Choral Society, Station Singers and the Army Band in the run up to Christmas also benefitted.

As well as making a five-figure financial contribution to the actual cost, the active involvement of the church congregation and their friends in contributing funds towards the work demonstrated the commitment of the people of St Mary's to the project, so essential in securing support from grant aiding bodies.

We are also able to underwrite final snagging costs to secure a really good 'finish', and start the New Year with a small balance of funds to put towards the next development work planned by the PCC. This stated financial purpose of the Friends means that PCC Funds for 2025 are freed to be used to meet the day-to-day financial commitments of running our church.

### Busy December

The Friends were able to support the staging of the Army Band Concert through staffing the bar/refreshments and looking after our generous performers who were donating the proceeds of an excellent evening's music to St Mary's. Likewise, providing behind the scenes help and on-the night 'staffing' for another excellent Station Singers concert helped these community choirs in their aim to give financial support to the Step-free Access project. A great turnout of committee members and others for the Christmas Coffee Morning in the Town Hall provided a good end to a successful social and financial year. Thanks to all!!

### And so to February's happenings

We are delighted to welcome Vox Populi back to the church on **Saturday 15th February at 7.00 p.m.** This under-rated, highly-talented choral ensemble presents a new programme of well-loved music, interspersed with rarely-performed items in a venue ideally suited to displaying their vocal talents. The fact that it is **free** to come along should be an added incentive, and will prove the saying that some of the best things in life are, indeed, free ... although donations towards their costs at the end will be appreciated. This ensemble of singers from Newcastle and Durham Universities are determined to make no charge for their concerts in order to make



them accessible to all, especially by attracting people who have never experienced choral music before to their audiences. Vox Populi deserves a much wider hearing and reports of previous concerts have been outstandingly good, so come on folks, do turn up and be delighted by their music.

*'Vox Populi are putting the North East on the choral map with their glowing, pure sound and effortless versatility.'* (Lucy Walker, Composer)

*'Exquisite harmonies, wonderful tones, beautiful music.'* (John Treherne MBE)

### **Blues in the Pews – 28 February**

The 2025 Season kicks off with the return of Jed Potts and the Hillman Hunters. This fantastic live act were highly acclaimed when they first performed here in 2023, having come down from Edinburgh to perform a fantastic mix of self-penned songs and covers of well known music of others. Tickets only £10.00. See the poster on page 40 for full details.



### **Friends AGM – Sunday 9 March**

Would you be interested/willing to join the committee for 2025? We'd love to hear from you. Please contact Peter Trewby (01748 824468) or Jim Jack (07754 283161).

*Jim Jack*





## LIGHTLY GRILLED AT HIPSWELL

Anyone who is a parent, or grandparent, knows that children are full of questions, often asked very directly. Last term, **CAROLE McCORMACK** was in the 'hot-seat' with some 8/9 year olds.



I am proud to be a Foundation Governor of this unique Church of England Primary School, serving the Garrison at Catterick and the surrounding area. Last year there was an inter-regnum in Hipswell parish, and so I was asked whether the Year 3 and Year 4 children could interview me about my Christian faith. Of course, I said 'Yes', and was delighted at the depth and range of the children's questions. The staff asked whether I would like a sight of the questions beforehand and I declined, remembering a piece of advice I had been given years ago: in matters relating to God, one's first response is probably the most honest. I didn't want time to over-think and over-embellish the facts.

What really struck me, is that we should be prepared to face these sorts of questions in our everyday life as a follower of Jesus – and to be honest in our responses. Some of their questions were as follows, with my less-than-perfect answers in italics.

### **Have you always been a Christian?**

*No. I met some girls from Manchester University when I was 16 and they suggested that I should read the Gospel of Matthew. I did and, quite honestly, didn't feel anything at all – until the very last verse. In fact it was the very last words! 'And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.' That absolutely did it for me, and from then on I gave my life to Jesus.*

### **Are all your family Christians?**

*No. One of my daughters is attracted by Buddhism; and it has struck me how the emphasis on doing good to all and not doing harm is common to both Christianity and Buddhism.*

### **Do you pray during the day and if so, when?**

*I pray all the time. Sometimes short, arrow prayers; sometimes longer prayers, but usually only when I am by myself.*

### **During Covid, did you stay at home and pray?**

*I prayed a lot at that time, because I was trying to understand what God was doing.*

### **How do you keep the Sabbath?**

*Yes, I do now. But it hasn't always been like that. I try to do something with my family and dogs – walking, cooking a nice meal. Someone very wise once said to me that keeping Sunday different is 'a privilege not a penance.'*

### **Do you always follow Christian rules?**

*No! I try to, but I certainly do not succeed all the time. When I do the wrong thing, I am very sorry and say so to God.*

### **How does being a Christian impact on your life?**

*It influences every part of my life. I couldn't imagine how I would live, if I wasn't a Christian.*

### **Which of Jesus' teachings do you think is the most valuable with meaning?**

*To love one another. If people did this all the time, there would be no wars and the world would be such a happier place.*

### **How is the church involved in the community?**

*The motto, or strapline, of St Mary's Richmond is 'Where all are welcome'. And this is true. If you cast a glance over the congregation you will see all sorts of people in church.*

What a wonderful afternoon! I was reminded yet again how a child's view of the world is usually the clearest and most perceptive. It wasn't accidental that when Jesus invited a little child to stand among them, He said: "Truly I tell you," ... "unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

*Carole McCormack*

## NOTES FROM THE PAST

This month, **JANE HATCHER** reflects upon recent changes in government policy, drawing parallels with what happened in this country almost 500 years ago and the consequences for local people at that time.

### **“Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.”**

When I started drafting this piece during the dark days just before Christmas, there was an air of doom and gloom abroad. Farmers were up in arms about changes in taxation, and many pensioners were worrying about their fuel bills. But only a few people (if too many) are actually destitute these days. We owe so much to William Beveridge’s far-sighted, if imperfect, Welfare State. And Aneurin Bevan’s much-maligned NHS still comes up trumps when the chips are really down.



