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**St John's Church
Ranmoor, Sheffield**

**Dec/Jan
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£1.50**



Nativity Set Festival



SATURDAY 13TH DECEMBER
10AM-4PM
ST JOHN'S CHURCH, RANMOOR



We're hosting a Nativity Set Festival, and we'd love to invite you to be part of it!

Do you have a nativity set with a special memory or story behind it? Each set has its own journey, and we'd be delighted to display yours in church on Sat 13th Dec. If you're happy to show your set, please contact **Claire in the parish office** on **0114 230 1199** or email **administrator@stjohnsranmoor.org.uk** with the details by Sun 30th November. Maximum number 20.

All proceeds raised on the day to our SOS Appeal

St John's Church, Ranmoor

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 photo by Philip Walshaw: Christmas in the City Centre

Large print versions of Inspire are available

Foreword

Inclusive Church?



From time to time, I find it very helpful to revisit St John's Mission Statement: '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 marked by care for one

another, by a passion for justice, and by a commitment to the service of our local and wider community.'

From this statement came the decision several years ago by St John's PCC to join the Inclusive Church Network which has similar values. It believes in a Church 'which welcomes and serves all people in the name of Jesus Christ; which is scripturally faithful; which seeks to proclaim the Gospel afresh for each generation; and which, in the power of the Holy Spirit, allows all people to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Jesus Christ.'

The Inclusive Church Network works for a church which 'celebrates and affirms every person and does not discriminate. It challenges the church where it continues to discriminate against people on grounds of disability, economic power, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, learning disability, mental health, neurodiversity, or sexuality.'

For St John's this is an ongoing journey, and we always have something to learn. As Inclusive Church reminds us, inclusion is about many areas

of life and St John's will not always get it right. We need your help!

One area that is particularly important to us is our welcome of same sex couples who would like to celebrate their love in church. St John's is pleased to be able to offer Prayers of Love and Faith. At present, this can only be done in the context of existing services but we hope and pray that this will change before too long.

At Christmas, our thoughts turn to another family. The inns of Bethlehem did not make Mary and Joseph welcome so they had to find shelter in a stable. Persecution by King Herod forced the Holy Family to flee as refugees to another country. Inclusion and welcome, remain issues not just for the church but for the whole of society. As we welcome the Christchild this Christmas, I hope we can find room in our hearts for all of God's children.

Matthew



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From the Editor's Chair



It's getting ever nearer to 2026 and, no doubt, we will soon be watching tv programmes reviewing the year of 2025. As we do, one thing that stands out immediately for me is Dictionary.com's Word of the Year 2025. Why? Because arguably it isn't a word. The chosen "word" is 67 which I've always recognised as a number, but it is pronounced "six-seven" (which if I am being picky are two words). However, the most important thing is never to pronounce it as

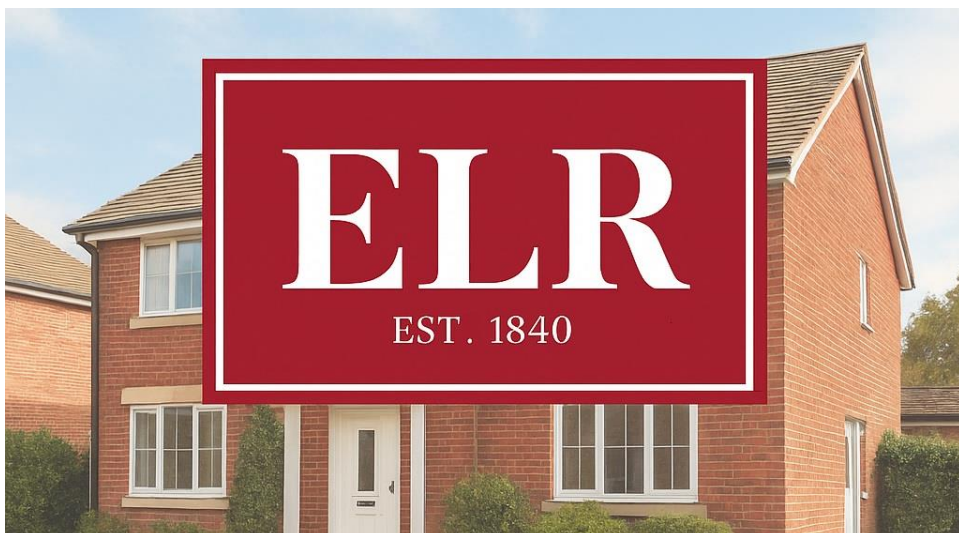
"sixty seven" because that would show your age!

