

“He **leads me forward**, through paths unknown,
and when my strength is gone, He **heals my weary soul**,
and **shows me who I could be**, He stays with me,
and **I know...**”



INSPIRE

St John's Church
Ranmoor, Sheffield

February
2024
£1.00

“I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me”
(Philippians 4:13)



Flowers in Church at Christmas



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.

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Cover design by Rory Walshaw, aged 14, with words from one of her favourite worship songs

Large print versions of Inspire are available

Foreword



This year, Lent starts early on 14th February. Bringing your beloved to the Ash Wednesday service at St John's 7.30pm may not be the most romantic plan but Valentine's Day has more in common with Lent than you might imagine. Like many valentines, the identity of St Valentine is a bit mysterious. His name first appears in a list of martyrs which was compiled between 460 and 544. The Feast of St Valentine on 14th February, was

established in 496 by Pope Gelasius I who included Valentine among all those "... whose names are justly revered among men, but whose acts are known only to God."

The Catholic Encyclopaedia mentions three possible Saint Valentines. One was a priest, one a bishop and one was martyred with others in Africa. Whether there were three Valentines or just one it seems that they really followed Christ in the way of the cross. What little we know of Valentine speaks to us of suffering rather than romantic love. How he ended up as the patron saint of love is a bit of a mystery.

While we are unlikely to be called upon to die for our faith, like Valentine, we are called to journey faithfully with Jesus during Lent. As usual, there are opportunities at St John's and in our Mission Area for us to get to know our Bibles better. As we reflect on Jesus fasting in the wilderness, we may choose some form of self-denial. Alternatively, we might decide to take up something new, like carrying out some random acts of kindness.

However you decide to use the season of Lent, I hope that during it you will discover more and more of the fullness of God's love for you and for others. The life, death and resurrection of Jesus is God's eternal love letter to the world.

Matthew

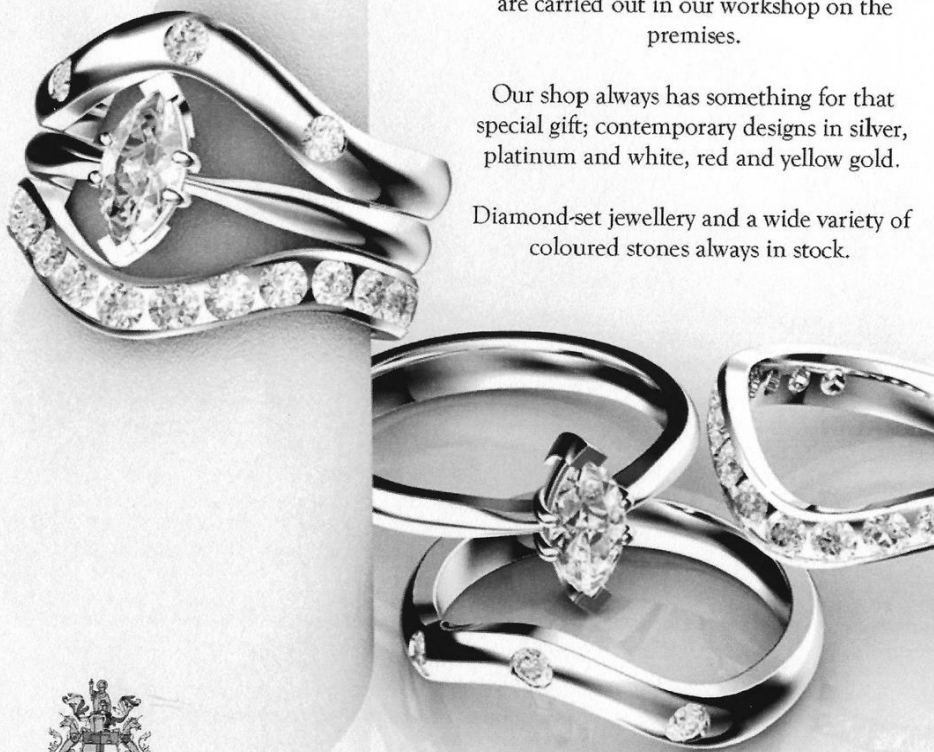
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From the Editor's Chair



I'm writing this mid-January, after enjoying a wonderful performance of the famous musical *White Christmas* at The Crucible Theatre. I didn't know whether to look back on the one that had just passed or look forward to next Christmas! From an early age, after having read a biblical story about Lot's wife (Luke 17:32), I have been ever conscious of the perils of looking back. I see nothing wrong in looking back on happy memories, because there is so much to enjoy about them, but I try to avoid the

negativity of looking back and reflecting on how things might have been different if only this or that, or even the other, had happened.....

