

CONNECTIONS



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

June 2024

Price £1.80

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

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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	Jennifer Williamson	(01748) 824365	rev.jenny1@btinternet.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

I seem to have started recent editorials with the hope that there will be some improvement in the weather, but as I write – in early May – I’m still waiting! I suppose it is a bit better, but wouldn’t it be nice to have some consistent sunshine and warmth.

Mind you, I don’t think it was much better 80 years ago, because poor weather caused a delay in the D-Day invasion of Normandy, about which we are thinking this month. One can only imagine the misery of sea-sickness endured by the forces involved, with the prospect of landing on a hostile shore yet to be faced. Some 50 years ago, I can recall a friend telling me of a ferry crossing to Northern Spain in rough seas. Sometime during the night, the porthole in their cabin blew open and water gushed in. The reaction of his wife, who had been suffering for hours, was ‘Thank goodness – the ship’s sinking!’ I imagine many on those Landing Craft must have had a similar feeling and couldn’t wait for their journey to end.

Once again, we have a range of articles in this issue which I hope you will find of interest. Later this month, we shall welcome our new Curate, Lorna Heatley, so John Pritchard conducted a ‘remote interview’ to help us to get to know her better. It will be a pleasure to welcome her to our midst and we look forward to items from her in due course. Apart from a couple of articles related to D-Day, we have historical contributions from Jane Hatcher and Christine Porter; the story of another local business from Jim Jack; and the concluding part of Jan Beeton’s visit to North Korea. Our Treasurer, Paul Carnell, has kindly provided pie-charts of our finances for the early part of the year; Jennifer Williamson reports on the sad demise of a majestic tree in Marske Churchyard; and Wendy Pritchard turns her attention to Foxgloves.

I was very moved by the personal testimonies given by those participating in May’s Morning Worship Service and hope it may be possible to include these in future editions. Perhaps you might like to share your experience of what it means to be a Christian in 2024? If so, I’d be very pleased to hear from you.

My thanks to Jim Jack, once again, for completing the compilation of this issue while Carole and I are seeking some sunshine.

John McCormack

**Cover photo:
British Normandy Memorial — Ver-sur-Mer, France**



Martin's Message

June 2024



Our PCC for 2024-5

At the **Richmond with Hudswell Annual Meeting** on 28th April we elected Peter Trewby and Wendy Pritchard as our **Churchwardens**.

Linda Curran, David Frankton, and Carole McCormack were elected as **PCC members**, beginning a three-year term, and Isobel Short was elected for a two-year term (there having been a vacancy since the 2023 Annual Meeting). They join Saron Digan and Steph Williamson, who were elected last year, and Ann Richardson and Stuart Rowan who were elected in 2022 and will therefore be serving for another year. With Anna Warren who was also elected in 2022 having resigned we still have a vacancy for the coming year. The PCC will be delighted to co-opt Reuben Digan at the July meeting.

Colin Hicks and Susan Welch are our elected Deanery Synod representatives, with two years remaining of their three-year term.

We are grateful to each of them for their willingness to serve in the governance of our church. Do please hold them in your prayers – particularly when they meet (every other month from May). They will also be gathering for an **Away Day** on 26th October to agree our priorities as the parish church of Richmond with Hudswell. Please let any member of the PCC know your views on what these priorities should be. Indeed, as our elected representatives the PCC would love to hear your views on any aspect of church life.

The **Downholme and Marske Annual Meeting** will be taking place on 29th May and the results of the elections will feature in the next issue of *Connections*.

Admission of Children to Communion of before Confirmation

With the General Synod having discussed the question of children receiving communion before confirmation over many years, the first set of guidelines were issued by the House of Bishops in 1996. In June 2006 these guidelines became formal regulations and since then many parishes have adopted this practice. Our PCCs are now considering doing the same.



Our Diocese has recently issued a set of resources to assist parishes wishing to explore this further, see: <https://leeds.anglican.org/how-we-can-help/children-and-youth-work/children-young-people-and-families-resources/admission-to-communion/> If you have any questions, comments or suggestions as we consider this important aspect of nurturing the faith of our children then do please speak to any member of the PCC.

Home Groups for Bible Study and Prayer

Being a member of a small group who meet regularly for Bible study or prayer is a good way to grow in faith. As members get to know each other they learn from each other, encourage one another. Small groups of all shapes and sizes really are the life-blood of a church community.

At St Mary's we are fortunate to have a network of Home Groups – and we need more! Listed below are our current groups: if you would like to join please speak to the group leader or to me – and if you would like to lead, host, join, or start a new group just let me know.



Study groups

Alternate Tuesday afternoons, led by Martin Clarke (resumes in October): Bible study

Alternate Tuesday evenings, led by me (from September): Bible study

Alternate Wednesday evenings, led by Bishop John: Bible study

Monthly on Thursday afternoons, led by Isobel Short: Book Group

Monthly on Tuesday evenings, led by Bishop John: Poetry Group

Prayer group

Weekly on Wednesday evenings, led by Anna Boyce. beginning with a short relaxed Bible study and followed by a time of prayer for the Church, the World, the Benefice, and for each other, our families and friends.

Praying for each other

At St Mary's we have a range of ways to request and give support in prayer:

By asking Martin or Colin to include someone's name in the 'Prayer Requests' section of the Pew Sheet. This section is in two parts, with the first ('special need') used in our public intercessions, and the second ('ongoing') used by the Ministry Team, the Pastoral Care Team and the congregation in our daily private prayers.

By placing a slip in the box next to the Candle Stand in church, beneath Ruth's Window. These are used privately by the Ministry Team during Morning Prayer, and by the Prayer Circle (see below).

By coming forward for prayer ministry for yourself or someone else, after a 10am service. We hope soon to be offering this ministry regularly.

Or by simply contacting Martin, Anna, or a member of the Pastoral Care Team so that we can consider together the most appropriate form of prayer support.

St Mary's Prayer Circle



The Prayer Circle is an email-based anonymous group of church members who commit to pray when specific requests are made, usually for named people. These can be relatives, friends, acquaintances who do not have to live in the area, but would appreciate confidential prayer.

To make a prayer request (or to join the Prayer Circle) please contact Anna.

Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you (1 Peter 5:7, NLT),

Blessings,

Martin



FRIENDS OF ST MARY'S

As Summer approaches, the pace of activities for the Friends starts to hot up! Your support for any of the following much appreciated.

Saturday 15 June: the second of our '**At Home' Coffee mornings**, generously hosted by Anne and Martin Clarke at their home—1 Lawrence Crescent on the Pilmoor Hill estate -between 10.00—12.30. Please bring yourselves and friends. Donations of home baking for sale would be welcome.

Friday 21 June: another splendid night of music ahead with **BLUES IN THE PEWS**—Big Joe Bone the featured artist. See Andy Lovell's poster for details re tickets purchase.

Finally, please remember to plan to get together plants, cuttings, preserves, and prepare for a big bake for the Plant and Produce Sale on **24 August**.

Jim Jack

CHARITY OF THE MONTH—USPG

The Charitable Giving Team, comprising David Frankton, Loo Morton, Colin Hicks and Rev. Martin Fletcher, met at the beginning of 2024 and agreed a list of charities for St Mary's to support on a twelve month rota, alternating between a locally-based, followed by a nationally based charity. It is the turn of USPG, a long-standing national charity to have our support in June. Rev MARTIN FLETCHER gives the background



As many of you already know, I am an advocate both of local churches supporting overseas mission and the mission agencies USPG (United Society Partners in the Gospel) and CMS (Church Mission Society). Just as we contribute to the mission and ministry of our Diocese through the Parish Share, so we support the mission of the worldwide Church to which we belong. And if our support is active and engaged then we ourselves will be enriched: we will receive far more than we give! (As the son of a USPG missionary who worked in Korea (where I was born) I must declare an interest in this Anglican mission agency!)

Overseas mission has changed radically over the years. From being about the “propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts” (hence USPG’s original name when it was founded in 1701: Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG)), mission nowadays is principally about *partnership* - mutual support and enrichment. SPG became USPG (ie *United Society*) in 1965 when it merged with the Universities’ Mission to Central Africa, and in 2016 the name was changed to *United Society Partners in the Gospel*.

USPG’s Vision is for the churches of the Anglican Communion to experience a deeper fellowship together in Christ and be sources of transformation within their communities and beyond.

USPG’s Aims are:

Rethinking Mission : by bringing people from different parts of the global church together in mutually enriching conversation and profound encounters, to increase understanding and deepen our discipleship as inter-cultural Christians.





