



CONNECTIONS

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

December 23/January 24

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	Every Sunday apart from 1st Sunday
	Worship for All	(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
	Free to Be	3rd Sunday (every 2 mths—Feb, April etc)
9.15 a.m.	Holy Communion	Every Wednesday

CHURCH SERVICES AT HOLY TRINITY CHAPEL, MARKET PLACE, RICHMOND

10.30 a.m. Holy Communion Every Thursday

PARISH OF ST MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS, DOWNHOLME

CHURCH OFFICERS

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CHURCH SERVICES AT DOWNHOLME

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

THE PARISH OF ST EDMUNDS, MARSKE

CHURCH OFFICERS

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Organist	Jennifer Wallis	(01748) 822930	1 School Terrace, Marske
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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



A tumultuous year of international and national uncertainty is drawing to a close with no real signs of resolution at the start of 2024. From afar, we see conflict, brutality, inhumanity brought into our homes through the reach of television—and feel we can do nothing concrete to help, especially as so much of the conflict is rooted in historical hurt, greed or misjudgement. Whilst the conflict being ‘played out’ in the area in and around the Holy Land has some roots in societal groups whose different religious backgrounds each preach peace, we are also reminded how easily the major conflict on 2022-3 in Ukraine has almost completely disappeared from our screens. This serves as a warning about how we may allow our own views to be shaped solely by what TV editors and visually impactful incidents bring to our attention. What makes a murder in the USA more important than social problems in our own country? Or what about the 23 other ongoing conflicts around the world about which we hear little or nothing.

It’s a challenging backdrop for our own festive season but it is a time where there is an extra emphasis on awareness of the need to help and be warm towards others. There is plenty ahead in the benefice and the town in which our community can become involved.

This is the last magazine for which I will be editor. I am immensely grateful for the opportunity which has widened my own, and hopefully your knowledge of the range of goodness which is supported by volunteers in our community. People have also been willing to share their interests and experiences—gardening, travel, recipes, walks, visits, school activity. The feedback from you, the reader, and the people to whom you pass on this magazine echoes my gratitude. Thanks this month to Christine Porter, John Pritchard, George Alderson and Liz Kluz for their writings. A special thank you to Ian Short, master photographer, who has brightened the front cover of our magazine for a number of years and for whom this image of Christmas at Ripon Cathedral will be his last regular contribution. Thanks so much, Ian.

And a thank you too to John McCormack, who will be stepping into the role of putting the contributions to the burgeoning editorial team of wife Carol, Christine Porter, John Pritchard, dare I say myself and another potential member to continue and develop our Benefice magazine. Each of these individuals still needs your help to keep this community magazine informative and relevant—so when you’re asked for a brief interview, a photograph, an item of writing, please just say ‘Yes’. Remember, ‘the load lighteth easily upon many rather than heavily on a few.’ Have a great Christmas—and thank you.

Jim Jack



A Letter from Paul - Curate, not Saint



La la la, la la la, lalala laaaaaaa (guess the Christmas song)



I CAN'T WAIT! Christmas is just around the corner and the weather has changed making me feel all Christmassy. I started my countdown to Christmas on 1st January 2023 and we are nearly there. I know some of you may find my countdown annoying.

Christmas is a time when the TV adverts would try to tell us that everyone is happy and everyone has lots to eat, mountains of presents and rooms full of friends and family to share in the festivities. That is not true for many in our country, not to mention those around the world who have far less than we do. Christmas is a time of excess and for many the drive to 'keep up with the Jones' only drives them further into debt. I have been humbled by the work of many in our communities who help those in need. This is sometimes done because of faith, but often, it is done to simply give back to a society that is in need. There is hope!

Christmas for me as a child was rarely filled with joy. There would be a guarantee of arguments between my brother and I and our stepbrothers and sister as the battle commenced as to who was the more spoilt. That would boil over to adults arguing and, more often than not the Christmas day afternoon trip home, rather than staying where we had expected. I would often feel aggrieved that my own father would not bother to call or send a gift, and this in turn heightened the need to argue with the other kids. After all, their father was very much present and willing and able to spoil them.

I tell you this, not to seek sympathy, but in some way to explain why I now appear to love Christmas as much as I do. In reality I find Christmas day very challenging. The memories of hurt still linger, and in an attempt to compensate from the past, I make every effort to ensure that Christmas for those around me is as good as it possibly can be. I am strange (I know some of you know that) as I find receiving gifts difficult and even embarrassing, but I genuinely LOVE being the one that

gives a gift, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant.

I'm sounding a bit like Ebenezer Scrooge, (incidentally my favourite book of all time). Yes, there are many of us who will be able to look back on Christmases past to the good and the bad, but like the message of Scrooge, I would like this message to bring about in you a sense that all is not lost. Ebenezer and me have both grown to love Christmas and even more importantly we have grown to love life itself.

It appears that these December magazine articles have become a place where I confess. Looking back to 2020, I let the secret out that I truly do not like Christmas carols, and now I've confessed to how challenging Christmas is in general for me. This next confession is less dramatic in some ways, but all too life changing in others. So here I go.... this will be my last Christmas in Richmond!

To many of you this won't be a shock, as we have known from day one that a curate (that's me) can only stay in post for a maximum of four years, but it still has come as a shock that time has flown by so quickly. Jeanette and I have grown to love Richmond and many people here, and due to our attachment to many of you, it will be a wrench to leave when that day come (a date not yet known). However, I/we intend to make the most of this final Christmas in Richmond. We will hold on tight to the joy that our community and church family bring to the season and I encourage you to consider what Christmas is truly meant to symbolise. It's not kids or adults arguing over who's child is more spoilt, it's not the overcooked turkey or the very questionable TV shows.

Stop for a moment and thank God for the birth of a little baby in a stable many miles from Richmond.

Stop for a moment and thank God for this sign, a sign of renewal, a sign of hope for the future.

Have a very Happy Christmas and a blessed New Year.

Paul x P.S. (The 'la la ' song above is Jingle Bells!)





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



Edna Bradley
Cornelius James Rowan
John Donald Norris
Evelyn Mary Wells

28th September
5th October
14th October
17th October

May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

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

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

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

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

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

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

All is well

(Extract from 'Death is Nothing at All' by Revd Henry Scott Holland)



**WARM
WELCOME
SPACE**



FREE • WARM • WELCOMING • SAFE

visit www.warmwelcome.uk

Warm Welcome has been running since November 2022, offering 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 three

days each week, and we have relied on our rota of loyal volunteers. We continued during the summer when we have been open on Friday mornings, and now we are planning for the autumn and winter. We are now opening Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Opening hours on each day are from 9.30am to 12.30pm.

Volunteers is still welcome for each session to welcome people 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 me as soon as possible. (Tel. 01748 818653 or by email: JohnRidley7449@aol.com).**



MUSINGS FROM MARSKE

With the price of postage going up once more and a growth of companies offering methods of sending Christmas greetings to friends and family on-line, the tradition of sending Christmas cards has been under threat for a number of years. And yet, many people from all age groups comment on how nice it is to receive letters and cards 'through the post', especially those which are hand-written. Such pleasure from receiving can only be gained if people (including recipients!) can take pleasure from taking the trouble to send. As with many of our Christmas traditions, cards are a Victorian 'invention'. Liz Kluz takes us back in time to how it all began.

Victorian Christmas Cards

The theme of this year's Christmas article was decided last December when I received an unusual present.

Some years ago, once our children reached an age when they could understand the reasoning behind the idea, we suggested a maximum of £10 per gift at Christmas. The point being that it's not the value of the gift that matters but the fun of finding something unusual to suit each person and then the joy of watching them unwrapping it. We still stick to that principle although the amount has risen to £15 recently. Oxfam book shops, car boot sales and antique markets have produced a fascinating selection of gifts which didn't break the bank and gave us all lot of fun including a stuffed mongoose and a display case full of false teeth...unused of course.!



A mongoose in the wild– just in case you've never seen one before

The gift which was the inspiration for this article was a Victorian scrap book found in a shop in Bath last year. The book is in a very sad state but it contains a wonderful collection of old Christmas and other greetings cards, dating from the early 1800s, all neatly arranged and pasted in by somebody unknown.

To help with dating the cards I bought a copy of *The History of the Christmas Card* by George Buday published in 1954. In compiling this fascinating book, the author was helped by Her Majesty Queen Mary who allowed him to borrow her personal collection of 18 albums containing cards old and new. She even brought them to London from Windsor Castle and allowed him to photograph and reproduce the cards for his book while identifying and noting the senders of the cards. Sadly the author was unable to dedicate the book to Her Majesty as she died in 1953 just before the book went to print.



**John Callcott Horsley
(1817-1903)**



First Christmas card—including an image of a small child drinking wine , which outraged some.