Just think how this compares with what befell our forebears, in Richmond as elsewhere, nearly 500 years ago. It was in the 1530s that the religious houses – monasteries, nunneries and friaries – were abruptly closed down. This so-called ‘Dissolution’ was the work of Thomas Cromwell, he of ‘Wolf Hall’ fame – or infamy, depending on your point of view.

The Dissolution did not just affect monks, nuns and friars, it must have had a huge effect on the likes of you and me. Those religious houses were more than places of prayer and praise; they were centres of expertise in fields such as medical knowledge. They also provided education, looked after the poor, and cared for the old folk.

As the religious houses were, one by one, closed down, all those benefits evaporated. Suddenly, and without warning. And the economic effect on a major town such as Richmond (for yes, we were that at the time!) must have been equally devastating, as an immense amount of purchasing power was also quashed.

The local scene would change greatly too. Not just because thriving institutions became roofless ruins in untended grounds – the *“Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang”* as Shakespeare described them in his Sonnet 73 – but the

streets were suddenly denuded of their personnel. The once-familiar sight of Easby's white-robed canons, St Martin's brown-clad Benedictine monks, Richmond's grey-garbed friars, and the nuns who regularly travelled down from Marrick or Ellerton in Swaledale, were all gone. Imagine the effect on us today if Catterick Garrison closed down: how different Tesco would seem without uniformed soldiers in the aisles!

The closure programme began by targeting the smallest and poorest houses, as these were assumed to be least likely to put up much of a fight, though it must be said that some of the nuns offered particularly spirited resistance to the threat they faced. There was one series of closures in 1536, and another in 1539, so it did not all happen in one go. But what happened around Richmond did not totally follow the 'poorest first' and 'richer later' pattern.

How many members of the local religious houses are we talking about? From surviving records we can get some estimate of numbers. When Easby Abbey was closed down in 1536 there were 18 canons in addition to the Abbot, Robert Bampton. In 1539 the Warden of Greyfriars, Dr Robert Sanderson still had 14 friars. The number affected at St Martin's, also in



**Easby Abbey ruins today**

1539, is more difficult to ascertain because it was not an autonomous house, but a cell of St Mary's Abbey in York, and we don't know the names of the St Martin's monks other than the Prior, John Mattheue. As for the nuns, the Prioress of Ellerton, Joan Harker, only had 4 nuns under her in 1536, whereas the Prioress of Marrick, Christabel Cowper, had 12 nuns when she 'surrendered' in 1539.

Thus the total numbers over the four-year period are likely to have been something like 60. But there would also be large numbers of redundant lay staff and servants. And this should be set in the context that the estimated population of Richmond at the time was about 1500.

So what happened to those who had taken their vows to serve God in a religious house? In the 1536 closure programme, each person was offered a choice. They could move to a larger house of the same order, to continue their religious life there, or if they turned that down, they were assessed by a government official as to how much pension they should receive. This was based on their place in the hierarchy, with the 'chiefs' being awarded more than the 'indians'.

For the later phase of closures, the only option was a pension. Pensions were paid by a government department called the Court of Augmentations, out of the assets the Crown seized from the religious houses. The pensions continued to be paid for the rest of the lives of the personnel. Yes, really. But the system still left some people struggling.

We know that some of the men were allowed to take up posts as lay clergy in churches and chapels, but that option wasn't available to the nuns. We have evidence from Wills that some sisters set up home together in Richmond, living very modestly, and continuing to wear their old habits, presumably not having enough money to buy new clothes.

Was there a grass-roots protest movement against the Dissolution of the religious houses, an equivalent of the blockades of tractors we've seen recently? Yes, indeed there was, and Richmond was much involved in it. It was called the Pilgrimage of Grace, and, having started in Lincolnshire, quickly spread to York and North Yorkshire. Indeed, with local backing, several canons briefly moved back into some of the buildings at Easby Abbey.

People in the north still felt very strong support for the benefits the religious houses provided, particularly citing the loss of the prayers which had been offered in all those great monastic churches. But a more immediate loss was presumably felt by the sick and poor who could no longer get practical help at the gatehouse of religious houses such as Easby. Beggars now went hungry; wounds went undressed; and children missed out on education.

In time, a few public-spirited individuals attempted to remedy some of the shortfall, and the later Tudor period saw the start of many charities, particularly educational ones. For example, the medieval grammar school at Richmond, which had been taught by clergy in the parish church, was re-founded in 1567.

The charity founded by John Dakyn in 1556, which still has land in Richmond, provided for a grammar school and an almshouse at Kirby Hill. The school closed in 1957, but the almshouse continues to serve that area. Richmond was to have several almshouses in due course, including that set up on Anchorage Hill by Eleanor Bowes in 1607 for 4 poor widows. Now just one person lives there.



**John Dakyn's Almshouse, Kirby Hill**

*Jane Hatcher*

## DATES FOR YOUR 2025 DIARIES EVENTS ARRANGED BY THE FRIENDS OF ST MARY'S

15th February Concert)	Vox Populi	Church
28th February (Blues Night)	Jed Potts & Hillman Hunters	Church
22nd March	Quiz Night	Town Hall
11th April (Blues Night)	L'il Jim	Church
24th April	Fashion Show	Town Hall
16th May (Comedy night)	Paul Kerenza	Church
21st June (Concert)	Musicality	Church
5th July	Summer BBQ	Church
10th July	Summer Coffee Morning	Town Hall
8th August (Blues Night)	Teresa Watson Band	Church
23rd August	Plant & Produce Summer Sale	Church
5th September (Folk Night)	Edwina Hayes	Church
13th September	Quiz Night	Town Hall
18th October	Curry Night	Town Hall
24th October (Blues Night)	Nothing in Rambling	Church
29th November (Concert)	Musicality	Church
20th December	Christmas Coffee Morning	Town Hall

## CONGRATULATIONS TO TRINITY ACADEMY

Our warmest congratulations go to our own Trinity Academy — staff, children and parents – for the most pleasing Ofsted report published in December last year which gave the school ‘Good’ gradings, ending a period of time in ‘special measures’. We are delighted that the school can continue to move forward with renewed vigour and confidence. More next month.