Wary of being turned into a pillar of stone, I can't help but look back on the Christmas that has just passed and, in particular, the wonderful Nativity Service on Christmas Eve that I was privileged to participate in as a Yorkshire sheep. It was great to see the church so full of children and young people, both in the "audience" and "on stage" and much credit should go to Ruby Hart, a member of our choir, for the inspired script that she wrote and for her encouragement and "stage direction" in dress rehearsals and on the day.

We are blessed at St John's to have so many children and young people involved with the church and this issue features some articles written by them.

Philip Walshaw

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Introducing Claire Eaton



Hello! My name is Claire and I am the Children and Families Worker for St John's church. I would like to start by saying a very big 'Thank you!' to everyone here at St John's for making me feel so welcomed and loved. It has been great meeting many of you over the last few weeks, learning more about life in your wonderful church, and listening to your hopes and visions for the future of the children and young people in our congregation,

parish and wider community. I believe that, together with God's loving help, we can achieve great things. I appreciate your prayers as I begin to embrace my role here: God is faithful and I feel very thankful for this opportunity to be a support and encouragement to families.

A little bit about myself...

I was born and grew up in Bradford until we relocated here fifteen years ago and love living here, feeling it is now my home. For most of my career I have worked in schools specialising as an Early Years practitioner, most recently as a Deputy Manager for a local preschool, but also have many years of experience working with children in the primary age group. I have been previously employed as a Children and Families Worker for Wesley Hall Methodist church in Crookes until the birth of our second son and it was this job I feel I have loved the most, which is why I was very excited when I saw that St John's were advertising for this role and even more thrilled when I was successful to appointment!

Before my job there, I supported families in a volunteer capacity in lots

of different churches over many years, leading children's and youth work for midweek and Sunday groups as well as parish weekends away, holiday clubs and residential. For a short while after our move to Sheffield we also lived in Bakewell during school term time where I worked as a Housemistress for a boarding school – an experience worth mentioning for the skills and variety it provided me with as the full-time carer for up to ten girls aged between 8 and 12!

Throughout my adult life I have enjoyed attending dance classes and am part of a great dance school called Hype Dance Company. I have taken part in annual productions, charity dance festivals, fashion shows and a television show.

I am married to Dan, a primary school teacher, and we have two sons – Ben, aged 15, and Noah, aged 6. Dan is a keen historian (particularly local history and World War I). Ben and Noah are both part of the Sheffield Wildcats Roller Hockey team and play in tournaments. Roller hockey is an interesting sport – non-contact form of hockey played on quad roller skates. Ben enjoys life at Tapton, while Noah is at Lydgate Infants. We also have a cat called Oreo.

I love that St John's is an eco-church because it ties in with my own passion for creating a more sustainable lifestyle and contributing to the world's efforts in a kinder approach to our planet. I hope to keep these values at the heart of my work and incorporate them into my activities with the children, enabling them to see the need for change in their world and empowering them with the knowledge and resources to make small changes that will have a big impact.

I will be starting a new toddler group in the near future and have lots of ideas for other groups and events. Please do get in touch if you would be interested in helping at any of my groups or events or if you would just like to have a chat.

My email address is: claire.eaton@stjohnsranmoor.org.uk

The Diary of a Christmas Chorister by Freddie Beardsmore

One of my favourite books is the *Diary of a Christmas Elf*, so I've written my own Christmas diary all about being a chorister at Christmas time.

Monday 13th November

We started to practice some Christmas music tonight. It's still quite early but there is lots to learn. We got the carol books out and practiced some carols to sing over Christmas. We had lots of new music to learn too.

