

INSPIRE

St John's Church
Ranmoor, Sheffield

July/Aug
2023

£1.00





**Photos of the Christian Aid
Concert of Talent
held on 19th May**



St John's Church

Ranmoor, Sheffield

Parish Office, Ranmoor Parish Centre,
5 Ranmoor Park Road, Sheffield, S10 3GX

Tel: 0114 230 1199

Website: www.stjohnsranmoor.org.uk

St John's Church is a community whose vocation is to extend to all people the same welcome that we ourselves have received from God in Christ. Our worship, enriched by our strong musical and choral traditions, is at the heart of our community's shared life. The gospel calls us to lives of discipleship, informed by reflection and marked by care for one another, by a passion for justice, and by a commitment to the service of our local and wider community.

Contents

- Foreword - 4
- From the Editor's Chair - 7
- Christian Aid Week - 8
- Pharmacy and Medicine - 10
- Eco Church: "Smart Thinking" - 13
- Nature Notes - 17
- Church Calendar - 18
- Parish Registers - 19
- Young People's Pages - 20
- Tom's Bomb - 21
- Restaurant Review: Olive - 23
- The Lord's Amazing Grace - 26
- Quiz - 30
- Contacts - 31
- Groups and Activities - 32
- Contributing to Inspire - 34

Cover photograph by Philip Walshaw: The Emperor Fountain at Chatsworth House and Gardens

Large print versions of Inspire are available

Foreword



Over the last week summer has arrived, the sky is blue, the sun is shining and as I journey around the parish, gardens are in glorious bloom. I wonder at and give thanks for the beauty of God's creation around me. As I ponder about what to write, the title of the hymn *'Through all the changing scenes of life'* spring to mind as there will be comings and goings in the weeks ahead.

At the end of June, we say our farewells to Clare and Matt Wood. Matt has now finished his curacy with us and will be moving on to pastures new. We will miss them both and we send them onwards with our love and prayers thanking them for all they have given to us in their ministry over the past three years.

On Sunday morning 2nd July, Peter Das will be ordained Deacon by Bishop Pete in Sheffield Cathedral and will join us as curate. Peter has trained at Westcott House in Cambridge. We very much look forwards to welcoming Peter to the parish and getting to know him.

On Saturday afternoon 1st July in Sheffield Cathedral, I will be ordained by Bishop Sophie to the Priesthood. I am very excited for this moment after a journey which started in 2014 when I attended a day exploring women's ministry at the cathedral. It has been a journey through Reader training and then ordination training and I am very much looking forwards to celebrating my first communion on Sunday morning 2nd July. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Matthew and everyone at St John's for their love, support and prayers which have held me on this journey... so do keep calm and carry on!

At St John's there is a wonderful diversity of gifts. We are all individual and have different skills to offer and we do this in the name of the living God. The God who is always at our side through trouble and in joy who holds us in his loving arms. My calling throughout the last nine years has

been to serve God in His Church and meet people at their point of need and it is a huge privilege to be able to do that.

*To Father, Son and Holy Ghost,
the God whom we adore,
be glory as it was, is now,
and shall be evermore.*

Alison

The Sunday Social



For those who would like to share a simple lunch, fellowship and the opportunity to try out some tabletop games. The Sunday Socials will be held in the Parish Centre on the 4th Sunday of the month immediately following coffee in church. Tea and cakes will be served shortly before departure at 3pm. If you would like to join us, please notify Claire in the office by the Wednesday before.

There will be a box for voluntary donations (for the church refurbishment fund).

The next Sunday Social dates are as follows:

Sunday 23rd July;

Sunday 27th August;

Sunday 24th September

We look forward to seeing you.

Janet Anker and Wendy Weeks.

ST JOHN'S CHURCH, RANMOOR

FOODBANK COLLECTION



Please bring your foodbank items to **the Church drive** on the following
Wednesdays between **10am and 12.30pm:**

12th & 26th July

9th & 23rd August

Everyday Items

tinned fish and meat, UHT milk, long life fruit juice, tinned fruit/veg, shampoo, single toothbrushes, Cereal, Soup, Pasta, Rice, Tinned tomatoes, pasta sauce, Tea/coffee, Tinned fruit, Biscuits

Thank You

In 2022 St John's Ranmoor donated over 3385 kg, which was 13% of the total donations to the Burngreave Foodbank!!!