## THE 200 CLUB

Congratulations to our latest Winners:

December — no: 99 — Jeanette Lamour  
 December bonus — no: 123 — Jeanette Sunderland  
 January — no: 151 — Isobelle Scrafton

## IT'S A DATE — FEBRUARY

Into February already, and **JIM JACK** offers us another pot-pourri of dates for the shortest month — some always memorable, some perhaps less so, and a few not known to us. Let's find out more!

Well, here we are in February already, having experienced one of the frostiest and snowiest starts to the year for some time. With Hogmanay celebrations in Scotland experiencing cancellations, Scots have at least been able to celebrate Burns Night on 25th January, marking the birth of their celebrated national bard in 1759 (should Shakespeare have his own day in April?). I apologise to all Scots for missing this last month — including my late father — and myself.

Ach, weel, let's no' dwell on the past. There's enough to mark in February, even though it has the fewest days of any month. Furthermore, ask a quiz question about which saint's feast day falls in February and I'm pretty sure that 'Valentine' is the name which will correctly come back from most teams — even though,

as Christine Porter wrote in her fascinating article in last year's February issue, there are at least two Valentines who are in contention for celebration and remembrance ('Connections' February 2024). Both of those described in her article, however, were united in their deep Christian faith and their martyrdom for it, defying Rome through their own support and love for different, persecuted fellow human beings. The one we remember through the date of St Valentine's Day (**14 February**) was the Bishop of Terni, arrested for evangelising.



St Valentine of Terni

Brought before Judge Asterius, the trial developed into a discussion of faith and the validity of Jesus. The judge tested Bishop Valentine by bringing before him his adopted blind daughter, with the promise that, if Valentine could restore her sight, the judge would do whatever Valentine asked. Valentine laid his hands on the judge's child's eyes and restored her vision. Honouring his commitment, the judge then met Valentine's requests, breaking heathen idols around his home, fasting for three days and then undergoing Christian baptism. The judge also brought his household (some forty-four people) for baptism and freed all Christians in his area of jurisdiction.

Valentine continued to evangelise, however, was re-arrested and eventually executed on 14th February 269. Whilst in prison, he is reputed to have sent

messages to the judge's daughter for whom he had developed a deep affection. The last of these letters, written just before his execution, was signed 'From your Valentine,' the base from which all future legends grew. There are other early saints who lived, and often died, for their Christian faith and whose Feast Days are marked this month. In Ireland, St Brigid (**1 February**), Abbess of Kildare, is remembered for her work in spreading the faith in that country almost as much as her mentor, St Patrick.

Lesser known perhaps, even in Wales, is another Celtic saint, St Seiriol, one of only two saints connected with Anglesey and the only one associated with Puffin Island, just off the coast of North Wales. I mention Seiriol alongside Brigid, because his life illustrates sainthood at a gentle, local level. Setting out simply to lead a hermit's existence (his bee-hive cell on Anglesey survives, albeit as a ruin, today) his love for, and missionary work in, his own community led him to establish a small monastery on nearby Puffin Island (Ynys Seiriol) and thence to sainthood, largely due to how his simple Christian life influenced and converted those in his area.



**St Seiriol's Well**

St Anskar, (**3 February**) from Amiens in France, was the total opposite to Seiriol in terms of his geographical 'reach'. Another of the many saints who were born into noble families and who then renounced their status and wealth, Anskar became a monk in Picardie in the 9th century, before beginning his apostolic work in Westphalia. During that time he met the exiled King of Denmark (Harald) who had become a Christian whilst in Westphalia. Returning to his own land, Harald took Anskar with him to evangelise in Denmark, which ultimately led him to become Bishop of Hamburg. He continued his preaching during Viking raids on the country, establishing schools, giving large sums to the poor and even having the courage to tackle the Viking slave trade, in which he was partially successful. In spite of having preached and worked in countries now known as France, Germany, Norway, Sweden and Denmark, it was because of his evangelical work in Denmark that he was beatified, becoming the country's patron saint. He also died a natural death, which not many saints managed!

From wealth to shepherding, the Christian church remembers Caedmon, shepherd boy and minstrel, on the 11th February. His short life around the Whitby area is chiefly remembered for his ability to turn the stories of Christ and



his disciples into song and verse in the tongue of local people, thus making Christ's teachings more accessible.

Talking of making story telling more accessible, our modern times ask us to note **National Story Telling Week (1-9 February)**. Promoted by the National Literacy Trust, during this week schools will be encouraging children to listen to story-telling, then writing down or recording stories in some way. Although schools will lead on this, there is a strong lead on [www.literacytrust.org.uk](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk) with online activities — something for parents, grandparents and carers to try.

For young people and young adults, seeking a way of learning which suits them and which offers equally valid and, in a number of cases, better routes into employment than a traditional 'academic' post-16 school-based approach, a focus on apprenticeships in **National Apprenticeship Week (10–14 February)** should deservedly turn the spotlight on the excellent opportunities which increasingly exist up to degree level.

Look out for **Groundhog Day (2 February)**. An American import which dates back to 1877, it relates to the tradition that, when a groundhog leaves its burrow, if it sees its shadow, there will be six more weeks of winter weather. If no shadow, look out for an early Spring. Brought to public attention in this country by the 1990s film, the movie's underlying message is that if bad things happen, keeping on doing the same thing will mean that the same results occur. A change to abandoning self-centredness, giving out love and being a 'good person' allows life to move on.



**Groundhog**

At a less philosophical level, all of us living in Yorkshire can celebrate **Yorkshire Pudding Day** or, if no groundhogs are available, **National Hedgehog Day**. It is to be hoped that the celebration of **World Ukelele Day** doesn't drive the celebrated creatures deep underground, or indeed, cause your Yorkshire puddings to fall flat, because they all also fall on 2nd February.

National Story Telling Week also covers the same days as **Children's Mental Health Week (3–9 February)**, an area of increasing national concern. Run by the charity Place2Be, the focus this year is on 'Know Yourself, Grow Yourself', designed to focus on helping children and young people to build self-reliance and resilience. Again, a website offering more information and resources can be found by visiting [www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk](http://www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk).