Saturday 2nd December

Today we went out into town and sang lots of carols to raise money for Christian Aid. I really liked it because it's lots of fun singing our favourite carols. It was very cold, but at least it was dry this year. Afterwards we went for hot chocolate to warm up.

Saturday 9th December

Today was a very busy day doing our Christmas Extravaganza concert with Stannington Brass Band. We had new chorister hoodies to wear for the concert. The brass band were really good and I liked the trumpets and the glockenspiel. My favourite pieces of music were *O Holy Night* and *The Holly and the Ivy*. There were lots of people at the concert. It was a very tiring day.

Sunday 17th December

Tonight was my first carol service with the choristers. We sang lots of Christmas anthems and carols and there were lots of reading too. It's a very special service and there were lots of people in the congregation.

Monday 18th December

Instead of rehearsing, we had a Christmas party today. We started by singing some of our favourite carols, I chose *Good King Wencelas* because it's my favourite. Then the senior choristers led some games like the newspaper game which I won. Then we had some party food. It was nice to finally relax and hang out with the other choristers.

Sunday 24th December

It's Christmas Eve and today is the Ranmoor Nativity. The Choristers were the angels in our choir robes. The Juniors were the sheep and have to say "Bah" lots! It was a really good nativity, even though it was quite different to the services we usually sing.

Monday 25th December

Finally, it's Christmas Day and we get to celebrate baby Jesus being born. We sang lots of descants today and I did a trio with two of the other boys in *Agnus Dei* by Ireland. We also sang *The Holly and the Ivy* again. Today we also got our choir pay, which I always look forward to.

Finally, all the singing for Christmas is over and we get a couple of weeks off to rest.

Poems by Mabel Bailey

During December, I tried to write poems as often as I could, and I think these are two of my best. The first is a blessing, inspired by Irish blessings I have sung and read, and the second is an Advent poem about the world waiting.

A Blessing

May your road ever run under green trees,
May the skies be always blue above you,
May your hills not be steep and your legs never tire,
May your friends ever stay beside you,
May the wind keep away and the cold not bide,
And may a warm fireside await you.

Waiting (an advent poem)

The world is hushed.
Expectant.
Cold has hardened the ground,
turned the mud to ridges,
weighed down grass blades with frost.
It waits for snow to cover its bareness,
to soften its crudeness.
The sky is waiting too.
The wind has scrubbed it to a grey white,
pink sunrise stains the edges.

It is waiting for the clear, summer's day blue
that only frost can bring,
for soft white clouds and snow
to fill the sky with whispers.
Houses, too, are expectant.
Bay windows wait, empty,
thinking of the time soon when
glossy branches fill the space,
hung with glowing lights,
that spill brightness out over the streets,
over the glistening snow.



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Ask the Bishop!

In December, before Bishop Pete went on his sabbatical, the children of Ranmoor sent him some questions. See what he had to say below.



What do you like most about being a Bishop?

I especially love telling people the good news about Jesus and encouraging them to live in his Way. I get to do this quite a lot, often in schools, but also at big church services like Confirmation.

What's the most difficult thing about your role?

Most days I have to make difficult decisions, when it is not possible to please everyone and someone will be disappointed. I don't like doing that. Also, if there is a complaint about a vicar or a church, it will usually come to me and I don't enjoy dealing with it!

What's your favourite thing about going to church?

Ooh... the best thing for me is definitely an experience of the presence of God. It comes to me sometimes when we are singing hymns, sometimes when I am listening to the sermon, and sometimes when I am receiving the bread and wine at Holy Communion. It is absolutely the best thing, to me, about being a follower of Jesus.

What's your favourite Bible story or book of the Bible and why?

That's a difficult question, because it depends. I love the whole Bible and every single book in the Bible and they all matter to me at different times depending on my situation. At the moment, my favourite is the Old Testament book of Ruth, because I am hoping, in the next few months to write a book of my own about it.

Who is your favourite Bible character and why?

Again, it really depends. What I love about almost all the characters in the Bible is that their faults and weaknesses are not covered up – so I learn that God chooses and uses ordinary people, like me! But obviously, I have a soft spot for St Peter, after whom I am named. He got a lot of things wrong in following Jesus, but he also got plenty right!