Energising the Church: by making connections between the Dioceses of Britain and Ireland and those overseas, seeking ways in which faith and action can go hand-in-hand. We also look to strengthen the unity and capacity of the Anglican Church by promoting education and leadership and by learning from each other in rich exchange.

Championing Justice: by accompanying churches of the Anglican Communion in their struggles against injustices associated with gender, climate change, migration, the human rights of indigenous people and inter-religious living. We support Christians across the world to form communities of hope and resistance and we strive to give a platform to the faithful among those with power in the secular world.



As we support USPG in June I invite us to give generously not only in financial terms but also in prayer and of our time. Do explore the USPG website www.uspg.org.uk – and be enriched in the process!

Martin



St Mary's Mothers' Union
would like to thank all those who generously gave to the
March Charity of the Month,
resulting in £254 being raised.

This has enabled the branch to support the current appeals (Make a Mother's Day and Summer of Hope) from Mary Sumner House.

We are also grateful for the support you gave to the bake stall and hope to have another one in the future, so please look out for a date.

Our introduction to the charity raised a lot of interest and some prospective new members, which is very encouraging - more news soon.

With best wishes, thanks and continuing prayers,

Susan, Christine and Margaret.

P.S. Margaret Clayson would like to invite you to tea /coffee and cake on Thursday June 27th, at 5 The Convent , Reeth Road .10:00am till noon and/ or 1:00pm to 4:00pm. Voluntary donations **for church funds**



60 SECOND INTERVIEW

Later this month, we shall be joined by our new Curate, **LORNA HEATLEY**, so, to help us to get to know her better, **John Pritchard** invited her to answer, remotely, his customary 20 questions.

First memory? Throwing a tantrum in the car, because my mum wasn't letting me go to school with my brother (something I regretted, when I eventually went to school).

Favourite meal? Pasta Carbonara – homemade, restaurant made, found in a bin – I will eat it.



Favourite music or musician? *My Chemical Romance*, as I will always be an emo at heart.

Pet dislike? People who spell/get my name wrong in an email. I get why people get it wrong in person – it's a fairly unusual name – but my name is literally in my email. They have to physically type my name correctly to send me an email.

Best holiday? Scotland, where I go every year. But as a one-off holiday, Denver 2016, where I approached a male elk in rutting season, because I thought it was a robot.

Childhood hero? My dad has asked me to say it was him, but it was actually Jeremy Paxman.



Favourite hobby? Hiking.

Luxury on Desert Island? A Kindle with 4g connection (and unlimited charge, if we're playing that game).

Recent TV you've enjoyed? *Psych*, a hyper-perceptive man pretends to be a psychic to help solve crimes. Shenanigans ensue.

Worst fault? Aha! You won't get me that easily. But also, I am a chronic over-thinker, who doesn't know how to use apostrophes properly.



2 best films ever? *Spiderman: Into the SpiderVerse* (that animation is perfection) and *Hunt for the Wilderpeople* (heartwarming, sad, funny, set in New Zealand)

Favourite drink? Any fruity cider on any warm day.

Regret? Unironically, watching *Cats* (2019). Relationships can be repaired; experiences can still be had; but I will never get that two hours of my life back. The biggest regret is essentially any time wasted.

Best recent book? *The Last Devil to Die* by Richard Osman. Shout out to that guy for making it so I had to pull over whilst listening to it on Audiobook whilst driving, because I couldn't see the road through my tears.

Favourite charity? Guide Dogs. Helping out those in need whilst getting monthly pictures of puppies? The dream.



Place you feel happiest? Up a mountain – any mountain. Probably not Everest, so up a reasonable mountain.

Three dinner companions? Living – Bernie Sanders, Graham Norton, Hannah Waddingham. Historical – Jesus (for the guidance, but also for the wine), Emmeline Pankhurst, Hedy Lamarr

What do you pray for most? Guidance – for myself; for those around me; for the world.

Traditional or new Lord's Prayer? Traditional (I am sustained by 'thees, thys and thous')

Epitaph? "Do you think, now she's dead, she'll finally stop talking?"

John Pritchard

GOOD NEWS FLASH!

What a great idea!

Good to see the newly formed Richmond CIC fostering positive community spirit.

Who could you nominate?



THE LONGEST DAY

As we have the Green Howards Chapel at St Mary's, it seems appropriate to remember the regiment's involvement in D-DAY. **STEVE ERSKINE** — the Researcher at the Green Howards Museum — has kindly provided the article below.

As the anniversary of D-day is upon us, we remember those tumultuous events and reflect on the nature of bravery and sacrifice. The landings were successful for several reasons, not least the willingness of ordinary men and women to do 'their bit'. Thomas Henry Lovegrove is not a name you will know, but you should. Thomas Lovegrove, the son of a Salvation Army officer, was born on December 14, 1908. He himself worked with the Salvation Army before becoming a Baptist Minister: clearly working in the service of others was ingrained in him. In 1941 he volunteered to become an army chaplain and, after a period of home service, he was posted to the 8th Army, then fighting in North Africa.



**Captain & Padre
T H Lovegrove**

In 1943 he was posted to the 6th Battalion, The Green Howards, then in the midst of the campaign in Sicily. Alarming, but indicative of the 'front-line' role of the Army Chaplain, his predecessor had been killed. He returned to the UK with the battalion in November 1943 and began the preparation for the Normandy landings. He described his role as being: ***"The one person with time to be a confidante and Counsellor. To share the family concerns, the fears and hopes of all concerned."***

On Sunday 4 June, Rev. Lovegrove conducted a service aboard ship. Much liked by the men of the battalion, he had blotted his copybook some weeks before when, during an exercise at sea, he had chosen as his text ***'The hour has now come....'*** Many thought the Reverend had chosen a subtle way to tell them that they were on their way to France.

On 6 June, Rev. Lovegrove landed immediately behind the assault wave of the 6th Battalion on Gold Beach, resplendent in Battle Dress, clerical collar, and full pack, but no gun. He recounted how, having landed, they had to wait for the Royal Engineers to cut a gap through the barbed wire and other beach obstacles. He remembered ***'At first light I recall vividly how the sea was full of ships of all kinds and overhead the planes were bombing and the naval bombardment was in progress ...'***

'One's first impression on landing was the narrowness of the Beach. We had to lay flat whilst the Engineers were busy clearing the barbed wire and beach obstacles that impeded movement. On the left of Gold Beach, 'A' Company were pinned down under the Sea Wall, whilst on the right 'D' Company were faced with a Pill Box at the end of a trench within twenty yards of where they had advanced and were immediately under fire from the Pill Box.'

It was at this moment that he also witnessed Company Sergeant Major Stanley Hollis, single-handedly attack a pillbox, which was part of a major German gun complex named the Fleury Battery. In doing so he captured a number of the enemy and potentially saved his men from sustaining severe casualties. This was the first action that day undertaken by Hollis that would ultimately lead to the award of Britain's highest award for gallantry, the Victoria Cross, the only man to be awarded this honour during the landings.



Reverse of Hollis VC

On the beach, Rev. Lovegrove found himself sharing cover with a young Lieutenant who, the Reverend noted, was 'feeling the strain.' The young officer turned to Lovegrove and said, ***"It's alright for you Reverend, you have faith, but many of us have none and it's hell."*** It was an encounter Rev. Lovegrove never forgot.

Clearly a resourceful man, Rev. Lovegrove managed to get hold of a 500cc

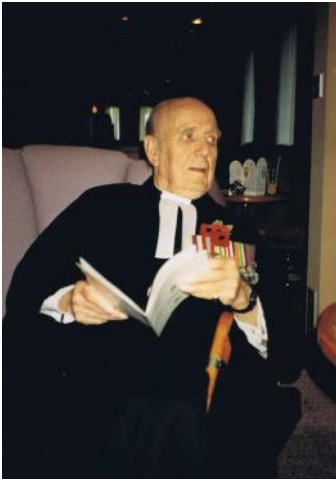
Norton motorcycle and rode around looking for wounded which, once gathered, he then took back for medical treatment: he was very aware of his role as the main link between the wounded in the front-line and medical help further back. In between helping the wounded and avoiding German fire, he conducted many battlefield funerals, often digging the graves himself. It is due to his diligence that so many men have graves and are listed, in Kipling's famous phrase, as simply *'Known unto God'*. Many times, Rev. Lovegrove would meet with those about to go on patrol and, as he recalled, he would say *'a wee prayer if required, but always a silent one.'*

Later on D-Day at the village of Crepon, CSM Hollis was ordered to investigate reports of a German Artillery piece firing from behind a farmhouse at the south of the village. Hollis found the gun and, with two men, crawled forward to attack it. Alerted to the presence of Hollis, the German gun crew opened fire with everything they had. Hollis managed to make it back to safety, but soon realised that his two companions were trapped under fire. Without any regard to his own safety, he charged back into the fight, drew the fire of the Germans onto himself, buying time for the other two men to get clear. Later in the campaign, from 17 June onwards, during the fighting for Point 113 south of Lingraye, Rev. Lovegrove was working at a Regimental Aid Station when he saw CSM Hollis arrive with two lightly wounded lads, German snipers having been taking a heavy toll. The wounded were taken in and, as Rev. Lovegrove approached Hollis, he was taken aback when the CSM broke down in tears and fell into his embrace. Lovegrove was astonished to see such a *"strong man in tears, weeping for his men who were being killed by a hidden enemy."*



CSM Stanley Hollis (centre) at his investiture

We are used to reading of the exploits of Hollis, but this small picture adds further gloss to his reputation for bravery and fortitude, tempered with humanity.