So what does it mean? Obviously (!) it means "so-so," or "maybe this, maybe that," especially when paired with its signature hand gesture where both palms face up and move alternately up and down. Apparently, some youngsters, sensing an opportunity to reliably frustrate their elders, will use it to stand in for a reply to just about any question. ("Hello, darling child, how was school today?" "67!"). It has also made counting from 1 to 10 significantly harder for teachers! A perfectly timed 67 signals that you're part of an in-group, and if you're already using its emerging spinoffs "six-sendy" and "41", you might be even cooler.

Perhaps the most defining feature of 67 is that it's impossible to define. It's meaningless, ubiquitous, and nonsensical. In other words, it has all the hallmarks of "brainrot" which, incidentally, was Word of the Year 2024 and is an internet term for low quality online content and a general state of mental fatigue from excessive digital consumption, leading to difficulties with focus and motivation.

But enough of this, there is a word that has been used consistently over the last 2,000 years or so and that is the Word of God. I wish you a Merry (more than 67) Christmas and a Happy (brainrot free) New Year.

Philip Walshaw



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Church floral decorations for Christmas



We will be decorating the church window sills on **Friday 19th December** between 9.45am – 12.00am and the porch, pedestals, welcome arrangement and font on **Tuesday 23rd December** between 9.45-12.00 am.

We will need lots of arrangers to help us on both dates please. Sandra and Jackie will provide more details about

the designs nearer the time but we will be continuing to produce eco - friendly arrangements.

If you are new to flower arranging and are interested in learning we are a very friendly group of people and we will gladly give you help and encouragement on the day. Or perhaps you might like to just come along and watch the arrangements take shape!

If you would like to help or be involved, please could you get in touch with us. Thank you.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Jackie Lowe (0114 2303999, jackielowe22@btconnect.com)

Sandra Green (0114 2309180, sandra.green70@gmail.com)

Donations towards the cost of Christmas Flowers

We rely on the generous donations of the congregation to be able to purchase flowers to decorate the church and we would be very grateful for any donations towards the Christmas flowers please. Thank you.



“Ow Much? The Big Plastic Count 2026

by John Green

No - not the usual Yorkshire response to the cost of living but some citizen science as part of our Eco Church response to the Climate Crisis. I've written recently about what we do with our rubbish by way of Reduce, Re-Use or Re-cycle, particularly in the context of plastic waste.

I mentioned The Big Plastic Count as a way of raising awareness of the amount of plastic we use every year. The Count is a joint venture between Greenpeace and “Everyday Plastic” a charity founded by Daniel Webb in Kent. It started when he decided to count all the plastic he used through a whole year and it came to a staggering 4,490 items, which he kept and photographed - enough to fill a full advertising billboard.

The Count runs every other year for a week when we are asked to count and tabulate all the different types of plastic we use in that week, identified by size and function. Their website has links to register and download scoring sheets and then submit your results at the end.
thebigplasticcount.com

It's worth downloading now to familiarise yourself with the categories and the recording sheet. Christmas is a particularly heavy plastic use time, which is probably why the count isn't till 9th - 15th March 2026. Let's hope the next count shows progress in reducing plastic use. I've certainly noticed more paper and card packaging in our shopping, compared to masses of plastic in the past. Some good news would be welcome as I'm writing this while COP 30 is meeting in Brazil.

COP or Conference of the Parties is where world leaders meet to discuss and agree targets for dealing with the Climate Crisis. Attendance this year has been lower with leaders from China and the USA not

present. Nearer home, the UK Government efforts are coming in for criticism driven by high energy costs for consumers and industry.

