

CONNECTIONS

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

Dec '24 / Jan '25



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National
Silver Award 2024

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

www.richmondhudswellparish.org.uk

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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

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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
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PCC Secretary	Andra Sisons Ham		andrakrumins@gmail.com

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

As the December days continue to shorten and get colder, we enter the season of Advent and begin to look forward to Christmas. I hope our cover photo is an adequate reflection of the coming of light into the world and a symbol of hope for the future.

In this double issue, once again we have a variety of articles which we hope will be of interest to our readership. We have details of our charity programme for the year ahead, together with information about those we are supporting during December and January. The coming month is always very busy, so a summary of events has been included, together with the welcome news that the Step-free Access project has been completed. John Pritchard tells a story about his time in Canterbury, as well as continuing his series on Bible Pointers; wonders what 2025 might bring; and contributes another 60 Second interview. Jim Jack has unearthed another collection of dates for the two months, some more quirky than others; provides an up-date on the 'doings' of the Friends of St Mary's during the past year, and what is planned for the next 12 months; and also shares a rather different Christmas reading which left quite an impression on Jan and himself. Judith MacLeod came across a lovely Christmas poem; Graham Barber contributes a hilarious recollection of their first Christmas trip to Norway; and Jane Hatcher tells the story of an interesting character associated with Marske. Speaking of Marske, Liz Kluz returns with an account of a welcome 'pit-stop' on the Coast-to-Coast Walk; Linda Drury issues an invitation to join a pilgrimage; and Anna Boyce reviews a book she read recently. All in all, something, we hope, for everyone.

My thanks to the many of you who have already subscribed to Connections for 2025 and have returned your form to the Parish Office. If you haven't already done so, it would be really appreciated if these could be returned before the end of the year, so that we know how many to print in future. If you have mislaid the form, more are available at the back of the Church.

Finally, on behalf of the Editorial team, may I wish you all a very happy Christmas and a New Year full of peace and joy.

John McCormack

**Cover photo by Wendy Pritchard
Christmas lights outside Ripon Cathedral**



Letter from Lorna

December 2024



If there is one certainty this year, it's that the new curate is going to write about New Beginnings in the parish magazine. It is uncertain when she'll stop. It is certain that these new beginnings will run out at some point, but it is uncertain whether that'll be before the end of her tenure in this parish.

This month, I'm throwing something new into the mix – certainty and uncertainty. For the world, this entire year has been a time of uncertainty. Wars have started popping up throughout the Middle East; we've had our election (as have many other countries in the world, including the USA); energy prices have been all over the place; and, understandably, it's a bit of a worrying time. Uncertainty comes in (you guessed it) new beginnings and times of change, and it makes the whole idea of a new beginning rather not fun. We don't know if things are going to turn out well or not. As we come to the ending of this year and the start of a new one, however, looking ahead with optimism is not a move that ignores reality. It is a move that accepts the reality of God's plan in our world, the coming of Jesus Christ, and the hope of his birth and resurrection.

This is the beautiful thing about the Christmas season. Advent is a time of hope for things to come, regardless of what the future may bring, through the wonderful birth of Jesus Christ. Although it may be uncertain how Christmas Day will be spent – whether it's with family, friends, on your own, or on holiday, there is the certainty that Jesus' coming is a renewal of the promise God has made to us. That in our lives we will always be able to depend on the lowly king, born in a stable, come to save us all.

If there is one certainty in our lives, it's that God has us in his hands. It is uncertain what His plan for us is, but it is certain that Jesus is born in our hearts. It is uncertain if we are listening to Him.

Finally, it may be uncertain how dark the darkness can become, but as we look to advent, the Christmas season, and the start of a New Year, it is certain that the light will shine brightly, and the darkness shall not overcome it.

May you be blessed with peace and joy this Christmas.

Lorna



Martin's Message
December 2024



Charitable Giving at St Mary's

Our Harvest Festivals in October reminded us that we are all called to be good stewards of the gifts we have received, and to give generously. This call applies to individuals, families, communities, nations – and to churches.

At St Mary's, our Charitable Giving Programme enables us to support a range of needs locally, nationally and overseas, including mission support. As well as supporting a 'Charity of the Month', we promote Christian Aid Week; the work of the Mothers' Union; the Children's Society (through our Christingle Service); the Royal British Legion; and the Mayor's Charities. We also support emergency appeals launched by the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC).

In October many of you kindly responded to our Charitable Giving Team's request for nominations for the **2025 Charity of the Month programme**. Based on your nominations, the programme proposed by the Team now has PCC approval:

Month	Charity	Local/ National/ Mission
January	Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI)	National
February	Paul Curran Celebration Trust	Local
March	Mothers' Union	Local and National
April	Holy Rood House, Thirsk	Mission
May	Christian Aid	Mission
June	Christians against Poverty	Mission
July	HomeStart Richmond	Local
August	Just the Job	Local
September	Friends of Garget Walker House	Local
October	Liver Cancer UK	National
November	Combat Stress	Local
December	Darlington Women's Refuge	Local

Our website offers further information on the programme and on each charity: [St Marys Church Richmond > Giving > Charitable Giving](#). Throughout 2025, both this Magazine and our weekly Pew Sheet will give details of each month's Charity.

With grateful thanks for your generous support of our charitable giving at St Mary's,

Martin

St Mary's Church Richmond Services/Events December 2024

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| Sun 1 Dec | 4:00 pm - Christingle Service |
| Sat 7 Dec | 7:30 pm - Richmond Choral Society
Winter Concert |
| Sun 8 Dec | 6:30 pm - Advent Carol Service |
| Wed 11 Dec | 7:00 pm - Mayor's Carol Concert |
| Sat 14 Dec | 6:30 pm - Station Singers Concert
"A Popular Christmas" |
| Mon 16 Dec | 7:00 pm - British Army Band Catterick |
| Fri 20 Dec | 9:30 am - Trinity Academy Christmas
Service |
| Sat 21 Dec | 8:30 am - Richmond Town Hall
Coffee Morning |
| Sun 22 Dec | 6:30 pm - Nine Lessons and Carols |
| Christmas Eve | 4:00pm - Grib Service
Children are invited to come along dressed up as angels, shepherds or any other Nativity character. |
| | 11:30pm - Midnight Mass |
| Christmas Day | 8:00am - Holy Communion
10.00am - Christmas Communion |

For more details find us at :

www.richmondhudswellparish.org.uk

CHRISTMAS PRESENT

In a previous parish in Cumbria, **JIM & JAN JACK** heard this modern reading in a Christmas service. The author is unknown, but its inclusion within the traditional John 1 reading left a strong and lasting impression on them both.

*He was in the world, and the world was made through Him,
And the world did not know him.*

He came unto his own, and his own did not receive him

Last night, I couldn't sleep,

Last night, I thought of nothing but today.

Last night I lay awake, longing for day break;

Last night, I thought back to previous birthdays,

Last night, I slept and dreamed;

Last night, I saw myself seated at the head of a long family table;

Last night, I saw myself blowing out the candles on my own birthday cake.

This morning — I cried;

This morning, I saw my family forget me.

This morning, I saw them reading cards they had sent to each other.

This morning, I watched them gleefully open their parcels

This morning, I had breakfast — alone.

This morning, I wasn't asked to my birthday,

This morning, I watched everyone celebrate my birthday without me.

Next year, perhaps they'll remember me,

Next year, perhaps they'll make me the centre of their attention,

Next year, perhaps they will seat me at the head of the family table;

Next year, perhaps I will be satisfied,

Next year, perhaps I'll enjoy my birthday,

Next year, perhaps I'll be very much part of my birthday;

Next year, perhaps I'll find my family celebrating my birthday for my sake.

*And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us,
And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,
full of grace and truth.*

THE CHRISTMAS ROSE

At a time of year when most of our gardens look rather bleak and devoid of colour, one plant at least seems to defy the odds. Quite by accident, **JUDITH MacLEOD** discovered this lovely poem, so appropriate for this time of year.