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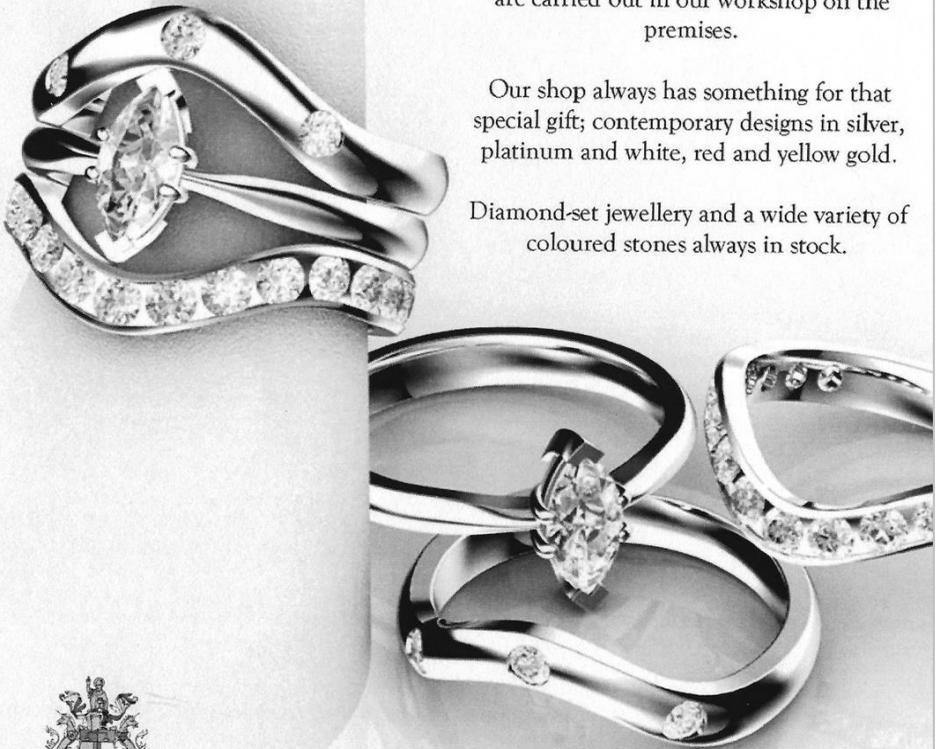
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From the Editor's Chair



In Matthew's talk at the All Age Service on Trinity Sunday, he said that there were a number of references to 'threes' in the bible and asked the congregation to give any examples. The obvious response was the Three Wise Men, albeit contentious, as Matthew highlighted there were three gifts but not necessarily three wise men. However, I was impressed by the other, and less obvious, answers given by younger members of the congregation.

Being the clever clogs I sometimes try to be, I thought of proffering "three disciples of Jesus beginning with the letter 'j'". And then I thought, am I right? Are there any others whose name begins with a 'j'? Had I better not embarrass myself? So I tried to recall the names of all the twelve disciples...and I failed. It's a good job I kept quiet and the old adage came to mind about being better to be thought a fool and keep quiet than to open one's mouth and remove all doubt. There was, of course, a fourth 'j' - another James, but I couldn't recall all twelve and I had to refer to the bible to complete the list. No, I didn't "Google" it, although there is a bible search engine on the website.

There is an obscure name amongst this group of twelve and I wonder if you can name all the disciples? If you can or you can't, you can always try the quiz on page 30, but one lesson I have learnt is that I should read the bible more often than I do.

Philip Walshaw



Christian Aid Week, 2023

Once more we would like to say a huge thank you to you all who so generously gave of your time, energy and money in delivering and collecting envelopes, planning events, manning stalls, beating the bounds of the parish, growing peas, and displaying their talents in order to support Christian Aid Week this year.

Special thanks must go to Matt Wood and Peter Wozencroft who provided the big breakfast, to Philip and Susan Walshaw for so many plants, and to all who gave books, hand-made cards, preserves and cakes for the stalls, to Sarah Beardsmore for organising the Concert of Talents, and Claire Webber for the publicity. The Concert of Talents gave us all a great time as we appreciated the highly skilled performances of members of the choir and congregation. Behind the scenes, we would like to thank Matthew for his compering and excellent support, and Pauline Heath for all her energy, and for her hard work especially in processing the finances! The final total is £3,519 plus Gift Aid which will be about £220.



Our hearty congratulations also go to Peter Lowe on his successful sponsored cycle ride from Land's End to John o' Groats, raising over £1,300 for Christian Aid (which is not included in the figure of over £3,000 raised by St John's) and also over £1,500 for the Alzheimer's Society.

There are millions of people suffering from climate change, including drought and flood all over the world, but especially in Malawi, where the effects are so severe, and the funds will go towards a project that will enable people like Esther Saizi to grow their crops and feed their families.