To complete the gloomy picture, we await the November budget, with rumours of tax increases for incomes, houses, electric and hybrid vehicles, pensions and possibly VAT. By the time you read this we'll know the outcome but as always, the test is fairness and from an Eco Church perspective - the environmental impact.

The politicians' mantra is that the burden should fall on the broadest shoulders but this may not turn out to be what we think. Taxing the super-rich is difficult; there aren't that many of them and they have better advisers than us! They are the top of the pyramid but the large numbers the Chancellor needs are much further down because of the number of people needed to significantly increase the tax yield.

Ann Pettifor, the economist speaker at the recent seminar at St. Mark's I wrote about last month, had one last idea for us that probably won't be in the budget. You might remember a time when the amount of money you could take abroad on holiday was very restricted. This applied to commerce and industry but was de-regulated in the Thatcher-Reagan era. Since then, capital has flowed freely between countries, facilitating globalisation and thus increased consumption and carbon emissions.

She was proposing a partial return to these restrictions to slow down the flow of income and profits long enough for them to be subject to at least an exit tax. It seems reasonable that these profits should be taxed in the country where they are made and preferably be inwardly invested. Otherwise, growth in the economy is being put out of our reach in a process dubbed "Vampire Capitalism" in a recent book by Paul Kennedy. It may also feature in Ann Pettifor's new book: "The Global Casino - How Wall Street controls people and the planet".

But after all this don't forget to make a New Year's resolution to join the Big Plastic Count ... and, before that, have a Happy Christmas.

Undiscovered Antiques for the Churchgoing Collector

by Roy Stanley

I really enjoy the odd weekend away, don't you? Or at a certain stage in life, a mid-week couple of days, to stay in some previously unvisited part of our incredibly interesting country. On trips of this nature the sun is always shining, the roads are traffic-free and the carefully pre-booked hostelry has a Michelin starred restaurant - which also offers great wine and beer at modest prices! Well maybe some slight exaggeration here, especially the sun always shining bit.

At this stage I have a confession to make. I am a collector. 'So what', you may well ask. What has this to do with churches, antiques, or anything else for that matter? Sadly, or perhaps fortunately, depending how one view the situation, my collecting interests include antique furniture, antique silver and antique pottery. In order to acquire sufficient knowledge to avoid the many pitfalls when purchasing items of this nature it is essential to view and handle as many pieces as possible. How does one go about this? Antique shops, auction houses and fellow enthusiasts are obvious candidates. However the risk of handling an item, which lacks authenticity, is quite high. Often a fair amount of repair or restoration has taken place (unsurprisingly) on many of these very elderly pieces. So where to go in order to see real thing? The answer lies in the vast number of centuries-old churches, which usually occupy important positions in every town, city and village across the land.

Visiting old churches when on holiday, both home and abroad, is usually an important part of the curriculum. There is often the beauty of the building itself, including perhaps an attractive ancient graveyard (often overgrown). The interior (if you can actually get in) can often be very different to your own familiar church. With luck there can be many artifacts to see, some familiar, some strange, all absorbing, and always worthy of further investigation.

This, for me, is when life really becomes interesting. Have you ever examined, I mean really examined, any of the items of furniture, which most churches have in some quantity? The table, sometimes just inside the door, which holds various leaflets, notices, postcards or similar. The pews, especially the pew-ends, which may possibly exhibit intricate carving. Old coffers, perhaps used to store little-used items. Ancient chairs, often on display in the Sanctuary, and if one is really fortunate, an early wooden screen could provide an example of medieval carving at its best.

Sadly, this ethereal concept has gradually faded as old church buildings are destroyed or re-purposed into a more “viable” use such as domestic dwellings or similar. Grasp the opportunity when presented and avail yourself of an ever-diminishing ability to absorb the atmosphere of a very different bygone age.