Recently I was looking for a Christmas poem for the Talking Newspaper, when I came across this lovely poem by Cecil Day-Lewis. The Christmas Rose is one of my favourite flowers. We have some in the garden – pink ones and black ones – which always gladden my heart in the winter months, when most other plants are dormant. The contrast between the large, leathery leaves and the delicate flowers makes them seem all the more special.

The rose described here is a white one, the one colour that I have never managed to grow. Its colour is key in this poem, as the rose becomes a metaphor for a white star, the Star of Bethlehem. The poet invites us to view the rose through his eyes and see the baby Jesus who, although humble, has the power to counter despair. Like the rose, Jesus is born at a cold time of year. We are invited to picture the stable with the cattle and the wise men and are then challenged to think of our world in which



fear and death prevail. Comfort is offered in the vision of the nativity, with the image of the white rose being transferred to Jesus. Cecil Day-Lewis captures the Christian message of hope, with his call to the baby Jesus to transform our lives. I love the last line with its association of the child and the flower.

It is a very accessible poem, which is delightful in its simplicity. The repeated rhyming pattern of ABBA CCDD makes it seem more comforting. The last word in each of the 6 verses reflects the mood – the cheer brought by the flower; the message of rebirth; despair and fear of human destruction and the joy of the light. I hope you like it as much as I do.

Cecil Day-Lewis, of Anglo-Irish descent, was born in 1904 in Ireland and emigrated to England in 1906. He was poet laureate from 1968 until his death in 1972.



The Christmas Rose

*What is the flower that blooms each year
In flowerless days,
Making a little blaze
On the bleak earth, giving my heart some
cheer?*

*Harsh the sky and hard the ground
When the Christmas rose is found.
Look! its white star, low on earth,
Rays a vision of rebirth.*

*Who is the child that's born each year —
His bedding, straw:
His grace, enough to thaw
My wintering life, and melt a world's despair?*

*Harsh the sky and hard the earth
When the Christmas child comes forth.
Look! around a stable throne
Beasts and wise men are at one.*

*What men are we that, year on year,
We Herod-wise
In our cold wits devise
A death of innocents, a rule of fear?*

*Hushed your earth, full-starred your sky
For a new nativity:
Be born in us, relieve our plight,
Christmas child, you rose of light!*

Cecil Day-Lewis

The Christmas rose is known by gardeners as *Helleborus Niger*. Several myths surround it, but one concerns a story about a young shepherdess called Madelon. Legend has it that Madelon was tending her flock one cold night and saw the three wise men of the Nativity pass by carrying their gifts to the baby Jesus. Madelon wept, because she had nothing to give. As her tears fell to the ground, however, an angel parted the snow to reveal a plant with beautiful white flowers – a Christmas rose – and the perfect gift.

Judith MacLeod

ANNOUNCEMENTS



**We have laid to rest those who have died
and give thanks for their lives.**



Margaret Mabel Smith
David Leslie Willey

16th October
18th October

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.*

THE 200 CLUB

Congratulations to our latest Winner:

November — no: 99 — Jeanette Lamour

Still in need of some Christmas cards?



5 for £3.00



or 20 for £10



See Andy Lovell at the back of the church or call him on 07974 766020.

All proceeds go to the Friends of St Mary's.



60 SECOND INTERVIEW

It is always fascinating to read the responses to **John Pritchard's** questions. This month it is the turn of **ROSEMARY BELL**, a long-standing member of our congregation, to be his interviewee.

First memory: Air raid siren, gunfire and exploding bombs

Favourite meal: Roast beef and all the trimmings

Favourite music: Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius*

Pet dislike: Hypocrisy

Best holiday: Touring the West Country in a campervan

Childhood hero: My father

Favourite hobby: Gardening and reading

Luxury on a desert island: Solar-panelled record player and my CDs

Recent TV you've enjoyed: Solar System or anything with Prof Brian Cox

Worst fault: Procrastination

Two best films ever: Amadeus. Bob Marley and the Wailers
(a reminder of my 10 years in the Caribbean)

Favourite drink: Tea

Regret: Not continuing with organ playing

Best recent book: 'The Salt Path' by Raynor Winn

Favourite charity: Great Ormond St. Hospital

Place you feel happiest: Walking in bluebell woods

Three dinner companions: David Attenborough, Judy Dench, Sean Henry

What do you pray for most: World peace

Traditional or new Lord's Prayer: New

Epitaph: 'I dreamt of Gerontius and he took me away.'



John Pritchard

IT'S A DATE — DECEMBER

Well, we've made it to the end of another year after a somewhat misty November. Clearly, December offers us some dates like Christmas Day and Boxing Day, which we are not going to forget. There are some awareness days or weeks, however, which merit attention but are less well known, and some which even seem somewhat quirky — although for me the quirkiest of all come in January. But first, December.

From the point of view of the Christian church, the feast of **St Thomas Becket** (29 December) is given fuller coverage elsewhere in this month's edition, whilst **St Francis Xavier** (3 December), **St Nicholas** (6 December), **St Stephen** (26 December) and Joseph, husband of Mary, have had full coverage in previous editions. Love and care for others in our own community and beyond, however, are given a clear focus in a number of secular 'awarenesses' this month.

At a time of an apparent lack of these qualities currently at international level, the whole month of December every year is earmarked as **Universal Human Rights Month** by the United Nations, with a particular focus on the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** on 10 December (also more recently added, the day for a consideration of **Animal Rights** at international level). This declaration, signed on 10 December 1948, commits nations to recognize all humans as being "born free and equal in dignity and rights", regardless of "nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status". The detail was set out in 30 separate articles, not all supported by all members, but detailing obligations and aspirations still relevant today.

There are calls for awareness of the needs of others at this time of year, as with **National Grief Awareness Week** (2-8 December) and **International Universal Health Coverage Day** (12 Dec). In the UK, another whole month awareness is called for the treatment and eradication of bowel cancer. And gentlemen, for those who have grown a moustache for **November**, you can choose to shave it off or add lower-jaw coverage in support of **Decembeard**.

It will not surprise you to know that the month contains a number of food or seasonal secular appeals. It starts on 1 Dec with **Eat a Red Apple Day** (why particularly red, I'm not sure), followed by **English Breakfast Day** on 2 December.



We could also choose to move on to **National Cookie Day** (4 Dec), another example of infiltration from across the pond perhaps? We are asked to **Celebrate the Spanish dish Gaspacho** (7 Dec), perhaps ending the meal with a nod to **Candy Floss Day** on the same day. Well nourished, you could fast for a day before supporting **Pastry Day** on the 9th, or delay a toast to this festival until the 10th on **National Lager Day**, when beer lovers are invited to explore, taste and appreciate the golden beverage.

Having donned your Christmas jumper on Thursday 12 December (**Christmas Jumper Day**) and logged on to the Save the Children website to find out how else you can support this charity (and even get a free activity pack), you might choose to feast on sausages wrapped in bacon on the same day (yes, folks, believe it or not it's also **Pigs in Blankets Day!**). You may go the whole hog on **Roast Suckling Pig Day** (18 December), and then ease-off in time for Christmas, noting a celebration of our national bird on the shortest day (21 December — **Robin Day**). Talking of the shortest day, its also **Short Girl Appreciation Day**.



Animals get a December look in. You might spot **International Cheetah Day** (4 Dec) if you're quick, **National Llama Day** on the 9th, **National Horse Day** on the 14th, shared with **Monkey Day** and a chance to walk off the festivities on 27th with **Visit a Zoo Day** (it's also **International Day of Epidemic Preparedness** the same day).

Seasonal customs are not forgotten. 3 December is **Make a Gift Day** (make rather than buy) and also **Giving Tuesday**, a suggestion to give away bad buys from Black Friday. 7 December is both **Candle Day** and **Tree-Dressing Day** — encouraging us to make both in an eco-friendly way.



Spreading goodwill and cheer are not forgotten. **Go Carolling Day** is on the 20th and we're encouraged to block the airwaves with **Call-A-Friend Day** on 27th, before celebrating the end of a busy month on **National Champagne Day** (30 Dec). And if you don't like the excesses? Join others of like mind on 21 December. Short of light — and temper? — it's **Bah Humbug day**. Happy Christmas!

Jim Jack

ONCE UPON A TIME ...