**Sir Henry Cole
(1808 –1882)**

The very first card with a Christmas greeting was commissioned by Henry (later Sir Henry) Cole and designed by his friend, artist John Calcott Horsley. The picture above shows the personalised card sent by the artist which has a little sketch of himself in the bottom right hand corner and is dated 'Xmasse 1843.' For centuries people had exchanged new year greetings but until 1843 nobody had produced a specific Christmas card.

In fact when the first cards were introduced, established printers (who produced playing cards, notepaper, envelopes, needle box liners, labels and other greetings cards) considered Christmas cards to be a temporary fad which would pass so they concentrated on a quick turnover “while the craze lasted”.



A New Year card—caption reads ‘foreign visitors—such nice company’. The Union Flag has not yet incorporated St Patrick’ cross

How wrong they were!

Enter the GPO

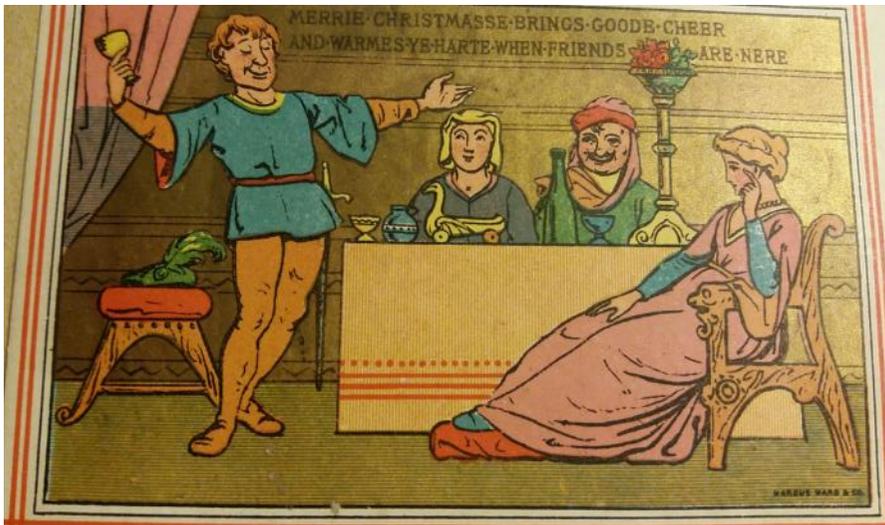
The first adhesive postage stamp had been invented by Sir Rowland Hill in 1837 but postage charges were paid by the recipient of the letter who also had the right to refuse it. The cost of the letter or package was calculated on the distance it had travelled and how many sheets of paper it contained. The system was too complicated with each delivery being charged separately. So, in January 1840, the Uniform Penny Post was introduced by the General Post Office. By sticking a new Penny Black stamp onto a letter, not exceeding half an ounce in weight, it could be sent from any part of the United Kingdom to any other part of the country for

one penny if paid when posted or for two pence if paid when delivered.

Just nine years earlier on September 10th, 1831 the York Herald reported that, following a proposition submitted by J. H. Fletcher Esq., the Postmaster General had approved the setting up of Post Offices at Reeth and Marske with daily horse-post communication from and to Richmond. The service had begun on the previous Tuesday delivering letters which had arrived in Richmond that morning and collecting post to be taken to Richmond 6 hours later. How marvellous it must have seemed to receive letters with the postage already paid.



One of the advantages of sending your Christmas greetings by post was that you didn't have to call on people personally as had been expected previously. Postage costs were reasonable and with the first cards being no bigger than a lady or gentleman's calling card, about 2" x 3", most would have been within the penny limit. At first some folk were reluctant to give up the idea of calling cards which the previous generation had used so they just added little coloured "scraps" which they stuck onto the corners of their existing cards leaving the backs blank for greetings.



Once the idea of specially designed Christmas cards really took off, printing companies competed with each other for the best artists and 'sentiment writers'. Wood engraver John Greenaway engraved his daughter Kate's first designs on wood in the 1860s and her artwork was used until about 1900. Aubrey Beardsley, George Cruikshank Jr., Rex Whistler, Louis Wain and Louisa, Marchioness of Waterford,

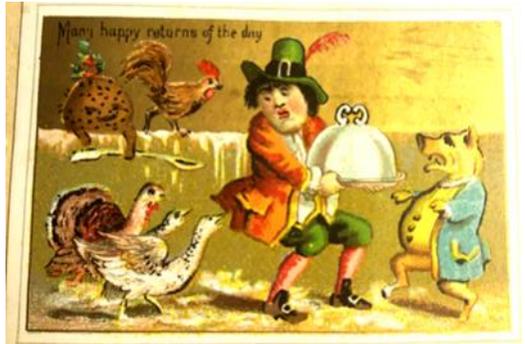


along with a thousand other artists, produced work which was used to decorate Christmas cards.

Surprisingly only a small proportion of card designs were religious and some were just plain odd. There were pictures of dead robins lying on their backs or quite alarming scenes of ruddy faced men wielding a blooded knife over a

pig or some chickens...hardly the sort of sentiment to fill anyone with festive cheer.

Each year the latest card designs became a hot topic of discussion and there was a certain amount of one-upmanship about the quality and size of cards received. However receiving cards didn't appeal to everybody and Vita Sackville-West's husband Harold Nicolson tells a lovely story of a friend who, when he received a card, would immediately put it into an envelope and post it onto someone else. If the card had been signed "Love from Pamela", he wouldn't bother to erase the name he just added "and Richard" leaving the recipient wondering who this person Pamela was.



Although the increased cost of stamps today has made posting cards very expensive, it would be a great pity to stop sending them altogether because, for many of our friends and distant relatives, who we rarely see, a card once a year is the only connection. Electronic cards and e-mails are just not the same.

Liz Kluz

HAPPY CHRISTMAS ONE AND ALL!

Christmas at Marske:	17 Dec	Carols & Crib Service	2.30 p.m
	24 Dec	Morning Prayer	11.00 a.m.
	25 Dec	Holy Communion	11.00 a.m.



Christmas Cards Today!



5 for £3.00



OR
20 for £10



Andy Lovell has once again produced some beautiful cards for sale for Christmas. Taken as drone shots over Richmond, the iconic castle and our church are captured dusted in snow. The cards are A5 size (the same size as this magazine) on high quality card, with all profits being donated to the Friends of St Mary's.

They are available from the back of St Mary's Church (payment using card reader by beside the door or cash/cheque in slot in wall) or by contacting Andy direct on 07974 766020. Thanks, Andy, for your generous support of the Friends through these seasonal sales.



RELIGION AND POLITICS

Sometimes it is useful to be able to reflect further on words from the pulpit on Sundays later in the week, especially on major matters of national or international concern. JOHN PRITCHARD challenged the oft-used phrase that 'the church should keep out of politics' in early November. This is a reprise of his thoughts.

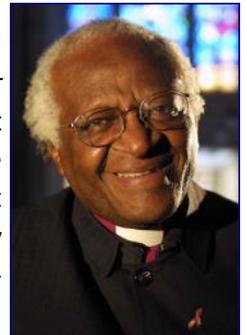
I'm really sad – no, let's admit it – *annoyed* when people say that religious leaders should keep out of politics, that religion and politics don't mix. What kind of God do they believe in? One that isn't bothered that Russia invaded Ukraine, that Israel and Hamas are at each other's throats, that we have a cost of living and poverty crisis in this country, that children are still dying by the million because of infected water, that climate change threatens everything about life on earth?



Frankly that's heresy. This world is God's, and we are made in God's image, therefore nothing is off the table to true religion. We aren't disembodied spirits; we're embodied persons whose flourishing is God's great project, and for whom therefore the means of our flourishing – food, housing, education, jobs, healthcare and so on, are central concerns.



Mahatma Gandhi, from another tradition, said that those who say that religion and politics don't mix, don't understand *either* religion *or* politics. Desmond Tutu put it neatly: 'I am puzzled about which Bible people are reading when they suggest that religion and politics don't mix.' Certainly the prophets of the Old Testament wouldn't have understood that idea at all.



And Jesus in Matthew 22 makes the point in his wonderfully subversive way when the Pharisees tried to catch him out with their question about whether they should pay tax to Caesar. Jesus calls for a denarius. 'OK, whose head and title is on that coin,' he asks. 'The Emperor's,' they say. 'Then give to the Emperor what belongs to him, *and give to God what belongs to God.*'



Game, set and match. Give the filthy lucre to Caesar (it's not important), but give to God what belongs to him – which every good Jew knew was everything! We owe everything to God, our very lives, everything we own and hold dear. God is our absolute priority every time. We're made in God's very image, so if that dirty little coin with Caesar's image on it belongs to him then let him have it, but *how much more* do we, with the image of God on us, belong to the Most High and Holy One.



Which is why the work in the House of Lords of our Baronesses Angela Harris and Brenda Hale is so important. Which is why the national contributions of Bishop Nick on poverty, inequality and international relations, are so important. Which is why religious leaders have been speaking up on the Middle East disaster, and the need not only to condemn terrorism in the strongest terms and to require limits to vengeance on innocent citizens, but also that Israel and the international community must address the underlying causes of Palestinian anger.