Janet and Malcolm Anker

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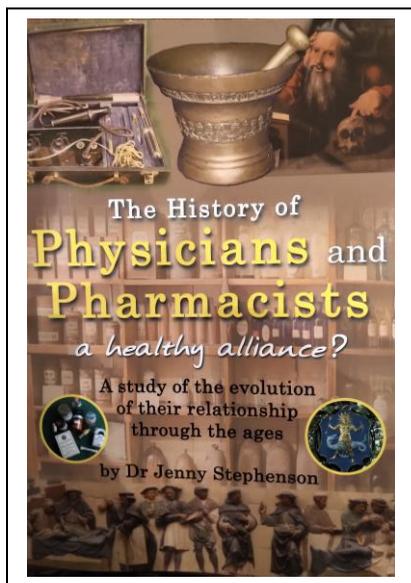
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The History of Physicians and Pharmacists – a Healthy Alliance?

Dr Jenny Stephenson has written a new book, again for charity (the Cavendish Cancer Care and Burngreave Food Bank) and will be giving a talk on Pharmacy and Medicine at the Parish Centre on Friday, 15th September at 7pm. Here is an article that she has written about the book.



Have you ever wondered how our medical treatments and pharmaceuticals came to be? Who were the first pharmacists and how did they get on with the doctors of the day? I have set about answering these questions, and many more, in my latest book with the above title. This is the third in my series and is lavishly illustrated and packed with facts.

The story starts in 3000 BC with the Ancient Egyptians who equipped their important dead with treatments of herbs ready for the afterlife. Evolving from this was the idea of Alchemy, or the search for perfection, the

formation of gold from base metal and the ability to preserve life for ever.

In early times the two professions of medicine and pharmacy were not distinct from one another. Superstition and witchcraft had held sway over the medical scene for centuries, and from that developed the local folklore.

300 BC saw Hippocrates, the first physician, set up a medical school on

the island of Cos, Greece, in order to share and promote his logical medical ideas. He dispelled myths and replaced them with logic, based on careful observation. For example, he asserted that it was important for a person to keep themselves well by attention to diet and exercise. He proved it by living to nearly 100 when most died in their 40s.

Avicenna followed, an Arab doctor-pharmacist, who in his prolific writings expounded the virtues of plant remedies and modern concepts like cleanliness and observation. His writings were in force until the 17th century, accepted teachings for six centuries.



There followed new ideas, born of a healthy mixing of theories and discourse, through the learned doctor-pharmacist Paracelsus. He challenged accepted rules and showed that metals and minerals also had their place in treatments, for example arsenic for worm infestations and mercury for syphilis. He cautioned low doses as he also knew about poisons.

The narrative takes us through the subsequent eras of monasteries, which were important givers of population health care from the Middle Ages. Their dissolution in 1536 threw health care into chaos. Herbalists of the time developed into Apothecaries who didn't just sell herbs but examined their patients and made up their remedies – the fore-runners of today's GPs. The somewhat turbulent history of the development of physicians and pharmacists rumbles on, and their battles and tribulations are described in animated fashion. The story continues through to the NHS in 1948 followed by pharmacist-physician collaboration to make possible new life-saving drugs as the centuries move on.

I've indulged myself in a couple of chapters concerning how the active plant chemicals (alkaloids) were observed to work for various specific conditions.

Many of these are still the basis of our drugs today, though of course they are synthesised. Examples are digoxin (from foxglove, *digitalis*) for heart failure; colchicine (from autumn crocus) for gout; aspirin (from willow bark) to name but a few.



The fact that such a wide variety of plants contain the keys to preserving our health, is a miracle before our eyes.

The book is available directly from Jenny by emailing jenniferannstephenson@btinternet.com and is also on Amazon.

The marked price is £12 but due to high costs, the donations to charity would be boosted if anyone was able to give £15; Jenny is happy to hand deliver where feasible, otherwise the p&p cost is £5.



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“Smart Thinking?”

Eco Church article by John Green

In recent years Waterstones have created a new category in their bookshops - “Smart Thinking”. The increasing popularity of non-fiction books on science, economics, behavioural science, psychology and politics must be a major reason. One author who fits the “Smart Thinking” label is Yuval Noah Harari, with titles such as ‘Sapiens’ and “Homo Deus” which describe our cultural evolution in a very understandable way. He is an academic at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and in “Sapiens” writes about human evolution in the context of religion, politics and economics in such a way as to demonstrate how we have got to where we are.

“Homo Deus” looks to the future but his latest book is aimed at young people and looks back over human evolution in a way that links it to the Climate Crisis. The title is “Unstoppable Us - how humans took over the world” and explains how man has shaped the world because of the ascendancy of our species - “Homo sapiens”. He asks the question - “Why are there no longer any woolly mammoths?” His thesis is that, rather than disease or climate events, the explanation is that Homo sapiens became so skilled at hunting them for food and skins that we wiped them out. The key to how we could capture and kill an animal 10x our size was learning from experience and cooperation, rather than just weaponry. Setting traps and hunting in groups enabled ancient man to separate and surround a mammoth. In more modern times we think of hunting tigers and elephants for ivory.