Padre Lovegrove in later life

In later years, Lovegrove reflected: *“I counted it a privilege to have been part of that great venture, and to have served with men, mainly from the north country – Yorkshire, Northumberland – who were so very brave. Many had endured long years in the desert and there they were on the threshold of the great move into Europe.”*

As we mark the anniversary of such great events, we recall all those who were there, some with only faith to shield them.

If you have been moved or intrigued by this story, The Green Howards Museum Exhibition **D-Day '80** covers a multitude of such personal stories from 6th June 1944 and subsequent days. The exhibition can be visited between 10am-4.30pm, Monday-Saturday. Museum entry is £8 per adult, £5 for ages 10-16, free for under-10s, tickets are valid for 12 months.

Steve Erskine

**‘Early Medieval Monasticism’
Dr Christine Maddern
and ‘Fountains Abbey:
Life in a Cistercian Community’
Dr John Ridley**

**Talks for Christian Aid
Richmond Methodist Church
Friday 7th June at 7.00pm
Admission £5 (refreshments)**

christian
aid

A PERSONAL MEMORY

Many people have treasured mementoes from their family's past. Thinking about D-Day prompted **JOHN McCORMACK** to look more closely at his father's war service

Being in his mid-30's, my Dad wasn't called up until 1942. He opted for the Navy and was sent to HMS Royal Arthur – a rather grandiose title for Butlins Holiday Camp at Skegness, which had been requisitioned as a Naval Training Establishment, or 'stone frigate'. After completing his training – as an Electrical Artificer – he was assigned to Combined Operations and the 11th Landing Craft Flotilla – or 'Fred Karno's Navy' as he called it – which, at that time, was based on the west coast of Scotland.



Dad in 1944

As children in the 50's, I can remember my brother, sister and I often asking him to 'Tell us about the war, Dad', but, like so many of his generation, he never did – apart from the occasional funny story or incredible event. I do remember, however, that he used to really enjoy *'The Navy Lark'* – a radio comedy programme with Leslie Phillips and Kenneth Williams on the then BBC Home Service. He'd really chortle at catch-phrases like *'Left-hand down a bit'*, saying it was just like 'his lot' and that there wasn't a harbour on the West coast that hadn't suffered as a result of the flotilla's attentions.

It wasn't until he had passed away many years later, that I came across his pocket-book diaries for the war years and was able to gain some insight into his experiences. The entries are cryptic – *'Working'*, *'At sea'*, *'Rough'*, *'Make do and mend'*, *'On 347. Rudder job'* etc. Even the day he nearly drowned – 15th December 1942, when the boom broke while transferring to a battleship in Scapa Flow anchorage – only merited the entry *'Fell off boom into drink'*.

Through the Spring of 1943, his flotilla seemed to have moved to the south coast – Southampton, Plymouth and Saltash being mentioned, before leaving Plymouth on 29th April. At the end of that month, a slightly longer entry – *'The burning question is when will I see home again?'*. 9 days later, however, *'Arrived Gib. What a change to see no black-out. Bought some oranges and bananas.'* Then 12th April – *'Arrived Algiers. Hot reception.'* Stops at various North African ports

are then mentioned, before 13th June – ‘Arrived Valetta, Malta’. Seven days later he was back in Tripoli and seemed to spend much of July and August ‘Working’ and ‘Bathing’ there, before sailing with the US Navy for Sicily in late-September. The month finished with ‘Large query. Are we going home? Plenty buzzes’, but it wasn’t until the end of October, and another stop in Algiers, that he sailed again for Gibraltar.

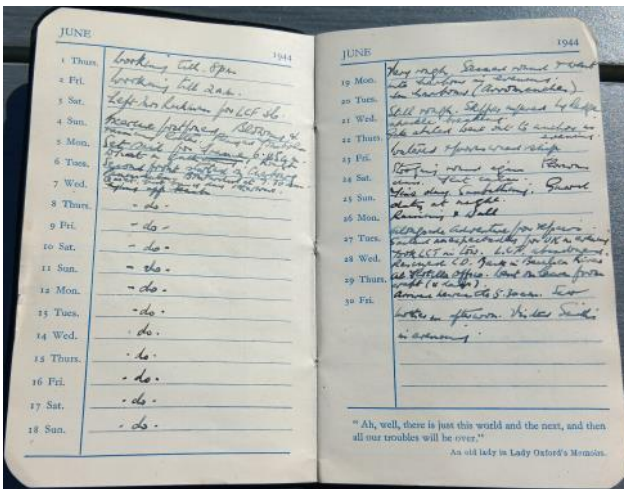


Combined Forces Insignia

Having left Gibraltar on 5th November, he sounded very relieved to have reached Falmouth 10 days later. The entries change from ‘Fine. Slight swell’ and ‘Somewhat choppy’ to ‘Started to blow up during night’, ‘Rough’, ‘Rougher than that. Shipping water’. What a relief it must have been to record ‘Still rough. Calmed down in evening. Sighted Bishop’s Light. Survivors!?’ I do remember him mentioning, years later, that nightmare crossing of the Bay of Biscay in a Force 9 gale. Landing Craft weren’t designed for rough seas — they were flat-bottomed, shallow draught, and open-decked — so some didn't make it home: he was one of the lucky ones.

The latter part of 1943 seems to have been spent at Combined Forces training establishments in Ipswich and Boston – HMS Woolverston and Arbella respectively – before being transferred back to the Clyde in early 1944. It wasn’t long, however, before they sailed south to Poole – HMS Turtle – where he was promoted to Petty Officer in late March. Preparations for D-Day were clearly well underway, and I can

recall him once mentioning that he could have walked across Poole Harbour without getting his feet wet. It wasn’t until years later, when living in Dorset and visiting Poole – the second largest natural harbour in the world – that I appreciated just how many craft must have been gathered there.



Diary for June 1944

On 3rd June, he boarded LCF 36 – a landing craft converted to a Flak ship – but the entry for 4th June is *‘Exercise postponed’*. Did they realise, I wonder, that this was ‘the real thing’? On 5th June, however, it reads *‘Set sail for France 6.45am. What a gathering! Rough’*. On 6th itself, he records *‘Bombarded at 7.30am. Quiet, but busy day otherwise’*, which I find difficult to believe, considering what must have been going on all around him. Then, for the next 11 days, it is just *‘Lying off beach’* with ditto marks, presumably as part of the defensive line providing cover for the landings, before being driven into Arromanches harbour by bad weather on 20th June.

Apart from shuttling back and forth across the Channel a couple of times and ending up in Ostend – *‘Unloading. Ashore. Pretty grim.’* – nothing much of any significance (apart from news of my arrival!) seems to have happened in the rest of the year, nor, with the exception of VE Day on 8th May, was 1945 much different. Lots of days are simply recorded as *‘Working’*, with *‘Pictures’* seemingly alternating with *‘Duty’* in the evenings. The impression given is of a lot of ‘hanging-around’ waiting to be de-mobbed, which eventually happened on 20th November.



Medal ribbon from Dad's Uniform

1939-1945 Star, Atlantic Star (with Rosette for 6 months' service afloat), Italy Star

Dad never considered himself as anything special and certainly not heroic: in his eyes he was ‘just an ordinary bloke doing his bit’. He never said anything about the horrors of war: of dangers experienced; friends and comrades hurt or lost; and death and destruction witnessed. To all intents and purposes, he survived the war unscathed and returned to his pre-war career in insurance until he retired 30 years later. Two things, however, stick in my mind. One day in the late-50’s, while driving home from a family-day-out at the seaside, we ran into a thunderstorm. With a blackening sky, every time there was flash of lightning he would flinch and duck down at the wheel – a legacy, I’m sure, of those days spent off the Normandy beaches. And the second thing? He never missed a Remembrance Day Service at the local Cenotaph.