When I was in the House of Lords and lead bishop on education, I was always saying to ministers that you can't understand the modern world without understanding the role of religion, because 70-80% of the world's population take their religion very seriously as a guide to life. Religion is right in the centre of the public square.

Religious leaders have no business taking the side of any political party, of course. It's obvious that we'll reach different conclusions about the means to achieve peace and justice, security and growth. But the big issue is clear. Who do we belong to? Whose image do we carry? If we carry God's image and belong to God that really is a full-time job. There's no part of our lives that doesn't belong to him.

In our political thinking and action, particularly now in a frightening world with politics front and centre and with our own General Election only months away, may we be both fully engaged in the issues and fully Christian in our approach to them; fully committed to God's great project of a just, generous, fair and flourishing world.

Jesus called it the Kingdom of God.

John Pritchard

A PRAYER FOR LASTING PEACE IN THE HOLY LAND

Gracious God,

We are stunned and aghast at what we see happening in Israel and Gaza.

This is your 'holy land' but there's nothing holy about the hatred and violence we see at the moment.

Your heart of love is being brutally attacked, and Jesus is once again flung onto a cross.

We continue to cry to you for help,

for the worst to be avoided,

for the men of violence to be held in check,

for the innocent to be protected

for the deep source of this conflict to be addressed,

and for justice and mercy to live again in this special place.

May the right of Israel to exist in peace and prosperity,

*and for Palestinians to have their land in security and with justice—
may these rights both be respected,*

and may holiness be seen again in this Holy Land.

We pray this earnestly, in Jesus' name.

Amen



LINES OF MUSIC

Richmond is a community with remarkably diverse opportunities to make music. Although 'Richmond Live' is sadly no longer with us, there is still a significant variety of opportunities to play, sing or listen to live music. From a performance point of view, there are talented musicians playing jazz, blues, rock and orchestral whilst the choral society always tackles a taxing repertoire of choral music.

Twice a year, St Mary's hosts concerts by a group of singers whose musical backgrounds are as varied as the general opportunities in the town. What may be less generally known is that past and present members of the church communities in Richmond played a key role in the founding and development of the Station Singers.

On Saturday Dec 9th in St Mary's Church, Richmond at 6.30pm, the three community choirs of The Station Singers present their concert 'Carolling around Europe' and are proud to be aiding Richmondshire Refugee Support Group. Although the concert title intends no pun, it could be one, because the hugely talented leader and musical director of the groups is Carol Gedye.

Yet concerts such as these were never the prime aim of the establishment of these choirs. Carol herself has had a long held belief that anyone can sing. What was often missing was the confidence to try on the part of the potential singer and the lack of opportunity to try in a 'safe' environment.



**Carol Gedye -
Musical Director**

Over ten years ago, the trustees of the Station, itself a community inspired and run venture, were looking for ways in which the building could be used to support new types of community activity. Hearing of organisations such as 'Singing for non-singers' in other areas, the community Committee at the Station put out feelers. Step forward Carol Gedye, with a great enthusiasm to get more people to sing. She had already deployed her skills and talents to select and arrange music to suit the abilities of her musicians and singers in Upbeat and Anacrusis at St Mary's, as well as at Richmond School.

A small team was set up, including Suzie Stevens as accompanist (another member of the St Mary's congregation), to plan a launch. The Station provided an electric piano and amplifier, photocopied the required music and organised the publicity. 'Are you the sort of person who was told to stand at the back and mime

in school singing? Does your family tell you to stop singing while working round the house? Do you love singing in the bath or shower? Then this is for you.'

And so a taster session was organised in what is now screen 3 of the Station one Saturday afternoon—and the room was packed out. Carol and Suzie led a fun session and the venture was deemed a 'go-er.' Publicity began for people to sign up. The demand was such that there was a need to split the group—not into 2 but 3 because over thirty interested singers were unable to attend the Wednesday morning sessions as they, annoyingly, had jobs to go to!!! Whilst a Thursday evening offered a solution in terms of people's attendance, the Station had no space for singing sessions. The solution came in the form of an off-site venue, namely the Town Hall. As for what to call the choirs? Well, given the railway connection, Platform 1 and Platform 2 seemed good choices for the Station-based groups, with Branch Line being chosen as a name for the 'off-site' singers.



There were clearly costs involved in setting up and running such groups so a membership fee had to be charged—purchase of sheet music, hire of venues, legitimate copying costs etc—but a scheme of supported cost was devised for those who wanted to sing but who were unable to commit to the cost of a full membership payment.

The journey began one bright September morning in Screen 2 with a group of about 20 individuals, including your editor, being guided through a small selection of well known songs. Most in the group had never sung with others since they were at school—but it was enjoyed by all, guided by an irrepressibly cheerful Carol and sensitive accompaniment by Suzie. As we left, we crossed over with a larger group of individuals, some of whom had fuelled up on Station coffee and in whose

midst were spied some individuals who definitely had choral experience alongside some who had none.

You may have noticed that at no point has the word 'choir' been used yet to describe this varied crew of local individuals, just out for a good time making music. Public performance was never the prime aim of the 'project'. Nevertheless, there was a desire amongst some to share their learning with a more public audience by giving a concert. It was also an opportunity to show some of the family 'naysayers' that they could sing! Whilst there was no obligation to join a performance group—a choir-, many relished the challenge of learning a repertoire to be performed at the end of a ten week 'term.'

Probably the fullest the Station has ever been was on a Saturday morning near Christmas when those who wanted to from all three groups joined together to sing carols—spread out along the gallery and down the stairs, creating a really cheerful community start to the festive season.



Jubilee Concert 2012



Setting the scene for the 2016 Christmas Concert

Even when Suzie Stevens move out of the area, the St Mary's connection continued for her place at the keyboards was taken by Brett Overin,. He was already working with the indefatigable Carol on supporting the development of the Military Wives choir at Catterick Garrison at the time. This group too had been started not for stardom or public acclaim but for the simple joy of making music together and , under Carol's musical leadership, achieving things which they never believed possible within themselves.

And so it is that, on Saturday Dec 9th in St Mary's Church, Richmond at 6.30pm, the three community choirs of The Station Singers will present their concert



Rehearsal in full swing for Christmas 2022 Concert

'Carolling around Europe' and are proud to be aiding Richmondshire Refugee Support Group. Tickets are available on-line from www.ticketsource.co.uk/the-station-singers for £10 or on the door for £11. Accompanied children enter for free.

As ever, the evening promises to be a great experience for the listener with music chosen by Carol and assistant musical director Kay Bromhead, ably accompanied by Brett Overin. Carols have been chosen from around Europe to celebrate the festive season; some carols you will recognize, whilst others will be new. There will be the opportunity for audience participation. There will be a raffle and bucket collection at the end.

The choirs are always ready to welcome new members. They still exist for all levels of experience. There are many benefits to singing in a group, but, put simply, singing makes you feel better. It helps you to relax and builds a sense of community. In short, singing is good for you. If it's something you would fancy doing, either on your own or with a friend, you could take the opportunity to talk to members after the concert. There is no audition process to worry about. The Station Singers always offer a free taster session in the first week of every Autumn and Spring term .

A great volunteer committee works with Carol, Kay and Brett in planning the future. Looking further down the line, Spring Concert preparations are well under way. Based on an environmental theme, rehearsals begin on Wednesday 10th January at The Station for Platforms 1 & 2 and evening rehearsals on Thursday 11th January at The Town Hall for Branch Line. Why not give it a go? Further information can be found on the Station Singers website at www.richmondstationsingers.co.uk or phone 07773 424744 or 07895 864845.

Helen David & JEJ



NOTES FROM OUR PAST

A feature of JANE HATCHER's articles in this fascinating series is how they remind us of things we might have queried at the time of seeing—and then forgotten. I remember reading '1066 And All That' in the 1960s. A line which stuck was 'Sing a song of sixpence in the Wapentake of Rye' and thinking 'what's a Wapentake?' - but never bothered to find out. Lovely word—now, sixty years on, I find that Jane's focus for this month has answered my oft-remembered question, but in a local context. Thanks, Jane!

What's in a Name?

Wapentake. Do you have a favourite word? Favourite for some personal, idiosyncratic reason? I think mine is 'wapentake'. I like it because it is obscure, quite hard to pronounce, and understanding what it means is part of my affection for the area in which I've now lived and worked for the latter part of my adult life. I might not have got to know the word if I'd stayed in my home city of York, but because I've settled in Richmond, North Yorkshire, I do.

Yes, you're bound to be thinking, having *wapentake* as my favourite word must show that I'm becoming more eccentric by the minute, and you could be correct! So I'd better explain what the word *wapentake* means – or meant – and then what it has got to do with the history of Richmond.