The main message is that, whilst we are no longer able to kill Woolly Mammoths, we are able to kill off whole tranches of animal and plant species, through human activity. The difference nowadays is that is unintentional rather than intentional but no less devastating. Unintended consequences have been the learning from recent times such as Covid

grants to support companies, some of which were set-up just to collect grants! Smart motorways are in the news because of fatal accidents involving broken-down vehicles in live-lanes (which used to be the hard shoulder). The test of a government is not whether the (good) intention to decrease congestion on motorways was wrong but how quickly they deal with the unintended consequence of fatal accidents.

Whilst we are unlikely to create (bad) consequences on such a large scale we may do so in our own attempts to 'Go Green'. One of my favourite authors (and broadcasters) is Tim Harford - the "Undercover Economist" and host of the "More or Less" Podcast on BBC Radio 4. His programme 'looks at the numbers in the news and in everyday life' and came into its own during the pandemic. The language of statistics became the stuff of everyday discussion with reports from Professors Chris Whitty and Patrick Vallance. As a one-time epidemiologist, it was gratifying to see politicians having to deal with actual numbers rather than the ones they preferred. It worries me that less than 30 out of 600+ MPs have a STEM degree (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths). Increased awareness of statistical concepts such as incidence, risk, probability and (statistical) significance are one of the few positives arising from the pandemic.

Tim Harford has also published "50 things that made the Modern Economy" which explains, in a very readable way, subjects such as the Qwerty keyboard, which is another example of unintended consequences. Manual typewriters have a typeface on the end of a long arm so you don't want too many heading for the same point on a piece of paper, at the same time. As typing speeds increased the Qwerty keyboard layout was devised to slow down typists. A more intuitive layout is 'Dakota' which groups commonly used letters together but it lost out to Qwerty. "50 things..." also includes recycling and particularly plastic food packaging. Food is wasted in transit, if packed loose and when being handled by consumers, so packaging is about reducing food waste (which is a **good** thing) but actually generates more plastic (which was a **bad** thing).

Solutions such as potato-starch ‘plastic’ bags, better cardboard wrapping and ‘compostable’ plastic are appearing. Shrink-wrapped cucumbers are a good example of counterintuitive thinking. Cucumbers if wrapped, last up to two weeks but only three days if not. A recent Government report said that only 3% of UK food is wasted in transit whereas the figure is 50% in developing countries. Carrying your food shopping home in a single use plastic bag is getting rarer but data shows that an alternative ‘bag for life’ needs to be used every day for a year to have less environmental impact. According to Tim Harford, ‘real’ bags for life, made from organic cotton, need to be used 20,000 times to justify their carbon footprint - that’s every day for 50 years!

One final conundrum is the current ‘Just Stop Oil’ protest. Our ‘route to net zero’ involves using gas and oil to maintain power supplies until renewables are able to cope, e.g. when the wind isn’t blowing. Using our own gas and oil resources, in the North Sea, seems preferable to relying on supplies from less stable or even hostile sources, not to mention the transport costs. These issues are highly political, in the light of protests but something as obvious as the windfall taxes on energy companies are reducing investment, exploration and production in the North Sea. Who would be a politician?

There are no easy answers to these contradictions but continued pressure from us, the consumers, will provoke research and solutions that do work, i.e. more “Smart Thinking” (which is what we Homo sapiens have always done!)

“Unstoppable Us - How humans took over the world” Yuval Noah Harari - Puffin 2022

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Nature Notes



Our garden is bird and bee friendly and we are amazed at the different species of bees we see. We have a nest through the air grate under our house and even have a Solitary Bee nesting in the cavity of our open bedroom window! We also observe a variety of birds and we host a family of swifts nesting in the eaves of our house. It's great to watch them as they screech past our window.

We have a bird bath in the garden, but it has been turned into a jacuzzi by a Wood Pigeon, as you can see in the photograph. It comes in the morning, has a good splash around and then defecates in it. Well, that's pigeons for you! In order to prevent the spread of disease amongst our bird population, I clean out the bath, only for the pigeon to return the following morning. We now put a small bowl in the middle of the bath to deter it and it seems to have done the trick. We also have squirrel proof bird feeders, but one clever squirrel can open the spring clips. Whilst it is interesting to watch it perform, I have had to outwit it by using wire fasteners so that only the birds can consume the sunflower seeds. That's nature for you.

