

CONNECTIONS



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

April 2026



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THE BENEFICE OF RICHMOND WITH HUDSWELL, DOWNHOLME AND MARSKE

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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	Every Sunday apart from 1st Sunday
	Morning Worship (no communion)	Every 1st Sunday
4.00 p.m.	Café Church	3rd Sunday (every 2 mths — Jan, March etc)
	Fun-Key Church	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

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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

At last! The sun is shining, the daffodils are in bloom, the birds are singing, and Spring has definitely sprung. By the time this issue appears, the clocks will have changed, the evenings will be lighter and Easter will almost be here. In the words of the traditional Easter salutation – *Alleluia Christ is risen, He is risen indeed, Alleluia.*

Holy Week is always particularly busy, so Canon Martin opens his message with details of all that will be happening in the run-up to Easter itself. Then there is news of an exciting project to perform a Passion Play in Richmond in 2027, which made me want to find out more about the history of these productions. Judith MacLeod shares her impressions of another historic church in our region and has also contributed a review of a book which might appeal to those interested in stitchery. Mention of a restored holy well in *The Times*, prompted Christine Porter to investigate further and be surprised by just how many there are around the country. Jim Jack reports on the next leg of his and Jan's walk along the Camino Ingles in County Durham, and brings us up-to-date with the activities of the Friends – a very useful list of this year's activities is provided, so do please note them in your diaries.

I'm sure the current war and strife in the Middle East are very much on everyone's minds at the moment, so it is ironic that well before the latest troubles erupted, John Pritchard should have addressed the subject in this month's Hard Question. A sermon which he preached shortly before hostilities actually started seemed particularly pertinent and warrants further consideration, so it too has been included.

On a lighter note, we also have the History of the Hot Cross Bun from Liz Kluz; Jane Hatcher reflecting upon a gathering of mayors of Other Richmonds; details of this month's Charity – Guide Dogs – from Rachel Walker; and notices about Blues in the Pews and a Station Singers Concert. With our usual medley of puzzles, information about various activities, and adverts, we trust you will find something of interest.

Wishing you peace and joy this Easter.

John McCormack

Cover photo by Wendy Pritchard
The start of a new life



Martin's Message

April 2026



Marking Holy Week and Easter

This issue of *Connections* will be available just in time for **Holy Week**, the most significant week of the Christian year. There will be a range of special services and events at St Mary's, summarised on page 8.

On **Palm Sunday** (29th March) we commemorate Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The 10.00am service will feature a dramatic reading of Jesus' Passion – bringing to life the events which show that Jesus, out of his love for all people, willingly laid down his life for us.

On the **Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of Holy Week** (30th March – 1st April) there will be a short meditation at 7.00pm, concluding with Compline.

On **Maundy Thursday** (2nd April) at 7.00pm we will commemorate the Last Supper, at which Jesus instituted Holy Communion ('Do this in remembrance of me'). This moving service will feature the stripping of the altar, as the church is made ready for Good Friday, and then a Watch of Prayer ('Could you not watch with me for one hour?').

On **Good Friday** (3rd April) there will be an ecumenical **Walk of Witness**, beginning at 10.00am at the Catholic Church, and concluding with a short service in the Market Place – followed by hot cross buns at the Methodist Church.

Then, at St Mary's, there will be three alternative ways to dwell at the foot of the Cross:

12.00-1.00pm **All Age 'Whistle-Stop Tour' of Lent**

2.00-3.00pm **Meditation for the Last Hour**

7.00pm **Sung Meditation with readings.**

On **Holy Saturday** (4th April), as we contemplate the reality of Christ lying dead in the tomb, there are traditionally no services.

With the arrival of darkness and **Easter Eve**, however, we will hold our first service of Easter: the **Easter Liturgy**, at 8.00pm. This wonderful service features the new Paschal Candle being lit from a fire outside, and then brought into the

church. As we each hold a candle, lit from the Paschal Candle, the dark church is illuminated by the light of Christ. A Vigil then follows, in which we reflect upon key Old Testament passages which tell the story of the history of our salvation in the *light* of the Resurrection.

On **Easter Day** (5th April) there will be three alternative celebrations of Jesus' Resurrection:

6:30am— **Dawn Service** at Easby Abbey (an ecumenical non-Eucharistic celebration, led by Revd Simon Dowson, vicar of Easby, Skeeby, Bolton and Brompton-on-Swale)

8.00am— **Holy Communion** at St Mary's

10.00am — **Parish Communion** at St Mary's –
followed by our traditional egg rolling competition!

There will also be services of **Holy Communion** at **Downholme and Marske** (at the usual times of 9:30am and 11:00am).

Easter: 'I believe so that I may understand'

For many people, Jesus' Resurrection from the dead is hard to understand, let alone believe. But if we allow ourselves to believe, then we will come to understand; after all, there is much evidence available to us.

We have eye-witness accounts, such as John 20:24-31, which includes these words of the risen Christ to Doubting Thomas: 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.' We also have two thousand years of people's lives being changed by their belief. With believers considering themselves to be in a living relationship with God, the evidence of this relationship being real is the strength and guidance we receive from beyond ourselves.

By allowing ourselves to believe in a living, loving God, we come to understand that he not only exists, but brings meaning to our lives. As St Anselm said, 'I do not seek to understand so that I can believe, but I believe so that I may understand; and what is more, I believe that unless I do believe, I shall not understand.'



Thank you ...

... to everyone who participated in the Survey held during February on the resources **you** would like to see available to deepen your faith and sustain your spiritual life. Our Worship and Prayer Team have now processed your responses and will soon be announcing several new initiatives. Watch this space!

Your Church Needs You

Across the Benefice, we are gearing up for our Annual Meetings, which will be held in May.

The Richmond with Hudswell Annual Meeting will take place on Sunday 17th May, straight after the 10.00am service, whilst that for Downholme and Marske will be on Wednesday 27th May at 7.00pm. An Annual Meeting offers us the opportunity to review the past year and to look forward to the next. We also elect our Churchwardens and PCC members, and appoint our church officers.

PCC members represent our congregation in the governance of our church, and PCCs are the first link in the chain of national Church governance, which involves two-way communication between Deanery, Diocesan and General Synods.

If you would like to know more about this, then do please speak to me.

With every good wish for a joyful Eastertide,

Martin

ANNOUNCEMENT

CONNECTIONS DISTRIBUTION CO-ORDINATOR

Last month, we said 'goodbye' to Keith Robson as our Co-ordinator for distribution of this magazine. This month, we welcome **Catriona Smith** who has very kindly offered to take on the role. Any queries regarding your magazine delivery can now be directed to her using the contact details on page 2. Welcome, and many thanks, to

Catriona.

Editorial team



St. Mary's Church Richmond

Special Services for Holy Week and Easter

Palm Sunday 29th March 10.00am

Parish Communion with Dramatic Reading

**Monday, Tuesday Wednesday of Holy week
30th March - 1st April**

7.00pm Meditation concluding with Compline

Maundy Thursday 2nd April 7.00pm

Eucharist of the Last Supper and Watch of Prayer

Good Friday 3rd April 10.00am

Walk of Witness from the Catholic Church

12.00 noon Family Whistle-Stop tour through Lent

2.00pm Meditation for the Last Hour

7.00pm Sung Meditation with Readings

Easter Eve 4th April 8.00pm

Easter Liturgy

Easter Day 5th April

6.30am Easter Day Dawn Service (Easby Abbey)

8.00am Holy Communion

10.00am Parish Communion with egg rolling
competition

www.richmondhudswellparish.org.uk

INTERESTING CHURCHES

Regular readers will be aware of **JUDITH MacLEOD's** interest in ecclesiastical architecture. Having visited several Cathedrals, this time she has been to somewhere more modest, but no less important historically and architecturally.