The word wapentake has two components: 'wapen', from which we get our word 'weapon'; and 'tak' as in our word 'take'. What the word conveys is a gathering to which people took their weapons, and flourished them as a sign of voting in support and agreement. Surely the stuff of erstwhile Saturday morning children's films in cinemas of far-off pre-Netflix times?

But interestingly there is an old sculpture showing just such a scene. It is a grave marker which was found at Lindisfarne, and is known as the Viking Domesday stone. It is thought to date from the 9th century. The carving on one side shows seven armed men brandishing their weapons. So this links the definition of the word wapentake with the Danish or Norse period which has had such an influence on the place names and dialect of much of the North of England, and the Richmond area in particular.



Viking Domesday Stone, Lindisfarne Priory

A *wapentake* was an administrative geographical area in pre-Conquest times, and several wapentakes made up a 'shire'. A shire could be large or small. It is huge in the case of Yorkshire, much smaller in the case of, 'whisper it low', Lancashire. 'Down South', where they more readily accepted language brought in by the Norman invaders, such a constituent part of a shire was often called a 'hundred', that word being defined as 'a subdivision of a county having its own court'.

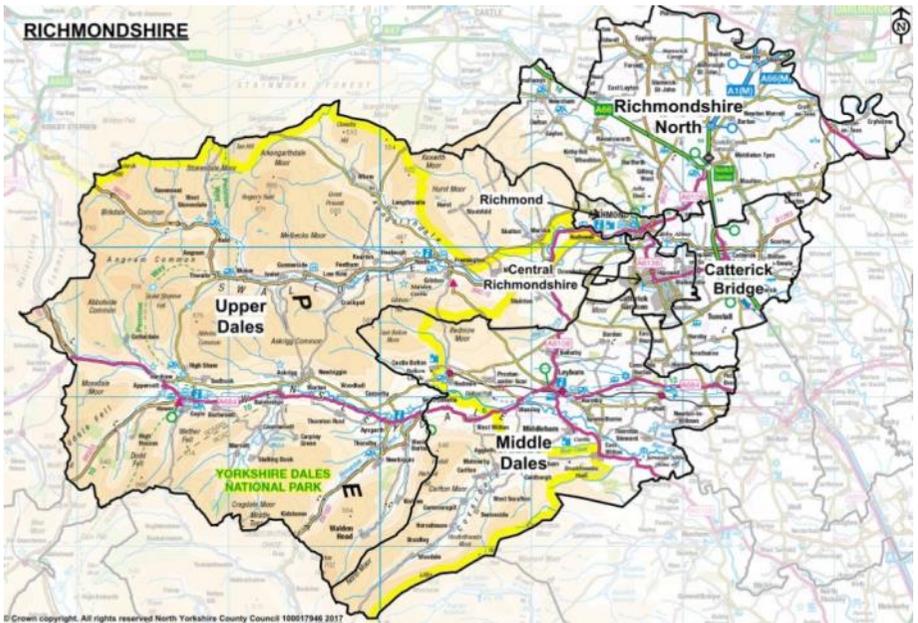
The word 'hundred', like wapentake, is rarely heard today, unless we hear that an M.P. is 'Taking the Chiltern Hundreds'. This process is an ancient parliamentary anachronism. Technically, an M.P. is not allowed to relinquish his or her seat by resignation, as the only legal reasons to cease to be an M.P. are death, disqualification or expulsion. So a legal fiction was invented in 1624, and is still used today, by which the Chiltern Hundreds, an ancient administrative area of Buckinghamshire, could be granted by the Crown as a nominal appointment, which allowed the M.P. to resign their seat.

But now back to our word wapentake. Once upon a time there were many shires which we have largely lost sight of, for example Hallamshire around Sheffield, and Allertonshire around Northallerton. But of course until 1 April 2023 we were living in Richmondshire. Or at least we were in an area run by Richmondshire District Council.

Some years ago, the then Chief Executive of Richmondshire District Council proposed moving all the scattered council departments into one new office in a new business park in Colburn. Outraged that historic Richmond would cease to be the administrative headquarters of our area, I wrote to the *Darlington and Stockton Times* asking if it was also proposed to change the name of the local authority to Colburnshire? Please, no disrespect intended to Colburn, a village which, unlike Richmond, has an unambiguous entry in the Domesday Book. But it is [was?] Richmond which had historically been the most important administrative centre



**Chiltern Hundreds Map— the relevant parliamentary area - is shown in black
Stoke, Desborough and Burnham**

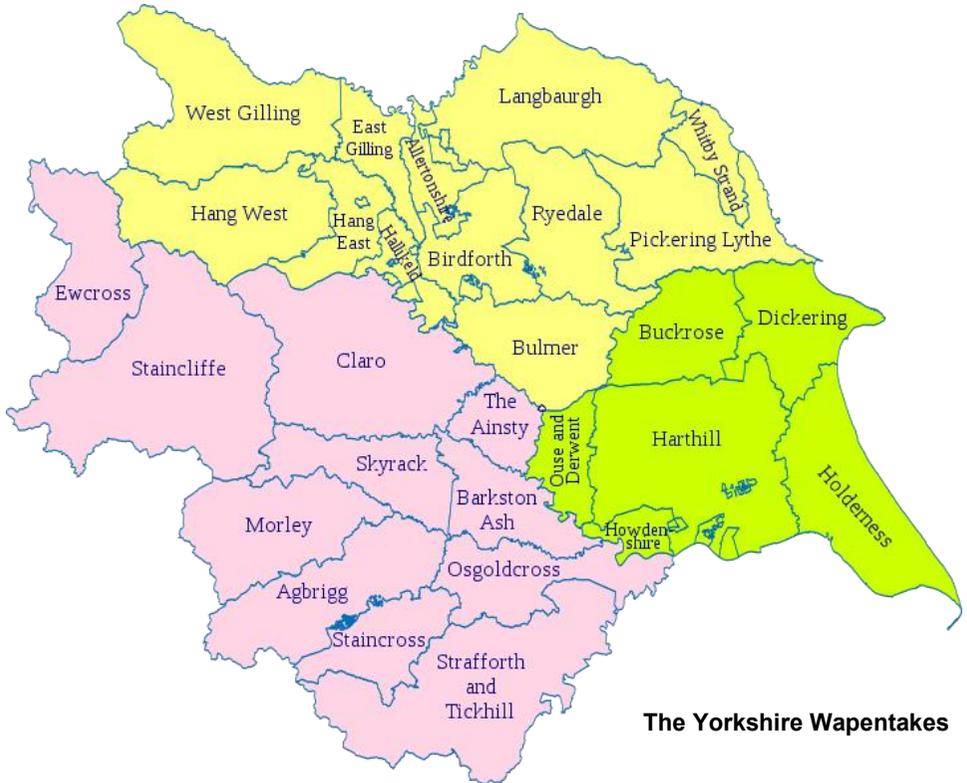


Will the name Richmondshire continue to be remembered? Maybe in the name of Richmondshire Museum, and the little magazine *Richmondshire Today*. And of course the signs alongside the roads saying Richmondshire, Hambleton etc, haven't been taken away yet. Changing the name of administrative areas is nothing new, but there is more to say about the name Richmondshire.

The local authority of Richmondshire District Council which was abolished on 1 April 2023 had been created on 1 April 1974. And it was in 1972, preceding the reorganisation of all local authorities, that it was decided to use the name Richmondshire. It was not a new creation, but a revival of a much older place name. And here I can at last return to my favourite word *wapentake*. For the older Richmondshire consisted of several wapentakes, which were, as already implied, of ancient origin. In fact they dated from several centuries before the place name Richmond was brought into use for the Norman castle and surrounding town. But Richmond became so important that its name was later given to this 'shire'.

So of which of these ancient areas did the older Richmondshire consist? It was at first made up of three ancient wapentakes – one called Gilling (roughly Swaledale and covered what later became the Richmond area, one called Hang, roughly equal to Wensleydale, the last, called Hallikeld, covered the Bedale area. The wapentakes of Gilling and Hang were later subdivided to become Gilling West and Gilling East, and Hang West and Hang East, making five wapentakes in Richmondshire.

So when did the term wapentake go out of use? The Yorkshire historian, the late David Hey, in his fascinating book *The Oxford Companion to Local and Family History*, says that wapentakes continued to be taxation districts, and were also used for areas organising the calling out of the militia in the Napoleonic Wars. Furthermore, they survived as the jurisdictions covered by magistrates, so the names Gilling West and Gilling East, and Hang West and Hang East, survived into relatively recent times for court sessions. For example, people in Richmond ‘had up’ for a minor offence used to appear before the Gilling West Magistrates Court.