John McCormack

In Loving Memory
Charles Laing McCormack
1908 – 1974

NOTES FROM OUR PAST

Often **JANE HATCHER's** articles reveal the history behind some of our local buildings, places or events, but this month she is focussing on someone who can probably best be described as a 'local character' from times gone by.

An Awkward Customer

In the 'media' we have recently been hearing much of struggling high streets. But we are relatively fortunate in Richmond in still having some very successful independent shops, some of which are being featured in *Connections*.

One of our thriving independent shops is Ken Warne's, on the 'High Row' of the Market Place. Although that name has only been on the shop fascia since 1992, the premises have been used as a grocer's for well over 100 years. There may still be people who remember it as Jopling's in the 1980s, or perhaps even as Wrelton's in the 1950s. During World War II the first floor above the shop was used as the Government's Food Office, from which food rationing was organised. And going back further, during World War I, it had become Singleton's 'high-class' grocery shop.



But I am going to relate a story which has nothing to do with high class groceries. It is about a Richmond scallywag known as "Dirty Willy Dixon". His unkempt appearance led to the first part of the nickname, but he should have been anything but dirty as he came of a good family.

Willy's father, John Dixon, was the brother of William Dixon, who held the post of Town Clerk of Richmond from 1754 until he died in 1761. William Dixon, who of course was highly respectable, was unmarried, and it seems likely that his nephew had been named after him. But Willy did not have a job to earn his living, instead he lived 'on his wits', scrounging money from his relatives, mainly to spend on drink and certainly not on clothes.

What is now Warne's was one of the several properties owned by this William

Dixon, and he leased “Warne’s” to one of his unmarried sisters, Faith, who was thus Willy’s aunt. Faith Dixon was also a highly respected Richmond personage. She used the ground floor of the premises as a draper’s shop, and lived upstairs, above the shop. But she had her own private front door in the passage which still exists at the side of the shop.

It was through this door that Willy repeatedly tried to gain access, in order to demand money for his drinking from his aunt. She, understandably, did not wish to encourage his liking for drink, which was responsible for much of his bad behaviour. Indeed, it was known throughout Richmond that Willy’s behaviour would become disgusting when he was “in drink”.

How do we know of his escapades? Well, we know many salacious details of life in Richmond in late Georgian times through the notes made by an upholsterer called James Arrowsmith (1776-c1850), who lived at the corner of Millgate and the Market Place, which I hope by the time this reaches print is still Barclays Bank.



Arrowsmith says that this sketched portrait ‘is an excellent representation of Willy’s face, figure and dress’. He further recorded that it had been made by ‘Mr George Cuitt junior’. The younger George Cuitt (1779-1854) was born in Richmond, the only son of the Richmond artist George Cuitt (1743-1818) – the two spelled their names differently! A large and richly-illustrated biography on the younger Cuitt was published in 2022.

Arrowsmith had purchased a copy of Christopher Clarkson’s definitive tome, *The History of Richmond*, published in 1821. Quality books in those days were sold as loose sheets in a box, in order for people to have the book bound in their chosen style to match their library. Arrowsmith took the opportunity to have his copy bound with blank sheets interleaved between those of Clarkson’s text, and on

these he wrote copious annotations. Amazingly, Arrowsmith's highly idiosyncratic copy of Clarkson's *History* has not only survived, but become part of the collection of rare books in York Minster Library.

Many of Arrowsmith's annotations consist of local gossip, such as the misdemeanours of Dirty Willy Dixon. In addition, Arrowsmith included amongst his interleaved pages a sketch of the disreputable Willy, to show his figure and dress. Arrowsmith had a personal link with the unfortunate happenings which occurred above "Warne's", for he had himself been apprenticed to Miss Faith Dixon to learn his upholstery skills.

Arrowsmith relates that the following anecdote occurred when Willy was a middle-aged man. He writes that Faith Dixon, having heard that on this particular Saturday, market day, Willy was as usual 'upon the roam', as Arrowsmith calls it. Miss Dixon, therefore, instructed her maid to lock the front door, so that Willy could not walk in.

Willy, however, bided his time, and in due course the maid needed to fetch more coal for the fire, leaving the door unlocked while she re-filled the bucket. Willy saw his chance, sneaked in and climbed up to the drawing room, which Arrowsmith describes as running the full width of the front of the building.



Now Willy demanded a shilling for his beer money from his elderly aunt, who of course refused him, and an argument followed. Willy now resorted to blackmail. Seeing a dish of butter on the cloth-covered side-table, he picked up a large handful of butter in each hand, and stuffed it into the pockets in the top of his waistcoat. Then he went and stood on the hearth stone, so that the heat of the fire would melt the butter. Being so unkempt, he did not mind it running down his clothes, but his aunt was horrified to see it running

over his shoes, and dripping down onto her floor. Reluctantly she capitulated, and Willy headed off to one of Richmond's many pubs!

What became of "Dirty Willy Dixon", you might ask? Well, surprising as it may seem, late in life Willy decided that he'd been missing out on his home comforts, so he decided he now ought to wed. And so he did, and he and his wife produced several children. Did she manage to clean and tidy him up? Unfortunately, Arrowsmith does not say!

Jane Hatcher

FOR ALL THE SAINTS

I suspect few people have ever heard of Saint Thurstan, but, earlier this year, some research confirmed that he was indeed a lost Saint with local associations. **CHRISTINE PORTER** tells his story.

If you approach Northallerton on the Darlington road, there is an unremarkable small monument by the road, 2 miles from town, commemorating the Battle of the Standard on 22 August 1138. Continuing over the level crossing towards the town centre, the first pub on the left is *The Standard*, with an intriguing sign depicting this medieval battle. The sign shows a cart with a ship's mast, from which hang the banners of Saint Peter of York, Saint John of Beverley and Saint Wilfrid of Ripon.



The battle was the biggest on British soil following the Battle of Hastings in 1066 and involved English forces fighting for King Stephen and defeating the Scottish invaders, who were backing King David 1 of Scotland's claim to the throne. The person who had mustered the English army and had created the standard on the cart was one of the most influential figures in medieval England: Thurstan, Archbishop of York. It was also Thurstan who, later in 1138, negotiated a truce at Roxburgh between England and Scotland.

Thurstan was born in Bayeux, Normandy, around 1070, the year that William the Conqueror laid waste to northern England in the so-called harrying of the north, killing tens of thousands of people in what some have described as a genocide. Thurstan was the son of a priest, and the family moved to London when his father was appointed as a canon of St Paul's.



Thurstan became a royal clerk to William II, then to his brother Henry I, also serving as almoner to Henry. Early in his career, Thurstan visited Cluny and vowed to become a Cluniac monk later in his life. In August 1114 Henry appointed Thurstan as Archbishop of York. He was ordained a deacon in December 1114 and ordained a priest on 6 June 1115 by the Bishop of Durham.

Since 1070, however, there had been a long-

running dispute between York and Canterbury, whose churchmen believed they should be supreme in England. Perhaps Henry had hoped that Thurstan's rapid elevation would resolve the dispute. But Thurstan refused to make a formal profession of obedience to the Archbishop of Canterbury Ralph d'Escures, and the Archbishop of Canterbury refused to consecrate Thurstan unless he professed obedience to the southern see.

Thurstan refused to make such a profession, and asked the king for permission to go to Rome to consult Pope Paschal II. Henry refused to allow him to make the journey, but even without a personal appeal from Thurstan, Paschal decided against Canterbury. At the Council of Salisbury in 1116, Henry ordered Thurstan to submit to Canterbury, but instead Thurstan publicly resigned as Archbishop. On his way to the council, Thurstan had received letters from Pope Paschal that supported York and commanded that he should be consecrated without submitting to Canterbury. Similar letters had gone from the Pope to the Archbishop of Canterbury, ordering him to consecrate Thurstan. After the news of the letters became public, Thurstan's resignation was ignored, and he continued to be considered the Archbishop-elect.