St Mary's Church, Lastingham

Lastingham is an historic village of just over 200 souls on the edge of the North Yorkshire Moors, 5 miles from Kirkbymoorside. It has a thriving pub, a family-run country hotel and a delightful church. If you have been a regular reader of this magazine for the last year, you may remember my piece on St Gregory's Minster in Kirkdale, which is just 8 miles away, as the crow flies, in the direction of Helmsley.

When you approach from the A170 Thirsk to Scarborough Road via Appleton-le-Moors, you see the village from above. The church, with its charming churchyard, is on your left. It is a Norman Grade 1 listed building renowned for its eleventh-century Norman crypt.

The village has a long history. After the withdrawal of the Roman legions in 410AD, Britain was invaded by Germanic tribes, the Saxons. During the fifth and

sixth centuries, the land between the Humber and the Tees was known as Deira, one of 7 kingdoms of Northumberland. Towards the end of that period, a clan called Loestings arrived in the area and gave the village its name.

In 654, Cedd and his brother, Chad, who, with their 2 other brothers Cynebil and Colin, had been educated at the Abbey of Lindisfarne under its founder, St Aidan, were given a grant of land by the King of Deira to found a monastery in a remote place. By this time, the Northern Saxons were mostly Christian and by 664, when Cedd died, he was Abbot of the Monastery at Lastingham, as mentioned in one of the first history books – *'The Ecclesiastical History of the English People'* – written by the Venerable Bede in the 700's. This monastery is thought to have been linked with the Kirkdale monastery.



St. Mary's Church, Lastingham

Both Lastingham church and the monastery were destroyed by the Vikings in 877. The church was re-founded, however, by Stephen and the Benedictine monks of Whitby in 1078, when William the Conqueror gave permission to build a new one. The earlier, wooden structure was replaced by a Norman, stone building. A crypt, a word derived from the Greek 'kryptos' meaning hidden, was dug out below it, around the spot on which Cedd's body was thought to have been laid after his death from the plague. St Mary's church is unique among Norman churches in having 2 naves, 2 apses (semi-circular extensions at the eastern end) and 2 sets of side aisles, one level above the other.



The interior, with apse at the East end

My usual reference sources for the architectural features of cathedrals and churches are *'The Buildings of England'* by Nikolaus Pevsner and *'A History of Architecture'* by Banister Fletcher. To these I have recently added Andrew Ziminski's *'Church Going, A Stonemason's Guide to the Churches of the British Isles'* published in 2025. The appeal of Ziminski's book is that he combines a detailed knowledge of ecclesiastical architecture with a beguiling understanding of its power to move and inspire, the whole described in mellifluous prose.



Columns and Capitals

As a visitor to St Mary's, your interest is aroused when you reach the middle of the nave of the main church and see a staircase leading to the lower floor, a sort of undiscovered secret passage. When you arrive on the lower floor, you are immediately aware of a change in atmosphere created by the low ceiling and light. Ziminski recounts his impression with a simplicity that matches the simplicity of the structure: 'As I loitered at the threshold and my eyes adjusting to the darkness, there loomed before them a Norman church in miniature, with a vaulted ceiling above four pairs of columns and capitals that formed an arcade of sorts, complete with aisles and a chancel



The rounded Apse



And looking closer

arch that led to the curved end wall of the apse. A single-slit window behind the altar that was level with the circular graveyard, along with two small slits at the aisle end, provided the only light.’.



The stone altar is lit by a thin lancet window. Although the glass is not contemporary with the architecture, it matches it in its simplicity.

Ziminski concludes: ‘I felt enveloped by an atmosphere of deep sanctity, unlike anywhere else I’ve ever visited’.

It is indeed a special place.

Judith MacLeod

EXTRACTS FROM RE EXAMINATION PAPERS

- ◆ In the first book of the Bible, *Guinnesses*, God got tired of creating the world, so He took the sabbath off.
- ◆ Moses led the Jews to the Red Sea, where they made unleavened bread, which is bread without any ingredients.
- ◆ Moses died before he ever reached Canada.
- ◆ Solomon, one of David's sons, had 300 wives and 700 porcupines.
- ◆ It was a miracle when Jesus rose from the dead and managed to get the tombstone off the entrance.

From Parish Pump



SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY
A PASSION PLAY FOR RICHMOND
FRIDAY, 26th MARCH 2027



All the Churches in Richmond are coming together to produce a street performance of the Way of the Cross/Passion, scheduled for Good Friday morning, 26 March 2027, across the town. The action will take place at prominent town venues such as the Georgian Theatre Royal, Richmond Castle and the Market Place, and will finish with the tomb at St Mary's.

It will tell the extraordinary story of Easter, starting with the Last Supper and taking us to the tomb, but culminating with each Church celebrating Easter Sunday.

You may have experienced the York Mystery Plays, or even been lucky enough to go to Oberammergau. Our play has been written especially for Richmond. It will be in biblical dress and will take the place of the annual Walk of Witness, just for one year. The scale is ambitious and it will be profoundly moving.

We want to promote Richmond as a significant Christian centre and as a thriving community with diverse cultural offerings. While this production centres on Christian witness, it equally celebrates community cohesion, the arts, and Richmond's historic venues, for Passion Plays represent one of drama's oldest traditions.

Baroness Angela Harris is delighted to be our Patron, and Bishop Anna (Bishop of Ripon) will lead prayers.

We will also need local businesses to sponsor us to support our funding target.

Look out for the call for volunteers, casting and production. And please talk to any of us if you want to know more.

Steph Williamson - St Mary's
Janet Dowding - Influence Church
Anne Simpson - Methodist Church

PASSION PLAYS

The notice on the previous page about the prospect of a Passion Play in Richmond next year prompted **JOHN McCORMACK** to delve into the history of this traditional art form, which has become so popular in Yorkshire.

Passion plays have long served as one of the most vivid ways in which communities can retell the story of Christ's final days on earth. Although performed in many towns and cities in the UK, and indeed throughout the world – think of the huge production staged every 10 years in Oberammergau, in the Bavarian Alps – the tradition is particularly strong in Yorkshire, where, according to Wikipedia, 'the York Mystery Plays are considered to be the most complete and culturally significant in Europe.'



The Crucifixion scene — Oberammergau 2020

Passion plays grew out of medieval liturgical drama, especially short devotional dialogues such as the *Quem Quaeritis* (*Whom do you seek?*) consisting of a mere 4 lines spoken by two choirs addressing one another in dramatic form. Apparently, these gradually developed into full-scale dramatizations of biblical events and, rather like early stained-glass windows, were considered to be aids to devotion and teaching, especially for largely illiterate congregations. By the 13th & 14th Centuries, however, they had moved from inside churches to the streets and public spaces, becoming major civic events which blended religious meaning with local pride, craftsmanship and spectacle.