The Yorkshire Wapentakes

I said earlier that it was nothing new to change the names of local authorities, and we have seen this year that North Yorkshire County Council has become North Yorkshire Council. North Yorkshire County Council was a late-19th century creation under an 1889 Act of Parliament. Rural District Councils were established a few years later, in 1894. And four of these, the Rural District Councils of Richmond, Reeth, Aysgarth and Croft, were joined with the ancient Borough of Richmond to form Richmondshire District Council in 1974. Anyone taking bets on when the next reorganisation of local authorities will take place? And do you think it just might be a return to wapentakes?

Jane Hatcher

PATHWAYS IN PRAYER

In his final offering in this series, **JOHN PRITCHARD** invites us to consider an over-arching way of approaching prayer—as a way of living.

ALL OF LIFE WOULD BECOME A PRAYER



This is the ultimate goal of prayer – that all our life is offered to God, that all our life becomes prayer.

Of course, this doesn't mean that we become annoyingly pious all the time. It means that our lives become so open to God that **simply the way we live each day before God becomes a kind of prayer**, an offering, a listening, an attending to God.

Think of it this way. A birdwatcher may regularly go into his 'hide' to observe and enjoy the birds around him and the songs they sing. But by doing this he might find he's learning to hear that birdsong all the time, not just when he's in his hide. He might become so attuned to the songs that he hears them the rest of the week, their variety, patterns, modulation and pitch. He might become aware of the songs that others so easily screen out.

In a similar way **our regular focused time of prayer** (in the 'hide') **might enable us to be attentive and open to God during the rest of the day or week**. We might recognise and respond to the 'songs of the Spirit' that are always there. God becomes a present Reality, not a distant Idea.

The practices and pathways I've offered in this spot over the last two years aren't an end in themselves. The ultimate goal is the transformation of our relationship with God. All of life could become a prayer.

Two final thoughts:

- **Pray as you can, not as you can't.** Don't try and fit into someone else's clothes – trust your own dress-sense.
- **We learn to pray by praying.** We're all serial beginners. Keep at it!

John Pritchard

YOUR MAGAZINE IN 2024



As 2023 draws to a close, we are already looking forward to 2024.



Over the course of 2023, the magazine has become a team operation instead of being one person's sole responsibility. Whilst I have been Editor, we now have an editorial team of John Pritchard, Carole McCormack, Christine Porter and me, supported by regular contributions from Jane Hatcher (local history), Liz Kluz from Marske, George Alderson from Downholme and cover photos from Ian Short. We have also benefitted from occasional writings from others which have enhanced the publication. In this way the work has been shared out with the editorial role still resting with me. We have a subscription list of around 200 people and an estimated readership of 750—800. It is a delight to know that the magazine is picked up more than once, passed around and commented upon favourably by people in the area who have no known involvement in our benefice.

As you know, I am standing down from the editorial role after this issue, but will remain a member of the editorial team, whilst supporting your new editor, John McCormack, in the final compilation and print-readiness of the monthly publication. Many thanks to John for stepping forward.

Costs: As you will recall, we had to put the price up for 2023 due to a large post-Covid rise in printing costs. These have now stabilised and become more competitive so the price (supported by our advertisers) can be kept at £15 p.a. for subscribers for 10 issues. The cover price for buying single copies is hoped to be kept at £1.80.

Subscriptions : Thank you so much for your continued support in 2023. We hope that you would like to continue to do so in 2024 by committing this year to paying a £15 subscription to have your magazine delivered in 2024. Early sign up will help us to know exactly how many magazines to print and keep control of costs.

How to subscribe:

- A) By direct payment from your bank to ours using your own on-line banking.
- B) By organising for your bank to make a standing order payment on your behalf.
- C) By Cash or cheque: posted to Colin Hicks, our Parish Administrator.

You will be receiving a separate letter soon, setting out the details of how to pay.

When you receive the letter, it would be very much appreciated if you can respond as soon as you can. (You may wish to pass it on to someone else as a hint for your Christmas present this year!). We do hope you will want to continue your support in 2024 and, if you enjoy it and know of someone else who might like to subscribe, please let us know. We also continue to welcome contributions by you, our readers, or ideas of what you would like to see in our magazine.

For the present, thank you once more for the feedback over the past three years. It has been a pleasure to put the publication together each month and a matter of gratitude to those who have made their own contributions to make it a great team effort. Thank you too to our team of deliverers who bring your copy to your door under the leadership of Keith Robson.

The people working on the 2024 magazine remain the same; the jobs are being shuffled. We look forward to continuing this work next year. Best wishes to all.

Jim Jack



CHRISTMAS AGAIN—SO WHAT'S NEW?

For the past three years (if not longer—no way of checking!) , we have tried to offer you some information about this annual festival which may be new to you or add to the stories you already know. So here we go for 2023. Is this fresh news—or have you already got it stored up to impress people at a future quiz? Here we look at the alpha and omega of the season- Advent and Epiphany..

Advent

Advent is the period of four Sundays and weeks before Christmas (or sometimes from the 1st December to Christmas Eve!). Advent means 'Coming' in Latin. This is the coming of Jesus into the world. Christians use the four Sundays and weeks of Advent to prepare and remember the real meaning of Christmas.

As Advent is specified as four Sundays before Christmas Day in the calendar, Advent Sunday can be as early as 27 November (as in 2016) or as late as this year is (i.e. 3 December). At 22 days, 2023 is the shortest period of Advent can be. An early record of Advent being 'celebrated' was in 567 AD when monks began a period of fasting at the start of December leading up to marking the birth of Jesus on 25 December.



The mention of 'fasting' will mean that it's not surprising to know that, for certain Orthodox and Eastern Catholic faiths, the traditional 40 days of fasting means their advent started in mid–November. This time is sometimes known by them as 'Winter Lent.' For Orthodox and Coptic churches who celebrate Christmas on January 7th, their Advent fasting is still 40 days but doesn't start until 28 November.

In medieval and pre-medieval times, in parts of England, there was an early form of Nativity scene called 'advent images' or a 'vessel cup'. This was a box, often with a glass lid that was covered with a white napkin, that contained two dolls representing Mary and the baby Jesus. The box was decorated with ribbons and flowers (and sometimes apples). They were carried around from door to door. It was thought to be very unlucky if you haven't seen a box before Christmas Eve! People paid the box carriers a halfpenny to see the box .

Advent a countdown to Christmas—so what about having a calendar?

It is said that the original idea came from a German mother in the 1850s who became tired of her children asking how many days it would be until Christmas so she made up a picture board with different religious images for each of the 24 days leading up to Christmas Day. Whether true or not, Lutheran Germany saw the first commercial advent calendar in the first decade of the 20th century when a printer, Gerhard Lang, produced a numbered cardboard board and a set of religious pictures to stick onto the board, one for each day. This became more sophisticated in the 1920s when the more familiar cardboard calendar with opening doors became popular.



The images became more generally seasonal as time went on (think snow, robins, snow-men) before many calendars became totally secular. Chocolate made its first appearance in 1958 on the continent, two years after the first UK produced traditional calendar emerged. Cadburys didn't produce a chocolate-based calendar until 1971.

All sorts of fripperies having nothing at all to do with the birth of Jesus can now be seen behind the magical doors. The world's largest advent calendar was made in 2007 at the St Pancras Train Station in London, England. It was 71m tall and 23m wide and celebrated the refurbishment of the station.



Advent using Wax

Again a Lutheran tradition. Scandinavian churches have either used a single candle with marks for each day on the side as it burns down or 24 little candles and one large one since the 1700s. The first wreath was made in 1839 from a cartwheel and contained 20 small red candles and 4 larger white candles. The red candles were lit on weekdays and Saturdays, with the white candles being lit on the four Sundays of Advent. This design was simplified to the Advent wreath/crowns which are used now. Many churches use an Advent wreath with five candles. The circular shape of the crown/wreath represents the every lasting love of God and eternal life.



Each candle has a different meaning in Christianity. Different churches have given them different meanings, but commonly the first represents Isaiah and other prophets in the Bible that predicted the coming of Jesus, the second represents the Bible, the third represents Mary, the mother of Jesus and the fourth represents John the Baptist, Jesus' cousin, who told the people in Israel to get ready for Jesus' teaching. The middle or separate candle is lit on Christmas Day and represents Jesus, the light of the world.

Epiphany

Epiphany is celebrated 12 days after Christmas on 6th January (or January 19th for some Orthodox Church who have Christmas on 7th January) and is the time when Christians remember the Wise Men who visited Jesus. The Bible doesn't say how many Wise Men there were or that they were kings. The number three comes from the three gifts the Wise Men / Magi brought with them.

Epiphany is also when some Churches remember when Jesus was baptised, when he was about 30, and started to teach people about God. Epiphany means 'revelation' and both the visit of the Wise Men and his Baptism are important times when Jesus was 'revealed' to be very important.

In Orthodox churches, Epiphany is also known as 'The Feast of the Holy Theophany' and it is as important as Christmas. During the services to celebrate Epiphany, on the eve of the feast and on the feast day, water is blessed to remember Jesus's baptism. The blessed water is used in church services during the rest of the year.