Not quite sure how this fits in with Ferrero Rocher's support of **World Nutella Day** on the 5th, or **Chopsticks Day** on the 6th, although the latter does refer to the humble and ancient eating tool, of which 45 billion pairs of disposable ones are manufactured in China each year. These require 25 million fully grown trees to produce. Do bear in mind that, if visiting Japan, it is rude to stick your chopsticks upright in your rice bowl (it's linked to Japanese funeral rituals). The day is noted for promoting other cultures and encouraging visitors to oriental restaurants to try using the utensils in recognition of these cultures.

Related to Children's Mental Health Week is **Safer Internet Day (11 February)**. In the UK, the Safe Internet Centre manages the project as a partnership which includes Childnet International and the Internet Watch Foundation. Through its website [www.saferinternet.org.uk](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk), it offers useful resources and tips (which are probably useful to more than just children of school age!)

The theme of thinking of others in February is continued through **Random Acts of Kindness Day** on the 17th as the culmination of a World Random Acts of Kindness Week (**9—15 February**) — not grand gestures, just simple acts of kindness or gestures of goodwill with no expectation of any kind of personal return or gain.

At a different kind of global level, Rotary International uses 23rd February as **World Peace and Understanding Day**, the day after Girl Guides and Girl Scouts observe their long-established **Thinking Day (22 February)**.

In case anyone's concerned that animals don't get much of a 'look-in' in February, we are encouraged to watch films, sing songs and tell stories or go on safari in support of **World Hippo Day** on 15th February. I only know one song (by Flanders and Swan), but thought I'd struck research gold on the internet trying to find more, until I quickly realised that too much AI and predictive text had taken me to 'hippotalmus' and later 'Hippocratic oath'! The timely showing of a documentary series on polar bears in January, however, gave us a good lead into a day considering the diminishing habitat of these large white creatures on **International Polar Bear Day** on 21st February. Near the end of the month there's a choice between sitting in front of a screen on **World Pokemon Day** or being active on **Walking the Dog day** on the 27th.



Finally, for those of the Muslim faith **Ramadan** begins on 28th February, involving fasting from dawn to dusk. I wonder what March holds?

*Jim Jack*

## BIBLE POINTERS

For the next in his series on aspects of the Bible, **JOHN PRITCHARD** turns his attention this month to the question of reliability. As always, his analysis, and conclusion, is compelling.

### How Reliable is the Bible?

#### 1. **'Reliable' is a tricky word.**

If we mean, 'Is the Bible accurate history?' the answer is 'sometimes', but that's because so much of it doesn't set out to be history e.g. the story of the Garden of Eden is a myth of eternal truths; the psalms are a Jewish prayer book; the prophets are calling Israel to return to God; the gospels all have a point of view.

#### 2. **Ah! 'A point of view'.**

That means they're biased. Well, yes – the writers were Jews and Christians who believed passionately that God was active in the lives of men and women and had a vital message for us. But all writing has a bias, whether its history or science or any other discipline. People write from their convictions and from their own world-view. They write about what they believe to be important. Histories of a war will be told somewhat differently depending on what side the writer was on. Newspapers famously reflect their political stance. There's no such thing as absolute objectivity.

#### 3. **So what 'points of view' can we see in the gospels, for example?**

Well, Luke had a bias to the poor, to women and to those who were suffering. Matthew had a bias to Jewish history and wanted to show how Jesus fitted in to God's Big Story. Mark wanted to show Jesus was the Son of God from chapter one, verse 1, especially as shown by his power and miracles. John wanted to show how Jesus revealed the glory of God and his mystical union with his Father. Bias? Yes. Reliable? Also yes.



#### 4. **So were the writers of the gospels eyewitnesses?**

Scholars are divided on this, but most believe that there is a more subtle accuracy to these texts. It's quite likely that Mark got his information from Peter and wrote it down accurately but in his own order. Luke was a companion of Paul after the death and resurrection of Jesus, but he, like the other synoptic writers (Mark and Matthew), took his information from oral sources, because the sayings of Jesus were passed on reliably by word of mouth and taught to new Christians. John (the 'beloved disciple'? or a school around John?) reflected at greater leisure on the significance of the whole 'Jesus event'.

#### 5. **So do these oral sources of the story of Jesus have a strong claim to authenticity?**

The Semitic mind was used to committing material to memory in an age where much less was written down than now and fewer people could read. Sometimes a rock of genuine material appears above the waterline e.g. the exact Aramaic words of Jesus – 'Talitha koum' (little girl, get up), 'Ephphatha' (be opened), 'Eloi, eloi, lema sabachthani' (my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?). Again, you can sometimes see how a 'key phrase' or a particular word act as a lynch pin by which people could remember the stories and sayings of Jesus.

#### 6. **Another important thing to remember.**

When the first written accounts of the story of Jesus began to circulate, there would have been plenty of people around who could challenge inaccuracy. You can see this when Paul writes to the Corinthians that the risen Christ appeared to over 500 brothers and sisters at one time, 'most of whom are still alive'. So check it out! John, too, refers to the disciple following Jesus and Peter on their post-resurrection lakeside walk by Galilee, saying, 'This is the disciple testifying to these things and has written them, and we know that his testimony is true.'

#### 7. **100% accurate in terms of a movie-camera?**

Probably not. But reliable? Absolutely!



*John Pritchard*

## GRAND DAY OUT

If you haven't already been, then a visit to the Auckland Project at Bishop Auckland can certainly be recommended. After visiting the Faith Museum last year, **CAROLE McCORMACK** made return visits, this time to see the Bishop's Palace and, later, the outdoor Christmas light-show **AGLOW**.



Location of included attractions in the Auckland project

The Auckland Project is a group of significant heritage attractions in and around Bishop Auckland: an annual ticket for £30 per adult may seem like a lot, but represents very good value indeed, as it assures not just a single Grand Day Out, but several. Tickets, with concessions for families, are available at the 'Auckland Tower', or visitor centre, which, because of its modern and striking appearance, can be easily located after parking in one of the central car parks. Access to the included Faith Museum, the Bishop's Palace and the two Art Galleries (the Spanish Gallery and the Mining Gallery) is level and distances between them are short. There are toilets in the Visitor Centre and the Bishop's Palace, and there is a very pleasant café/restaurant in the basement of the Palace if refreshments are needed or a full day's visit is planned.