As children, we take nursery rhymes at face-value, without realising that there is generally a historical story behind them. **JOHN PRITCHARD** tells us about one such rhyme, and of his own association with it.

Thomas Becket and me

For five fascinating years I held the post of Archdeacon of Canterbury, not the least benefit of which was that we lived in the best clergy house in the Church of England (that's official, obviously). I was also a residentiary canon of the Cathedral, so Wendy and I lived in Chillenden Chambers, a house with twelfth-century origins and a 'modern' wing that was clearly Tudor.



Canterbury Cathedral

In the garden grounds of the house were the thirteenth-century ruins of the monastic refectory, dormitory, kitchen and cellarer's hall. And here we begin to home in on Thomas Becket, whose commemoration day is 29th Dec. I was somewhat alarmed to discover he also had been Archdeacon of Canterbury – just 800 years before me.

Now, the interesting bit is this. The cellarer's hall is the place in a monastery

where visitors would arrive, leave their horses, and be supplied with food and beer. In our cellarer's hall was a mulberry tree, small, ancient and much treasured. It would have been the daughter or granddaughter of the original twelfth-century tree, and was set in the small courtyard of the hall.

Thomas Becket fell foul of Henry II for vigorously defending the legal independence of the Church. The earliest account of Becket's murder tells of the four knights who had heard Henry's famous grumble 'Who will deliver me from this turbulent priest?' arriving at the monastery and leaving their horses by a mulberry tree just a few yards from the cathedral cloisters. Guess where our mulberry tree was?

The knights entered the archbishop's palace which was, again, only a few yards away from the cellarer's hall. They had a furious argument with the archbishop who realised that his time was up and he needed to get into his cathedral. He scooted along the cloisters, closely followed by the knights, who then proceeded to murder him in a very unpleasant way. I won't go into details, but they would have got quite messy in the process. They then returned to their horses by the mulberry tree in the courtyard of the cellarer's hall to make their getaway. But first they had to clean themselves up, and to wash some of the dirt of the murder off their swords and hands.



Thomas Becket Shrine

Now we come to it.

Hence the familiar nursery rhyme, 'Here we go round the mulberry bush.' You remember the words? '*This is the way we wash our hands... (of the blood)*', '*This is the way we clean our teeth (or our swords)*', '*this is the way we put on our clothes (or our cloaks)*', '*...on a cold and frosty morning.*' Which was 29th December 1170. Interestingly, small children might still have found a sword stuck in the ground even in the years 1996-2001, although some said it was plastic and had been placed there by a fraudulent cleric!

It was rather nice to feel we had some purchase on this infamous incident, although I've never had the story independently authenticated. Other accounts of the origin of the rhyme are available, but don't be taken in by them! The earliest account of the murder must be true....

John Pritchard

TIME OF MY LIFE — 3

In this, the concluding episode (for now at least!) of their Norwegian adventures, **GRAHAM & JUDITH BARBER** share their memories of an eventful, and rather different, first Christmas in Norway, coupled with a memorable family occasion

Rent-a-Wreck — Christmas 2002

When our eldest daughter, Julie, married Kristian Berg from Norway in 2000, I was able to say in my speech that we had not only gained a son-in-law but also a splendid new holiday destination. In each of the 24 years since then, we have travelled over there, not only for holidays but also for family celebrations and to look after our grandchildren William and Nicholas – long-distance babysitting when required. Kristian, who as you know, is in the Norwegian army, was a member of the Special Forces and is now an Instructor, while Julie is an accountant.

By Christmas 2002, baby William had arrived and the family had moved to Rena, a town about 100 miles north of Oslo. This is at about the same latitude as Lillihamer, but to the east of the mountains and a bit colder. When they were settled-in, and consequently rather at the last-minute, they invited us all to go over for the Christmas holiday. “You should be able to hire a car from the airport at Oslo Gardermoen” It turned out that we couldn’t, as everything at the airport was booked-out by then.

We were on the point of giving up the idea of a white Christmas, when Julie solved the problem. “I’ve found you a car,” she told us. “Just call this number and



A White Christmas — viewed from a dog-sleigh

ask to speak to Anders. His company is called 'Rent-a-Wreck' and it is right beside the airport". We weren't terribly enthusiastic about the company name, but there seemed no alternative, so I rang him.

Anders was a cheerful and positive sort of chap and he seemed to be expecting my call. He explained that his cars weren't new, but they were perfectly roadworthy and all had winter tyres and good heaters. As there were going to be five of us travelling in it (two other daughters and a boyfriend were to join us), he thought a Ford Sierra Estate would be ideal. Since the Sierra was last produced in 1993, this one was probably over 10 years old, but nevertheless we settled on a price and so we were in business.

A couple of days before we were to set off, Anders rang. In his lilting Norwegian accent, he explained that the company would be closed when we came to pick up the car – "because it's Christmas you know" – but not to worry, he had a plan. The plan went something like this....

"When you come out of the airport arrivals door, you will see the Minibus taxis that take people to their hotels. Just get in one of them and say you want to go to Rent-a-Wreck. They all know where we are. When you arrive at our compound, walk up to the office hut and you will see a safe on the wall with a digital lock. I will send you the code. In the safe there will be envelopes, and one of them will have your name on it. Inside are your car keys; the bay number where your car is; and the insurance form which you must sign and push down the tube sticking through the wall so that it falls onto the floor in the office. Good luck and have a nice Christmas".



**The Rent-a-Wreck Sierra —
once cleared of snow!**

This turn of events was somewhat alarming, but Anders was confident it would work and we were now committed, so off we went. When we walked out of the airport door to find the minibus, we realised just how much it snows in Norway.

It was agreed that we didn't all need to go for the car, so we left the others to guard the cases and Judith and I boarded the first bus and asked for 'Rent-a-Wreck' please. "Ja", said the driver and I crossed his palm with Krone. As we set off, I heard another passenger ask the driver if I'd said 'Rent-a-Wreck' and the

driver confirmed this with another “Ja”. Other passengers then began sharing the conversation amongst themselves and chuckling as we rolled out of the airport.

After dropping off passengers at two or three hotels, we approached a roundabout and turned off on to a small road which had been cleared, but with snow at the sides of the road which was level with the window of the bus, then suddenly, we were there.

We alighted and the bus left immediately, leaving us standing alone in the deep snow and an even deeper silence outside the floodlit compound in the middle of nowhere. We found the hut and there was the safe, so I put in the code ... and the door didn't open. I tried again with the same result. I was then nudged aside and Judith, looking as if she was about to panic, entered the code ... and luckily the door opened. We found our envelope amongst half-a-dozen others, dealt with the form and set off to find Bay 3. Alas, it had clearly snowed quite a bit since Anders had left for the holidays and there were no Bay numbers visible, nor registration numbers. In fact, the cars were only just visible, making it very difficult to identify a Sierra at all.

In the end we found it, having cleared a few number plates, and I tried the door lock. It was frozen, and we had no matches or lighters to warm the key. I went round to the passenger door and that was frozen too. Last resort was the boot door and to our relief it opened, so I was able to climb over the seats to the front and open the door for Judith to get in. It was no warmer inside, but I tried the ignition and miraculously the car started: we were ready to go! The industrial-sized snow-scraper in the boot made short work of clearing the snow, so we collected the others – who had been getting more than a little anxious – and were soon en-route for Rena.



Another view from a dog-sleigh — possibly a better way to travel!

The roads in Norway are mostly single carriageway country roads with a fifty miles per hour speed limit. Fines for exceeding the limits are high and will probably result in a ban. Penalties for drink driving are severe. Snow ploughs clear the roads but, in our experience, salt gritting is rarely evident. Moose are a hazard, as they migrate through the forests and wander across roads and train

lines. To counter this, many country-roads have high metal fencing along both sides, with gaps every few miles where the animals can cross. These places are well-signed in advance and are often illuminated and camera monitored. Garages on these roads are fairly infrequent, but they usually have a shop and provide hot drinks and hot food by way of 'Polse', which are large hot-dog sausages in a wrap – 'lefse' – or a bun, as well as other hot and cold snacks.