Epiphany Eve (also known as Twelfth Night) marks the end of the traditional Christmas celebrations and is the time when you were meant to take Christmas decorations down. During the Elizabethan era people often left greenery up until Candlemas. St Mary's has recently repeated this custom.

CHRISTINGLE

Every year, at St Mary's, we support the Childrens' Society through holding a Christingle service. This year it's on the afternoon of Sunday 3rd December (4.00 p.m.) But what is Christingle? How did it all start?

It is the Moravians whom we have to thank for bringing us the Christingle. Especially one Moravian clergyman: John de Watteville.

On 20th December, 1747, John de Watteville was taking a children's service in his Moravian church in Marienborn, Germany. He led the children in some hymns, and read out verses which the children themselves had written to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Then he ex-

plained to the children that true happiness only comes through knowing Jesus. Jesus, said John de Watteville, "has kindled in each little heart a flame which keeps burning to their joy and our happiness".

John de Watteville then went on to illustrate that 'flame'. He gave each child a little lighted wax candle, tied around with a red ribbon. He ended his service with a little prayer: *"Lord Jesus, kindle a flame in these children's hearts, that theirs like Thine become"*.

The visual aid was a great success with the children; for the Marienborn Diary for that day concludes: "hereupon the children went full of joy with their lighted candles to their rooms and so went glad and happy to bed".

A Tradition is created

The candle and red ribbon were remembered the following year, and the following after that.... The years came and went, and as the Moravians began to travel beyond Germany, so they took the custom with them: to Labrador, to Pennsylvania, to Tibet and Suriname, to the Caribbean and South Africa. In each country the Christians adapted it for their own use.

No one knows for certain when the word 'Christingle' was first used with regard to the custom. No one even knows where the word 'Christingle' comes from. Some people say it is from the old Saxon word 'ingle' (fire), meaning 'Christ-fire or light'. Another theory is that it derives from the German 'engel' (angel), meaning 'Christ-angel'.





In any event, the symbolism of Christingle gradually developed, until today the Moravians in the British Province use an orange, representing the world, with a lighted candle to represent Christ, the Light of the World. Nuts, raisins and sweets on cocktail sticks around the candle represent God's bounty and goodness in providing the fruits of the earth. Red paper,

forming a frill around the base of the candle, reminds us of the blood of Christ shed for all people on the cross at Calvary.

In Moravian churches, the Christingle Service is usually held on the Sunday before Christmas or on Christmas Eve. The website for the Moravian Church says: "We are glad that the Moravian Church has been able to make this contribution to the wider Christian world."

In our own benefice, there is an annual Christingle service held, with the collection and fund-raising proceeds going to the Childrens' Society

The Childrens' Society

The Childrens' Society runs fundraising campaigns across the year. A major focus takes place around advent when churches and schools highlight Christingle in their acts of worship.

The Church of England Childrens' Society found its beginnings in 1881 when Edward Rolf, a young Sunday School teacher and civil servant in South London was confronted by child poverty in his Sunday School role.



Edward Rudolf



Two young boys who had attended his Sunday School class quite regularly failed to turn up one Sunday so he decided to go and look for them. To his horror, he discovered that they were begging for food on the streets. Their mother, widowed very recently, was struggling to feed her seven children, none older than 11.

He discovered that, far from being a 'one-off' situation, countless numbers of children and young people were living in similar poverty stricken circumstances. He was moved to dedicate his own life to improving their lives. It was here that the society finds its roots.

These were the times of the workhouse where many of the most poverty-stricken families dwelt. Rudolf yearned for those children to have a loving, secure family environment. He won the backing of the Archbishop of Canterbury of the time. This backing was crucial in him securing funding to set up a small number of Church of England children's homes. Each housed about ten children aged between 5 and 14 with a master and a matron to act as house parents.



Camberwell Workhouse, London

This template led to the society establishing over thirty permanent residential nurseries around the country to help to cope with the rising numbers of children in need of care. Care for Jewish children escaping the Holocaust established an added tradition of supporting asylum seekers.

The learning from this led the society to branch out into opening a number of successful day-care centres to support single parent families or those affected by illness, stress or poverty.

Changing Times, Changing approach

The Society has moved the focus of activities as times have changed. Fewer children were being housed in children's homes due to a mixture of less social stigma being attached to single parenting. Abortion and availability of contraception were also believed to be a reason for smaller numbers of children being brought forward for adoption or care. This led to a closure of much of the network of children's homes and a move towards supporting young people to manage and even solve their problems within their own environments.



The Children's Society opened 12 new day centres in 1981, their centenary year and began to emphasise community and local solutions and support as their main activity offering direct help, at the same time as increasingly becoming a campaigning organisation on behalf of children and young people. Working for social justice in such areas as healthcare, housing, social security, education to persuade successive governments to modify legislation and approaches became a priority. For example, in

2000, government guidelines recommended that the police should treat many errant children as victims of abuse rather than perpetrators of crime.

In this millenium, the Society has led a *Make Runaways Safe* campaign which resulted in a number of local authorities to change their approaches to one of protection whilst all councils have to conduct a mandatory return interview if a minor is about to return home. Their *Fair and Square* campaign in 2012 was significant in bringing all reception, year one and year two children under the free school meals umbrella, whilst their findings in their *Behind Cold Doors* report (2015) led the government to standardise the criteria for being eligible for the Warm Homes Discount across all suppliers



The Society still operates family centres and a few homes today, but its approach has moved to one of supporting young people to learn to manage their own situations with support, including day centres, and researching and campaigning for all young people for social justice.

It is another charity which relies upon donations for support. Our Christingle Service on December 3rd with its attendant collections is almost their 'Poppy Day' but the fundraising continues throughout the year—donations, bequests, grants, coffee mornings. If you want to know more about support, volunteering or donations, you can visit the website www.childrenssociety.org.uk or contact by phone (020 7841 4400) or letter at Whitecross Studios, Banner Street, London, EC1Y 8ST. They can also be contacted if there is a concern about a young person's well-being for advice and support.

JEJ

Charity of the Month at St Mary's 2024

At the November meeting of the PCC, it was agreed that our monthly support for charities would be as follows: (L= local; N= national; M= mission)

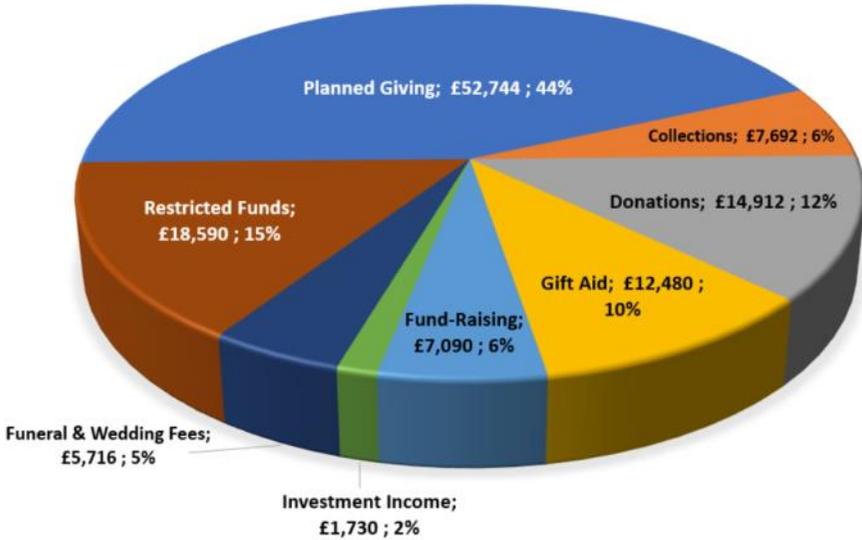
January;	Talking Newspaper	L
February:	UNHCR	N
March;	Mothers' Union	L
April:	Just the Job	L
May	Christian Aid	N
June	USPG	M

July;	HomeStart	Richmondshire
August:	Marie Curie	N
Sept:	Dementia First	L
Oct:	Citizens' Advice	N
Nov.	Darlington Women's	Refuge
Dec:	CMS	M

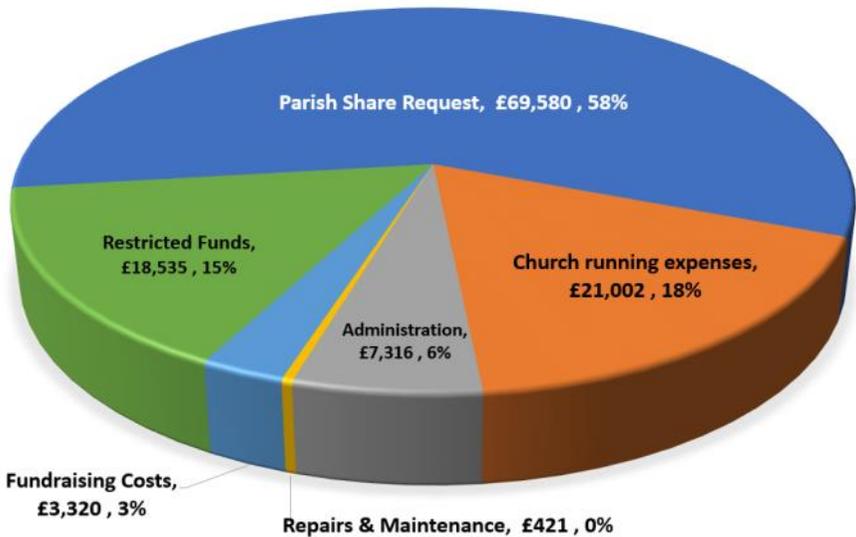
MONEY, MONEY, MONEY..