Who inspires you?

I am inspired by people in three different groups: first, Bible characters like Peter inspire me; then, saints down the ages (like Thomas à Kempis, or John Calvin, or William Wilberforce) inspire me, and finally Christians serving God in my own lifetime (like John Stott and Rowan Williams) inspire me.

You're taking a sabbatical, what will you be doing during your time off?

Well, I will be abroad for 10 weeks (mostly in Melbourne, Australia), and my chief focus then will be to write that book on Ruth which I mentioned earlier. Before that, I need to visit some elderly members of my family in the week after Christmas, because I won't see them again until Easter; and then I am going to attend my 'Cell group' (which is a prayerful support group of bishops) and finally I am going on a silent retreat, to try to get 'still' inside, before I go away. I hope to come back feeling rested and renewed for all that God has in store for me and for our Diocese in the coming years.

If you could visit anywhere in the world, where would you go and why?

I love to travel – though I realise that it is important to remember that every journey has a real cost in terms of your carbon footprint. But if I didn't have to worry about that, I suppose I would most like to visit China, because I have never been there. It is so vast, and there are so many human beings there, and the culture is so strange to me, that I would like to learn more about what it is like.

What's your favourite food?

Hmm... good question! I grew up in India, so I do love a good curry –

but not a generic takeaway. I like strong flavours, and I prefer savoury to sweet food.

What would you do on your perfect day?

I do love the sunshine and I love watching sport. So if I could combine those two things it would be a special day! But I also have three very precious grand-daughters (aged 6 and 4 and 2) and I love to spend time with them – and I would even choose a rainy day with them over a sunny day of cricket or football!

The Further Adventures of the Elephant and Mouse



The elephant sat to one side, looking more than a little embarrassed. "It's fine," the mouse said for what felt like the hundredth time. "I told you that no one noticed." "What kind of elephant trips over its own trunk?" the elephant wailed.

"Look," the mouse said in desperation, "as falls go, it was a graceful one. You could tell that you

know how to dance." "Could you?"

The elephant looked rather pleased at this. "Am I really that graceful?"

"Well," and the mouse realised that it had to tread carefully, "in the big picture, yes." "And in the smaller picture?" "You almost fell on top of me." "Oh," said the elephant.



@littlepoppypoetry

Lent Groups

This year we are offering a variety of ways in which through bible study, reflection and prayer you can prepare for Jesus' death and resurrection during the Lenten season.

Lent Study Groups run by St John's

This year we have chosen 'Lent and Easter for Everyone - From wilderness to glory' by Tom Wright. (ISBN 978-0281-07141-8). Tom Wright is a very well-respected theologian and author and former Bishop of Durham. The book has seven weeks of daily readings and reflections. These can be used as the basis for individual reading and prayer during Lent and the Easter season and we will focus on selected readings for our Lent Groups. Relevant material will be provided for each of the study groups so you can still participate if you have not purchased the book. Each week the material will be free-standing so there is no requirement to attend all the sessions. We shall be offering two Lent groups at St John's on a Tuesday evening (7.30 - 9.00pm) and a Thursday afternoon (2.30 - 4.00pm). The groups will be led by both clergy and members of the congregation. The groups will start during the week beginning 19th February and finish in the week beginning 18th March.

Lectio Divino (run by St John's)

For several years a small group has met each Wednesday afternoon for Lectio Divina. During Lent we shall be reading Bible passages taken from the service the previous Sunday, sharing our thoughts and then silently centering our prayers and thoughts around it. This has been a lifeline of of peace and refreshment, in the certainty that God is there alongside us. We meet for about an hour every Wednesday at 2.45, in the Parish Centre, and we would be so pleased if you would like to come and join us.

If you would like to join one of these groups there is a sign-up sheet at the back of church or alternatively contact Claire in the Parish office.