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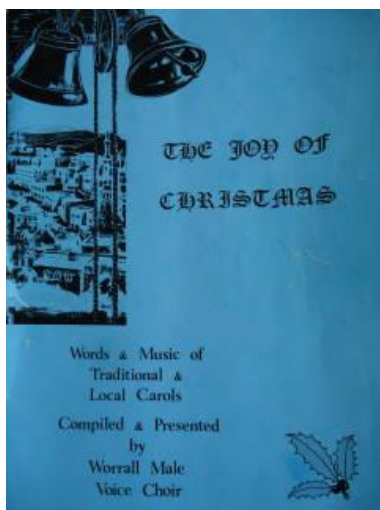
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Local Christmas Carols

What's the earliest date you've started singing Christmas Carols?, a friend asked me recently. While festivities won't be starting for a few more weeks across the rest of the country, in village pubs around the northeast of Sheffield and Derbyshire, mid-November (and on into December, obviously), it's firmly carol season. The tradition known as the Sheffield Carols begins the week after Armistice Sunday and you can find out where to hear, and join in with, these carols by clicking on www.localcarols.org.uk . Unfortunately, the carols' spiritual home, *The Royal* public house in Dungworth closed down at the turn of the year but you'll still be able to hear them at the Old Band Room in Dungworth, albeit with an electric organ accompaniment, rather than a piano.



We all have our favoured tune to the hymns we like, but have you ever sung *While Shepherds Watched their flocks by Night* to the tune of *Ilkley Moor Bah't at?* And, why would you not want to, even if you were not a Yorkshireman or woman? We generally hear the carol sung to the tune of *Winchester Old*, but if you were singing the carol in Yorkshire, it could also be sung to the tune of *Fern Bank*, *Liverpool*, *Lloyd*, *Lyngham*, *October*, *Old Foster*, *Pentonville*, *Shaw Lane*, *Sweet Chiming Bells* or...well, the list seems tendless!

My first recollection of hearing local Christmas carols was in the late 1970s when I went to a concert given by the Worrall Male Voice Choir. Such was the demand from the public for copies of the words and music of Christmas carols, the Choir took it upon themselves to produce an edition of traditional and local carols in 1982 titled *The Joy of Christmas*. This includes such favourites as *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*, but sung to the tune of *Malin Bridge*, and others sung to tunes named after local places such as *Stannington*, *Oughtibridge*, *Bradfield*, *Back Lane* and *Spout*

Cottage. There is also a tune called *Pratty Flowers*, which, by the way, has nothing to do with the floral offerings I occasionally give to my wife! This particular tune was an adaptation of an existing folk song, *The Maiden's complaint for the Loss of her Shepherd*. Now known as the Holmfirth Anthem, it was harmonized and arranged circa 1850 by Joe Perkin, choirmaster of Holmfirth church.

The Sheffield Carols, as they are known locally, predate modern carols by over a century and are sung with alternative words and verses to those we are used to hearing. They were originally sung in churches accompanied by self-taught artisan musicians, but from the 1830s onwards they were driven out across the country by the Oxford Tractarian Movement (a movement within the Church of England, originating at Oxford University in 1833, that sought to link the Anglican Church more closely to the Roman Catholic Church). Broadly speaking there were two outcomes of that purge. One was that the reformed church filled the void left by the lost carols with new ones, creating the Christmas carol legacy that we know so well today. The second was that, in many parts of the country, the tradition of local carols started to die out. However, in South Yorkshire the tradition survived,

The local carols have their roots in the vernacular tradition of playing musical instruments to accompany carols and other sacred music in churches prior to the introduction of the organ. On becoming redundant, these church “bands” and “quires” did not disappear altogether; they simply moved their music into their community, visiting houses and hostelrys. Although this tradition largely died out in across the country, it still survives in and around Sheffield, usually, though not exclusively, centred at a village pub. The style of the playing and singing is typically robust and assured, the participants taking great pride in maintaining an important local tradition. The carols themselves derive from various sources. Some were composed locally; some appeared in broadsheets circulating around the country and became favourites, whereas some would travel by “word of mouth,” sometimes undergoing a change to the words or tune or even a change of name in the process. As a bonus this year, the Sheffield Carols will be included in *A Christmas Carol* at the Crucible Theatre.