Over the next three years, the new popes, Gelsius II and Calixtus II, championed Thurstan's case, and on 19 October 1119 Calixtus consecrated Thurstan at Reims. Calixtus had earlier promised Henry that he would not consecrate Thurstan without the king's permission, which had still not been granted. Enraged at this, the king refused to allow the newly consecrated archbishop to enter England, and Thurstan remained for some time on the continent in the company of the Pope. Eventually, Thurstan's friends managed to reconcile Thurstan with Henry, and Thurstan was recalled to England in early 1121.

During his time as Archbishop of York, Thurstan gave land to many churches in his diocese and founded several religious houses, including the first nunnery in Yorkshire when he founded St Clement's between 1125 and 1133. He obtained a papal privilege of protection for Whitby Abbey, as well as giving his own privilege to the Abbey. He also



Fountains Abbey

helped to found the Cistercian Fountains Abbey, by giving the site to monks who had been expelled from the Abbey of St Mary's, York. He was a patron to the Augustinian Hexham Priory, founded by his predecessor at York, as well as helping the foundation of Bridlington Priory, another Augustinian house.

Shortly before his death on 6 February 1140, Thurstan resigned from his See and took the habit of a Cluniac monk at Pontefract Abbey, where eventually he was buried. And there the record of Archbishop Thurstan's outstanding achievements ended ... until earlier this year.



**Carving in
Ripon Cathedral**

On 3 February 2024 *The Guardian* carried this story — “Unambiguous proof’: medieval archbishop revealed as lost English saint”. Michael Carter, a senior historian for English Heritage made the discovery during research at King’s College, Cambridge. He was going through a 15th century service book from Pontefract Priory, where he found a long-overlooked entry recording that Thurstan was one of England’s long-lost saints. The book included a calendar of all the saints’ feast days, and there, in the entry for 6 February was: “Death of Saint Thurstan, Archbishop of York, year of grace 1140”, written in red ink — a sign of Thurstan’s significance. This proves that, three centuries after his death, the monks at Pontefract Priory considered Thurstan to be a saint, Carter said. The monks at Pontefract Priory had acclaimed Thurstan as a saint, because two years after his death they had exhumed his body and discovered that it was well-preserved, with an odour of sanctity. At the time the pope's approval was not needed for sainthood.

So why, since Saint Thurstan was such an influential figure in his time, was he lost to history until now? One reason was probably because he had been buried in Pontefract and not in York. The main reason he has been overlooked for centuries, however, was the destruction of monasteries during the Reformation, when almost all material possessions and records disappeared. The detail of Thurstan’s sainthood was lost in this destruction. Pontefract Priory was one of the sites vandalised in the Reformation. Later, it was totally dissolved in 1539 under Cromwell, and today nothing remains. But for the recent meticulous research of an English Heritage historian, we may never have known that Thurstan had indeed been a Saint.

Christine Porter

MY BUSINESS IS YOUR BUSINESS

Continuing our series on local independent businesses, Jim Jack stopped off at The Cheese Press, opened just over two years ago by new owner, **AMBER LEE** in a building formerly wine store and then a hospice charity shop

Mark Whyman's comprehensive review of buildings in his book 'Richmond at the Start of the 21st Century—an Architectural History' describes the grade 2 listed No 7 Victoria Road as 'one of my favourite buildings'. Believed to be either a coach house and tunnel leading through to 16-18 Finkle Street or linked in some way to the Black Lion, the curved, windowless ceilings create an extensive 18th Century cave whose atmosphere creates an almost continental artisanal feeling, well suited to selling wine or— as now— fine cheeses.



Amber Lee, originally from Cornwall, moved to Richmond area 13 years ago . She fell in love with the town and the surrounding countryside and is clearly here to stay. The day job she moved for offered security and pension, but, for reasons which Amber still finds difficult to explain other than a love of cheese (particularly British cheeses), she felt drawn to step out on her own - by opening a cheese shop.

In terms of developing her own knowledge, she studied with both the Academy of Cheese and the Guild of Fine Food. As well as teaching many of the skills and knowledge required to run a business selling cheese, these detailed courses created an even greater awareness of the wide range of cheeses being produced by enthusiastic local producers up and down the land. Adding a similar wide array of continental cheeses available only served to feed Amber's desire to create a unique specialist cheese shop in her adopted home town.

Walking past no. 7 Victoria Road two and a half years ago, its cave like, cool appearance appeared to be ideal for Amber's project. Its inclusion in a TV series 'Dales for Sale' also offered an unplanned but welcome TV platform to describe the vision for the space to a wider audience.

Amber sources her cheeses from a wide variety of suppliers, many of whom are themselves small producers. One of the smallest is a local producer of goats' cheese who only supplies five pots a week. For quite a number, cheese manufacture is sideline to their main dairy work, but this leads to a wide choice of unique

flavours. Amber samples them all so that she is confident about what she is offering at the Cheese Press, advising customers about each cheese's distinctive characteristics.



On opening, she had one chiller cabinet displaying a range of cheeses on offer but it wasn't long before a second and then a third were needed. Whilst we were talking, a delivery of five boxes of cheeses arrived which needed to be moved into refrigerated storage quickly.

This prompted an enquiry about how she was able to offer such a wide range of interesting, specialist cheeses. 'I work with quite a number of wholesalers—this delivery is from London -which gives access to cheeses from different parts of the UK and Europe.' was the reply. Amber is also very keen to provide an outlet for many local producers, developing the personal contacts which geographical closeness allows. Whilst this buying policy does mean that prices per kilo will be higher than the mass-produced, bulk purchased products sold in larger outlets, it does also mean that you will not generally find what the Cheese Press sells available in supermarkets.

Asked how she dealt with supermarket competition, Amber was clear that they are operating in different 'markets'. Like the other local businesses we have met, there is an emphasis on experience and personal service, talking with customers, stressing the need for people to try before they buy (so offering samples is important) and being able to advise on accompaniments that go well with the cheeses on sale.

She is also in a position to advise on types of wine which work with cheeses. Indeed, the 'cave' is a treasure trove of 'accompaniments - crackers, pates, spices, olives- which can be enjoyed with cheese although Amber's personal preference is to eat cheese on its own. The range of customers means that some are highly knowledgeable, some know exactly



what they want from a limited range of tastes and others (like me) know very little about cheeses and need leading through choice gently! Some customers come in for the same amount of the same cheese each week.. She also supplies restaurants and functions, such as weddings, where she is often asked to put together a suitable selection of cheeses—a responsibility but nice to be trusted! This advice is also called for if people are wanting to set up a cheeseboard for guests at home. For this,

Amber would start with a blue cheese, a soft cheese, a hard cheese, a goat's cheese and add a 'wild card' to provide a range of strengths, flavours and textures.

'And what about storage?' I ask. 'Cheese shouldn't be out of the refrigerator for more than four hours,' is the answer. 'Allow about an hour after taking it out of the 'fridge which allows the cheese reach room temperature to taste it at its best.'

The ensuing description of tasting cheese has echoes of wine tasting. 'It's a blend of the senses,' Amber explains. What the cheese looks like, what it smells like, its texture and taking time to savour it all combine to get maximum enjoyment from each mouthful.

'And when it's time to return it to the 'fridge'?' Plastic, cling film and foil is not recommended. All cheeses are sold individually wrapped in waxed paper, to be kept to re-wrap the unconsumed portions at the end of a meal. Failing that, individual 'Tupperware' containers for each cheese work acceptably.

We break off the conversation once more for a phone call and then as a small group of customers enter the Cheese Press. Visitors to Richmond, they start by choosing

their preferred cheeses (not sure whether it was the Cornish Yarg (a cheese wrapped in edible nettles, creamy under the rind, crumbly at the core, pasteurised and suitable for vegetarians) an individual Crottin (unpasteurised), Yoredale, Wensleydale- from the village of Wensley itself (vegetarian, unpasteurised), Shorthorn Blue (from Skipton—pasteurised, vegetarian) or ... The list seems endless, but



after some tasting and conversation with Amber, their choice was made. Complementary foods which work with the cheese are chosen and finally there's a discussion with Amber about where to go to eat in the area.

This was customer service in action. Amber explains that members of the local Business and Tourism Association are keen to learn about and promote each other's businesses in the area. She and her small team of part-time staff do see making people welcome to Richmond more generally as part of their work.

The Cheese Press is developing all of the time. A blackboard on the wall advertises cheese tastings on the first Thursday evening of every month where four cheeses are offered with accompanying wine suggestions. One of the sections of the cave offers an unusual, distinctive and appropriate environment for these evenings which are proving very popular.