Lent Groups run by St Mark's

St Mark's is running Lent Groups which are open to members of all the churches in the Mission Area. Their course is based on a book called 'How to Eat Bread - 21 Nourishing Ways to Read the Bible' by Miranda Threlfall-Holmes. There is more information about this on their website if you are interested in joining one of these groups.

https://www.stmarkssheffield.co.uk/Groups/410736/Lent_Groups.aspx

ST JOHN'S CHURCH, RANMOOR

CALENDAR – FEBRUARY 2024

Thursday 1st February

8pm Organ Recital with Peter Heginbotham (St John's, Ranmoor)

Sunday 4th February - Candlemas

10.30am All Age Communion

12.30pm Baptism of Frankie Alexander Ellis

6.30pm Candlemas Procession

Wednesday 7th February

11.30am Holy Communion in the Parish Centre

10-12.30pm Foodbank Collection from the Church Drive

12.30pm Lunch Club

5.30pm Choral Evensong

Saturday 10th February

7.30pm Choral Bangers 3 with Cantores Feriatum

Sunday 11th February – Sunday next before Lent

10.30am Parish Communion

6.30pm Choral Evensong

Wednesday 14th February – Ash Wednesday

11.30am Holy Communion for Ash Wednesday in the Parish Centre

12.30pm Lunch Club

7.30pm Ash Wednesday Holy Communion

Sunday 18th February – 1st Sunday of Lent

10.30am Parish Communion

6.30pm Choral Evensong

Monday 19th February

7.30pm PCC meets in the annexe

Wednesday 21st February

11.30am Holy Communion in the Parish Centre

12.30pm Lunch Club

5.30pm Said Evensong

Saturday 24th February

4pm Ranmoor Rex Cinema - Matilda the Musical!

Tickets on sale via Ticketsource

Sunday 25th February - 2nd Sunday of Lent

10.30am Parish Communion

12.30pm Sunday Social in the Parish Centre

6.30pm Choral Evensong

Monday 26th February

7.30pm Sanctuary in the side chapel

Wednesday 28th February

11.30am Holy Communion in the Parish Centre

12.30pm Lunch Club

5.30pm Choral Evensong

Other services during the week:

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

Choral Evensong: Evensong Wednesdays at 5.30 pm (Choral Evensong every other week in term time, see Music List for details)

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 – please book with the Parish Office

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

Please book with the Parish Office.

Our Sunday Services are always in Church and on YouTube

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The Parish Office is open Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays 9.30am-2.30pm

St Michael's Church, Linton

by Liz Dwyer

Matthew and Claire Wood's new ministry in the Yorkshire Dales reminded me of my own experience of St Michael's, Linton, one of the churches where he is now Vicar. Some years ago, my daughters, grand-children and I attempted to go to a service there. Unfortunately, it was the fifth Sunday of the month and a joint service was being held elsewhere so the church was open but empty of people. As the rain was pouring down, we stayed in the building for some time and explored it.



It is a delightful church, a short walk from the town of Grassington. The church and graveyard sit in a loop of the river and there is a feeling of tranquillity, unless you take the short path to the beautiful but deafening Linton Falls. The earliest parts of the building are twelfth century but it is thought that worship has taken place there for much longer. My main memories of that visit are of a place with ancient roots but which seemed to still be well cared for and full of life.



I was particularly taken with a beautiful altar frontal, symbolising the Holy Spirit spreading throughout the world. I bought some postcards of it. I gave one to Alison Wragg when she was ordained, never thinking that it would have a link to anyone else from St John's.

Because we had loved the atmosphere of the church, we decided to try again the following year. This time we knew that although the Vicar was

on holiday there was a lay led service. By the time we had got three adults and three less enthusiastic children out of the holiday cottage and driven over from the next Dale we were running late. We could hear that a hymn had already started when we fell through the door.

At first sight it seemed as though the church was empty again. The congregation was crammed into the choir stalls and filled every seat. The singing stopped and, much embarrassed, we indicated that we would sit in the front pew. However, six chairs were brought for us and arranged in a semi-circle at the East End so that we appeared to be of utmost importance. Luckily this subdued the grandchildren. It was a lovely and simple service. Individuals chose favourite hymns which we sang. We wrote prayers of thanksgiving and petition on different coloured paper chains, joined them all together and a grandson and I fastened this round the altar as we brought our communal prayers before God. As we neared the end of the service, the leader suggested that we the guests might choose and lead in a hymn. Every known hymn immediately escaped my panicked memory. Luckily one of my daughters is a Youth leader and offered to lead everyone with actions in the chorus “Our God is a great big God”. Everybody joined in enthusiastically and with obvious enjoyment.