We drove north as far as Hamar then turned east to Elverum, where we turned north again onto the road to Rena. Picture a snow-covered road with three lines of tyre tracks, one on the centre line and one on either side. The idea is to drive with the left-hand wheels in the centre of the road to keep away from the deep channels at the side. When something else comes the other way, you have to leave the track and slither past carefully until you can regain the centre line. Happily, there was very little traffic on the road by this time. The temperature had dropped considerably and the trees were bent over the road, laden with snow sparkling in the headlights: it was beautiful. Finally, we reached Rena and took the turning into the forest to find their house. We had anticipated a problem at this point, but Kristian had put lighted tallow candles in the snow along the way to guide us.



Baby William in his 'pulk'

Another daughter had arrived by train with her boyfriend and so the family was all together and we all enjoyed a brilliant and very different Christmas holiday. During the week, temperatures dropped to around minus 20°C and below, but there was no more snow. The sun appeared over the skyline around 10.00am and disappeared around 2.00pm, so outdoor activities were challenging at times, but great fun. We were hopeless novices, but we tried downhill skiing at a ski resort at Trysel and we went Dog-Sledding, which was most enjoyable.

One day we all went cross-country skiing along the forest tracks near the house, then out into a clear open area. Kristian was towing 3-month-old William in an insulated enclosed sled called a 'pulk', and he had a rucksack on his back, from which he produced a small spade. On his instructions Rachel (the youngest) dug a hole in the snow about two feet diameter and two feet deep (without reaching the ground). Some of us collected dead branches and twigs and others found green

twigs, which were then sharpened with a knife from the backpack. Kristian climbed a tree to collect dry moss from the trunk and that went into the snow hole with the firewood. Then from the backpack he produced sausages, buns, ketchup and mustard, a kettle, cups for everyone, coffee and 'Christmas Beer' brewed by Kristian's brother, Olemorten. He lit the fire with a lighter (No – not a flint, nor by rubbing the sticks together) and we spiked the sausages on the green sticks and cooked them. We drank coffee made with melted snow whilst sitting on a bench, which we had cut out of the snow and covered with a strip of groundsheet, also from the backpack. Surprisingly the snow around the fire pit didn't melt and the wood slowly burned away to ash. We backfilled the hole with snow, re-filled the backpack and went home.

In Norway, Christmas dinner happens on Christmas Eve and a typical main course is 'Ribbe' – a particular joint of pork ribs on a grand scale. It is followed by 'Riskrem', a cold rice pudding involving whipped cream and a little sugar, served with a berry sauce. Kristians' parents, brother and sister had come up for Christmas, so it was a big party!



Traditional Pork 'Ribbe'

On Christmas day, William was christened in the large wooden church in Rena, which is an Evangelical Lutheran State Church. The service was in




**Rena Church
Where William was Christened**

Norwegian, but still familiar to us, and the hymn tunes, such as 'Away in a Manger' and 'Hark the Herald Angels sing', were the same. Until 2017 the State Church was funded by the government and its employees were effectively civil servants. Although still funded by the government, and local authorities are still required to maintain or provide places of worship, the Church now runs independently.

All too soon the holiday was over and we set off back to Oslo. The return journey was uneventful, so far as any of us can remember, and we returned the car to the compound. The plan had worked, so 'Well done, Anders'.

Graham Barber



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For more information or help phone 07773 424744
Ask Choir members or the Friends of St Marys Church
trewbyp@gmail.com

STEP-FREE ACCESS PROJECT

After several weeks of work, this major project has been completed, apart from some associated work around the parking area for those with limited mobility. **PETER TREWBY** provides some background and looks forward to the official opening.

For years we have grappled with the inaccessibility of St Mary's Church. The harsh incline leading up from Station Road, followed by 4 steep steps, made it difficult for some and impossible for others to enter the church by the South door. Access from the North door can also be quite hazardous, with a slippery path outside, and very steep and unexpected steps leading straight down. Unaccompanied wheelchairs and mobility scooters had no way of gaining access into the church. We used to put down ramps, but these were demeaning and not entirely safe (a friend's wheelchair flipped over backwards on a similar ramp).

As to funerals, the choreography, if it wasn't so degrading, would be quite comic. The ramps were put out so that anyone in the wheelchair could enter the church, then were deftly removed so the pall bearers could bring the coffin in, and then put out again after the coffin-bearing party had departed. It was humiliating and embarrassing for the affected person and their carers.

With increasing use of the church for concerts and other secular activities, it was distressing that those less able found it difficult to attend. ONS data records 5.9% of Richmondshire residents as being disabled and physically limited. In addition, many army veterans who are disabled through injury, age or infirmity were unable to enjoy the comradeship of the regular Veteran events held in the church. Our ageing demographic, together with the increased use of wheelchairs and mobility scooters and our sensitivity and awareness of the need for inclusivity, made it essential that we addressed this problem of access.

We set out a year ago to address the problem. In conjunction with our architect and focus group, we looked at various plans to improve accessibility. These ranged from a lift from the Station Road path into the church, to a winding path leading round the perimeter of the



graveyard. We settled on a simple C-shaped ramp leading from the station road path and joining a raised platform extension from the south door (see drawing). This in turn would join the path leading round the west end of the church, which would join a small disabled access car park in the Rectory garden. Martin, our Rector, kindly agreed to this plan to release part of his garden as a car park. To date, there has been no suitable disabled-access car park within walking distance of the church, the council car park being unavailable during weekday hours. Much legal discussion was needed between our group and the Diocese who own the land. The car park area needed to be transferred from Diocesan Parsonage to Glebe to PCC. Discussions and negotiations eventually resulted in a satisfactory seven-year lease at £50 per year, with the presumption and hope that this will be renewed in seven years' time.

Most of the past 10 months has been involved in fundraising, for £130,000 was the sum needed. We have been very fortunate in obtaining some major grants, including from the UK shared prosperity fund; lottery funding; and significant grants from the Garfield Weston foundation and the Benefact Trust as well as others. Individual donors have kindly given many and generous contributions. The Friends of St Marys, with their varied and numerous fundraising events, provided the initial £12,000 for a feasibility study, and continue to support the project. We are not quite there and are still looking for money for planting, particularly around the new fence in the Rectory garden; around the rest bench; and the recently installed ancient font, together with the tarmacking of the access path. But thanks to the dedication of Jonny Staley and other contractors, the Church was open again via the south door for Remembrance Sunday. We are



working towards a formal opening after the 10.00am service on Sunday, 15th December by Linda Curran, Deputy Lieutenant of North Yorkshire, who has been so much involved with this and other disability projects in the town. This will follow-on from the Station Singers' concert on the evening of Saturday, 14th December. Their chosen charity this year is the Access for All project, so do support this if you can and do come to the formal opening the following day.

The new curved ramp being tried out for the first time

Peter Trewby

FRIENDS OF ST MARY'S

In terms of events and activities, the last few weeks have been a quiet time for the Friends after a busy summer. The fruits of the work of the organisation, thanks to your tremendous support, however, have been seen with the opening of the Step-Free Access to the church. We were able to pay the majority of the architect's fees to get the project under-way (£8,000) and then offer to underwrite any shortfall of funds needed for all of the work to build and complete the steps, path and car-park to the tune of £10,000, thus enabling the work to start. Happily, this money was not needed as other funding was found — but it does mean the Friends can now underwrite the cost of unforeseen extras (e.g. completion of tarmacking, which the council will fund in due course; additional railings around the platform immediately outside church for extra peace of mind for wheelchair users; and additional lighting of the parking area) for the same amount of money.

These costs, which would otherwise have had to be met from general church resources built from existing income, when the PCC is already short of funds, ensures that improvements to our church environment can still take place. The Friends is a separate charity, whose aims are to support the development of the church. This project is a good illustration of how the fund-raising of the work of the Friends contributes to life at St Mary's for the whole community

The Storm after the Calm – almost

A few things happening this month. As your magazine is arriving in November, a final reminder about advance purchase of **Curry Night tickets (£15, 30th November)** - necessary to get the catering right. There's a Mayfest Fund-Raising Quiz on **7th December** in the Town Hall, which we have decided to support as a community event.