Philip Walshaw

Parish Registers

**WE THANK YOU FOR THE GIFT OF THE LIVES OF THESE CHILDREN WHO WERE BAPTISED HERE. MAY YOUR BLESSING OF PEACE AND JOY BE WITH THEM AND PROTECT THEM ALL OF THEIR DAYS:
Albert John Oldfield and Beatrice Rose Oldfield**

ST JOHN'S CHURCH, RANMOOR

CALENDAR – JULY 2023

Saturday 1st July

12noon Baptism of Torger Bek Buckingham Liddle
4pm The Revd Alison Wragg Ordination to the Priesthood - Sheffield
Cathedral

Sunday 2nd July – Trinity 4

10.30am All Age Communion - Celebration of Alison Wragg's first
Communion
10.30am Peter Pathikrit Das Ordination to Deacon - Sheffield Cathedral
6.30pm Choral Evensong

Saturday 8st July

Parish Coach Trip to Filey and Scarborough

Sunday 9th July – Trinity 5

10.30am Parish Communion
6.30pm Choral Evensong

Wednesday 12th July – 10-12.30pm

Foodbank Collection from the Church Drive

Saturday 15th July

7.30pm Abbeydale Singers Concert – A lily in your hand
Tickets available on the door

Sunday 16th July – Trinity 6

10.30am Parish Communion
Choir end of term celebration for Summer
6.30pm Choral Evensong

Monday 17th July

7.30pm PCC meeting in the Annexe

Sunday 23rd July – Trinity 7

10.30am Parish Communion
12noon – Sunday Social
6.30pm Choral Evensong

Wednesday 26th July – 10-12.30pm

Foodbank Collection from the Church Drive

Saturday 29th July

11am Baptism of Hugo James Gibbons
1pm Marriage Blessing of Natalie and Abby

Sunday 30th July – Trinity 8

10.30am Matins and 6.30 pm Parish Communion
2.30pm Baptism of Theia Patricia Hodgkiss

CALENDAR – AUGUST 2023

Saturday 5th August

1pm Marriage of Anna Louise Hughes- Lawson & Michael Blake Probert

Sunday 6th August – Trinity 9

10.30am All Age Communion

6.30pm Choral Evensong

Wednesday 9th August – 10-12.30pm

Foodbank Collection from the Church Drive

Saturday 12th August

12.30pm Marriage of Rebecca Slater & William Evans

Sunday 13th August – Trinity 10

10.30am Parish Communion

6.30pm Choral Evensong

Sunday 20th August – Trinity 11

10.30am Parish Communion

6.30pm Choral Evensong

Monday 21st August

7.30pm PCC meeting in the Annexe

Wednesday 23rd August – 10-12.30pm

Foodbank Collection from the Church Drive

Sunday 27th August – Trinity 12

10.30am Parish Communion

12noon Sunday Social

6.30pm Choral Evensong

Other services during the week:

Holy Communion: Every Wednesday at 11.30am in the Parish Centre

Choral Evensong: Wednesdays at 5.30pm (not through school holidays)

Morning Prayer: Monday to Saturday 9am in Church and on ZOOM

Footsteps: A Sunday school children's group that meets during the Sunday morning service.

Children are welcome at all of our services.

Lunch Club: meets every Wednesday in the Parish Centre. All Welcome

Sunday Social: Meets straight after the morning service on the 4th Sunday.
All Welcome

Our Sunday Services are always in Church and on YouTube

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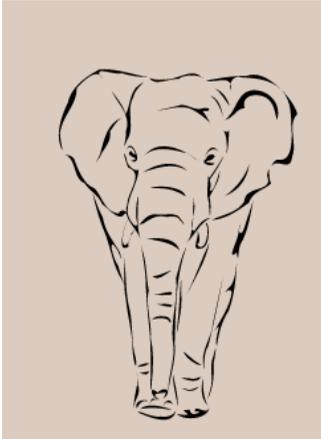
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The Parish Office is open Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays

9.30am-2.30pm

Young People's Pages

Episodes 39 and 40 of the Adventures of the Elephant and Mouse:



"What are you doing?" asked the mouse. "Looking," replied the elephant, shuffling

Through leaves and petals with its trunk. "What are you looking for?" "I'm not sure yet," admitted the elephant, "but I'll let you know when I find it."

"I'm sad today," announced the mouse with a sigh. "Oh, dear." And the elephant sat down beside it. "Why are you sad?" "Just am," the mouse explained with a disconsolate shrug. "I woke up sad and it's been downhill ever since." "Well, what do you think might make you not sad?" The mouse considered this carefully before answering. "You know, honestly, I don't think I'll ever be happy again."