Afterwards, over coffee, we were met with such warmth. We were told of the activities of this and other local churches, of the services provided by them in nearby Grassington and of support offered for people experiencing loneliness. One person said that she thought we had been sent by God to encourage them – not something that is usually said about my family! In our turn we were lifted by the faithfulness and friendliness of the church of St Michael’s in Linton.

I know that this and the other churches are lucky to have Matt and Claire to truly encourage them. I trust that they too are already finding the faith and love which we glimpsed on that Sunday morning.

Recording Star?!

by Alan Heath

As a member of Sheffield Bach Choir, I received an email in the middle of October informing members that the choir had been invited to be part of the 'Stage Chorus' for the Christmas and New Year recordings of 'Songs of Praise' which were to take place at Sheffield City Hall on Tuesday November 14th. I wasn't aware of the event beforehand and never saw any publicity later, so I was surprised to discover that there was a sell-out audience of over two thousand. I don't watch the programme regularly but it didn't take me long to decide to accept the invitation as I thought it would be an interesting experience and I knew I would regret it if I missed out.



We were told to enter by the stage door before 5 o'clock with the men wearing dinner jackets, white shirts and black bow ties. This is not my normal attire on a Tuesday afternoon, but I tried not to look too conspicuous walking through the city centre after finding a parking place fairly close by – fortunately parking is cheaper after 4:30! We were then directed to a 'large room' which was not really big enough for everyone and learnt that there were 160 singers but only nine men – five basses and four tenors. I'm not sure how many choirs were represented, but I came across members of Sheffield Oratorio Chorus and Sheffield Community Choir. We moved to our seats close to the organ console, high above and behind the stage, ready to start recording at 6 o'clock.

The Christmas episode was presented by Aled Jones. I'm not particularly a fan of his but I was very impressed with his presenting skills and the way he interacted with the audience. The most notable thing about the recording was that everything was done out of sequence, resulting in some of the audience becoming confused and starting to leave after the final sequence was shot even though it was only about half way through

the process! It was also slightly curious that there were so many pauses breaking up the continuity within each section including gaps between guests coming on stage and their performances. This is not obvious during the broadcast, although there are frequent views of the audience at these points as a result.

The recording generally went smoothly although the floor manager frequently appeared and we had to re-record items, with a prime example being the chorus of one verse in 'The Holly and the Ivy' which had interludes between each phrase and befuddled many of the audience as well as some of the choir to extent that some sang at the wrong time even on the final 'take': although fortunately you can't really tell on the broadcast. The words 'Sweet Singing in the Choir' in this verse were appropriately the only thing the chorus was required to sing alone during the whole evening, although again this is not obvious when watching it.

Yet another quirk was that Kathryn Jenkins performed her 'Christmas single' accompanied by a backing track, but the chorus was asked to pretend to be singing even though no close ups of us were shown. There was some irony in this however as my attendance prevented me from taking part in one of three audio recordings by Sheffield Chamber Choir who performed a carol concert for the Catholic linked organisation 'Shalom Media', although I appeared to be singing in all the pieces when we 'lip-synced' on the visual recording a couple of weeks later.

The New Year's Eve programme was presented by Kathryn Jenkins who was clearly not as experienced in the role as Aled Jones (who was a guest this time) but she was very cheerful and charming. As you would expect, the recording process was very similar to the earlier show, with most of the audience numbers being done near the end. The strangest thing this time was linking hands and singing 'Auld Lang Syne' in the middle of November. We finally finished at 10:22 and were left to wonder how the outcome would appear. I watched the two programmes with interest and was thankful that I appeared to be singing the correct words when shown and that my tie was straight, as there were no mirrors available to check such things. Several people have commented that I was featured more frequently than many of the chorus

on the first programme, however I noticed just five occasions when I could be seen clearly and this was matched by Ann Bird – a member of St. John’s congregation – who was in the audience. I spotted myself seven



times during the second programme – not that I was counting! – although several of these were side on when I was partly obscured. Despite my starring role, I’m still awaiting contact from an agent and sadly my appearances have now been ‘trumped’ by my son-in-law who has recently been interviewed on