Philip Walshaw

Telling the Tales of Sheffield's Medical Scene **by Dr Jenny Stephenson, DMHSA**

As I mentioned in previous issues, I am now a volunteer curator for Sheffield Hospitals Heritage Centre and I wanted to make some of our interesting stuff more accessible to everyone. We have a handsome collection of medical and surgical artefacts and photographs which tell the tales of Sheffield's hospitals through the years. I give new talks about our hospitals and the history of the collection, and we hold open days in Heritage week. Further events can be arranged. This is the last one of a series of objects featured during the year.

OBJECT 11: DENTAL SOCKET IRRIGATOR c1960 (donated to the collection by A J Shorthouse).

This small fine glass tube with angled end, together with its rubber bulb was used by a dentist in the town or in the Charles Clifford Dental Hospital after tooth extraction to wash out the socket. It is likely that mild salt water was used to irrigate, and for inspection.

The city's dental services started in the Royal Hospital, which closed in 1978. Colonel Sir Charles Clifford, a generous man, donated land for the



purpose-built dental hospital which we know today, opening it in 1953. Further dental services could then be offered, and a busy dental teaching programme.

Services were available mainly on

an outpatient walk-in basis, then with the advent of specialist dentistry the spectrum of mouth and dental conditions broadened. These oral-maxillofacial surgery operations are now carried out in the Royal Hallamshire, leaving the Charles Clifford dedicated to outpatient work and day case dental procedures.



Christingle



The Children's Society

JOY

Join us to reunite with friends, family and the local community this Christingle.

CHRISTINGLE

Sunday 14th December
4PM

In Church &
YouTube

www.stjohnsranmoor.org.uk
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NINE LESSONS & CAROLS

Sun 21st December
6.30pm

Join us for a beautiful service of carols and readings, recounting the story of Christ's birth.

JOY

In Church &
YouTube

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JOY

NATIVITY

Wednesday 24th December
4pm

Book your place
at our Nativity
using the QR
Code here:



In Church and on YouTube
www.stjohnsranmoor.org.uk
0114 230 1199

ST JOHN'S CHURCH, RANMOOR

December/January Calendar

Wednesday 3rd December

5.30pm Choral Evensong

Choristers, Bairstow in E flat Responses *Plainsong*
How Beautiful are the feet G F Handel Psalm 76, 77

Thursday 4th December

8pm Christmas Organ Recital

Peter Shepherd (Chesterfield Parish Church)

Saturday 6th December

7pm Christmas Extravaganza To book via [Ticketsource](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/st-johns-church), visit
www.ticketsource.co.uk/st-johns-church

Sunday 7th December 2nd Sunday of Advent

10.30am All Age Service

6.30pm BCP Communion

Wednesday 10th December

11.30am Holy Communion in the Parish Centre

10-12.30pm Foodbank Collection from the Church Drive

12.30pm Wednesday Lunch Club

5.30pm Evening Prayer

Thursday 11th December

10am Toddler and Baby Group

Saturday 13th December

10am – 4pm Nativity Set Festival

Incl. Crafts, Carol singing and Christmas fun

Sunday 14th December 3rd Sunday of Advent

10.30am Parish Communion

4pm Christingle Service

6.30pm Choral Evensong

Wednesday 17th December

11.30am Holy Communion in the Parish Centre

10-12.30pm Foodbank Collection from the Church Drive

12.30pm Wednesday Lunch Club

5.30pm Evening Prayer

Thursday 18th December

10am Toddler and Baby Group

Sunday 21st December 4th Sunday of Advent

10.30am Parish Communion

6.30pm Nine Lessons and Carols

Wednesday 24th December

4pm Nativity To book via **Ticketsource**, visit www.ticketsource.co.uk/st-johns-church

11.30pm Midnight Mass

Thursday 25th December Christmas Day

10.30am Parish Communion

Sunday 28th December

10.30am Parish Communion

no evening service

Sunday 4th January Epiphany

10.30am All Age Communion

6.30pm Epiphany Procession

Wednesday 7th January

10-12.30pm Foodbank Collection from the Church Drive

11.30am Holy Communion in the Parish Centre

12.30pm Lunch Club resumes after Christmas break

5.30pm Choral Evensong

Thursday 8th January

10am Toddler and Baby Group

8pm Organ Recital (Tim Selman – Lincoln Cathedral)

Saturday 10th January

7.30pm Candlelight Concerts with Simply strings trio.