The York Mystery Plays were first recorded in 1322, but by the late Middle Ages they had grown into a cycle of 48 pageants depicting biblical stories. These were performed annually on individual wagons which moved throughout the city. Each

play was assigned to a different craft guild – the Shipwrights staged the Building of the Ark; the Goldsmiths were assigned the Coming of the Kings; and the Butchers performed the Crucifixion, to name but three. Understandably, the Guilds vied with one another to demonstrate their skills and so produced sets of real quality on the wagons. The Plays drew crowds from far and wide, becoming major civic events which blended religious meaning with local pride, craftsmanship and spectacle.



The Reformation brought an abrupt end to these performances, for by the late 16th Century religious drama was viewed with suspicion. This led to the suppression of the York cycle of plays which, for the next 400 years, survived only as old manuscripts. They hadn't been forgotten, however, and, with renewed interest in medieval drama in the 20th Century, their modern revival began in 1951 as part of the Festival of Britain. When it was re-introduced and performed that year in the ruins of St. Mary's Abbey in York, the production was so well received that a pattern of large-scale performances was established, which now take place every 4 years. Since the revival, the original cycle of 48 plays has been reduced into a more manageable set of 8 – 12 plays, with the next performances in York scheduled for 28th June and 5th July 2026.



A scene from York's 2022 performance

justice, suffering and hope, while still retaining the emotional power of the Passion narrative.

While York remains the centrepiece, numerous towns and villages within the county have put on their own performances over the years. These are always characterised by wide, voluntary community involvement and support. In recent times, there have also been many modern adaptations of the scripts, which have explored contemporary themes such as

Let us hope that the organisers of next year's Richmond Passion Play find lots of enthusiasm and support for the project within our community. It has the potential to really foster community collaboration and do the town proud.

John McCormack

HARD QUESTIONS

With the so-called Christian USA and Jewish Israel attacking the Muslim theocracy of Iran, and the Middle East erupting in conflict, this seems a good time to ask a question many have raised about the violence apparently caused by religion.

JOHN PRITCHARD looks at the issue.

Isn't Religion one of the Biggest Causes of Violence in the World?

Yes. Christians and members of most world religions can be incredibly intolerant over matters about which they feel strongly. The evidence list is embarrassing for Christians: the Crusades, the Reformation Wars of Religion, medieval anti-semitism, the Inquisition, heresy trials, Northern Ireland, and countless flare-ups between and within churches.

So, apart from putting our hands up, what can we say?

First, this wasn't the religion that Jesus Christ would have recognised.

The so-called Prince of Peace was so named, because he constantly spoke of, gave out, and exemplified peace. 'Peace be with you' were his most common words. 'Blessed are the peacemakers' was the mantra of his life as a radical non-violent teacher. So too St. Paul, whose angry journey to Damascus was interrupted so completely that he could write the sublime chapter 1. Corinthians 13: 'Now faith, hope and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.'

Faulty religion comes from the tragic scrap yard of the human heart..

And this is distorted by our tendency towards selfishness, greed and power. 'The heart is deceitful above all things. Who can understand it?' (Jeremiah 17.9). The drive to control others and bend them to our will is a constant in human behaviour. Faith seeks to transform this 'Fallen' instinct, but it's always a work in progress. We are all unfinished, incomplete Christians.

Much violence by 'Christians' is, in fact, more tribal than religious.

See the painful history of Roman Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, for example. Tribalism has been rife in the province for generations and has erupted into violence in terrible ways, when the self-righteousness of social and cultural tribes has latched on to the convenient labels of faith.

The answer to religious violence isn't less religion; it's better religion.

The answer to the darkness of religion isn't to get rid of it – which is impossible anyway, when humankind is fundamentally wired for religious belief; the answer to darkness is light. Christians have to bear witness to the pure, fresh air of Love and its social expression – justice.

The secular alternative of trying to live without faith has a much worse record than Christian history.

One philosopher wrote, 'What I find most mystifying is the strange supposition that a truly secular society would be more tolerant and less prone to violence than a society shaped by faith. Given that the modern age of secular governance has been the most savage and violent period in human history by a factor, and body count, of incalculable magnitude, it's hard to identify the grounds for this confidence.' He would have in mind Hitler's Germany, Stalin's Russia, Mao's China, Pol Pot's Cambodia and many more.

We have to admit to terrible things having been done by Christians in the name of their faith. But we have to see through those corruptions of Christianity and pledge ourselves, in our time, to the values of Jesus, and to staying close to Him.

John Pritchard



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



Ogden Taylor	17th December '25
Ann Baty	14th January '26
George Robert Metcalfe	17th January '26
Almeana Eales	1st February '26

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.

FROM WORLD CUP TO ANOTHER GOAL

This series of articles has followed **Jan and Jim Jack's** progress through County Durham, walking the recently instituted Camino Ingles. Mapped by a group led by Keith Taylor, the walk is creating a pilgrimage route which picks its way from Finchale Priory, four miles North of Durham City to Gainford, following established tracks and rights-of-way over a distance of about 35 miles. Last month, a chance meeting with Keith in West Auckland, gave a surprise ending to another section, so it's there we pick up the story at the start of the last nine miles. They have chosen to tackle this in two sections — West Auckland to Ingleton and then Ingleton to Gainford. How is the 'eating of the elephant in small chunks' going? Let's find out.

Another small bite of the proverbial elephant. We were becoming used to the routine of leaving our car at our destination for the day and then using buses to take us to a start point, although this was more complex. With no direct bus route between Ingleton and West Auckland, we parked our car in Ingleton village and caught the hourly service bus to Cockfield. Some most enjoyable chat with local service users led to expressions of surprise that we were disembarking in Cockfield and not going on to 'Barney market.' However tempted we were to sample market day in Barnard Castle, we took our leave of our travelling companions and, after a twenty minute wait, took our second bus of the day to West Auckland.

Our excellent walk notes drew our attention to the hotel in which we had drunk coffee with Keith Taylor, Camino planner extraordinaire, where we had ended our last walk. This old building had started life as a hunting lodge for Henry VIII (or so it is believed) and later became the 18th Century home of the Eden family. One of their number, George, took the title Baron Auckland of West Auckland when elevated to the peerage after a successful career in

politics and, as a patron of the first governor of New Zealand, found the town of Auckland being named after him. The UK prime minister in the 1950s, Sir Anthony Eden, was a descendant. It was here we had collected our latest stamp



**Manor House Hotel —
Henry VIII's Hunting Lodge?**

on the passport, so it was from here we should start. Admiring the second longest village green in Durham once more, and the sculpture of the footballer and the miner mentioned in last month's issue, we set off southwards

The route took us past the primary school, over a beck and onward briefly cross country to cross the A688. Leaving West Auckland behind, we headed off on well marked paths into more open country. Although it was mid-October, there were plenty of berries, hips, sloes, haws and rowan on the bushes and trees which we passed on our way. Some fields were freshly tilled in some cases: in others already planted, green shoots were already appearing. Once again, the slow journey of the pilgrim gave us time to reflect on a mild Autumn and what would happen to these inordinately early signs of spring if the weather turned unkind.



The fruits of Autumn

As we weaved our way through the way-marked countryside, for the first time we encountered no stand-out moments, although this made us look harder at the ordinary around us and appreciate it. Nothing evidently historic, no key landmarks, not even fellow-travellers to talk with.

This changed on Hummerbeck Lane, when two cyclists on electric bikes stopped to give way to us as our paths crossed. Easy conversation followed. It turned out that they were from the same area of Cumbria as the one we inhabited for ten years before coming to Richmond. Exchanging memories followed before parting.