A Cheese Club has been set up where monthly subscribers are introduced to three different cheeses each month.. More recently Amber has launched a 'Cheese Bar' on alternate Saturdays offering cheese and charcuterie boards to those who have booked. All of this suggests that our local sole trader lives and breathes her cheese business—a commitment to innovation, quality, care and service recognised by the community through recent receipt of the 'Best New Business Award' at the recent Business and Tourism Association event held at the Station. 'Thrilled to be nominated and even more thrilled to win,' says Amber.



Amber receives the 'Best New Business Award for 2023' for The Cheese Press from Baroness Angela Harris

Doors open at 10.00 and close at 4.00 with Mondays off, but the work starts before hand and carries on afterwards. The day starts at 6.30, rising to walk the dog. Some mornings, a local run with friends and breakfast starts the day. At 9 o'clock, the shop is to set up, orders to make or prepare. Deliveries usually arrive in shop hours but there are suppliers to keep in touch with, customers to serve. After 4 o'clock, there's 'clear up', refrigeration, hygiene standards to maintain, keeping on top of accounts—work taken home. Website development and updating. Appropriate checking of Facebook, What's App, Trip Advisor, emails which need a response. No time for more than a couple of days off at any one time since opening in March 2022 —although Amber and partner Mark have determinedly planned a week away this year—the longest stretch since the business opened. And where to? France is the answer. A cheese making region? Naturally.

As with many of our small independent services which depend upon their sales for a living, learning how and where to draw boundaries between work and family life is quite difficult. Amber feels she is getting better at this. It's probably marginally easier than for those with young families (Amber's son is a Sixth Form student) but she clearly enjoys what she does, including developing new aspects to the business

On my way out, I can't resist the idea of Northumbrian Nettle cheese or the Alp Blossom. Tasting each, then a bit of 'background' from Amber and the Alp Blossom has it (in spite of my Northumbrian connections.) Carrying a carefully wrapped piece of cheese in waxed paper and salivating slightly, I step out into Victoria Road, aware once more of what one of our local firms brings to our area—and the commitment involved in doing this.

Jim Jack

A TIME OF MY LIFE

Last month, **JAN BEETON** began to share her experiences of a visit to North Korea a few years ago. In this concluding part, she provides further insights into what she saw and relates the impressions gained.

We travelled by underground to see some of the famous monuments including the mausoleum for the previous leaders. This enormous building lies in manicured gardens and walkways, frequently visited by locals wearing their best attire. We too, were required to dress well, the men in suits and ties and women in dresses. As with Lenin, Mao and Ho Chi Min, dead leaders are embalmed and displayed for reverential inspection.



Other places visited included the war museum, whose displays and film footage of the Korean War were fiercely anti-American. The huge central library had a bizarre system for accessing books, which were not freely displayed on shelves.

Life for those lucky enough to live in the main city appears to be comfortable, if strictly controlled. Accommodation is provided according to status and occupation; they do not pay rent. Thus, there are zones such as the new science road for

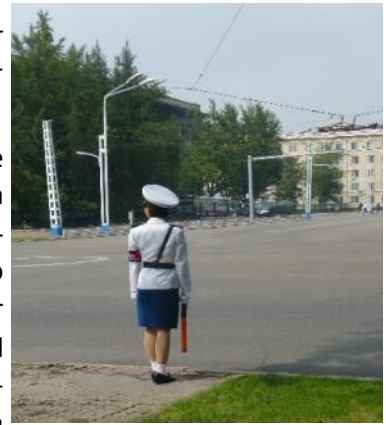


university science workers, with modern apartment buildings having shops and restaurants at ground level. We visited a hamburger restaurant whose menu and corporate styling was a pure McDonald's copy — minus the golden arches!

Car ownership is for the privileged few, mainly military and governmental officials, meaning that roads were virtually empty, apart from in the centre. This

made the choreographed routines of the traffic-control operatives seem even odder, as they organised minimal traffic at junctions.

Leaving the capital, we travelled south towards the De-militarized Zone(DMZ), staying en-route in a small sea-side town near to a vast international airport. This was still under construction, ready to welcome visitors from around the world. From our transport we also saw many small towns which had the same corporate structure. We visited one model town — to which Michael Palin also was taken a



couple of years later — so that we could see their school, clinic, and farm. A boy, approximately 12-years-old and speaking remarkably good English, showed us around his house and garden, in which the family grew food crops. The farmer was keen for us to see the large graph in the town centre showing increased crop yield year upon year, to allay Western suspicions of inadequate food supplies. There was almost no large machinery, all tasks being done with hand tools.

School children came to greet us, although sadly we didn't get the chance to go inside their school.



Our visit to the DMZ, also known as the Bamboo Wall, bristled with security, involving us and our belongings being searched at every opportunity. It is still a highly secured area with a large military presence on the North Korean side, although there were just sentry guards to be seen on the South Korean side. North Korean forces are known to have dug tunnels running deep into South Korean territory: American and South Korean troops had found four at the time of our visit, but there are thought to be about twenty.



Our journey back to Pyongyang allowed us time to visit a film studio where there were areas depicting most European countries, including half-timbered housing in a cosy-looking village for England. We could dress up in costumes amidst scenery of ancient Korea.

We visited the birthplace of Kim Il-Sung, which is now a shrine/museum set in beautiful parkland, and hiked in the countryside. We also climbed a “mountain” and visited ancient palaces and a Buddhist temple.



Our guides assured us that people have the freedom to follow different faiths and that there are Christian churches, but, as with so much we were told, it is difficult to ascertain the truth.

Here are some unusual facts:

- They operate on a different calendar to ours, this year— 2024— being 113 in North Korea, counted after the birth of Kim Il-Sung.
- There are only 28 permitted hairstyles, 12 for men and 16 for women.
- For nearly 20 years, the world’s tallest building was an empty 105-storey hotel in Pyongyang.

- Compulsory national elections are held every five years, with only one candidate.
- They still assume that South Korea wishes to reunite with the North, and the main road South goes beneath an arch signifying that union.



It certainly is an odd and increasingly dangerous country, but, nevertheless, it was a fascinating and memorable place to visit.

Jan Beeton

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

We have always sought to turn a spotlight on volunteers and the work which they do, not only in our benefice churches but also in our wider community. This year marks the 40th anniversary of the annual National Volunteer Week, which will run from Monday 3 June until Sunday 9 June—another prompt to think if there’s anything we might be prepared to give time to in the year to come. (See www.nvco.org.uk)



SWALEDALE FESTIVAL

St Mary’s is hosting two prestigious evening events in June this year
 Monday 3 June—Brotsky Quartet with special guests 19.30
 Thursday 6 June—Emma Johnson’s Orchestra of the Environment 19.30

200 CLUB

Our May winner of the £50 prize was no 18 Wendy Egerton.
 Congratulations, Wendy!

PARISH FINANCES

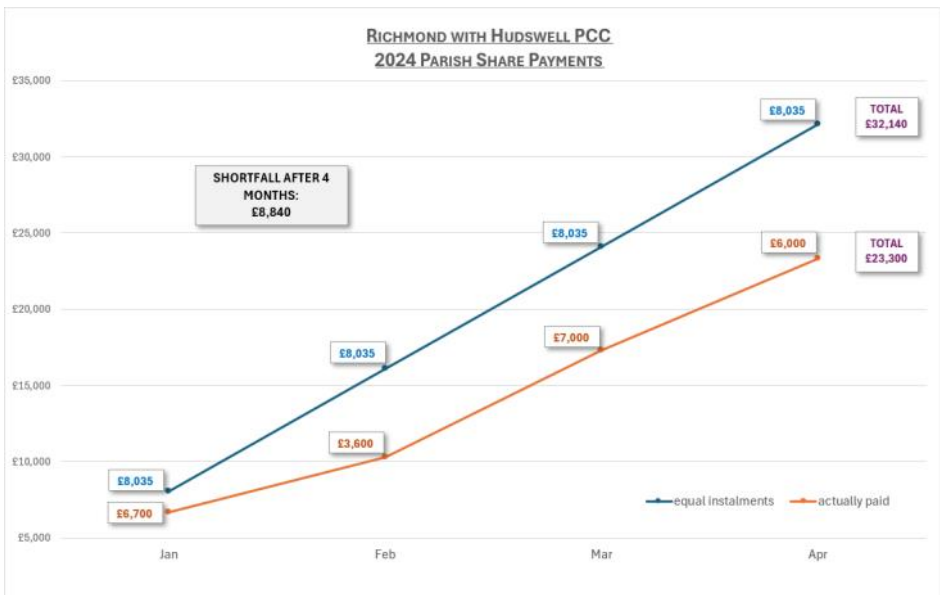
Paul Carnell, our Parish Treasurer, has kindly provided the information below to show our income and expenditure during the period January – April 2024.