‘Points West’ about his role in ‘Blood Biking’ in the Bristol area. (If anyone is unaware, this involves volunteers transporting donated blood to hospitals for use in transfusions)

I’m pleased I decided to take part and the outcome was worthwhile, but as any of you will know if you’ve taken part in a recording, it is quite a laborious process and I’m grateful that I don’t do it more frequently. One of the main things I took from the experience is that even if performances are not to your taste, you can still admire the professionalism involved, especially when it involves such a disjointed process and having to do things more than once. I’m still waiting to be asked, but autographs and signed photos are available on request!

Parish Registers

Please remember those who have died:

Ken Harris, Sara Blakey (Dr Barbara Sloan), Michael Bird and Tony Escott

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Our thoughts and prayers are with all the friends and families of those names listed.

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Restaurant Review: The Three Merry Lads, Redmires Road, Sheffield I0



I've never really been a fan of the Merry Lads. My favourite hostelry in this bleak outpost of the Sheffield hinterland has always been The Sportsman somewhat lower down on the Redmires road. Not sure why. Perhaps a few hundred yards closer to the warmth of the big city, or more likely a combination of long-standing fellow beer enthusiasts, and a friendly welcoming front of house greeting from the ever-present landlady Jill Hoffman. Sadly, Jill is no longer with us and the Sportsman is closed for an unknown period of time. All pretty gloomy reading so far! Still, having put in some social mileage recently at the Merry Lads due to the above changes in libation participation, the suggestion of an evening meal at this "alternative" hostelry, to include a somewhat reticent G, seemed appealing (to me anyway!) Actually, the "appealing" bit was based on the annual pre-Christmas visit from our local Loxley Silver band who had been invited to play various Christmas carols in the cheerful interior of the Merry Lads main bar area. So what is there not to enjoy as part of this potentially festive set up?

Quite tricky booking a table when entertainment is part of the evening - the Loxley Silver band gig is one of the highlights of the Merry Lad's year - and the whole establishment is heaving with very cheerful (nearly

Christmas!) clientele heavily compressed round multiple tables of eclectic dimensions seated on an equally eclectic mixture of seating artefacts. I was going to write “chairs” but seating varied from large squidgy sofas to sundry standard wooden chairs - plus a mixture of plastic pouffes (that’s another word I thought about before writing!) to provide to provide sufficient support for the vast quantity of expectant diners. Full house, great atmosphere - five of us seated around our allotted table with initial glasses of beverage – (beer and/or wine) – only decision to be made is what to eat.

The Meal

Brief mention of the historical bit before meandering into the culinary aspects of the Merry Lads gourmet offerings. Apparently, the pub’s origins date back to 1836 when owned by the Marsden family who named it after their very lively male offsprings! Why not? Seems a pretty good idea – certainly lasted over the years. Anyway, back to the food. Fairly standard “Pub” menu which includes various pizzas, which are produced from a pizza oven residing on one side of the bar. Great! You can watch your pizza being prepared whilst relaxing over your first pint!

Actually, I decided against the pizza and chose the “Curry of the day” which presented as a very acceptable medium strength chicken curry accompanied by a generous portion of basmati and wild rice (both good) plus a somewhat indifferent piece of Naan bread and an equally indifferent poppadum (£13.56). The curry was pretty tasty; I left the Naan and poppadum which really shouldn’t have been offered as they added a negative element to a very acceptable curry dish. G went for the full spectacle of a Margherita pizza - plenty of tomato sauce and mozzarella cheese - very fresh (see above if you’ve forgotten pizza production details) - and declared extremely tasty (£12.95). Well into the social culinary mood now, with the Loxley Silver band in full Christmas mode, so the concept of a pudding: Rhubarb crumble (£6.25) seemed appropriate. This proved to be a good move as there was just about sufficient quantity to share (small mouthfuls!) for G and I to enjoy. Ok, I did say there were five of us, but I guess you can’t win them all! Not sure if any more puddings were ordered by the others, not relevant anyway!