Our notes warned us that parts of this walk would be muddy, but with a relatively dry Autumn up to this time, we could enjoy a 'clart-free' journey. Jan's app on her phone (entitled 'Merlin') helped us to identify birds seen and unseen by their song. So robins, sparrows, chaffinch were passed, all in full voice.

The countryside was fairly level throughout, with gentle rises and descents, passing few houses on the way. The time passed quite quickly, as walked steadily towards the village of Ingleton, enjoying the peace, the fresh air and the brightness of an Autumn day. I say 'quite quickly', because we were delayed only by a stile whose design was somewhat obstructive. Nevertheless, with a bit of teamwork i.e. Jan bending my leg the extra few degrees needed to clear the top spar as her contribution, me grunting being mine, we were on our way again — the support of a fellow pilgrim easing the pathway!

So it was that one disused quarry, 1 farm, no fellow-travellers, one stile and two cups of lemon and ginger tea later, we arrived in Ingleton, a designated conservation village.

We made time to visit the church of St John the Evangelist on the main street to seek out passport stamps and enjoy the architecture of this Grade 2 listed church before heading back to Richmond. It was good to find a village church with a welcoming open door



**St John the Evangelist Church,
Ingleton**

Looking back on the four or five miles walked, we realised that it had been a really good day without the need for any 'wow' moments to make it so. The mixture of easy conversation and companionable silence and an appreciation of the 'ordinary', which would otherwise have passed us by, are probably a feature of any distance walk — pilgrimage or not. And once more we had been blessed with dry bright weather, which meant that Jan didn't get too cold in dialling back her normal walking speed to accommodate my plod. Only one more leg to go and we will have met our first objective, namely to complete the Durham section of the Camino Ingles of the North.

Three weeks later ...

Well, this is it! From the hottest weekend of the year in July for the start the Camino Ingles at Finchale, to the wettest weekend in November to end it. Only four miles to go — Ingleton to Gainford. Looks a pleasant, though unexciting, route to end this consumption of the elephant's Durham leg. Darker nights are upon us, but following the usual pattern of leaving the car at the end and problem-free bus routes to get us to the start, the distance ahead promised that all could

be completed before nightfall. Jan's immaculately researched bus timetables swing into action once more as we park on the Green in Gainford, in plenty of time to catch the half-hourly Bus into Darlington (Town Hall) at 10.18. This allowed a good 10 minutes to walk the short distance to Tubwell Row to catch the three-times-per-day service to Ingleton at 10.54. So we stand by the bus stop on the Green in Gainford as 10.18 becomes 10.23, but still no bus.



The promising sign

We stop a local resident who informs us that, although this is indeed a bus stop (identified by the give away words 'bus stop' and a silhouette of a single-decker bus,) no buses have stopped here for about ten years! The bus stop we seek is on the main road from Barnard Castle. So do we have a plan B or give up? Well, it's a pilgrimage, so no giving up.

Our plan B is quickly formulated. Car to Darlington, to Priestgate, just round the corner from Tubwell Row. Might just do it. Park in the multi-storey; two minutes to work out which of the myriad ways to pay for parking; and off to Tubwell Row — just in time to wave to the first of only three buses to Ingleton just pulling away from the bus stand.

And so to plan C — which only existed when plan B collapsed. Call our daughter. 'Are you busy, pet?' Not really ... and so our family taxi set off for Gainford and we headed back from whence we came, both cars arriving at the Green in Gainford at the same time. So, after over an hour-and-a-half, the distance travelled to our destination was precisely ... nil!



.... and the reality!
No buses in Gainford

Never mind. We had a cunning plan, which was working. The family Uber took us on the five-minute direct road to Ingleton. We tumbled out, dispensed with the regulation Costa coffee cups (other brands are available) in the nearest litter bin, and, with sincere and effusive thanks, we began our final journey of the Durham section, very much believing that this would simply tick the box, earn the stamp, but not be of any particular fascination. How wrong we were!

But that's for next month.

Jim Jack

HOLY WELLS

After being intrigued by recent press reports of the re-opening of St Mungo's Well in Glasgow (see later), **CHRISTINE PORTER** decided to delve deeper into the history of these holy wells, some of which go back to pagan times.

Human beings are obsessed with water. We bathe in it, swim in it and spend leisure time by the sea or lakes. Our connection with water has been studied by scientists, who note that an instant positive response is generated in our brains when we are near water, releasing neuro-chemicals that improve blood flow to the brain and heart, making us feel more relaxed and increasing our sense of wellbeing. This appreciation of the importance of water in our lives has long been understood by our ancestors, who frequently settled near rivers, water sources and wells.

Some wells were thought to have healing qualities, due to an ancient belief in water gods and spirits. Sometimes shrines were built over wells, to mark those that were especially revered and regarded as holy, particularly from the Iron Age and Roman periods onwards. These holy wells became places of ritual and pilgrimage. Discoveries of votives in holy wells show that people deliberately placed items of importance in the water, including gold objects and decorative weapons, as well as human and animal remains. In Celtic regions, the pagan veneration of sacred water sites was symbolised by hanging strips of cloth, or "clooties", on nearby trees and bushes. The belief in water spirits continues to the present time through traditions such as the custom of well-dressing with flowers, which takes place in Derbyshire and Staffordshire.



Clotie Well at Munloch, Scotland

This practice is thought to derive from early pagan floral offerings to water spirits.

Many of the wells which were the focus of religious or ritual activity during pre-Christian times were subsequently re-dedicated in honour of Christian saints, and sometimes chapels were built over them. Some legends claim that holy wells

have sprung up where the water was said to have been made to flow by the action of a saint, or where early saints were killed or buried.

The spiritual significance of water bubbling up from the ground is a prominent theme in the Bible, hardly surprising since it tells the stories of a people living in dry desert conditions. It was beside a well that Abraham first invoked the name of God, and his son Isaac is portrayed digging out and unblocking wells and springs. The Old Testament also recounts how Moses followed a divine command to strike a rock, which produced a gushing stream of water. In Hebrew, the word *ayin* is used both for a spring and an eye, suggesting that where water emerges, there too is the eye of God. The New Testament continues this theme in the story of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman beside Jacob's well at Sychar, where he tells her: "The water I shall give will be an inner spring, always welling up for eternal life."

It is not just in Christianity that wells and springs have spiritual significance. For Muslims, drinking water from the Zamzan Well that emerges from a rock near the Kaaba at Mecca is an important element in the Haj pilgrimage. It is believed to have been miraculously provided by the Archangel Gabriel for Ishmail and his mother in the desert.



Zamzan Well at Mecca



Ruins of Walsingham Abbey

In countries that converted from Roman Catholicism to Protestantism, many wells fell into disuse and were lost, since they were closely linked with the cults of the saints. A good example were the multiple holy wells at Walsingham in Norfolk, known for their healing properties, which had been an integral element of the pilgrimage to the nearby shrine of the Virgin Mary. By medieval times, Walsingham had become second only to Canterbury in importance as an English pilgrimage site, attracting pilgrims from across the country and beyond. Royal

patronage helped the shrine to grow in wealth and popularity, with visits from many monarchs, including Henry VIII who finally had the shrine destroyed in 1538, after which the wells fell into disuse. After 350 years of neglect, the past century has witnessed the dramatic restoration of pilgrimage to Walsingham, now home to two distinct, major shrines with wells, both dedicated to Our Lady of Walsingham: the Anglican Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, re-established in 1931, and the Roman Catholic National Shrine (Slipper Chapel) re-established in 1934. In 2003 Walsingham was voted the nation's favourite spiritual place by Radio 4 listeners. Apart from the twin wells at Walsingham, there are a few other active holy wells that still attract large numbers of pilgrims in the UK, including St Winefride's Well in Holywell, Wales, and the Chalice Well in Glastonbury.