"Not even if I told you," the elephant said slowly, "that I've just bought you a present?" The mouse sat very still. "What kind of present? it asked as casually as it could. The elephant shrugged. "Just a small one." "Not that ribbon I was looking at the other day...." "Maybe." "Oh," and the mouse leaned forward, whiskers twitching in excitement. "Oh, wow."



@littlepoppypoetry

Tom's Bomb

by David Hornsby

Gillian Stanley brilliantly recited this poem at the recent Christian Aid Concert of Talents. It went down a bomb, so to speak, so it is reproduced here, with the obligatory Health and Safety warning!



There was a boy whose name was Tom,
Who made a high-explosive bomb,
By mixing up some iodine
With sugar, flour and plasticine.
Then, to make it smell more queer,
He added Daddy's homemade beer.
He took it off to school one day
And when they all went out to play,
He left it by the radiator.
As the heat was getting greater,
The mixture in the bomb grew thick
And very soon it seemed to tick.

Miss Knight came in and gazed with awe
To see the bomb upon the floor.

"Dear me," she said, "it is a bomb,
An object worth escaping from."
She went to Mr Halliday
And said in tones that were not gay,
"Headmaster, this is not much fun;
There is a bomb in classroom one."
"Great snakes," said he, and gave a cough
"I hope it won't go off
But on the off chance that it does,
I think we'd better call the fuzz."
A policeman came and said "Oh God,
We need the bomb disposal squad,
Some firemen and a doctor too' A helicopter and its crew,
And, since I'm shaking in the legs,
A pot of tea and hard-boiled eggs."

A bomb disposal engineer,
Said, with every sign of fear,
"I've not seen one like this before."
And rushed out screaming through the door.
Everyone became more worried
Till Tom, who seemed to be unflurried,
Asked what was all the fuss about?
"I'll pick it up and take it out."
He tipped the contents down the drain
And peace and quiet reigned again.
Tom just smiled and shook his head
And quietly to himself he said
"Excitement's what these people seek.
I'll bring another one next week."

Restaurant Review: 'Olive' 762 Ecclesall Road, Sheffield | |



Isn't life full of unforeseen happenings? Some of these can be pretty devastating, some not, and some like this turgid sentence terminally boring. Actually, the start to this review seemed pretty snappy when I first began to write, but it's proving a struggle to get the thing going! My literary ambition (namely trying to compose this review) was to indicate that, after strolling around the Derbyshire countryside with a couple of friends (and G), an evening relaxing in one of the "gourmet" eating establishments on Ecclesall Road seemed quite appealing - especially as the suggestion was to dine at one of the two Thai restaurants close to Hunter's Bar. Also, an ancillary aim was to enlighten the enthusiastic reader of this erudite tome about the sundry vagaries encountered during this erstwhile endeavour. No need to book we decided as it was a Tuesday evening so few punters, and all one needed to do was arrive (at about 6.30pm) and straight in.

Sadly, number one establishment doesn't open Tuesdays, and number two restaurant was closed on a rather more permanent basis - boarded up, covered by graffiti, and displaying various "For Sale" notices. A couple of speedy phone calls established that nearby restaurant 'Olive' was fully functioning, (we were still outside the non-operational Thai establishments), and could accommodate our group of five disgruntled intended diners immediately. Hopefully not a bad solution as I have actually dined at this small (and friendly) establishment on several occasions (not for about a year though – and things do seem to change!) and have always rated it pretty highly.

The Meal (part one)

Only one table occupied when we arrived, so I guess they were delighted when we did our SOS phone call, but I guess the very cheerful welcome was standard practice anyway! Even more cheerful was the arrival of a bottle of a Moroccan red wine recommended by our pleasant and helpful waitress (actually, can one use the term "waitress" in our brave new TikTok society? Discuss.) Can't remember the name on the label (or the price!) but the speed of opening and consumption was impressive! A brief word of explanation would perhaps be apposite following the Moroccan wine element. 'Olive' is a restaurant specialising in Moroccan cuisine. The establishment was opened about eight years ago by two brothers (yes - from Morocco!) and has survived the Ecclesall Road restaurant Kamikaze syndrome (where local contemporary eating establishments clamour to self-destruct), and continues to offer an extremely good service based on meals (all meals) being prepared on the premises by an extremely competent chef who weaves his magic via a minute kitchen. I guess all the above complimentary rhetoric was based on the (hopeful) concept that the abrupt change of venue would be successful. Or at least provide a decent evening's entertainment.