Regular readers will know that we get occasional updates on our finances from our Treasurer, **PAUL CARNELL**. The current situation as the financial year comes to a close is set out below.

ST MARY'S 2023 RECEIPTS JANUARY - OCTOBER - £120,953



ST MARY'S 2023 PAYMENTS JANUARY - OCTOBER - £120,174



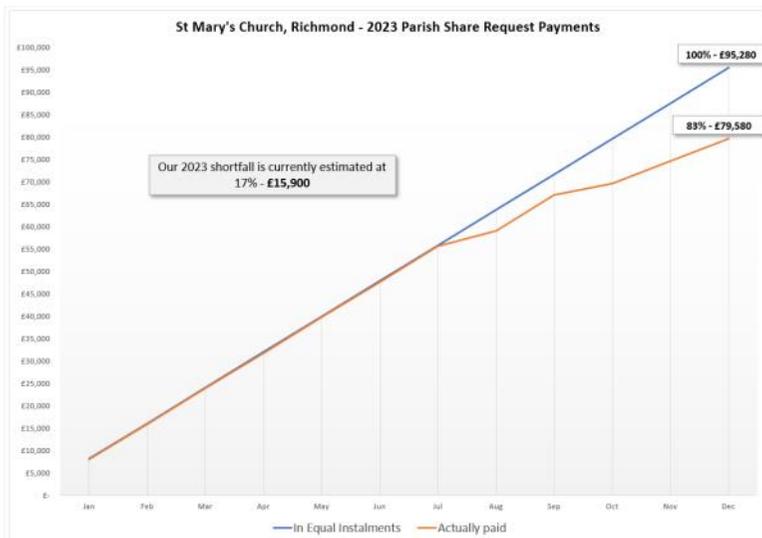
Receipts

If it were not for the large amount going into our Restricted Funds, the donations received from those on our planned giving scheme would have accounted, as usual, for over half of our total Receipts. My sincere thanks go to our many donors. Restricted Fund receipts included a Bequest that went into our Step-Free Access Fund; a donation towards the cost of the defibrillator; an insurance claim after lead was stolen from the roof; and a Benefact Trust grant towards the cost of our new roof alarm.

Payments

At the risk of sounding like I'm repeating myself if it were not for the large amount being paid out of our Restricted Funds, our Parish Share Request payments would have accounted for over half of our total payments. Restricted Fund payments included the costs of the defibrillator, the new roof alarm, the repairs to the roof following the lead theft and energy costs that came out of the energy grant that we received from the Church Commissioners in 2023.

Overall, with receipts of £120,953 and payments of £120,174, it can be seen that the Parochial Church Council and our Treasurer are being quite successful in balancing the books. However, with a forecast deficit in 2024 of somewhere in the region of £3,000, we will need to continue to keep control of costs whilst maintaining (or increasing) our income.



Parish Share request—graph

Our performance in paying our Parish Share Request is much improved compared to recent years. For eight months we've been able to make the optimum monthly payment but in August and October our payments had to be reduced due to other commitments. Of the thirty-three Parishes in our Deanery of Richmond, there are twenty-two that haven't fared as well as us and as of the end of October the Deanery has only been able to pay 56% of the amount requested of it compared to our 73%.

However, the prediction is that we'll only be able to pay another 10% by the end of the year so any help to close the £15,900 gap would be very gratefully received!

Paul Carnell (Hon Treasurer)

WHAT'S ON AT ST MARY'S—DECEMBER /JANUARY

Sun 3 December	Christingle 4.00pm
Sat 9 Dec ember	Station Singers "Carolling around Europe" 6.30pm
Sun 10 December	Advent Anthems, Carols and Readings 6.30pm
Wed 13 December	Mayor's Carol Concert 7.00pm
Sat 16 December	Richmond Choral Society Winter Concert 7.30pm
Sun 17 December	Nine Lessons and Carols 6.30pm
Tuesday 19 December	Army Band Christmas Concert 7.30 p.m.
Thurs 21 December	Richmond School Carol Service 6.00pm
Friday 22 December	Trinity Academy Christmas Service 9.30am
Sun 24 Dec	Crib Service. Children are invited to go along dressed as angels, shepherds or any nativity character . 4.00pm Midnight Mass 11.30pm
Mon 25 December	Communion 8.00am Christmas Communion 10.00am

HOLD ON
TO THAT
WHICH
IS GOOD

"All are welcome
in this place."



FROM THE TOWN COUNCIL

There are a number of events taking place in December which are regular and important parts of our community lives. Most of these are open to all and people are most welcome to attend. Bring your friends too!



Fri 1 Dec

Christmas Lights Switch On (with Richmond Duck Club)



Friary Gardens at 6.00pm (N.B. earlier start than normal!)
Fairground rides and Choirs in the Market Place
Mince Pies and Mulled Wine in the Market Hall from 5.00pm

Sun 3 Dec

Christmas Market 10.00am - 4.00pm

Richmond Town Council is bringing together:-
Little Bird Market - outside in the Market Place with over 50 craft, food & drink stalls
Richmond Artisan Fairs - in The Town Hall with craft stalls
The Performance Stage (opposite The Kings Head) featuring performances from Rhythm & Shoes Dance Academy, Service Children Community Choir, Richmond School Band Richmond shire Museum Children's Activities (11.00—3.00) & more!
Limited parking in the Market Place, FREE PARKING in Nuns Close Car Park

Sat 9 Dec

Distribution of Mayor's Audit Money. Mayors Parlour, Richmond Town Hall, 10.30am - 12.00noon

The Mayors Audit Money will be distributed to residents over the age of 60 years who live within the Town Boundary of Richmond. A special Richmond shilling is given to Richmond residents, in a tradition dating back to 1576, when Queen Elizabeth I granted the town its charter. Since 1986 the ceremonial coin has shown a view of the castle and river with the words 'Mayor's Audit Money Richmond – North Yorkshire' on the face side. The reverse depicts the Richmond Coat of Arms with the words 'Mater Omnium Richmondiarum', meaning the 'Mother of all Richmonds'

'Wed 13 Dec

Christmas Carol Concert. St Mary's Parish Church, 7.00pm

Featuring Leyburn Band and Local School Choirs
Free event - Donations on the evening to the Mayor's Charities. Everyone Welcome



BEHIND THE HYMNS

Christmas always has associations with particular pieces of music. Words of hymns and carols stir the emotions accompanied by appropriate melodies. **CHRISTINE PORTER** gives some interesting background to a favourite of many people which has been used by well known dramas to amplify the quieter, more pensive moments which the season brings—a beautiful blend of thought-provoking words and two haunting melodies.

In The Bleak Midwinter



In the popular BBC series *Peaky Blinders*, the title of the traditional English carol **In The Bleak Midwinter** became a key aspect of the show and was often quoted when the main characters were near death. While it may seem a bit strange to be quoting a Christmas carol when facing imminent death, this song was actually a favourite of British troops who often sang the carol together in the trenches during World War I.

The *Peaky Blinders* character Tommy Shelby, in season 4 of the show, explained the "In the Bleak Midwinter" reference and why it is used so often. He told the crowd at the funeral of John Shelby how they sang this song when he and the rest of the Small Heath Rifles were trapped behind enemy lines, cut off from the retreat, and out of bullets. They expected to be overrun and killed by Prussian cavalry at any moment, so they sang **In the Bleak Midwinter** to provide some comfort before their death. Luckily, the cavalry never came, and the Small Heath Rifles decided afterwards that, from then on, every minute they lived was extra and that, when death did come for good, they would greet it unafraid with the refrain "In the Bleak Midwinter". The phrase had provided comfort to the characters and had reminded them that every minute they live is extra, preparing them to face death unafraid. While usually used as a reminder of borrowed time, **In the Bleak Midwinter** was also used at Tommy's wedding in the TV series, to show gratitude for the good things in life and second chances.



Scene from 'Peaky Blinders' BBC



In addition to being quoted throughout the *Peaky Blinders* series, the carol made an appearance in the series premiere of *The Crown*, in which King George VI joined a band of carolers at Sandringham House in singing the final verse. It was even sung in the *Doctor Who* episode "A Christmas Carol" by the character Abigail Pettigrew, played by Welsh singer Katherine Jenkins.