It is estimated that there have been more than 8000 holy wells in Britain, usually dedicated to a saint or the Virgin Mary, although only a fraction survive. Many have been covered over for constructing roads and buildings, while climate-change and diverting water courses for drainage have caused others to dry up. Some have fallen into disuse or become hidden by undergrowth, but the recent creation of new pilgrim ways, particularly in Scotland, has put some forgotten medieval holy wells back on the map. Our Lady's Well in Whitekirk, East Lothian, is a central feature on the Forth to Farne Way linking North Berwick and Lindisfarne. St Glass's Well in the old Fife mining village of Kinglassie, probably visited by medieval pilgrims to St Andrews, has been cleared and opened up to refresh modern pilgrims walking the Fife Pilgrim Way.



Mother Shipton's petrifying well

The website www.britishholywells.co.uk records Britain's surviving, lost and destroyed holy wells, and currently records 2733 holy wells in Britain and 49 on the Isle of Man. Around 19% have been destroyed; 63% still exist; and the locations of the remaining 18% have been lost. In North Yorkshire, of the 68 that are listed, 44 are extant and the remainder are either lost, dry, destroyed or capped. Possibly the most famous well in North Yorkshire, now a tourist attraction, is the petrifying well in

Knarborough. It is linked to Mother Shipton, a sixteenth century prophet, who was born in a cave nearby. Lastingham has 3 holy wells, all of which are now dry. Near Richmond, there was a St Osyth's Well, now recorded as "destroyed", but map co-ordinates indicate that it was located not far from Aske Hall, just off Gilling Road.

The website is currently a work in progress and also records newly discovered or restored wells, e.g. St Osyth's Well at Bierton (Buckinghamshire), completely restored and rebuilt by the Parish Council to mark the Millennium Year. Other new discoveries include St Peter's Well in Derby (added to the website on 6th December '25) and St Mary's Well in Holbrook, Gloucestershire (added on 10th January '26).

Last year was the 850th anniversary of the city of Glasgow, and a series of concerts in the cathedral celebrated the refurbishment of the long-neglected St Mungo's Well in the crypt.



Newly restored St Mungo's Well, Glasgow

This well is believed to be where the city's founder and patron saint, also known as Kentigern, established his cell and performed baptisms in the well below, fed by waters of the Molendinar Burn, a tributary of the Clyde. St Mungo's Well became one of Britain's major pilgrimage destinations for more than 300 years. It is a place of deep spiritual significance, and not only predates

Christianity as a sacred site, but also marks the start of what would become the city of Glasgow. The well was later incorporated into the walls of Glasgow Cathedral, forming the heart of the Kentigern Shrine in the crypt. Neglected for many years, the well has been drained and cleaned, revealing coins, rings and shells on which pilgrims had written their names. Its shaft has been lined with more than a thousand hand-blown Italian glass tiles inlaid with gold leaf, with blue tiles representing water and green ones representing nature.

With climate change and pollution threatening water supplies, we are rediscovering the reverence our ancestors felt for holy wells. These sites are important, because they connect us to a tradition of prayer over many centuries and to the saints our predecessors honoured.

Christine Porter

FRIENDS OF ST MARY'S

Quiz Night

The year got off to a good start with another successful Quiz Night, with quizmaster Dave Tucker in the chair. The usual mixture of informative, obscure and interesting ('Oh, I'm sure I know that') questions, with excellent pie and peas at the interval, served by David Frankton and his team, meant another enjoyable session at the Town Hall. The usual bar, staffed by Andy Lovell and John Challis, lubricated the memory banks, particularly those of the team of St Mary's bellringers, who once again ran out winners. Great to see so many non-church-goers participating. The Friends see part of their role as offering socialising opportunities for our members to meet together, but also for the wider community to be brought into contact with the people from our churches. Many thanks to Andy Lovell, in particular, for organising the event, and to the team of willing helpers who shared in the workload on the night. The event raised £940.

Next events

Blues in the Pews makes a welcome return this month after a disappointing turnout last October, when a very stormy, wet night undoubtedly affected attendance. Buying your tickets in advance would be a good way to show the organisers your support for these occasions — full details are given on page 27. The calendar of events for the rest of this year are shown on the next page.

Friends of St Mary's Annual General Meeting

All those worshipping at St Mary's are automatically considered to be members of the Friends, so it was good to see that over 40 people stayed behind after Morning Worship on 8th March to attend the AGM. Reports were received about activity in 2025, and the committee and officers were elected for 2026. The organisation raised a total of £14,543.88 through our events programme in last year and, by using this amount, topped up with some of the £19,000 carried forward from 2024, we were able to make another significant contribution to the completion of the Step-Free Access project, yet still ended the year with £17,770.34 to carry forward into 2026. We have already committed £250 to the Flower Guild to support their work of adorning the church; £250 to the much-valued Warm Hub based at the Methodist Church; and as yet unspecified amounts to upgrade our toilet facilities and begin re-decoration work in the Church itself. Peter Trewby was re-elected as Chair, Graham Barber as Treasurer and Jim Jack as Secretary.

Friends events in 2026

Friday 24th April	Blues in the Pews	St Mary's
Saturday 30th May	At Home Coffee Morning	John and Alice Challis
Friday 26th June	An Evening with Musicality	St Mary's
Thursday 9th July	Coffee Morning	Town Hall
Saturday 11th July	Church Barbecue	St Mary's
Saturday 29th August	Plant and Produce Sale	St Mary's
Saturday in September	At Home Coffee Morning	to be arranged
Friday 25th September	Folk Night with Jez Lowe	St Mary's
Saturday 10th October	Curry Night	Town Hall
Thursday 29th October	Fashion Show	Town Hall
Saturday 14th November	Quiz Night	Town Hall
Friday 27th November	Royal Northern Sinfonia	St Mary's
Saturday 19th December	Christmas Coffee Morning	Town Hall

In addition, the Friends are supporting a number of events by providing hospitality and refreshments.

There is still a Blues in the Pews night to fit in in late summer, plus an Evening of Mike Porter Video Diaries of Richmond in the 1990s in the early Autumn. The Army Band will return in December, and exciting news will follow shortly about the Bootleg Eagles coming to St Mary's in January 2027.

Jim Jack



**Jez Lowe — Internationally
acclaimed Folk singer**



Royal Northern Sinfonia

**Friends of St Mary's Church Richmond
and
Found the Note
present**

Pat Fulgoni

with

Henry Botham

Keyboards

Plus Support

Drystone Blues Collective

Friday April 24th

St Mary's Church Richmond

7.30pm for 8.00pm

Bar

Tickets £10 adv (£12 Door) from :

The Bookstop Market Hall Richmond

or contact :

foundthenote@yahoo.com

THE STATION

Singers

Supporting
Richmondshire Museum
present

SONGS FROM SHOWS, STAGE & FILM

Led by our Musical Director, Kay Bromhead

Saturday 18th April 2026 at 7.00pm

(Doors open 6.30pm)

St Mary's Church, Richmond



Tickets available from
www.ticketsource.co.uk/the-station-singers
Scan the QR code
www.richmondstationsingers.co.uk

Tickets £11 On the door £12
Accompanied under 18s free

Please bring cash for raffle and bucket collection
Refreshments served on arrival



For more information: stationsingers@gmail.com
admin@richmondshiremuseum.org.uk



CHARITY OF THE MONTH — APRIL

This month, **Rachel & Howard Walker** invite our support for a long-running charity which supports, trains and provides assistance dogs for those afflicted by sight loss.