To book via **Ticketsource**, visit www.ticketsource.co.uk/st-johns-church

Sunday 11th January Baptism of Christ

10.30am Parish Communion

6.30pm Choral Evensong

Wednesday 14th January

11.30am Holy Communion in the Parish Centre

12.30pm Wednesday Lunch Club

5.30pm Evening Prayer

Thursday 15th January

10am Toddler and Baby Group

Sunday 18th January 2nd Sunday of Epiphany

10.30am Parish Communion

6.30pm Choral Evensong

Monday 19th January

7.30pm PCC meets in the annexe

Wednesday 21st January

10-12.30pm Foodbank Collection from the Church Drive

11.30am Holy Communion in the Parish Centre

12.30pm Wednesday Lunch Club

5.30pm Choral Evensong

Thursday 24th January

10am Toddler and Baby Group

Sunday 25th January 3rd Sunday of Epiphany

10.30am Parish Communion

12.30pm Sunday Social

6.30pm Choral Evensong

Monday 26th January

7.30pm Sanctuary in the side-chapel

Wednesday 28th January

11.30am Holy Communion in the Parish Centre

12.30pm Wednesday Lunch Club

5.30pm Evening Prayer

Thursday 29th January

10am Toddler and Baby Group

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)

Morning Prayer: Monday to Friday 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. **Toddler Group:** meets every Thursday in the Parish Centre during term time. 10-11.30am **Our Sunday Services** are always in Church and on YouTube

www.stjohnsranmoor.org.uk 0114 230 1199

administrator@stjohnsranmoor.org.uk

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

Parish Registers

Baptisms:

We thank you for the gift of the life of Charles Pierre Wulfric Eddy who was baptised here recently.

Please remember those who have died recently:

David Gill, Thomas Husband and Trevor Page

“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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Sometime.....
You will probably have the responsibility of making funeral arrangements. No one looks forward to this responsibility, but the death of a family member or a friend brings with it an obligation that must be met. These are people who can help you meet this responsibility. We have been helping people combine the different aspects of a funeral service for over one hundred and thirty five years.

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ORGAN RECITAL

With Peter Shepherd,
Chesterfield Parish Church

Thursday 4th December
8PM

JOY

In Church &
YouTube

www.stjohnsranmoor.org.uk
0114 230 1199



JOY

MIDNIGHT MASS

Wednesday 24th December
11.30PM

*A sacred celebration and Eucharist
for Christ's birth at the quiet
hour of midnight.*

In Church &
YouTube

www.stjohnsranmoor.org.uk

0114 230 1199



JOY

CHRISTMAS MORNING

Thursday 25th December
10.30am

*"A joyful celebration of Christ's birth
with worship and Communion on
Christmas morning"*

In Church &
YouTube

www.stjohnsranmoor.org.uk

0114 230 1199



Joy to the World

DIRECTIONS: Find and circle the vocabulary words in the grid. Look for them in all directions including backwards and diagonally.



ADVENT	INFANT	MYRRH
ANGEL	JESUS	NATIVITY
BETHLEHEM	JOSEPH	REJOICE
BIRTH	MAGI	STABLE
BLESSINGS	MANGER	STAR
CAMELS	MARY	THREE KINGS
FRANKINCENSE	MIRACLE	WISE MEN

Restaurant Review: The Sportsman, Redmires Road, Sheffield 11



Yes, I know I've already written a review about The Sportsman. In fact, I have actually written two Sportsman reviews (possibly even three Sportsman reviews – hard to remember!) So why another? I suppose I must really like the Sportsman - despite its many attempts at self-destruction. Like the proverbial Phoenix, it continues to struggle through the ashes of mismanagement, under capitalisation, rumours of demolition or change of use and somehow re-emerges – still trading as a traditional hostelry – as a beacon of hope over reality.