The Meal (part two)

At last something about the meal. It actually was a pretty good meal! In fact a very good meal. Read on. A dish of "Rustic bread" with marinated olives (£6.95) was ordered as a "sharing dish" to accompany the very drinkable wine (see above for details) followed by a main dish (for me) of Moroccan meat balls (lamb and beef mix) in a spiced tomato sauce

supported with an element of coriander (£9.50). Following advice from our ever-helpful waitress, a portion of truffle and parmesan mashed potato (£4.95) was added as an (essential) extra to this dish, the whole combining superbly. G went for the veggie option -Zaalouk – a combination of aubergines, olives, preserved lemons (a first for me this unusual addition) and chemoula - costing a punchy £16.95. I didn't actually taste this dish, but G seemed to rate it highly.

The sweet menu read well, so was unable to resist the vanilla panna cotta replete with raspberry coulis, meringue, shortbread biscuit and pistachio crumb (£8.50). Very well presented and very tasty. An indulgence? Perhaps, but why not? Coffee to finish – a good Cappuccino (plus amaretti biscuit) at a standard £3.20.

Verdict

A really good meal enjoyed by all. I feel perhaps that a mention of Olive's "signature" dish might be appropriate for those who are tempted to try this establishment. This consists of slow cooked Moroccan lamb served with cumin and spring onion mashed potato and spiced carrots at a pricey (but worth it!) £24.95. Give it a go. You will enjoy.

Roy Stanley



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The Lord's Amazing Grace.

Sally Booker has passed on this reflection about grace given by Christina Patterson at a recent service at Whirlow Grange

For some time, I have felt that The Lord wanted me to think more deeply about His grace, the amazing grace that He has for all of us. It is such an important part of our faith and the hope we have, that we are saved, by God's grace alone. The famous author C.S Lewis, who wrote the books about Narnia was once asked what he thought made Christianity different from other faiths and religions, and he said; that's an easy question; it is grace.

What is God's grace? You could say that it is the Lords' free gift to us, completely unearned and undeserved. God's unfailing favor towards us. It stems from God's deep compassionate love that He has for us all, the people he created. Even though he is holy and we are not, he so much longed to draw us to Himself and rescue us from sin and death that he made a plan for us to be saved. Ever since the very moment Adam and Eve rebelled against God in the garden of Eden, step by step God put His rescue plan in place. He sent many prophets to tell people of the promise that one-day the Messiah would come and save His people and put everything right. He would remove the separation between us and God And then that fantastic day finally came!

We can picture how the Angels came down from heaven, that wonderful night when Jesus was born. They had just stood face to face with God, and knew about the amazing message of grace that they were bringing. God had sent them to say to the shepherds: *"Do not be afraid, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you, He is Christ the Lord."* Then many angels started to sing; *"Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom His favour rests"* And there, in that message we clearly see and hear about the Lord's heart, so full of love and goodness towards us. He, who is the Lord Almighty and worthy of all praise, loves us, cares

for us and wants to give us His peace and to save us. His favour rests on us; we have God's pleasure; and He takes delight in us.

Then the big question is, can we, 2000 years later take God at His word and have complete confidence in God's grace? Is it strong and safe enough for us to stand on even when we feel that we have utterly failed God and others in so many ways? Can we rely on it, both in life and death and beyond?

As I thought about that I had a picture of the lakes in Sweden in the winter. If the temperature falls below zero both day and night for a period of time the lakes start to freeze over. Some winters we have been able to skate on the ice, which is fascinating. It can allow us to get to places that we could not reach through walking or swimming. But we all know how dangerous it is to walk on ice if it is not solid and safe, so we ask local people about the conditions, we look very carefully and examine the thickness of the ice before we take even one step onto it. In a similar way we can also carefully look at what is said and written about God's Grace. We have been thinking of the message the Angels brought; how The Lord is longing to save us, to give us peace and show us His favor, and now we go onto listen to what Jesus says, he who knows the Father's loving heart and intentions more than anyone.

Jesus says in the well-known verse, John 3:16 *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

That is grace in a nutshell; it is undeserved, it is free for us, but it cost Jesus everything. He was the only one able to take all our sins and place them on his own shoulders, so that we could be forgiven and set free. And we think about Jesus' crucifixion and one of the criminals who was crucified by Jesus' side. This man had lived his life as a robber, and he acknowledged that he was a sinful person, that he had actually got what he deserved, but he really sensed something different and special in Jesus; that Jesus was innocent of any crime and that he was someone he could turn to and put his trust in, and so he says: *"Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom."* And Jesus' gracious, reassuring response is: *"I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."* This

seems incredible, because the robber had not even said that he was sorry, and yet he was given grace this very last minute of his life. That is grace, undeserved, and amazing.

In His final words Jesus gives us even further reason to fully trust in Him, as he said *"It is finished."*, which meant; It is now complete. Jesus knew that step by step throughout his whole life he had accomplished everything his father asked him to do without fail, in order for us to be saved, and now his work was done, and it would stand for all times to come. He had redeemed the world.