There are 2 million people living with sight loss in the UK, and the number is set to double by 2050. Every day 250 people in the UK begin to lose their sight, and with that their freedom, independence and confidence: as a result many feel lonely and isolated.

Guide Dogs began in 1931 and since then 38,000 dogs have been partnered. 518 new partnerships were set up and 3,200 partnerships supported in 2024. Locally, there are 8 puppies in training and 2 working dogs.

A person with a guide dog with its distinctive harness is a familiar sight to us all, but behind this are many years of research, careful breeding, training and fundraising. Many people are involved in order to partner one dog with a new user – breeding dog volunteers, puppy raisers, and trainers at one of the several regional centres. The person, as well as the dog, has to be trained, but once a careful partnership has been made, the users world can be transformed.



Guide Dog in training

Wayne – ‘When I lost my sight at 28 I was in complete denial. But when I was partnered with my guide dog something shifted. For the first time in years, I felt free: now with Liberty by my side, I get to live the life I want, not just exist.’

Although best known for their work partnering guide dogs with visually impaired people, Guide Dogs provide many other services. For example, they:

- provide Sighted Guide Training for someone supporting a person with sight loss;
- provide technical equipment for everyday living and working;
- campaign on everyday issues which affect those with sight loss, like unsafe bus stops which force people to cross cycle paths, or the dangers of pavement parking.

Guide Dogs also work with young people: there are 28,000 children and young people in England with sight loss, and there are many services including:

- My Time to Play Sessions, which began in 2022, for children from birth to 4 years old plus their parents and siblings, with activities such as music and movement and sensory play;
- Custom Eyes Books, which are made according to each child's needs;
- Some children are partnered with a Buddy Dog, which builds confidence and provides companionship; and
- Family Support Groups – one parent said *“the emotional and practical support has made it easier to accept Eliza’s diagnosis. I don’t know where we would be without Guide Dogs”*.

Guide Dogs provides information and advice, life skills, on-going welfare support, and aims to help all those who are visually impaired to live independently, actively and well.

We recently met Jane from York who told us – ‘my beautiful guide dog Venus allowed me to be me again’.



It costs £102,000 for a Guide Dog from Birth to Retirement, so your support will be much appreciated. We are fortunate to have a local support group for Guide Dogs, who always welcome volunteers and fundraising. If interested, please contact babshunt873@gmail.com . Thank you.

Rachel Walker

The 'Welcome Hub' has now been running successfully for three years.

If you would like to learn more about joining the volunteering team, please contact:

Dr John Ridley,

Welcome Hub Coordinator

on (01748 818653 or

JohnRidley7449@aol.com).

WELCOME HUB
FREE WARM WELCOMING SAFE

Richmond Methodist Church
Dundas Street Entrance
Monday: 9.30am – 12.30pm
Friday: 9.30am – 12.30pm
Free hot drinks and snacks

Warm. Welcome. Spaces.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT ...

In February, just before the war in the Middle East, **JOHN PRITCHARD** preached the following sermon. It was based on the Gospel for the day about the temptations of Jesus in the wilderness, but it tackled the wider issue of how we 'see' the world as Christians - 'further up and further in.' In these troubled times, and bearing in mind this month's '**Hard Question**' on page 15, it seems particularly appropriate to reproduce it in full below.

A Worldview — Further up and Further in

I've had a bad week. I found myself increasingly depressed about human nature and what our world is becoming. Of course, I shouldn't be reading books like *Autocracy Inc* (Incorporated) by Anne Applebaum, that lays out in excruciating detail how autocrats are taking democracy apart across the world. In plain sight. Then my magazine, *The Week*, told me how President Trump is suing his own Internal Revenue Service for \$10bn, because someone there had leaked the fact that Trump had paid only \$750 in income tax in 2020. \$750!!

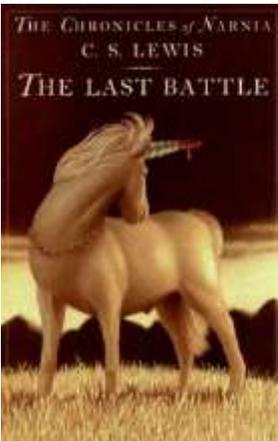
Then there's the Epstein Files, revealing layer after layer of hideous behaviour by an elite stratosphere of society where they think normal rules don't apply, and everyone knows each other, and nobody minds what anybody does because everyone's doing it. Then there's been the AI conference in India, that's spelled out the dystopian possibility of AI bots deciding they won't obey human commands, but will do what they want – which could destroy us all. And it's racing towards us with reckless speed. And I haven't even mentioned Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor...

(The following weekend, the Middle East erupted as the USA and Israel attacked Iran. President Trump struggles to find a legal justification and has irresponsibly left the defenceless population to bring about regime change, facing the Islamic Revolutionary Guard which killed over 20,000 of them in January.)

So where is God in all this? Is this world going to hell in a handcart, with God just looking on helplessly? A rabbi was teaching a group of students about the Messiah. One student put his hand up – 'Christians say the Messiah has already come,' he said. The rabbi went over to the window and looked down silently for a minute or two at the street below. 'It doesn't look much like it to me,' he said. No, it doesn't. But is that the full story?

What world do we see? That's the question. Jesus went out into the wilderness to face up to that question. What world did he see? Was it one where evil ran the show and where, if he was to achieve anything, he'd have to play along? The temptations he faced were really about power, and the abuse of power. Would he abuse his power over the material world, turning stones into loaves of bread? Would he abuse his power over the spiritual world – call on angels to catch him as he jumped off the roof of the Temple, and so assert his divine credentials? Would he abuse his political power over nations and kingdoms by compromising with the devil and bowing down before him?

The answer each time was 'No': he wouldn't abuse his power, because he had a different vision of the world. Evil isn't the only power at work in our global story, no matter how dark it seems. Jesus saw a beautiful, abundant, joyful world that lay inside, around and beyond the soiled, corrupt world that the devil was offering him. He saw a world where you didn't just live on bread, but on God's love; where God isn't put to the test, because his grace permeates everything; where you don't make corrupt deals with the devil because God is all in all and fulfils all our dreams – 'Worship the Lord your God and serve only him.'



So which world do we see? The world the media shows us, or the world Jesus shows us? In the Narnia book, *The Last Battle*, the children are looking down on the real Narnia – CS Lewis' picture of the Kingdom of God – and they're amazed at how beautiful it is. The Unicorn says: 'I've come home at last! This is my real country: I belong here. This is the land I've been looking for all my life, though I never knew it till now. Come further up, come further in!'

'Further up, further in' is where we find the real world, the home we really belong to. The immediate world of Autocracy Inc, of Trump, Epstein and rogue AI, is only the shadowland. Further up, further in is a vastly bigger, colourful, compassionate and just world, that Jesus called the kingdom of God.

A little girl had a Christian magazine with a picture of the world that she proceeded to cut up as a jigsaw, but, when she tried to put it together again, she couldn't do it. She took it to her father, who showed her that on the other side of the picture of the world was a picture of Jesus. And, he said, if she could get the picture of Jesus right, on the other side she'd get the world right. A bit twee, perhaps, but you get the point!