In April last year I wrote about our first Grand Day Out at this remarkable project, and shortly before Christmas we visited again, this time concentrating on the Bishop's Palace. This isn't marked on the above sketch map, but is situated just to the right of the Faith Museum. Also included in the ticket are the

beautiful and extensive gardens, which wrap around the Grade 1 listed Palace.

Historically, Durham's political importance lay in the fact that it was a buffer state between England and Scotland. When William the Conqueror became King of England in 1066, he soon realised that his kingdom could not be safely protected from Scottish invasion until Northumbria was subject to his rule. At the same time, he was aware of this area's remoteness and independence, and saw that it would not be easily controlled by a king in the distant south of England. Northumbria's two most powerful men in King William's time were its Earl, seated at Bamburgh, and the Bishop of Durham. The Earls of Bamburgh inherited their Royal powers from the old kings of Northumbria.

After two unsuccessful attempts to send an earl to govern this border region, the English king came up with the solution of giving the Bishop of Durham secular powers, and therefore the responsibility for protecting English interests, in return for allegiance. The steward of Anthony Bek, Bishop of Durham from 1284 until 1311, is quoted as saying: *"There are two kings in England, namely the Lord King of England, wearing a crown in sign of his regality, and the Lord Bishop of Durham wearing a mitre in place of a crown, in sign of his regality in the diocese of Durham"*. Bishops of Durham were given extensive powers enabling them to hold their own parliament; appoint their own sheriffs and Justices; administer their own laws; create fairs and markets; issue charters; salvage shipwrecks; collect revenue from mines; and administer the forests.

From 1075, the Bishop of Durham became a Prince-Bishop, with the right to raise an army, mint his own coins, and levy taxes. As long as he remained loyal to the king of England, he could govern as a virtually autonomous ruler, reaping the revenue from his territory, but also remaining mindful of his role to protect England's northern frontier.



Chapel, through the gateway

The autonomy of Durham; the prestige associated with the title of Prince-Bishop; and the fact that the office brought with it great wealth, made it a desirable place for ambitious, powerful men, not all of whom were particularly pious. Although, in later centuries, the Durham Bishopric's importance as a buffer state declined, this did not diminish the prestige of the Prince Bishop. With the status of the Durham Prince Bishops being what it was, the Bishops of Durham were all too happy to

demonstrate their political power architecturally and so, in parallel with its defensive role, the Bishop's Palace evolved as a palatial residence, often remodelled to reflect changes in taste. There were Prince Bishops until 1836 when the status was relinquished, but Bishops of Durham continued to live here until 2012, when the palace and its contents were sold to the Auckland Castle Trust, now the Auckland Project. It is now primarily a tourist attraction, but still houses the bishop's offices.

When we visited the Bishop's Palace, it was dressed for Christmas, which increased the impact of its luxury and status.



**The entrance and Throne room, both dressed for Christmas**

The chapel is the earliest part of the palace still standing, and was originally a dining room. It is described by Pevsner in his Buildings of England series as *“one of the finest rooms in North-East England”*.



**The Chapel at  
Auckland Castle**



**The Dining Room,  
set for a Christmas meal**

All the rooms are stately and full of interest, but the current dining room is magnificent and contains twelve paintings depicting *Jacob and His Twelve Sons* by the Spanish painter Francisco de Zurbarán.

The thirteenth portrait, *Benjamin*, is a copy, as the original hangs in Grimsthorpe Castle, Lincolnshire.

**Aglow**, the *Son et Lumiere* which is set in the gardens and grounds of the Bishop's Palace, is charged separately as a seasonal attraction. Although this recommendation comes too late to enjoy until Christmas 2025, we would recommend it highly, as it is an extensive 1.5 mile illuminated trail through the grounds, full of variety and of very high quality. It's truly magical!



**Just two of  
the many  
light  
shows**



One of the most striking things about visiting the Auckland Project is that, without exception, all the guides and staff are extremely pleasant, helpful and knowledgeable. They add to the experience.

*Carole McCormack*



## WHY GO TO CHURCH?

Several months ago, **JOHN PRITCHARD** preached a sermon which invited us to reflect on this rather fundamental question. At the beginning of another year, with Lent approaching, it is perhaps an opportune time to consider again what he had to say.

We live at a time when most people in the UK say they don't have a religious belief, and those who do are pretty apathetic about it. Our secular neighbours have different mental maps from 50 years ago and they aren't asking religious questions because there isn't anything 'missing' from their lives. Their map doesn't have a God-shaped hole.

So why do many of us still go to church? I think it's because we know at some deep level that this secular map misses a whole dimension of reality; it misses transcendence. It puts reality into a small box with a padlock. It misses wonder and awe and mystery and the longing of the soul for something more. It misses the deep undertow of grace that makes us lose our balance when we're waist deep in love or suffering.



To be more particular, here are some of the reasons we might keep coming to church:

1. **We come to get in touch with God.** The psychiatrist in Peter Shaffer's play *Equus* says 'If you don't worship, you'll shrink; it's as brutal as that.' As 80% of the world's population practise a faith of some kind, most people know that worship is essential. We believers are not the exception! We know at some level that we are made by God, in God and for God – who's nature is love, and it's in love that we discover who we are.
2. **We come because we're looking for a framework, a map, to live by.** We need a framework of values, disciplines and habits of thought and action that makes sense in a world that has, in many ways, outgrown its moral and spiritual strength. With all our technology we can **do** so much now, but we're not sure how to handle it. We need ancient wisdom deeper than we find on a fridge magnet.

**3. We come because churches make an honest attempt at community** in a culture that's forgotten how to do it. Society today has fragmented into ever tighter interest groups, but the church is a community gathered around the life and teaching of Jesus – welcoming, inclusive, serving, often failing, but committed to staying together – even if I have to see Edna Bucket as my sister in Christ, or I have to sit in a pew alongside Walter Woebegone whose theological views I regard as off the wall. Whatever happens, we are family.

**4. We come because we're all learners and this is a school for learning.** The syllabus is about an earthy holiness. We don't presume to have all the answers in a neatly wrapped package tied with a silver bow, but to be a community trying to, as St Paul puts it, 'learn Christ.' It's about *formation* as well as *information* and it's a lifelong process. We'll be learners to the end.