Although the 1st December Blues night had to be cancelled (artist withdrawal), there's a busy weekend later, starting on **14th December** with the **Station Singers Christmas Concert**, which we are staffing. Half of the proceeds are being donated by the Singers to the Step-Free Access project (featured elsewhere in the magazine) and the **Army Band Christmas Concert** on the **16th (7.00 p.m. start)** –full-house expected) with proceeds from donations going to the Church, and bar profits to the Friends — huge generosity once more from the band. **Help will be needed and welcome** for our annual **Christmas Coffee Morning** on **Saturday 21st December** at the Town Hall.



Ring in the New

In terms of fund-raising events, the Friends are putting together an eye-catching and varied programme of events for 2025. We hope you are able to support some or indeed all of them!

Some are familiar and enjoyable. **Dave Tucker** will be running two of his sociable **Quiz Nights** at the Town Hall on **22 March** and **13 September**. The format will be the same as this year, with admission limited to 100 places.



April 24 sees the Friends promoting a **Fashion Show** at the Town Hall, featuring clothes organised by **Larches of Rosemary Lane** in Richmond. Larches have run excellent, well-received events such as this in the past, and we look forward to the return of this type of event to our calendar.

Another new venture will be on **16 May**.

We will be promoting a **Comedy Night**, featuring comedy-writer and award-winning stand-up performer, **Paul Kerensa**. He comes with some brilliant reviews, having written for well-known television comedy series (e.g. 'Miranda', co-writer of 'Not Going Out') and performed to large, appreciative church and community audiences up and down the country. To see this Christian comedian perform live in Richmond, put this unique evening in your diary. Bring your friends.



Then there will be a **Folk Night** in Church on **5 September** with **Edwina Hayes**, promoted jointly by the Friends and Richmond Folk Club. Two Musicality concerts (**21 June** and a date to be finalised **in November**) and a performance by Medieval vocal ensemble **Vox Populi** complete the year's planned musical line-up.

Add in the annual **Plant and Produce Sale** on the August Bank Holiday weekend; the Church **Summer Barbecue** in early July; another **Curry Night** and two Town Hall **Coffee Mornings** and you can see that there is a busy fund-raising programme planned for the year ahead, offering lots of opportunities to take part — and also to help.

Monies raised from all these events will help us to fund improvements which otherwise could not take place, or would divert resources from other essential aspects of the church's work.

Jim Jack

CHARITY OF THE MONTH – DECEMBER



This month we are invited to support the work of the **Church Mission Society** both at home and abroad.

MARTIN FLETCHER elaborates upon what it is seeking to do, but, to find out more, check the website.

Just as we contribute to the mission and ministry of our Diocese through the Parish Share, so we support the mission of the national and worldwide Church to which we belong. Our 2024 Charitable Giving programme has included the mission agencies USPG (United Society Partners in the Gospel) in June and CMS (Church Mission Society) in December. (For details of the work of USPG, please see the June issue of *Connections*, or visit www.uspg.org.uk)

Over the course of its 220-year history, CMS has developed its approach to mission to include these **steps**:

- Pray, trusting that wherever we go, God is already there and already at work. This is humbling, freeing and encouraging – to understand it is not all down to us.
- Pay attention, trying to discover how God is already at work. We take the setting seriously: listening and learning from the local culture, discerning the best way to share the good news of Jesus. This will likely involve a mix of words and action.
- Build genuine, respectful relationships with those more familiar with the way things are in a given place or space, working together to make disciples.
- Learn from what works and what does not, and sharing that learning.

CMS are **people-focused** rather than programme-focused. Everything they do is through people working together. They see change happen: person by person, community by community, by:

- Connecting people with a heart for the edges so they can work together. Often this takes the form of cross-cultural hubs, or pockets of people from Western and non-Western backgrounds teaming up to bring change in a specific edge-based context.



Breakfast Club in a deprived area of Hull

- Training people for ground-breaking, transformational and sustainable mission in the UK and overseas.
- Equipping churches to look around, see what God is doing among people at the edges within their communities, and to join in.

“At the edges” can include church, society – or even our own comfort zones! CMS reaches out to people at the margins and cultural fringes, which are often overlooked or written off. They believe God is already at work in these spaces and their task is to join in. Examples include:

- Catalysing faith-based peace movements in conflict-prone areas of Africa.
- Supporting new Christians in Muslim-majority contexts in the Middle East.
- Creatively sharing the way of Jesus among spiritual, but not religious, seekers in the UK.



Conflict in South Sudan

As we support CMS in December, I invite us to give generously, not only financially but also in prayer. Do explore the CMS website churchmissionsociety.org to find out more.

Martin Fletcher



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). Thank you.

NOTES FROM THE PAST

There are numerous, interesting local characters from times gone by, and this month **JANE HATCHER** tells the story of another one. Sadly, no images of him seem to be available, so you'll just have to use your imagination.

A Quaker in Marske

Among the many religious services listed in the *Darlington and Stockton Times* each week are Quaker Meetings in the Scout Hut in Richmond and in the historic Meeting House in Bainbridge. Once upon a time there were sufficient Quakers in Richmond to have a Meeting House in Friars Wynd, and their burial ground has given us the name of Quaker, or Quakers, Lane.

Reeth Community Primary School was formerly called the Friends' School, because it was established by three Quaker brothers, George, Leonard and John Raw in 1778. It is thought that Leonard Raw also built himself the unusual Gothick-style Goodburn House in Newbiggin.

And it is in Reeth that we first encounter the subject of this article, the somewhat controversial character Michael Fryer, a man undoubtedly gifted, and who was able to mix successfully with people well above his own social status, but who seems also to have had a more dubious side.

Michael Fryer may have had some link with the Fryer family who were hosiers at Paradise in Swaledale. He was born about 1774, probably in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and it seems likely that he was educated at Sedbergh School. This was not one of the Quakers' own educational establishments, but it was in an area with a strong Quaker following. The delightful Brigflats Quaker Meeting House of 1675, a Grade I Listed Building, is only a couple of miles outside the little town of Sedbergh.

It was in Bristol, which was a major centre of Quakerism, that Michael Fryer began his



Brigflats Quaker meeting House, Sedbergh

career as the Secretary and Lecturer to the Literary and Philosophical Society. Here he became known as a distinguished mathematician, who published several maths text books for university students. He seems to have got into debt at some stage in his early life, possibly while he was in Bristol.

Michael Fryer moved to Reeth, perhaps in the late 1790s, and there set up a boys' boarding school which, due to his reputation as a mathematician, met with some success. He was probably hoping further to increase his earnings by using his geometry skills for the benefit of entrepreneurs developing lead mines in Swaledale.

It was as a schoolmaster from Reeth that in 1805 Michael Fryer was admitted to Lennox Lodge, the Richmond lodge of freemasons. His proposer was Joseph Harland, a lead-mine agent living in Marrick, who had been admitted to the Lodge in 1801. This was in the days before the freemasons had their purpose-built premises in Newbiggin, and the 1801 meeting took place at a pub in Rosemary Lane, the *Dainty Davy*, named after the Duke of Cleveland's famous racehorse.

The diary of a Quaker called Charles Fothergill for the year 1805 has been published, and this includes several references to Michael Fryer. The two men attended Quaker Meetings in York together; visited various churches and antiquarian monuments; met Yorkshire celebrities such as distinguished botanists; and also went 'hobnobbing' round various country seats.

Fothergill described Fryer as being tall and stout, and wearing a coat with immense pockets crowded with books, crowned by a helmet-like hat. They drank too much together, and engaged in what might be described as 'smutty' talk about womanising. Fothergill thought Fryer treated his wife in an inconsiderate manner, leaving her behind when he spent so much time away from home on his jaunts. Fryer's wife, Elizabeth, was one of the daughters of Joshua Blakey, a prominent member of Wensleydale Quaker circles around Bainbridge and Countersett.

Elizabeth was presumably no longer on the scene when, about 1814, Michael Fryer got himself appointed as a live-in librarian to John Hutton, the bachelor squire of Marske Hall, who built up a notable collection of fine books. John Hutton had got to know Michael Fryer when he was living in Reeth, and they had exchanged



Marske Hall today

correspondence about books, Fryer addressing the squire in the Quaker manner as 'Dear Friend'. Fryer not only had an outstanding knowledge of what was being published, and perhaps even had another sideline as a book dealer.