What world do we see? The soiled, corrupt world of my bad week, or the picture of the world that Jesus held before the devil in the wilderness? The Kingdom where love is the way. Father Ed, the co-founder of AA said, ‘Sometimes heaven is just a new pair of glasses.’ It’s a new way of looking. Or, in the words of the American writer Henry Thoreau, ‘The question is not what you look at, but what you see.’ One of our daughters, when she was 4 years old, said one day at family prayers, ‘Dear God, thank you for making the world seem new, even though it’s very old. Amen.’ Indeed, amen to that. What world do we see?

When we are tempted to despair of the world, and indeed when we are tempted to despair of our own weaknesses (and we all have them, we all know them), then we could do as Jesus did and choose instead the bigger, better world of the Kingdom of God. We could say, ‘No, **that’s** where we belong.’ Not in the shoddy world of temptation and failure. We could choose to go **further up and further in**. ‘Further up’ means going **above** the temptations and looking down on them, putting them into the bigger perspective of a world of beauty and honesty, of peace and hope. The real Narnia. ‘Further in’ means inhabiting **that** world.

If we go head-to-head with our temptations, we usually lose, don’t we? All our energy goes into the battle, but eventually we give in – again. It’s a weary struggle with our besetting sins, whatever they are – anger, selfishness, gossip, alcohol, greed, envy, pride, little dishonesties – whatever our temptations, we lose. But instead of battling head on, we could do as Jesus did and rise above the temptations: ‘further up,’ and see that bigger world ‘further in.’ Throughout his ministry, Jesus faced evil and temptation not with anger and violence, but by offering a more attractive alternative, a better world. We belong to that world, that bigger vision, that richer picture of a Kingdom where God is King, not the autocrats, and where the only writ that runs is that of love, and its social expression, justice.

I long for that world, further up and further in. But if I long for it, I must also work for it, every day. We all must. It’s our home, our real world.

John Pritchard



WORD SEARCH

Easter

Even as Jesus ate that last Passover meal with his disciples, he warned them he was about to be betrayed. He took the bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it to them; he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them to drink. The Old Covenant, based on Law, was ticking away its final hours; the New Covenant, based on Christ's body and his blood, was about to be ushered in. Jesus prayed in Gethsemane that this fearful cup might be removed from him, but even more, that God's will might be done. And it was. From Easter onwards we can only approach God through his Son, Jesus Christ, not on our own merit.

Jesus

Ate

Last

Passover

Meal

Disciples

Warned

Betrayed

Bread

Blessed

Wine

Thanks

Drink

Covenant

Law

Old

New

Body

Blood

Gethsemane

Cup

Removed

Will

Easter

Approach

God



NOTES FROM THE PAST

Usually, **JANE HATCHER** kindly offers accounts of people, places and events of long ago, but this month she reflects upon her memories of an event a mere 30 or so years ago.

Other Richmonds

I'm writing this on Candlemas. Yes, the dreary days are starting to become noticeably longer. An old farming adage was that a farmer should aim still to have half of his forage left by 2nd February, as it would be a long time before there is fresh grass available, but that must be very difficult when we have recently had some droughty Springs and other water-logged Springs.

I think I've got through January having remembered to write the new year correctly on the numerous cheques I have to send for subscriptions and bills which fall due in this hard-up month. But in the last few days, I've had a series of shocks to remind me how increasingly quickly time seems to move on these days. It started with "You know when we bumped into each other in Tesco". Yes, I thought, about 6 weeks ago. No, it turned out to be 4 months ago! Then "You remember when you researched the history of our house". A search of files proved that to have been 2006. But the next question was a puzzle: what is the life-span of a Royal Navy frigate? It turns out to be just over 30 years.

How did that arise? It was the news that HMS Richmond was about to be decommissioned. Our 'own' ship, whose crew were honoured with the 'Freedom' of Richmond. It was the last warship to be built on the Tyne by the famous old firm of Swan Hunter. The decision had been taken to name her 'Richmond', and the mayors of the three oldest Richmonds in the world were



HMS Richmond — F239 — Type 23 Frigate of the Royal Navy

invited to one of the official inaugurating ceremonies. Our mayor was Katherine Carr, and she and her husband Tom went along, only for Tom to be astonished to find that he had taught the Mayor of Richmond, Surrey, at Richmond Grammar School! Mickey King's father had been the licensee of the Town Hall Hotel, while the third Mayor — of Richmond, Virginia — was a black Baptist minister.



Richmond, North Yorks



Richmond, Virginia



Richmond, Surrey

This 'chain gang' got on so well, that it was decided to arrange for Richmond, Virginia, to host a visit by delegations from the two English Richmonds, and I was privileged to be invited to join the party from here. Richmond, Virginia is a large sprawling commercial city, rather like Leeds, with many huge former tobacco warehouses. We were shown the sites, of course, including visits to the theatre there, and a very snooty horse-racing meeting. The Civic Service took place in the mayor's Baptist Chapel, and what an amazing experience that was. All the English party were overwhelmed by the warm welcome and hospitality we were shown, and moved by the conviction of the worshippers, all dressed up to the nines, especially the many children there.

Something none of us had anticipated was the degree of overt racial prejudice totally evident in the way black people were treated in that Richmond, such as discrimination shown to our coach drivers. We tried hard to overcome this, to show that that was not the way we behaved, but we were only moderately successful, as it was so entrenched. I wonder if anything has changed there in the ensuing 30 or so years? And of course we had no idea then, that areas not far from us in Yorkshire Richmond, such as Darlington and Middlesbrough, would see dreadful riots attacking people of other religions and ethnic groups in 2025.

Now that we are well into 2026, how grateful we must be that things, if not exactly rosy in the world, seem at least to have moved on from that distressing time in our region. And let us hope we never again witness such awful things, as we look forward to Spring, and Summer, with glad hearts.

Jane Hatcher

MEMORABLE MANUSCRIPTS

If you are interested in needlework, not just as a practical skill, but in the way it has been used through the ages as a tool for communication, then **JUDITH MacLEOD** suggests this thoroughly researched book, although heavy-going at times, may appeal.

Book: Threads of Life

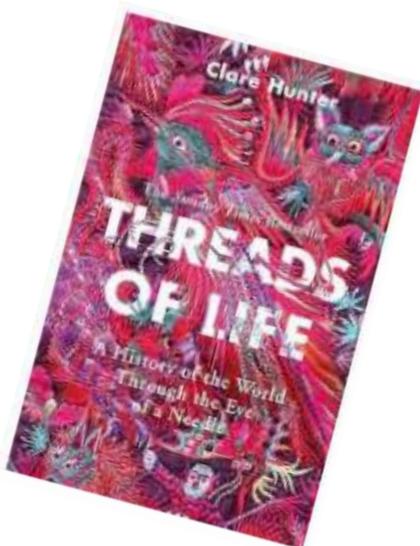
A History of the World Through the Eye of a Needle

Author: Claire Hunter

Publisher: Sceptre

This book is a chronicle of identity, protest, memory, power and politics covering a range of centuries and continents. It records the human need to communicate even in the most desperate of circumstances, and a 6-page bibliography supports the minute research upon which the author draws.