Verdict

Great evening. Not the greatest culinary experience that I've ever had, but a very decent curry and a very tasty rhubarb crumble. Prices ok, just about, but as an event - priceless! Certainly worth a visit even if it's only to consume a couple of pints of the wonderful Theakston's Black Sheep beer.

Roy Stanley

The Ranmoor **REX**

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24th February

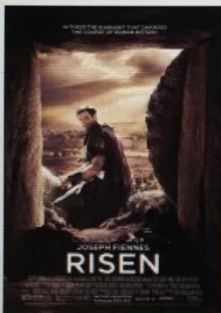
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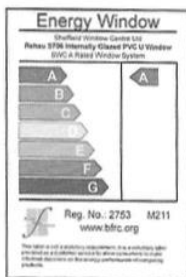
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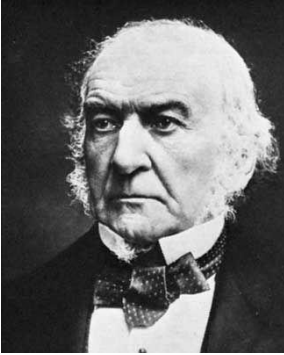
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Quiz: British Prime Ministers

compiled by Philip Walshaw



The answers to the clues below are British Prime Ministers. A prize awaits the person who submits the most correct answers. A bonus point will be awarded for identifying the Prime Minister featured here. 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 Monday, 19th February, 2024.

1. Support for Prime Minister? (5)
2. Lamp toners redesigned (10)
3. Labour shortly coming back with quartet (7)
4. Brown reorganised with a Local Authority initially (5-3)
5. Found in the athletics arena (5)
6. Hang around after a summon (9)
7. Pleased Eton's reformed (9)
8. Religious building in poorly condition (9)
9. Romance changed this Prime Minister (7)
10. Person on top of their job (8)
11. Prime Minister has quit in turmoil (7)
12. Branch email needs changing (11)
13. Prime Minister slow in changing (6)
14. Back jam alternative (5)
15. Side rail needs repairing (8)

Answers to December Quiz: 1. Hansel and Gretel 2. Pinocchio 3. Sleeping Beauty 4. The Pied Piper of Hamelin 5. Snow White 6. Peter Pan 7. Sinbad the Sailor 8. Jack and the Beanstalk (featured) 9. The Queen of Hearts 10. Babes in the Wood 11. Humpty Dumpty 12. Puss in Boots 13. Robinson Crusoe 14. Aladdin 15. Dick Whittington

Entries were received from: Janet and Malcolm Anker, Ruth Cheshire, Pam and Ian Dall, Ian Downing, Michael and Rosemary Hannon, Alan and Pauline Heath, Lynn and Steve Lawless, Monica Moseley, John and Brenda Staniforth, Janet Twigg, Anne and Paul Walshaw, Barbara and Peter Wozencroft.

The winner was Monica Moseley, who receives a box of Terry's luxury chocolate oranges.

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Children and Young People:

Footsteps (for children up to Y6)

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contact Claire Webber - Parish

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Cub Scouts:

Jane and Steven Hides - 0114 230 3635

Scouts:

Steven Hides - 0114 230 3635

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Inspire

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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.

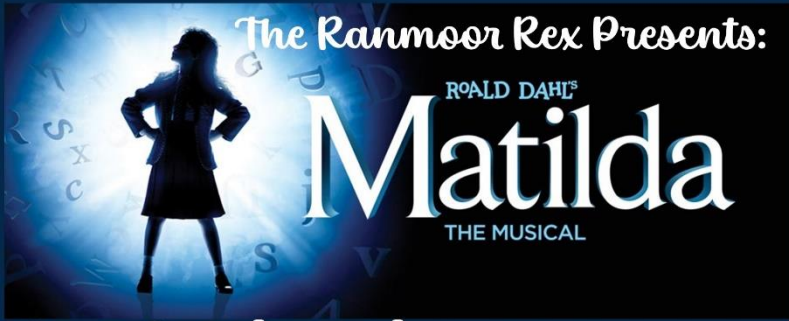
The deadline for contributions to the March edition is Thursday, 16th February, 2024.

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