The position at Marske Hall must have fulfilled several of Michael Fryer's dreams: he would have social status, would mix with other well-educated gentlemen in Hutton's circle, and would enjoy the benefits of a comfortable lifestyle – 'bed, board and wardrobe' as someone put it. Did he keep up his Quakerism while enjoying this period of his life? We have no way of knowing, although visitors to the squire often noted his presence, for instance at table.

While he was based at Marske, Michael Fryer wrote a book for which he is probably better known than for his mathematical treatises. This was *The Trial and Life of Eugene Aram*, printed in Richmond in 1832. Eugene Aram was a Knaresborough schoolmaster who murdered his friend, an expert on linguistics, and was hanged at York in 1759. Several versions of the story have been published since.



Eugene Aram

All was well with Michael Fryer's expedient position as librarian at Marske Hall until John Hutton died in 1841, and then Michael Fryer's convenient situation came to an end. John's executor, his younger brother Timothy of Clifton Castle near Masham, made sure that Michael Fryer quickly moved out. But he was not totally unceremoniously sent packing, for John Hutton had bequeathed him a pension of 1 guinea a week for life.



The 'Lit & Phil' - Westgate Road,
Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Michael Fryer now moved back to Newcastle-upon Tyne, and became involved with that city's Literary and Philosophical Society, which has a handsome building on Westgate. Its magnificent library still contains several volumes on mathematics, which were in Michael Fryer's extensive personal collection.

Michael Fryer died in Newcastle in 1844, and was afforded a generous obituary in *The Gentleman's Magazine*.

Jane Hatcher

THE NICENE CREED

Fancy a pilgrimage to some sites of great historical and religious significance? If you do, **LINDA DRURY** provides some information about one that is taking place next Spring. For more details, consult the AECA website – www.aeca.org.uk

The year 2025 is a big birthday for the Nicene Creed, that distillation of our faith which we declare at each Communion Service. (The shorter Apostles' Creed is used at Morning prayer.)



The Nicene Creed is the achievement of the early Church Council held at Nicaea in 325 AD, 1700 years ago. In 2025, the Anglican and Eastern Churches Association (AECA) is making a ten-day pilgrimage to Turkey to the sites of the early great Councils of the Church – Nicaea, Constantinople (Istanbul), Chalcedon and Ephesus – and other Christian and ancient sites on the way.

The pilgrimage – 28th April to 7th May – is to be led by the Rt Reverend Lord Richard Chartres, Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Europe, and by His Eminence Bishop Nikitas Loulias, Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain. Father James Buxton, the Anglican Chaplain in Izmir, Turkey will accompany us too.

The cost is £1350 per person in a double room, without flights to Istanbul and home again from Izmir. Details are on the AECA website.

The AECA's Secretary for Pilgrimages, who will be there too, is father Benjamin Drury, son of Mike Drury, for many years an Easby Churchwarden. Ben was educated in Richmond, then Oxford (Worcester College and St. Stephen's). He is



now Chaplain of St. Paul's Anglican Church in central Athens, in Filellinon Street. His main services are on Sunday and Wednesday at 10.30am, and he would be very pleased to see Richmond visitors. Do call, if in Athens: his email is frbenjamindrury@gmail.com.

The pilgrimage is open to all – you do not need to be a member of AECA. Do come, the Spring flowers will be glorious.

BIBLE POINTERS

Continuing his series on aspects of the Bible, **JOHN PRITCHARD** turns his attention this month to the question of who actually wrote it? As he explains, it is far from clear, so let's just heed his concluding advice.

Who wrote the Bible?

This isn't an easy question to answer! The Bible is a complex library of books written over many hundreds of years by many different hands and copied, edited and pulled together at different stages for different purposes. But let's try and break the problem down to some manageable pieces.

1. The Bible covers events roughly in the years 1900 BC to 65 AD. (The early chapters of Genesis aren't attempting to be historical but rather theological). However, the time when the books of the Bible were written is often different from the times of the events they describe.
2. Many of the events of the early years of the Hebrews were probably not written down for hundreds of years. Memories were passed on by word of mouth. They were then written down in an early form but the eventual writing down of the edited version we have today might not have occurred until the Exile and after (586 BC onwards).



The Great Isaiah Scroll from Qumran

3. We can't name the scribes who did this with the Pentateuch (the first five books) or the so-called 'historical books' of the Old Testament (Kings and Chronicles) but sometimes we see the phrase 'Everything else such-and-such a king did is recorded in the History of the Kings of Israel' so we see how earlier writings were used as source material.



4. Some of the Prophets are complex too. You would have thought they were clearly named after particular people but, for instance, Isaiah is usually split into three time periods covering the kingdom of Judah under threat of invasion (chapters 1-39), the period when the Jews were in exile in Babylon (40-55) and the time when they were returning to Jerusalem (55-66). It's likely the authors were different.

5. In the New Testament authorship is still difficult. Mark is the oldest gospel and the author is said by Papias around 120 AD to have listened to Peter and written down his memories. Matthew may have been the tax collector but there are doubts. Luke was the Luke of Acts and Paul's writings. John may have been written by 'the beloved disciple' who may have been John the apostle or it may have been written by a school of disciples of the apostle.

6. The letters attributed to Paul are a mixed bag. He certainly didn't write Hebrews (a completely different style) and there are doubts about a few of the others. He was a prolific writer of letters to his new churches, encouraging and trouble-shooting and doing his theology on the run.

7. Revelation is a one-off and not written by John of the gospel, but by a visionary writing at a time when the early church was coming under severe persecution.

Who actually wrote the books, particularly in the Old Testament, always seems to me to be much less important than what they actually say. It's certainly fun to look up the scholarly opinion (nearly always divided!) but better surely to 'read, mark, learn and inwardly digest.'

John Pritchard

IT'S A DATE — JANUARY

Well, that's Christmas gone for another year and, as we enter the season of Epiphany, **JIM JACK** offers us some more days of note for the first month of the year. Some you may wish to remember, others may offer an opportunity for a New Year's resolution, and some may just make you smile.

Well, I'm back — with a few pages since the last piece to indicate the relentless passage of time. With January being the month whose name emanates from the forward-facing face of the Roman god Janus, a number of organisations claim not just a day but the whole month as a time to raise awareness of — and support for — the cause they represent.

From a church point of view, the biggest event commemorated is probably the **Conversion of Saul** to Christianity, ultimately becoming St Paul. His journey to faith was fully recounted in an earlier edition. In the Christian calendar, **St Basil the Great** is remembered on the 2nd, **St Nathalan** by the Scottish church on the 8th, **St Felix** (14th), **St Anthony** (17th), **St Timothy and St Titus** (26th), and **St Angela Merici** (27th). Multi-faith matters are celebrated on **World Religion Day** (19th), whilst the **Orthodox Churches** celebrate **Christmas** on the 7th.

The organisations which vie for our attention, support and action starting on New Year's Day and running for the month are various. Following some Christmas excesses, there is a focus on having a '**Dry January**', which a number of people heartily support. In the other corner are the gin distillers, who clearly believe we haven't had enough and urge is to drink more of the easily produced spirit in **Ginuary** (tasting, cocktail recipes, trivia, how to make, etc.).



Meanwhile, the promotion of better health after a supposed hearty Christmas is shared among the Vegan Society with **Veganuary**. **Red January** offers a month of activities, challenges, motivational stories, community activity and workouts to promote better mental health through physical activity this month, paralleled by **Walk-your-Dog month** (for more activities for cardio vascular exercise, canine health etc. with daily walks and suitable routes — see also past issues of 'Connections'). Great if you have a dog, OK if you haven't, (as long as you don't go for a walk trailing an empty lead, or a gorilla, behind you and definitely not suitable for budgies!). On a more serious note, female health is the focus of **Cervical Cancer Awareness Month**. And it's also **Mentoring Month**, promoting another valuable support service, often carried out by trained volunteers.