The current manifestation, from a visual point of view, presents much the same as the last couple of manifestations. The bar, the tables, the chairs, the décor are totally unchanged. In fact, other than a general clean-up, and a lick of paint the interior is a magnificent example 1970's chic. Absolutely fantastic for the hard-core clientele who view change as one of the cardinal sins! Actually, I must include myself as a member of that peculiar sect who prefer to sit at the same table, consume beer from the "correct" shape of glass, and be on first name terms with the various serving staff.

The Meal

Tuesday evening - G, myself, plus two ex-regulars - have booked a table in order to sample the "New" Sportsman's culinary efforts. This booking

was arranged about three weeks following the hiring of a “proper” chef by the “current” management - who intend to provide a comprehensive dining service. This ambitious effort aims to offer both lunch and evening service via a “standard” food menu, which will be supported by a few “specials” to be added on a daily basis. I have some memories about “Good Intentions” being used as a paving medium used on route to a somewhat undesirable venue! Think about it!

Whilst contemplating this train of philosophical thought, a pint of the Landlord bitter (4.95) seemed appropriate. G decided to risk a large glass of Pinot Grigio, a pleasant dry white wine at a not too hefty £5.90. The food menu is pretty standard “pub grub menu” from which I decided to try the 10oz gammon steak with two fried eggs - which was accompanied by the usual chips and peas. I know this is a very non-adventurous choice, but my theory is that all the ingredients for this dish need to be freshly prepared - thus reducing the risk element of an inedible mess. Doesn’t always work, but worth doing when the chef is an unknown quantity! Good choice – all the above requirements were adequately met, quality and quantity good. G did even better. She chose - from the specials board - The pie of the day (£14.95). This proved to be chicken and mushroom and had all the elements of having been produced “in house”. The elusive, and often misquoted “homemade” claim seemed to be in order. Final element of a more than adequate meal was a slice of apple pie (£4.95) from the sweet offerings. Sadly, not made “in house”, but was most acceptable as served warm with cream.

Verdict

Difficult to be totally dispassionate about the meal as the Sportsman is one of my regular venues. I think the star item from the evening’s meal was G’s pie - which was excellent. All the rest of the courses, as chosen by the four of us, were pretty good, without being exceptional. The owners Stephen and David, the staff Rhys and Rebecca and the chef Paul all appeared at intervals and chatted - which provided a good communal atmosphere – and the beer was pretty good! Would I go again? Certainly. I think (and hope) they will succeed this time, the Sportsman deserves a good run.

Roy Stanley

A tale of two churches

by Philip Walshaw



Susan and I recently had a short holiday and we came across this church overlooking Lake Como in Italy. Not really - it's actually Normanton Church on the banks of a not too full (then!) Rutland Water. The reservoir was built in the 1970s to supply water to the growing population and industry in the East Midlands, utilising water from the lower reaches of the rivers Nene and Welland. The Gwash Valley had to be cleared and Normanton Church was in the way. It was deconsecrated and scheduled for demolition, but it was saved after public outcry at the prospect of this iconic church being lost.

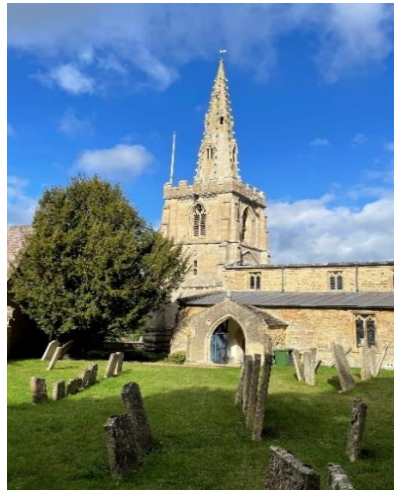
The medieval St Matthew's Church was built for the Earl of Ancaster on the foundations of a building dating back to the 14th century. It was later rebuilt in a classical style in the 18th century when the Heathcote Baronets created their estate in Rutland and used the parish church as their private chapel. In 1920 the aristocrat family relocated and the

church was abandoned. It remained as a lonely, isolated mausoleum, unloved, unwanted and without purpose. It was to remain that way until the creation of Rutland Water.