Originally **In the Bleak Midwinter** was a poem by the English poet Christina Rossetti, which was published under the title **A Christmas Carol** in the January 1872 issue of the American magazine *Scribner's Monthly*, and later appeared in 1875 in the book *Goblin Market, The Prince's Progress and Other Poems*. **A Christmas Carol (1872)**

In verse one, Rossetti describes the physical circumstances of the Incarnation in Bethlehem, although Rossetti appears to have transferred the location of Jesus' Nativity from Bethlehem to a colder Northern landscape! In verse two, Rossetti contrasts Christ's first and second coming. The third verse dwells on Christ's birth and describes the simple surroundings, in a humble stable and watched by beasts of burden. Rossetti achieves another contrast in the fourth verse, this time between the heavenly angels present at Christ's birth with Mary's maternal affection for Jesus. The final verse shifts the description to a more introspective thought process.

The text of this Christmas poem has been set to music many times. Two of the most famous settings were composed by Gustav Holst and Harold Darke in the early 20th century. Holst composed his setting of Rossetti's words for the *English Hymnal* of 1906, at the express wish of Ralph Vaughan Williams who was the musical editor of the Hymnal. This setting, titled *Cranham*, is suitable for congregational singing, since the poem is irregular in metre and any setting of it requires a skilful and adaptable tune. The hymn is



Gustav Holst
1874-1934



Midwinter Cottage, Cranham—the former home of Gustav Holst

named after Cranham in Gloucestershire where Gustav Holst lived for a while, and it was there, in the house now called 'Midwinter Cottage', that he wrote the well-known and much-loved tune.

An anthem setting by Harold Darke was composed in 1909 and is widely performed by choirs. The setting was written while Darke was a student at the Royal College of Music. Although melodically similar to Holst's tune, it is more advanced. Each verse is treated slightly differently, with solos for soprano and tenor (or a group of sopranos and tenors) and a delicate organ accompaniment. Darke omitted verse four of Christine Rossetti's original poem, and changed Rossetti's "a breastful of milk" to "a heart full of mirth" although later editions reversed this change. Darke also repeats the last line of the final verse. This version is favoured by cathedral choirs and begins with a solo voice rather than full choir. It is the one we usually hear at Christmas time in the TV and radio broadcasts of *Nine Lessons and Carols* by the King's College Choir. Darke served as conductor of this choir during World War II. Darke would complain, however, that the popularity of his tune for **In The Bleak Midwinter** prevented people from performing his other compositions, and rarely performed it outside of Christmas services.



**Harold Darke
(1888 –1976)**

In 2008 the BBC announced that **In The Bleak Midwinter** had been named the best Christmas carol in a poll of some of the world's leading choirmasters and choral experts, including 51 directors of music in the UK and US, who had been asked to name their five favourite carols and Christmas motets. The song came out top in the *BBC Music* magazine poll, above other well-known carols such as Silent Night, Ding Dong Merrily on High and Once in Royal David's City.

Many folk who have never heard *The Planets* or any other music by Gustav Holst will have derived great pleasure from hearing or singing his music for **In the Bleak Mid-winter**. Although the composer never sought popularity or success for its own sake, he would have been pleased to know that this carol had been a success. Whilst Holst's 1909 setting is probably the most familiar version to church congregation and is in our Common Praise hymnal at St Mary's, it was Harold Darke's 1911 arrangement that won the poll of choral experts.

Christine Porter

SIXTY SECOND INTERVIEW

DENNIS STEDMAN

A long-standing member of our team of greeters, Dennis' warm smile and cheerful welcome has often been a great introduction to St Mary's Church. He is used to asking others questions about their well-being, things that are happening in their lives. But this time it's **JOHN PRITCHARD** asking the questions and Dennis giving the answers

First memory? Playing outdoors in Station Road, aged 4.

Favourite meal? Roast beef and Yorkshire pudding.

Favourite music or musician? Mozart and Humphrey Lyttelton

Pet dislike? Lateness

Best holiday? Egypt

Childhood hero? Denis Compton, cricketer.

Favourite hobbies? Singing and croquet

Luxury on desert island? Self-winding radio

Recent TV you've enjoyed? *Game of Thrones*

Worst fault? Not listening enough.

Two best films ever? *Amadeus*; *The Outlaw Josey Wales*

Favourite drink? Chablis

Regret? Not learning to play a musical instrument.

Best recent book? *Essex Dogs* by Dan Jones

Favourite charity? Age UK

Place you feel happiest? Home

Three dinner companions? Rider Haggard, Victoria Wood, Wilbur Smith

What you pray for most? The health of my family and friends.

Traditional or modern Lord's Prayer? Traditional

Epitaph? He was always smiling.





POETRY FROM DOWNHOLME



GEORGE ALDERSON offers some seasonal verse, perhaps inspired by the sighting of angels over the flocks at Bethlehem over two thousand years ago. If sighted then why not now? Or are angels really hiding in plain sight and observable if we take the time to see.?

ANGELS

I've searched the sky and wondered why
I've never seen one flying by;
When it's not night, do they take fright
And hide themselves from mortal sight?
Perhaps they wait until it's late,
And then decide to congregate!



They say they sing upon the wing
But I've not heard one song they bring!
Yet I conceive (and do believe)
That one day I may well perceive!
Perhaps I've viewed what I've pursued,
But simple minded, mis-construed?

If you suspect, do not reject—
Though, by all means, be circumspect.
I'll take my time, ignore the chime
And maybe something quite sublime
Will be revealed, all scruples healed,
Though presently it is concealed.



Here, all along, both well and strong
The angels live within our throng.

George Alderson

Christmas at Downholme

10 Dec Lessons and Carols 3.00 p.m.

24 Dec Midnight Mass 11.30 p.m.



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THIRST!!

(The Men's Group)

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The Town Hall Pub & Dining, Richmond

7 December & 4 January



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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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.

The Pastoral Team at St Mary's has a **Prayer Circle** at St Mary's. If you have something which you would appreciate prayer for, whether for yourself or for someone you care about, we would be privileged to pray about it. No prayer request is ever too small or trivial. Whatever you wish to share, in confidence, we will support you in prayer.

To ask for prayer you can either telephone, email or text Rev Martin on 821241, martin.fletcher@leeds.anglican.org or 07762 440094; or Paul Sunderland (07989 178196) paul.sunderland@leeds.anglican.org—or speak to any member of the Pastoral Team and they will place your prayer in the circle. Please be assured your requests are confidential.

- ◆ *To be a praying member of the circle or a member of the Pastoral Team, please speak to Rev Martin or Paul. They would love to hear from you.*


"All are welcome
in this place."

Sudoku - Easy

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

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Sudoku - Medium

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

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"For the next part of our carol-service, Nigel, the verger's nephew will play his interpretation of Silent Night..."



We've got online carol-singers again!

Word Search

The story of 'Silent Night'

This much-loved carol comes from Austria, where it was first sung as *Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht* on Christmas Eve, 1818. It was written by Father Joseph Mohr, a young priest at St Nicholas parish church, in the village of Oberndorf bei Salzburg. As Christmas 1818 approached, he asked the local schoolmaster, Franz Xaver Gruber, to compose a melody for his carol. Gruber was organist in the nearby village of Arnsdorf, and so was happy to oblige. On Christmas Eve they presented the carol to the church during the midnight mass. The carol went on to become loved world-wide; and the version sung by Bing Crosby is the third best-selling single of all time.

Silent
Night
Loved
Carol
Austria

First
Sung
Stille
Nacht
Heilige

Christ-
mas
Eve
Father
Joseph
Mohr

Young
Priest
Organist
Midnight
Mass

Melody
Single
Bing
Version
Third



Puzzle Solutions

Sudoku — Easy

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

Sudoku—Medium

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

Wordsearch



Deadline February '24 edition; Saturday 13th January
 To contribute letters, articles, etc
 contact stmarys.maged@gmail.com or 07866 033263

How we can support Richmond's Food Bank

For readers who add to their weekly shop by buying items for the Foodbank based at the Influence Church, this is an updated list of the most useful donations

Tins : meat, fish, vegetables, fruit, soup, beans, pasta, tinned meals (e.g. chilli, stew), pies, rice pudding, spaghetti

Packets: pasta, pasta sauce, noodles, cereal, porridge, rice, biscuits, spaghetti; flapjack

Jars: pasta sauce, sandwich fillings, jam, spreads, tea, coffee

Also: UHT milk, squash, washing up liquid, deodorant, bars of soap, tampons, sanitary pads, nappies (0-3 mths); laundry detergent or powder;; toilet rolls (4 packs) ; shower gel; shampoo

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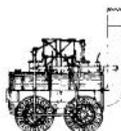
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