An illness thankfully absent from our shores but still in need of our financial support is **World Leprosy Day** on the 26th.

Food gets its usual awareness days. The Scots will celebrate **National Shortbread Day** (6th), the same day upon which the Irish mark the massive contribution made by women to Christmas festivities on **Nollaig na mBan** — a holiday steeped in folklore. While the day’s traditional aspects continue to be observed in rural parts of Ireland, Nollaig na mBan has also evolved into a broader celebration of women’s empowerment, with events organised in cities and towns to honour the contributions of women to Irish society. It’s a day of female camaraderie, rest, and reflection.

As far as daily awareness is concerned, I’m quite attracted by the **Festival of Sleep** on the 3rd. Food also features with **National Spaghetti Day** (4th), **Bagel Day** — another import – (15th) and **Cheese Lovers Day** (20th). I wonder if our former curate, Rev Paul Sunderland, knows that the 27th is **Chocolate Cake Day**, whilst the growing popularity of the French *petit déjeuner* delicacy, the **Croissant**, gets its own day on the 30th.

And what about those resolutions? Well, there’s **Work Harder Day** (12th), **Clear-Your-Desk Day** (13th), and even a **Ditch-your-New-Year-Resolution Day** (17th). I wonder if resolution slippage partly accounts for **Blue Monday**, statistically the worst day for depression following Christmas’s frenetic whirl. It’s always the third Monday in the month (does working from home make this better or worse?). A nice cuppa is offered to counteract this on **Brew Monday** — the same day (20th).



There is a danger that extremely serious awareness days got lost in this morass— like **International Day of Education** (24th), promoting the need for support throughout the world, **Human-Trafficking Awareness Day** (11th) and **Holocaust Memorial Day** (27th) – remembering not only the millions of Jews affected, but also later genocides in Cambodia, Darfur, Bosnia and Rwanda.

But still the quirky remain — don’t ask me why. **Dress-Up-Your-Pet Day** (14th) **Winnie the Pooh Day** (18th) , **Penguin Awareness Day** (20th) , **Kiss-A-Ginger Day** (12th — but don’t forget to ask first!), **National Hug Day** (21st) and even **Pass Gas Day** (7th). On that rather tasteless note, I think I’d better stop! Roll on February.

Jim Jack



CHARITY OF THE MONTH — JANUARY

2024 marked the 200th anniversary of what we now know as the **Royal National Lifeboat Institution**. **JENN BULLEN** seeks our support to help the organisation continue with its work of Saving Lives at Sea.

I have been involved with the RNLI for over 30 years and was latterly Chair of the Richmond Ladies Committee. Sadly we folded in the early 2020s, as we found it impossible to recruit new young members to the team and the then Committee were all over 80! It is a Charity very dear to my heart, however, being a Sunderland girl from a shipbuilding family and with two sons who sailed.

The Background

Sir William Hillary is credited with founding the National Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck, later renamed the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. After witnessing the destruction of dozens of ships from his home on the Isle of Man, and getting involved in rescue attempts himself, Hillary appealed to the Navy, the government and other 'eminent characters' for help in forming 'a national institution for the preservation of lives and property from shipwreck'. With the support of London MP Thomas Wilson and West India Merchants Chairman George Hibbert, the Institution was founded as a charity on 4th March 1824. The name was changed to RNLI in 1854.

Early Lifesavers

The islands of Britain and Ireland have always been at the mercy of the sea. In the early 19th century, there was an average of 1,800 shipwrecks a year around our coasts, and this danger was an accepted part of life onboard. Coastal communities often watched helplessly as vessels foundered. Rescue services did

exist in some places – there are records of a rescue boat stationed in Liverpool from 1730. In Bamburgh, men from the local castle patrolled the shore on horseback, ready to go to sea in their 'unimmergible' coble –



The oldest surviving lifeboat — *Zetland* — at Redcar in 1802 .
(From RNLI archives)

the first purpose-built lifeboat designed by Lionel Lukin and patented in 1785. A 1789 competition run by a group of businessmen from Tyne and Wear sought designs for rescue boats. One of the entries from William Wouldhave was designed to self-right. Boatbuilder Henry Greathead was asked to build a lifeboat combining the best features of Lukin’s and Wouldhave’s designs and came up with a vessel known as the Original. Within 20 years, he had built more than 30 of these lifeboats and they were saving lives around the UK and its islands from St. Andrews to St Peter Port.

Some Key Facts

The RNLI’s lifeboat crews and lifeguards have saved more than 146,000 lives since the charity’s foundation in 1854.

The biggest single rescue was in 1907 when lifeboats from Cadgwith, Coverack, the Lizard and Porthleven rescued 456 people from the liner Suevic.

The RNLI lifeboat crews continued saving lives at sea throughout both World Wars, and, in 1940, 19 RNLI lifeboats were used to evacuate Allied troops from Dunkirk

The RNLI today

The way in which people use the sea has changed dramatically since the RNLI’s foundation. More people are using the water for leisure, and the lifesaving service the RNLI provides has had to change accordingly.



In 2001 the charity’s lifeguards began patrols on some of the most popular beaches in Dorset and Cornwall, but are now present on 239 beaches around England, Wales and Northern Ireland. They rescue thousands of people every year, as well as providing essential first aid and safety advice.

In 2023, lifeboats were launched 9,192 times from the 238 lifeboat stations around the UK and Ireland, saving 359 lives. 97% of the operational crews are volunteers, on-call 24 hours a day, every day of the year, including Christmas.

The RNLI relies on donations and legacies, with 81% of its income being spent on its life-saving activities. It is an independent charity with no government support — that’s why it needs our help.

Jenn Bullen

WHAT CAN WE HOPE FOR IN 2025?

As the year turns, many people reflect upon their experiences during the past 12 months and think about what might happen in the year to come. **JOHN PRITCHARD** shares a few of his thoughts.

Perhaps it would be more honest to say I'm going to write about what I personally hope for in 2025. I can't answer for you but it's a question worth thinking about, because hope is very much a distinctive Christian gift to a society that easily drifts towards pessimism in a complex and fragile world. In my case this is what I'm hoping for:

Globally

I admit to having been in Eeyore's Gloomy Place over Donald Trump becoming President again. But I do just wonder whether his maverick way of approaching foreign policy might just throw up something unexpected in the paralysis of Ukraine. And maybe even in the Middle East, China and North Korea – although he made catastrophic moves last time. We can hope.



I hope that the momentum of action in response to our global climate emergency might be too strong to resist. Trump's instinct to be a climate change-denier is a real problem, but many US states and much hi-tech innovation just gets on with it anyway. We can hope.

Nationally



By the spring, we should have a ten-year plan for the NHS, which should be a huge improvement on the 'patch-and-spend' approach of the past many years. Amanda can be trusted with the money of course! But money can't just be poured into the gaping mouth of the NHS, because the demand is growing exponentially with our ageing population; dementia and mental health problems; expensive DNA and tech-based treatments etc. Social care must be bound into the ten-year plan; it surely can't be resisted any longer. We can hope.

On immigration, we can hope that a fairer policy will emerge, in which genuine asylum seekers will be treated with care and dignity and exploitative gangs will be

dismantled (a better word than ‘smashed’). We have to set this goal, however, against the backdrop of the inevitability of large-scale movements of populations such as have always occurred throughout history, and now especially with the climate emergency and increased inequality. I don’t know how we square that circle, but we can hope.

The Church of England



We can hope that the Church of England will resolve the running sore of the issue of blessing same-sex partnerships. (We haven’t even got near to same-sex marriage!). The differences in the Church need to be settled, so that the integrity of all is honoured. Legislation is before General Synod, but there are plenty of processes to negotiate so that we can be generous to each other and return to offering the good news of Jesus to a bewildered society. We can hope.

We can hope for the replenishing of holy and effective leadership in the Church. It can’t be long before we’ll be needing a new Bishop of Leeds and a new Archbishop of Canterbury. A flow of talented, God-centred leaders is essential, together with a stronger flow of new ordinands. I was encouraged by the quality of potential ordinands I met at a recent evening in Leeds and on another on-line course, but at present we aren’t replacing the numbers who are retiring. We can hope.