Parish Share is vital for sustaining ministry and mission in the Diocese of Leeds. The money that's contributed by the 400 parishes (33 of them in Richmond Deanery) goes to support 310 clergy and curates and pays for the maintenance of 380 clergy houses.

Back in 2019, when I became Treasurer of St Mary's, we paid our Parish Share Request by monthly standing orders in twelve equal instalments. But then along came Covid-19 and, with our heavily-reduced income, those standing orders had to stop. Ever since 2020, I've been looking at our finances at the end of each month and paying as much as we can afford, always keeping sufficient funds in reserve for the day-to-day running of the church.

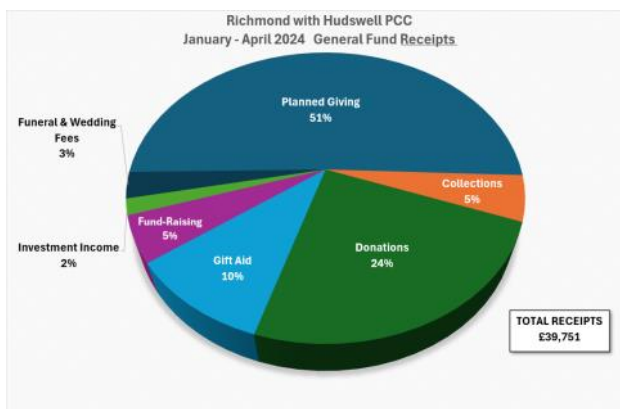
In 2024 we've been asked to contribute £96,422. Ideally, after 4 months we would have paid 4 x £8,035 to arrive at £32,140 but, as you can see from the graph, we were £8,840 behind that ideal situation at the end of April.

Any donations, large or small, to help get us 'back on track' would be very gratefully received!



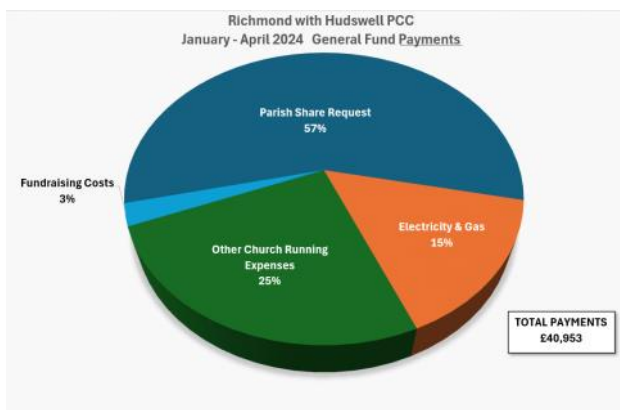
Receipts

Planned Giving refers to those who give weekly, monthly, quarterly or annually by bank standing order or who are members of the Parish Giving Scheme (a scheme much-loved by Treasurers – see www.parishgiving.org.uk). As you can see, this accounted for just over half of our total income.



Payments

Our Parish Share Request accounted for over half of our payments, but to emphasise just how much our energy costs have increased in recent months, I've given them their own piece of the pie.



Summary:

With General Fund receipts of £39,751 and payments of £40,953, St Mary's experienced a 4-month 'deficit' of £1,202. But with increased energy costs and the Parochial Church Council's aspiration to pay at least as much of the Parish Share Request as was paid in 2023 (85%), this situation isn't entirely unexpected.

FELLING OF THE MARSKE CHURCHYARD TREE

A majestic Cypress tree (*Chamaecyparis lawsonia* — a native of California, introduced into Britain in 1854) had graced Marske Churchyard for well over a century. **JENNIFER WILLIAMSON** tells the story of its sad demise.



In around 1903, a Cypress tree was planted in Marske Churchyard on the south side of the church. Whether it was planted as a sapling or grew from a seed blown from Marske Hall gardens or around, there is no record, but these trees do grow from seed and have been naturalised around the UK. However it got there, it grew and flourished in the churchyard, growing to probably over 100 ft. About 15 years ago, when I first began to visit Marske Church and to sit on the bench outside the porch, the tree, moving in the wind, would creak gently. It did occasionally make me wonder about the health of the tree, but the question would pass, and I would simply enjoy the presence of the cypress tree amongst the other trees in the churchyard and the bird life they supported.

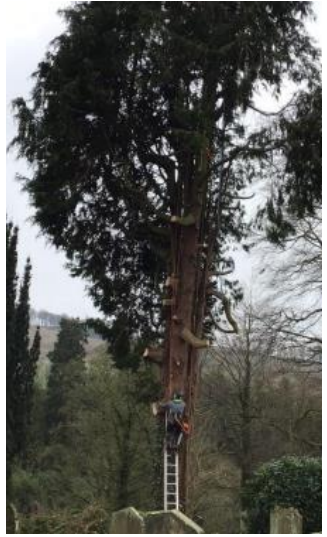
That was until the afternoon of Sunday 17th December 2023, the afternoon of the Carol Service. As I approached the church up the flight of steps on the south side of the church, below where the tree stood, I was met by Raymond Ridley and Martin Wallis who were expressing alarm about the safety of the tree. Following storms from the west, the sound the tree made had changed. It was now making very alarming sounds as it was whipped by the wind and, where one of the several side-trunks grew from high up in the tree, a rip was beginning to form.

For several days nothing more happened, until the side-trunk finally gave way and fortunately fell straight down like a javelin and embedded itself a few feet from the base of the tree. This allowed the fallen trunk to stand stable against the main trunk with the foliage linked into other foliage above. After advice from a tree surgeon and with the approval of the Archdeacon, the decision was made that the tree should be felled. This would not be a simple task, as access to the site made using machinery like a cherry-picker impossible. The tree would have to be taken apart bit by bit. The work would be painstaking and would take three days.



On day one the team arrived, armed with a variety of chainsaws and a shredder, and Tom and Rue began to clear a pathway up the tree. If access for machinery had been available, they could have started at the top, but for this tree they had to start at the ground and work up.

As the brushwood fell from the tree, several willing helpers dragged it away to the shredder waiting outside the gate on Church Road. Their help was greatly appreciated. You all know who you are and, lest I miss someone out, I'm naming no names, but your help was invaluable, keeping the site clear and allowing the work to go faster. The work began by one of the tree surgeons starting to cut a path up the trunk to allow them access to the higher, larger boughs. Of course, the great worry was that



falling branches might damage the surrounding gravestones, which made the work more difficult. Heavy branches had to be securely roped before being sawn, but bit

by bit the tree was carefully dismantled. Tree surgeons call themselves "tree monkeys" as they go about their work climbing in the trees, and it's not hard to see why.

At the bottom of this picture is the topmost tip of the tree, while at the top of the tree the tree surgeon secures the next piece to be swung down on ropes when it's been sawn off. In a site with open access, this is where they would have begun working from a high platform and taking the tree down from the top. A very scary process for all of those watching and filming from a safe distance.



All that now remained of the churchyard cypress was a stump as shown in the photo (p37). At this stage the remaining stump would usually be felled at the base, but the lack of space in the church yard and the presence of gravestones and memorials meant that the stump had to be removed by securing and sawing it down in slices.

The final stage was splitting all the logs left for the parish by the tree surgeons. These have been split and bagged and are offered for sale by donations towards to cost of



the tree being felled. Trees like this are not insured, so St Edmund's Church has had to bear the cost of £1800.00. It reminded us to grub-out any self-sown saplings in the churchyard before they too grow this big. Huge thanks to Tom and Ru, who did a tremendous job safely and well, and to all who helped throughout the three days and afterwards, clearing up, splitting and distributing the logs.



By the next Sunday, all there was to see was a neat tree stump.

Jennifer Williamson



GOOD NEWS FLASH!

A local business (Saks at Sedbury Hall) wins award.

Good to see recognition for such a pleasant place and welcoming, hard-working team.



POETRY FROM DOWNHOLME

This month, **GEORGE ALDERSON** suggests that we all have gifts that can be appreciated by many, now or after we have passed, and should always thank God for what we can offer the world.

Musicians

I've outlived Tchaikovsky, Beethoven and Mahler,
Puccini, whose works are still sought at La Scala,
Composers who all, in their way, drive emotions
Regardless of mountains and valleys and oceans.