Paul, the apostle also speaks much about grace. He also asks some very important questions in his letters. He asks "If God is for us, who can be against us? Who can accuse the people God has chosen?" And he goes onto answer: *"No one, because Jesus died in our place, rose again from the dead, and is now on God's right side praying for us."* And then Paul asks one more crucial question: *"Can anything separate us from the love Christ has for us?"* And his clear, triumphant answer is No! *"For I am convinced that that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."* So, when we ask the Lord to forgive our sins and place our trust in Jesus, our saviour, then we are clothed in God's grace for eternity, and held securely in the grip of God's grace.

There is however one more aspect of Grace to consider, the other side of the coin, and that is that WE are also called to extend and offer grace to others. We remember how Jesus taught his disciples to pray: "Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sinned against us..."

This can be very difficult. It is often a human instinct to get bitter and resentful and wanting to take revenge if anyone offends us. Some of us may have been terribly hurt in the past, and endured much suffering and perhaps experienced cruelty and injustice, and to forgive may take us some time, but in the end only forgiveness can truly set us free and help us to move on.

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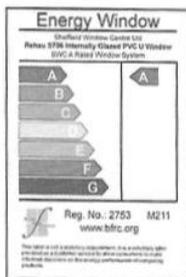
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The answers to the clues below are the full name or surname of male or female artists valleys. A prize awaits the person who submits the most correct answers. A bonus point will be awarded for identifying the artist featured. In the event of a tie, a winner will be chosen by a lucky draw. Send your entry by email to jpwalshaw@gmail.com or by post to 19 Cairns Road, S10 5NA to reach me by Wednesday, 16th August, 2023.

1. Canadian town (8)
2. Term changed around business image (9)
3. Creamy net I repaired (6,4)
4. Down to earth prophet (8)
5. Third name is changed (6,5)
6. Inherits administrative area (12)
7. One calm duet changed this impressionist (6,5)
8. Magic hole Len conjured with (12)
9. Appeared in Lego yacht (4)
10. Drawn a holy transformation (4,6)
11. Men used alarm differently (7,5)
12. Donkey features in beginnings of problem intervention comparison outcome (7)
13. Artist appeared on tv changing oven strangely (7,3,4)
14. Revealed in German etchings (5)
15. Yvonne initially follows the sides of the river (6)

Answers to June Quiz: 1 Edgar Wallace 2 Roald Dahl 3 A. A. Milne 4 Charles Dickens
5 Hilary Mantel 6 Mary Shelley (pictured) 7 George Orwell 8 Dorothy L. Sayers
9 D. H. Lawrence 10 Richard Osman 11 A. E. Housman 12 Peter James 13 Beatrix Potter
14 Emily Bronte 15 W. Somerset Maugham

Correction: Many apologies for the error in clue 14 which should have included the word "only".

Entries were received from: Janet and Malcolm Anker, Pam and Ian Dall, Michael and Rosemary Hannon, John and Brenda Staniforth, Barbara and Peter Wozencroft.

The winners were John and Brenda Staniforth, who receive a box of chocolates.

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Contributing to Inspire:

As always you should feel free to contribute to the magazine: articles, news, photographs, and anything else that you feel might be suitable. Any contributions received after the date shown below will be considered for publication in the following issue. We cannot guarantee that everything we receive will be published.

The deadline for contributions to the September edition is Wednesday, 16th August, 2023.

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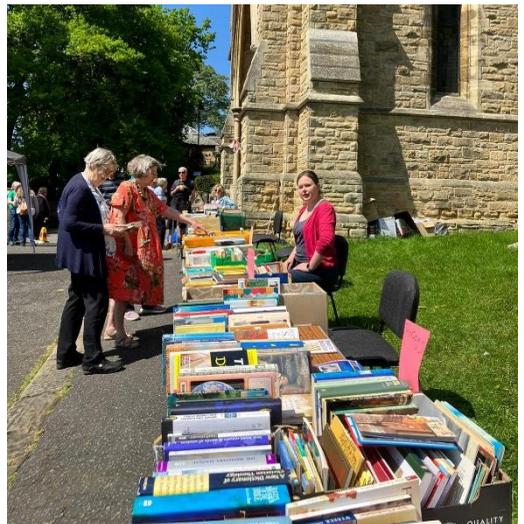
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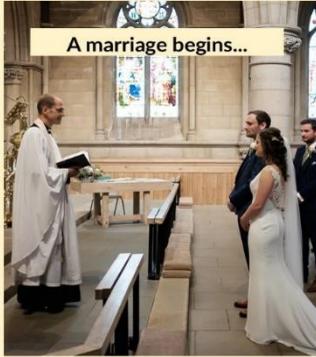
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