**5. We come because the building itself talks a different, enchanting language.** It's hard to describe, but it's the place itself, the history, the prayers, the dreams that have gone into it, 'the hopes and fears of all the years.' It's also the sheer space. In our crowded lives, space is hard to find. Here we have space to think, to rest, to reflect, to be still. We sift our experiences and sort out our dilemmas. Churches cleanse us somehow; they might even leave us feeling embraced. Relish the space.

**6. We come because when times are hard there are resources to be found here.** You don't have to be strong all the time. The myth of constant success is a hard one to live by, but we often spend our whole lives trying to ascend the ladders society puts in front of us. Sometimes we just run out of puff and need to sit down at the bottom of the ladder to recuperate and reassess. That's often when we encounter Christ who came down the ladder in the incarnation, and who now sits with those who can't climb any more. Churches can be places of rest, companionship, and restoration. And if forgiveness needs to be part of the deal, the Church specialises in that too.

**7. And maybe we come because there's a saint or two to be found here, and saints are exciting.** Most of us are just a shadow of our future selves, and it's good to get a glimpse of what a human being is meant to be.

Maybe, deep down, we come to church because God invites us.



"All are welcome  
in this place."

John Pritchard



## CHARITY OF THE MONTH — FEBRUARY

This month's charity is very close to home. One of its founders, Linda Curran, is well-known to all at St Mary's and is a tireless campaigner for the disadvantaged.

This charity was founded in 2002 by Linda and Martin Curran after the death of their son Paul at the age of 30. Paul was diagnosed with Friedreich's Ataxia when he was 10 years old and, in his later years, had to have specialist care support and equipment. Linda and Martin understood how hard it is for a parent of a child with special/individual needs to access and obtain what is needed to make that child's life the best it can be. They found an old school essay of Paul's and used an extract from this to form the basis of how they wanted the Trust to 'make a difference' on his behalf. Paul had written that, if he became a millionaire, he would invest in stocks and shares .....



Paul Curran

*"As my million pounds accumulated, I think I would become more generous and hopefully give more and more to charities. I am sure that I wouldn't be at all like Henry Sugar\* in his later life!"*

(\* A tale of greed from Roald Dahl)



The bell at St Mary's,  
ready to be hung

When they set up the charity, Linda and Martin wanted to do the best they could to make sure that it would always endeavour to follow Paul's sentiment to be generous and help children and young people with special and individual needs to fulfil their dreams and ambitions. They also sponsored a church bell to make sure that the name and aims of the charity would be known locally and be part of the church community. After Martin died, his Founder place fell to St Mary's to nominate a Founder Trustee.

The charity operates solely within the district of Richmondshire, and has been able to make a difference to

numerous individuals by providing:

- items of equipment for those with a disability;
- specialist physio assistance with PE at a school, after funding for non-teaching support had been withdrawn;
- funding for a whole new intake at a local Riding for the Disabled;
- funding for a group of young disabled people who were living independently but finding it hard to manage everyday finances; and
- furnishings for a newly-built bedroom that met the needs of a child with mobility issues.

It also campaigns for Access for All, and has given grants towards a new lift at Richmondshire Museum; the accessible toilet at St Mary's; the Step-free Access project; and the accessible play park in Leyburn.

The charity is allowed to donate up to 10% of its funds each year and doesn't set a figure for its grants. Any reasonable application is considered, and applicants are given advice about where further funding may be obtained, but it tends not to support anything that is available from the Local Authority. The Trustees are all volunteers: there are no paid employees, and all funds raised enable grants to be given.

The charity has a website: [www.paulcurrancelebrationtrust.org.uk](http://www.paulcurrancelebrationtrust.org.uk) from which further information can be obtained. This generates most of their applications, which need to be endorsed by a third- party e.g Occupational Health, Doctor or Teacher.

Please support this worthy local charity by giving generously, or by speaking directly to Linda Curran.



# STEP-FREE ACCESS PROJECT — COMPLETION AT LAST!

Much has been said in previous issues about this immensely worthwhile project, so, to 'round it off', here is a pictorial compilation of how it progressed.

## The Problem



## And our Solution



*Making the level platform*

## Work underway

*Creation of curved ramp*



*Heavy path work*



*Norman font hiding in church*

*New parking for the less able*





*The new resting station with bench.*

## **The end result**

*An aerial view from the tower.*



*The Norman font moved to its new and symbolically correct location at the entrance to the church.*



*Official opening by Linda Curran, Deputy Lieutenant of North Yorkshire and one of our Patrons, on 15 December 2024, exactly 12 months after Diocesan Faculty approval and Council Planning permission for the project.*

### **Acknowledgements**

We were very fortunate in obtaining financial support from the Community Lottery Fund; the UK Shared Prosperity Fund; Richmond Fellmongers Guild; Richmond Station Singers; Benefact Trust; Laing Foundation; Richmond Town Council; North Yorks Council; Garfield Weston Foundation; Leeds Diocesan Building Fund; William Webster Fund; Jack Brunton Trust; The Friends of St Mary's and many personal donations. We would like to express our thanks to all who donated to the project and say thank you to our contractors: J Staley Stonework Ltd; MAC Plant & Tool Hire Ltd; C J Tennant Engineering Ltd; and to our architect Louise Priestman, all of whom it was a pleasure to work with and who, together, ensured a successful outcome. Finally, to our patrons, Baroness Harris of Richmond and disability expert and Deputy Lieutenant Linda Curran for their tremendous support and invaluable advice.

*Peter Trewby*

*Churchwarden & Project Lead*

## POET'S CORNER

The 'Poetry & Puds' house group run by John and Wendy Pritchard encourages participants to write and share some of their own poetry. A few months ago, a walk in the Suffolk fields where she grew up inspired **SALLY BODDY** to put pen to paper.