The lower level of the church was filled with rubble and concrete and a new floor was created. A causeway and an embankment were created to make the building accessible from the shore of Rutland Water. Now, instead of standing amidst green pastures, it seemingly floats above the waterline. casting a gaze across one the most important wildfowl sanctuaries in Great Britain where, amongst other birds, breeding ospreys can be observed.

The structure is owned by Anglian Water and is now used as a venue for civil weddings and concerts. There is currently public outcry about plans to abolish the administrative County of Rutland, but that's another story.

We stayed for a couple of nights in South Luffenham, a small village with a comparatively big church dedicated to St. Mary the Virgin. Like St John's, it is a well-loved local landmark. It was built soon after the Norman Conquest and, as with many ancient churches, it has undergone many changes over the centuries, but what drew my attention and particular interest was the tall spire. It was added in the 14th century and is crocketed. Crockets are decorative external leaf shaped carvings and there are 14 tiers of crockets on this spire; 4 in each tier. The spire terminates in a large crocketed finial.



To add to my fascination with the spire, I was told a village story about a local steeplejack called Joseph (known as Jack, obviously!) who took a fancy to climbing tall buildings and doing clever tricks for the crowds below. Apparently at this church, he was asked to grease the weathercock on top of the spire. He climbed the spire without ropes or

ladders and I imagine the crockets came in handy. However, he refused to put the weathercock back unless he was paid a gold sovereign. This was eventually given, although there was disagreement amongst the villagers over the 'levy'. Jack, we could have done with you here at St. John's, I mused!!



Inside the building, there are a number of interesting features: a pulpit built of Clipsham stone in 1861, a 14th century octagonal font with quatrefoil panels on seven sides, and a 13th century chest for church documents. The bells were recast in 1861 and the oldest bell, the treble, still bears the inscription "Hew Watts made me 1563". In 1588, the church wardens were accused of selling bells and not accounting for them, with claims that one bell "which went to be cast anew being heretofore the greatest bell is now the least".

Apparently, the rector and churchwardens bought a piece of land called "Bell Ringers Close" with the money! I must pay more attention at future Annual Parochial Church Meetings...Only joking!



Ranmoor Parish Centre Bridge Club

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Quiz: One word song titles

compiled by Philip Walshaw



The answers to the clues below are the one-word titles of popular songs and tunes of the 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s. Send your entry by email to ipwalshaw@gmail.com or by post to 19 Cairns Road, S10 5NA to reach me by Friday, 17th January, 2026.

1. Rats let back in (7)
2. Nose might be put out (9)
3. Seedy tray assortment (9)
4. Mirror images (13)
5. Marvel in front of barrier (10)
6. Timber supply (9)
7. The French will follow new Pope (6)
8. It's magic! (11)
9. Think about it (7)
10. Don't stay (7)
11. Toils around Yorkshire river (9)
12. Take a break (7)
13. Blasts oar all over the place (9)
14. Wear tool out (8)
15. Body part needs tightening (9)

Answers to last month's quiz: 1. Ford 2. Madison 3. Biden 4. Roosevelt 5. Washington 6. Adams (featured) 7. Reagan 8. Eisenhower 9. Hoover 10. Garfield 11. Jackson 12. Clinton 13. Truman 14. Fillmore 15. Lincoln

Entries were received from: Janet and Malcolm Anker, Helen Baxter, Ruth Cheshire, Pam and Ian Dall, Peter and Janis Ivey, Caroline Gracey and Nick Morris, John and Rosemary Hannon, Alex Heaton, Lynn and Steve Lawless, John and Brenda Staniforth, Anne and Paul Walshaw, Barbara and Peter Wozencroft.

The winners were: Peter and Janis Ivey, who receive a box of chocolates.

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REACH (for young people Y7 and up)

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Secretary

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Administrator

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36th Ranmoor Group Scout Leader and
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Beavers (6 to 8 yrs) meet Mon night:

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Scouts (10.5 to 14 yrs) meet Tues night:

Simon Maltby

simon@ranmoor scouts.com

District Explorers (14 to 18 yrs)

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Liam Foster

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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 February edition is Friday, 17th January, 2026.

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