Their passion to please or to mitigate sorrow
Has kept them germane from their day and tomorrow
Their works will be studied and played and ingested
By millions of people, who, by life, are tested
But cannot find words to express their reaction,
So, recreate music which seizes attraction.
Yet what have I in me that stimulates senses,
Or even, if noticed, in part recompenses
The gratitude owed for pronouncements on living
Which I and my fellows have no way of giving?
My wonder and awe and complete admiration
For all who have passed, for their live inspiration
Is boundless, abiding, eternal and candid
And thanks be to God for what He has commanded.

NOTES FROM THE GARDEN

Perhaps by the time this appears in print, the weather will have been consistently warm enough for Foxgloves to flower in their full splendour. **WENDY PRITCHARD** tells us more about them and their use by our ancestors, but note the word of caution.

June is the month for foxgloves – on the edges of woodland and self-seeded all over our garden. They like a semi-shaded position, but will also flourish in full sun. They're native to our country, but are found as far away as north-western Africa. Their imposing flower spikes can grow up to six feet tall, in shades of pink, purple and white, with or without spots on the flowers. Bees love them and it's fascinating to watch big bumble bees carefully backing out of the flowers. Our native foxglove has the botanical name 'digitalis purpurea' and has flowers just on one side of the stem. Clever breeding has produced foxgloves which have large flowers all round the stem, in shades of apricot as well as the usual colours. All are easy to grow from seed.



Foxgloves are short-lived perennials – you'll be lucky to keep them alive for more than two or three years. They generally flower really well in their second year, then again the year after, but with much shorter spikes of flowers. They seed themselves like there's no tomorrow, so cut off the flower spike before the tiny seeds are scattered, or you'll have no difficulty replenishing your stock! If you want to transplant a foxglove seedling, do it when it's still small, as bigger plants don't move well.

Foxglove plants are poisonous, so do wear gloves if you're handling them. This seems strange, because they are also the source of 'digoxin', a heart medication. Their medicinal properties have been known for a very long time, but getting the correct dose from the leaves needed skill. The plant has also been used (unsuccessfully) to treat sore throats and scarlet fever – because of the spots on the flower throats. In the Scottish borders, foxgloves leaves were strewn around babies' cradles for protection from bewitchment, while in Shropshire they were put in children's shoes for the same reason.



Foxgloves are associated with fairies, and are said to bow when a fairy passes by. The name 'foxglove' has been around since before the mid-thirteenth century, but is rather mysterious. What has this plant to do with foxes, which certainly have no need of gloves? Possibly 'fox' started off as 'folk', a name for fairies. 'Glove' could have come from an Anglo-Saxon word 'gliew', which was a musical instrument with small bells. In that case, the name could mean 'fairy bells' – slightly more convincing than the explanation that foxes wore the flowers on their feet, so they could silently creep up on their prey!

Wherever the name comes from, different parts of the country have different variants. Lots are to do with fairies, like Fairy Caps, Fairy Gloves and Fairy Thimbles, whilst others are to do with the large downy leaves, such as the wonderful Floppydock. Dead Man's Bells speaks for itself!

Wendy Pritchard



Warm Welcome is now in its second year and continues to provide a safe, warm, comfortable space in Richmond, where visitors are offered free hot drinks and light snacks. Over the winter months we were open on Monday, Wednesday, and

Friday each week, and we have relied on our rota of loyal volunteers. We are continuing through the summer and, from May, we will be open on Monday and Friday mornings, from 9.30am to 12.30pm.

Volunteers are needed to welcome visitors, and to provide hot drinks and snacks. This remains a wonderful opportunity to serve the local community. 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.

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 — 30th June
For children and the young at heart.
Why not come and join us?
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 June



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 June '24



WORD SEARCH

Erasmus, patron saint of sailors

Do you like messing about in boats? If so, then you'll have heard of St Elmo's Fire. It is the light that is sometimes seen on mastheads of boats after storms at sea. St Elmo is another name for St Erasmus, a fourth century Syrian bishop, who was not afraid of violent storms. Legend has it that one day when Erasmus was preaching outside, a thunderbolt hit the ground right beside him. That might have distracted modern bishops, but not Erasmus – he just kept on preaching. His courage won him the respect of sailors, who made him their patron saint. Erasmus finally died during the Diocletian persecutions in 300AD, and his feast day is 2nd June.

Boats

Elmo

Fire

Light

Masthead

Storm

Sea

Fourth

Century

Bishop

Legend

Preaching

Thunder

Ground

Respect

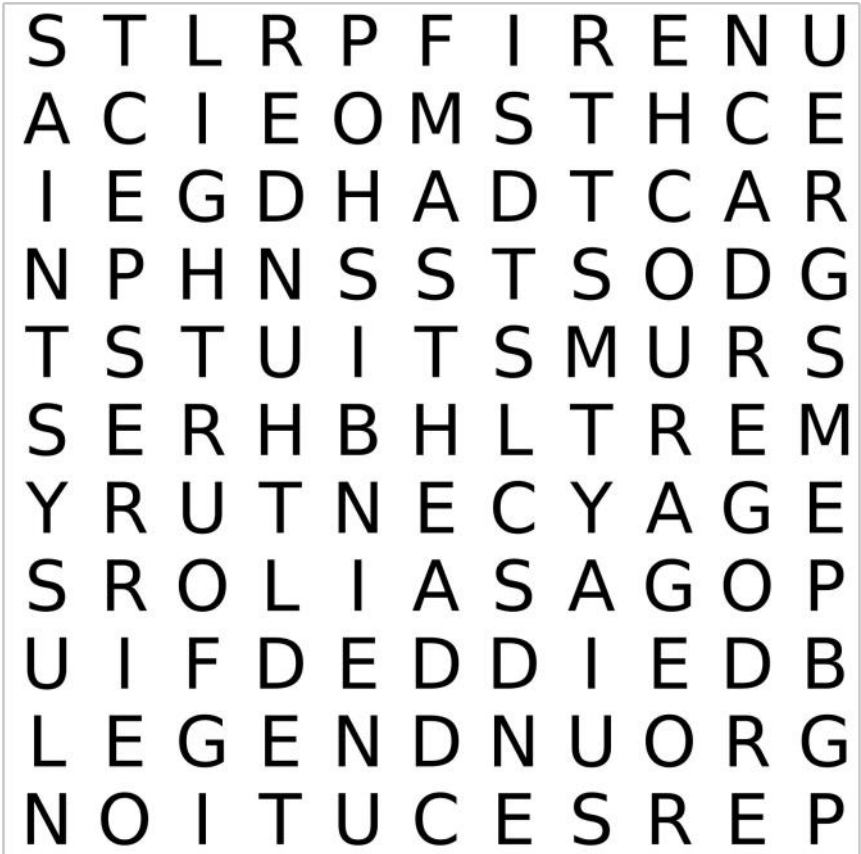
Courage

Sailors

Saints

Died

Persecution



Sudoku - Easy

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

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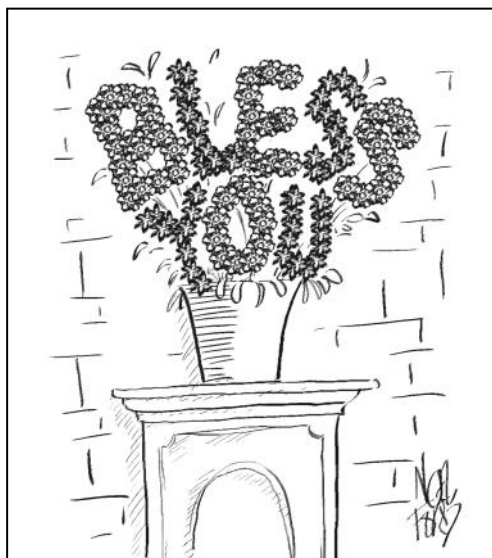
Sudoku - Medium

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

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...well you cannot fault the efficacy of
the new 'Planned Giving' scheme...



When it was Mrs Wilson's turn to do the
flower arrangements, she always kept
the vicar's hay fever in mind

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

Sudoku — Medium

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

Wordsearch

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

Deadline July/August '24 edition; Friday 14th June, but earlier if at all possible, please. Please note that this issue covers two months so offerings relevant to August also needed!

**To contribute letters, articles, etc
contact connections.ed24@gmail.com or 07866 033263**

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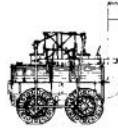
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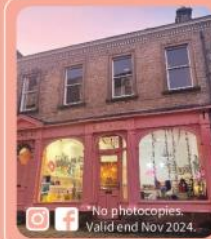
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