Claire Hunter is also interested in creative writing and uses her skills to enhance the reader's experience. On the first page, she describes part of her journey to see the Bayeux Tapestry (actually an embroidery, as it is sewn and not woven): 'I am on a train out of Paris, the hem of the city unfolding into a pretty patchwork of rural France.' I can just picture it. She describes the purpose of the tapestry as a warning of the cost of betrayal; its current fame; her disappointment, when she arrives in Bayeux, that the museum is so near to the station, requiring no pilgrimage; the atmosphere of the building in which it is housed; and a detailed description of the elements and narrative of the tapestry. She then asserts: 'It is generally agreed that the tapestry was designed by a man.' This is supported by the nature of the illustrations – war preparations, the portrayal of horses, and the weaponry. Abbot Scolland at St Augustine Monastery is identified as the likely designer. Questions as to who actually embroidered it, and whether in France or in England, are unresolved. Other





Part of Bayeux Tapestry

observations, such as the hundreds of depictions of men, horses and other animals but only six women, and the use of just 4 colours – red, blue, green and yellow – and 4 kinds of stitches, add to the reader's appreciation of the stitchers' skills. She deplores the injustice of the lack of interest shown in the lives and expertise of the embroiderers, while replicas of

the Bayeux Tapestry and other, more recent, examples of the collective inspiration to create sewn narratives are described.

Despite her lament at the injustice shown to women, Claire Hunter also celebrates the joy of the power of needlework. In chapter 2, entitled 'Power', she explores its importance in the sixteenth century. One example is the Cloth of Gold mentioned in the 1520 battle of the Field of the Cloth of Gold, because of the amount of gold used in the litters, tents and clothes spun from the beards of mussels. The Catholic church, too, valued embroidery and medieval England was for a time the source of the best embroidery that could be obtained. Mary Queen of Scots, imprisoned in Tutbury Castle, mourned her past glories through embroidery. The historical detail is so dense, you have to read it several times to absorb it fully.

The author has organised her material in 16 themes, with appropriate chapter headings. Chapter 2, entitled Power, is followed by Frailty, which describes projects by sufferers of severe mental illness, both men and women. Other chapter titles are Protest, Loss, Community, to name just a few. One that has stayed with me is Captivity, in which women prisoners-of-war in Singapore, separated from their menfolk in Changi prison, sewed something of themselves into an allotted six-inch square on quilts, which were sent to the men's prison.

As well as documenting the value of sewing in contexts as diverse as politics, religion and therapy, Claire Hunter records the passing of skills from one generation to another, usually in a direct, familial way. She is adept at conveying the resonances of familial traditions, and her well-written prose is dense with examples. It is a fascinating book to be read slowly, in order to absorb the carefully researched examples organised around the wide range of themes.

THE HISTORY OF HOT CROSS BUNS

What could be more evocative of Easter than hot cross buns? Nostalgic memories of childhood prompted **LIZ KLUZ** to look into the background of this culinary delight, and some of the customs associated with it.

There are some things in life that just shouldn't be messed with and, in my opinion, hot cross buns fall into that category.

As a youngster, living in London, it was my job to join the queue at our local bakery on Good Friday morning to buy the yummy buns for breakfast. The spicy smell emanating from the industrial quantity of buns which the baker and his family had been working on since the early hours was intoxicating. The fact that they were only available on one day of the year, made them really special and they were eaten with a kind of reverence and lashings of butter.

Sadly, the marketing executives for all the major supermarkets have spotted an opportunity to extend the sales of these popular buns by putting them into the shops from early January but, in doing so, they're completely missing the point that they were intended to mark the day of Jesus's crucifixion. I know that people can enjoy them without necessarily associating them with Christianity, so please don't think I'm being politically incorrect!

Did you know that new flavours for the buns include Tiramisu, lemon curd, rhubarb and ginger, orange marmalade or apple crumble? The salted caramel variety are rather good, I must admit, but I still prefer the traditional dark, spicy, fragrant ones from my childhood.

But, of course, hot cross buns have a long history going way back into pre-Christian times, when small cakes, sometimes marked with a cross, were eaten in spring by the pagan Greeks and Romans, particularly at the Festival of Diana which was celebrated at the Vernal Equinox.

Quite how soon after the general adoption of Christianity these festive little cakes became associated with Good Friday is unknown. There is a record of something similar being given to the poor at St. Alban's Abbey on Good Friday in 1361, and



possibly the idea spread to other places, but certainly by the early 1700s the annual consumption of hot cross buns was well established.



In towns and cities, especially London, street vendors could be seen and heard from early morning selling the hot buns from trays or baskets covered with cloths to keep them warm.

The street cries, advertising their wares, were first written down in 1744 and are still used by children today in a simplified form.



*Hot cross buns!
Hot cross buns!
One a penny, two a penny,
Hot cross buns!
If your daughters do not like them,
Give them to your sons
But if you haven't any of these pretty elves
You cannot do better than eat them yourselves.*



According to my trusty Dictionary of British Folk Customs, it was believed that hot cross buns made on Good Friday never went mouldy – apparently, if made in the traditional way and kept in a dry place, they rarely did.

The buns were also supposed to have curative properties, especially for ailments such as dysentery, diarrhoea, whooping cough and something called “summer sickness”. Even into the early 1900s, it was still common in country areas for a few buns to be set aside each year, hardened in the oven, then hung from the kitchen ceiling until they were needed. When illness came, a piece would be broken off and finely grated, then mixed with milk, which the patient would then drink. In some areas, powdered buns mixed into a warm mash were sometimes given to sick cattle.

There is a rather sad little custom which is celebrated each Good Friday at a pub called The Widow’s Son at Bromley-by-Bow in London. The pub was built in 1848 on the site of a cottage belonging to a widow, whose sailor son asked her to keep him a hot cross bun until he returned from his voyage. Unfortunately, he never came home, but his mother continued to save a bun for him every year and, when she died, a net containing a large collection of buns was found hanging from the ceiling in her cottage. Although sceptics have suggested that the story isn’t true, folk memory is strong enough to keep the memory alive, so each year a sailor from The Royal Navy places a new bun into a net in the Bromley pub in honour of the tradition.

Just another example of our British love of old customs.

Sudoku - Easy

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

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Sudoku - Medium

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

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All she had said was it was time for her
annual lawnmower service



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For more information or to sign up for the Song Squad

Contact Chris Denton 07817 386070



Usually last Sunday in every month
Next service — **26th April '26**,
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www.richmondhudswellparish.org.uk

LOUNGERS!

(The Ladies' Group)

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From 7.30pm in the **BLACK LION**
Finkle Street, Richmond

Next meeting:
24th April '26



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

9th April '26



Puzzle Solutions

Sudoku — Easy

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

Sudoku — Medium

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

Wordsearch



**Deadline for May '26 edition; Monday 13th April '26.
To contribute letters, articles, etc. please contact
connections.ed24@gmail.com or 07866 033263**

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.

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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



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in this place."

Reverend Matthew Hutchinson's Charity

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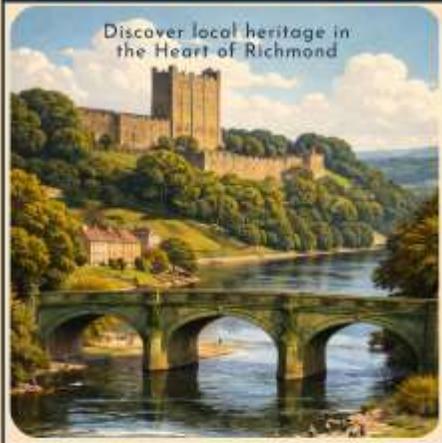
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