### Coldham


*This view wakes me up  
and it turns me around.  
And I see myself coming  
and I feel myself found.*

*I open my arms  
to the beautiful world.  
To the sun on the skin  
of a carefree, young girl.*

*And I'm sure, when I look,  
it's my feet on the floor.  
But the sound in my head  
is of hoof and of paw.*

*Here is where now  
and then are combined.  
Where I walk with my past,  
with our fingers entwined.*

*Sally Boddy*



Friends of St Mary's Church Richmond  
and  
Found The Note  
presents

# Jed Potts and The Hillman Hunters

plus support Drystone Blues Collective

## Friday 28 February 8pm

St Mary's Church. Richmond  
Bar

Tickets £10 adv £12 door

available from

Castle Hill Bookshop Richmond

Blues Night Records 85 Frenchgate Richmond

Eventbrite

[foundthenote@yahoo.com](mailto:foundthenote@yahoo.com)



Are you at school? Love Singing? Want to learn to read music?

## Join the St Mary's Song Squad

We meet on **Mondays during term time**, 4-5pm in St Mary's Church, Richmond  
As well as having lots of fun singing and learning a wide variety of songs, there will be opportunities to perform at occasional services/events and to participate in the Royal School of Church Music's highly acclaimed 'Voice for Life' Scheme.  
Juice & biscuits will also be available & tea / coffee for any parents / guardians wishing to stay during the rehearsal time.

**For more information or to sign up for the Song Squad**

**Contact Chris Denton 07817 386070**



Usually last Sunday in every month  
Next service — **23rd February '25**  
For children and the young at heart.  
Why not come and join us?  
[www.richmondhudswellparish.org.uk](http://www.richmondhudswellparish.org.uk)

## LOUNGERS!

(The Ladies' Group)

Usually, last Friday of each month

From 7.30pm in the MORRO LOUNGE  
Richmond Market Place

Next meeting:  
28th February '25



## THIRST!

(The Men's Group)

Meets first Thursday of every month from  
7.00 p.m.

Next Meeting at

The Town Hall Pub & Dining, Richmond

**6th February '25**



## WORD SEARCH

February opens with Candlemas – the naming of Jesus in the temple. Simeon and Anna praised God to see the promised Messiah, sent by a loving God to save his people. February also celebrates the love between men and women: Valentine cards and wedding fayres abound. ‘Love’ as in social compassion is also remembered: Fair Trade fortnight, Holocaust Memorial Day, World Leprosy Day, Education Sunday and National Nest Box Week.... Love is truly needed by everyone!

naming

Christ

Candlemas

Simeon

Anna

temple

love

Valentine

romance

Matthias

Fairtrade

Fortnight

coffee

bananas

chocolate

justice

poverty

nest box

marriage

wedding

Holocaust

leprosy

education

sunday



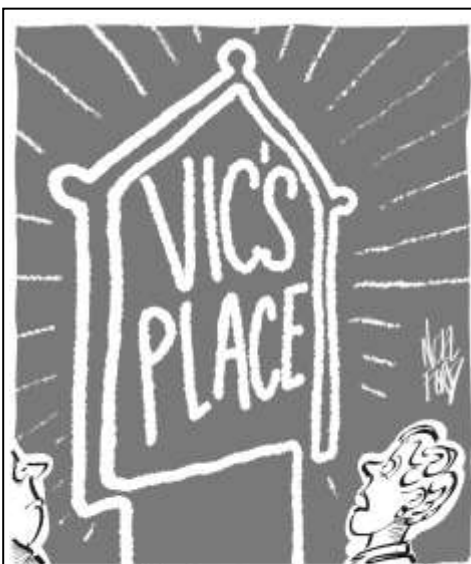
## Sudoku - Easy

	5		9			7	2	3
2		4	3	8			1	
	3		5				6	
		6			9			
5		3	2		4	6		1
			6			5		
	4				8			3
	2			6	3	8		9
3	8	9			5		4	

## Sudoku - Medium

		1		6				8	
8				5				7	2
		9	2	4			3		
	5								
		3	7	1	5	2			
								5	
		8		7	9	5			
2	9				6				8
	3			2		7			

© 2013 KrazyDad.com



"It may well attract more young folk to join the congregation but I still prefer the old church notice board"



...well your sermon on the theme of 'Life under President Trump' seems to have gone down very well, vicar..

## **INFORMATION POINT — ALL ARE WELCOME**

**There are a number of groups working in the church. All are welcome if you fancy contacting the group and being part of what they do.**

**Keith Robson reminds us that the Happy Bodgers are operating once more for help with odd jobs. Keith's contact number is (07866) 325843**

## **AFTER THE CARDS AND VISITORS**

Bereavement is a very difficult time for the spouse/partner left behind.

Starting again on your own is even more difficult.

Carrie and friends would like to help you with the next step.

*Our informal meetings are on the first Wednesday of every month at the Morro Lounge, Richmond Market Place starting at 1.30 p.m.*

Please phone Carrie Stephenson (01748) 850103 if you would welcome any more information. The approach is very informal and relaxed

TELEPHONE SUPPORT IS ALSO AVAILABLE.

Do please get in touch.

## **PASTORAL CARE — A CONTINUING SERVICE**

The St Mary's Church community wishes to do all we can to support, listen and love all in our parish, whether members of our church or not.

We are refreshing the **Prayer Circle**, an email-based anonymous group of church members who commit to pray when specific prayer requests are made, usually for named people. These can be relatives, friends or acquaintances, who may not even live in the area, but who would appreciate confidential prayer. No prayer request is ever too small or trivial. Whatever you wish to share, in confidence, we will support you in prayer.

If you would like prayer (or to be a pray-er), please contact **Anna** via [boycead11@gmail.com](mailto:boycead11@gmail.com)



"All are welcome  
in this place."