You and me

And what about us? What are we hoping for as 2025 emerges fresh and clean from the airing-cupboard of the future? If we hope for nothing, we’ll probably find nothing. Hope is no guarantee of achievement, but it’s a direction. It isn’t a



state of the world, but it’s a state of the soul. As Christians we approach 2025 with hope, but what we hope for we must pray for, and act for.

John Pritchard

NEWS FROM MARSKE

It must gladden the hearts of those stalwart souls who undertake the Coast-to-Coast Walk to find a welcome place of rest and refreshment at St Edmund's, Marske. Here, **LIZ KLUZ** tell of how The Tuck Shop began, and what it has offered to weary travellers.

Ok, ok, I know it's not Fortnum's, but our little Tuck Shop at St. Edmund's in Marske has gained something of a reputation of its own since 2018, when we decided to try selling a few chocolate bars, crisps and bottles of water to walkers in order to raise much-needed funds for the church restoration.

A welcoming sign inviting visitors into "our peaceful little church", with a price list, was fixed at the bottom of the steps on 1st May and we just waited to see whether anybody would venture up the steps. Folk did indeed come, and during the first week we sold out of goodies twice. The momentum continued throughout the walking season and, by the end of September, we had sold 463 chocolate bars, 115 flapjacks, 167 packets of crisps, 326 cartons of juice and 220 bottles of water!



St Edmund's Church, Marske

But there was more to it than just the income. The Visitors Book was signed by people from far and wide, all of them thanking us for being open; trusting them to pay; and offering a place of peace and reflection, as well as much-needed refreshment. It had become an oasis.

The following year we opened the shop at Easter, as walkers are a hardy bunch, and we added blister-plasters, tissues and wet wipes for those who had forgotten to pack them, or had simply run out. It was a bumper year, with sales of chocolate bars reaching 839.

With the exception of 2020, we have been open for business every year since then and, thanks to the very generous gift of a card reader from the Diocese, our sales increased considerably in 2023/24, so a HUGE thank you to them for believing in us.

This year chocolate bar sales reached 1011 and, with the addition of ankle and knee support bandages and mixed plasters, many limping customers have gone on their way with a smile.

The name Tuck Shop was coined in 2023 when an expectant walker had visited the church in February only to find no snacks. He left a plaintive little note in the book saying “lovely church, but where’s the tuck shop?”

This year we have decided to keep the stall going all year round, as local folk have got used to popping in for a treat and it’s a long way into town if you just fancy a Crunchie!



I must say it has been very rewarding to find out that we’re now in The Coast-to-Coast Handbook. It’s also surprising how many people I’ve met over the last few years who said they’ve visited the Tuck Shop and how welcome it was for a tired, thirsty walker.

The one thing we haven’t been able to provide is a lavatory for walkers, as we don’t have any water in the church, but that is about to change. Plans are being drawn up for a kitchenette and loo inside the church. The money generated by the Tuck Shop will go towards that much-needed facility, putting the smile back on desperate walkers’ faces.

Liz Kluz



MEMORABLE MANUSCRIPTS

Many, many commentaries on the Bible have been written over the years, but this month **ANNA BOYCE** shares her thoughts on a relatively new one, which she found very readable. If it appeals, she is happy to lend you her copy.

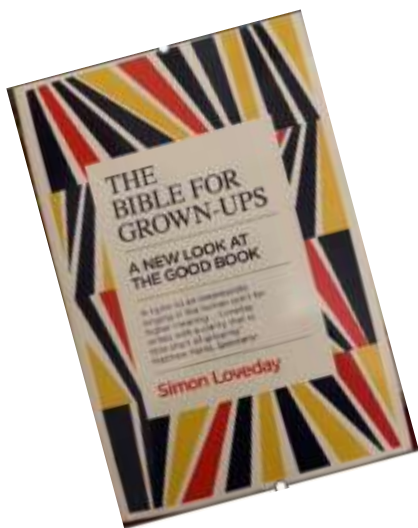
Book: The Bible for Grown Ups

— A New Look at the Good Book

Author: Simon Loveday

Publisher: Icon Books Ltd, 2016

I had recently read this book, when I was asked to write a book review for Connections – it sprang to mind immediately. Why was that? Firstly, it's a well written paperback: it is easy to pick up and read, and just as easy to come back to after a week or so. Secondly, it brings the Bible to life: I'll come to why in a moment.



The book traces by turn the evolution of the Old Testament and New Testament, giving an overview of how the individual books are thought to have been written and by whom, ending with a third part in which we are asked to think about the overarching theme of the Bible through the lens of myth rather than history – “myth looks inwards and has a different standard of truth: its fidelity is to shape, structure and meaning.” An arc of meaning that the author, Loveday, identifies across both Old and New Testaments, is the cycle of fall and deliverance – a fall from the Garden of Eden, and deliverance into the story of Abraham; a fall from the time of the rebuilt

Temple and the colonisation by Rome, and deliverance into the spiritual kingdom of Jesus. Ultimately, the Bible is not a set of rules to follow, but more the setting out of a vision, where “Visions, like compass bearings, are directions not destinations.”

Sadly, Simon Loveday died just after the book's publication: you can still read the

Guardian obituary online, and this is worth doing as it points to a man with a social conscience as well as a lively mind. Given his background in literary criticism, Loveday approaches the Bible from this perspective, with no faith-based axe to grind. His style, however, suggests he loved the writing of the Bible and this is infectious.

In the latter part of the book, Loveday uses his literary critical perspective to interpret three relatively familiar passages to impressive effect. We are introduced to the character development inherent in the pitiful story in 2 Samuel of King David's shabby dealings with Bathsheba and her husband Uriah, and the parable of the lamb told against David by Nathan the prophet. We re-read Luke's story of the Nativity which

“gives us a vision of a new kind of greatness: a woman of equal standing to her husband, a god who comes in peace, a King who stoops to conquer, a Saviour who cares for animals as well as humans. Not bad for nineteen verses!”.

Finally, Loveday spotlights an unexpected aspect of the story of Peter following Jesus to the palace of the High Priest, as recorded in the Gospel of Mark. Peter is often a favourite amongst the disciples; his fallibility means we readily identify with him in his impetuosity and capacity to mess up. Loveday nimbly demonstrates that “the passage breaks new ground”, but I won't spoil what is one of many golden nuggets in the book by telling you why – I'll happily lend you the book to read it for yourself!

Anna Boyce



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those we see no
more.

November 2024

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

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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



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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:

31st January '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

5th December '24 & 9th January '25



WORD SEARCH

Father Christmas is based on St Nicholas, who was born in the 3rd century in the Greek village of Patara, on what is today the southern coast of Turkey. His family were both devout and wealthy, and, when his parents died in an epidemic, Nicholas decided to help people. He gave to the needy, the sick, the suffering, and was made Bishop of Myra while still a young man. As a bishop, he suffered in prison with other bishops under the emperor Diocletian's persecution of Christians.

One story of his generosity explains why, today, we hang Christmas stockings over our mantelpieces. There was a poor family with three daughters who needed dowries if they were to marry, and not be sold into slavery. Nicholas heard of their plight and tossed three bags of gold into their home through an open window – thus saving the girls from a life of misery. The bags of gold landed in stockings or shoes left before the fire to dry. Hence the custom of children hanging out stockings on Christmas Eve, in the hope of attracting presents of their own from St Nicholas. That is why three gold balls, sometimes represented as oranges, are one of the symbols of St Nicholas.

Father
Christmas
Nicholas
Born
Third
Century
Greek
Village
Devout
Wealthy
Needy
Sick
Suffering
Prison
Emperor
Poor
Family
Three



Daughters Stockings Money Stockings

Sudoku - Easy

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

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Sudoku - Medium

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

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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



"All are welcome
in this place."

Puzzle Solutions

Sudoku — Easy

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

Sudoku — Medium

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

Wordsearch



**Deadline for February '25 edition; Monday 13th January.
To contribute letters, articles, etc. please contact
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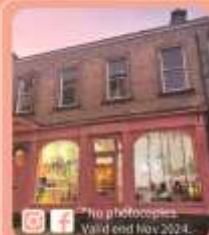
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