## Puzzle Solutions

### Sudoku — Easy

1	5	8	9	4	6	7	2	3
2	6	4	3	8	7	9	1	5
9	3	7	5	1	2	4	6	8
4	1	6	8	5	9	3	7	2
5	9	3	2	7	4	6	8	1
8	7	2	6	3	1	5	9	4
6	4	5	1	9	8	2	3	7
7	2	1	4	6	3	8	5	9
3	8	9	7	2	5	1	4	6

### Sudoku — Medium

3	2	1	9	6	7	4	8	5
8	4	6	5	3	1	9	7	2
5	7	9	2	4	8	3	1	6
7	5	4	6	9	2	8	3	1
6	8	3	7	1	5	2	9	4
9	1	2	4	8	3	6	5	7
4	6	8	1	7	9	5	2	3
2	9	7	3	5	6	1	4	8
1	3	5	8	2	4	7	6	9

### Wordsearch

N	R	S	U	N	D	A	Y	S	I	N	R	C	N
A	O	F	O	R	T	N	I	G	H	T	N	H	U
M	M	A	T	T	H	I	A	S	A	Y	M	R	E
I	A	I	O	L	E	L	M	T	N	N	O	I	P
N	N	R	O	A	H	O	F	T	N	A	A	S	O
G	C	T	T	H	O	L	O	C	A	U	S	T	V
C	E	R	N	E	D	U	C	A	T	I	O	N	E
T	V	A	L	E	N	T	I	N	E	C	L	E	R
W	E	D	D	I	N	G	E	D	M	O	S	S	T
H	L	E	P	R	O	S	Y	L	P	F	E	T	Y
C	M	A	R	R	I	A	G	E	L	F	L	B	T
J	U	S	T	I	C	E	A	M	E	E	O	O	T
C	O	C	H	O	C	O	L	A	T	E	V	X	A
S	M	B	A	N	A	N	A	S	I	M	E	O	N

**Deadline for March '25 edition; Monday 10th February.  
To contribute letters, articles, etc. please contact  
connections.ed24@gmail.com or 07866 033263**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

# TIME TO TRAVEL BACK IN TIME AT RICHMONDSHIRE MUSEUM



Come to Richmondshire Museum and spend time exploring our galleries that are full of the interesting history of the area.

Find us down Ryders Wynd just off King Street roundabout behind The Kings Head.

[www.richmondshiremuseum.org.uk](http://www.richmondshiremuseum.org.uk)

@richmondmuseum



### WARM WELCOME SPACE

FREE • WARM • WELCOMING • SAFE

visit [www.warmwelcomespace.org.uk](http://www.warmwelcomespace.org.uk)

Warm Welcome is now in its third year and continues to provide a safe, warm, comfortable space in Richmond, where visitors are offered free hot drinks and light snacks. Until the end of September we were open on Monday

and Friday mornings from 9.30am to 12.30pm, and from October to March we will be open on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday each week, again from 9.30am to 12.30pm in the Methodist Church Hall.

Volunteers are always needed to welcome visitors, and to provide hot drinks and snacks. This is a wonderful opportunity to serve the local community, so if you feel that you could support this project by volunteering during any of the sessions, it would be good to hear from you.

**To register your interest as a volunteer, please contact Dr John Ridley (Tel: 01748 818653, or by email: [JohnRidley7449@aol.com](mailto:JohnRidley7449@aol.com)). Thank you.**



Telephone: RICHMOND 822205  
8 Rosemary Lane, RICHMOND, Yorks

**S. Hamilton**

Proprietor S. Hamilton  
High Class Family Butcher



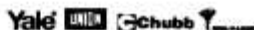
**GEO. MICHIE LTD.**

Wear Security, Hardware, Ironmongery, Safes (Locksmiths)

Mob: 07939 063468

Email: daniel.gill01@yahoo.co.uk

136 Northgate,  
Darlington,  
Co. Durham  
DL1 1RL



**Aerial Photography and Videos**  
Based in Richmond



[www.aerialshots4u.co.uk](http://www.aerialshots4u.co.uk)  
07434678972

**irvings**

sales • lettings



Main sponsors of  
Richmond Fire  
Cricket Club

- Free valuations for rental and sales properties
- Probate valuations
- Free advice and guidance

*A family business located in the heart of town.*

21 Market Place, Richmond, North Yorkshire DL10 4QG

t: 01748 821700 e: [info@irvingsproperty.co.uk](mailto:info@irvingsproperty.co.uk)

52 Richmond Road, Catterick Garrison, North Yorkshire DL9 3JF

t: 01748 883244 e: [catterick@irvingsproperty.co.uk](mailto:catterick@irvingsproperty.co.uk)

[www.irvingsproperty.co.uk](http://www.irvingsproperty.co.uk)



**FAIRTRADE**

Guarantees  
a **better deal**  
for Third World  
Producers

**DOWSE OF RICHMOND LTD**

**REMOVALS - CONTAINERISED STORAGE**

HOME & OFFICE REMOVALS  
LOCAL & NATIONWIDE  
PURPOSE BUILT CONTAINER  
FACILITIES  
PACKING SERVICE  
PERSONAL SERVICE

As an independent local removal  
company we have been providing customers with the very  
highest levels of service over several generations

**TEL: 01748 823393**

52 QUAKER LANE, RICHMOND, NORTH YORKS DL10 4BB



**BEDALE  
COMPUTER  
CENTRE**

IT Services for  
Home and Business

Device Repairs  
Health Checks  
On & Off-site Support  
Hardware/Software Sales & Support  
Remote Fixes  
Tutoring

Custom Built Desktop Computers  
VHS to DVD Transfers  
Cyber Security  
Hosting  
Website Management  
General Advice

2a Bridge Street, Bedale, North Yorkshire, DL8 2AD  
01677 424285 (option 2)

[www.bedalecomputercentre.co.uk](http://www.bedalecomputercentre.co.uk)



Why not let me help  
you to be satisfied  
with your  
garden?

All general gardening  
work undertaken.

Telephone  
07969265906

**G Bilbrough**

**PLUMBING & HEATING**

Installations, Servicing, Gas Repairs

GAS SAFE REGISTER

**Mobile: 07914 336 183**



# John Blenkiron & Sons

## Family Run Local Funeral Directors

Providing a personal and professional service throughout **North Yorkshire** and **County Durham**.

**CHOICE PRE-PAYMENT PLANS**



From *Funeral Partners*

**RICHMOND**

**01748 850033**

**LEYBURN**

**01969 625048**

**CATTERICK**

**01748 529168**

---

Email: [blenkiron.richmond@funeralpartners.co.uk](mailto:blenkiron.richmond@funeralpartners.co.uk)

[www.blenkiron.co.uk](http://www.blenkiron.co.uk)