



MARK'S MESSENGER

*The Parish Magazine of
St Mark's Church, Broomhill and Broomhall, Sheffield*

June 2025



Wholeness, Healing and Peace

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WHOLENESS, HEALING AND PEACE:

A Journey of Grace

In the heart of our Christian faith lies a profound invitation: to become whole, to be healed, and to live in peace. The reality of our lives is that we encounter brokenness, dis-ease and discord in the world, our communities and within ourselves. As we journey through life, we experience joys and sorrows and are constantly being drawn by God into a deeper relationship which offers us the opportunity to experience His transforming love through the example and stories of Jesus.

Wholeness: Living Fully as God Intended

Wholeness is not about perfection. It is about integration – living as our true selves, created in the image of God, body, mind, and spirit. If we don't, our actions and words are not congruent with our beliefs and values, and we experience a lack of authenticity as we try to live up to other people's values and expectations. This can lead to criticism and a sense of failure which fragments our lives even further. God accepts every part of us – our gifts and weaknesses, our past and present and under God's grace, they are brought together.

Healing: The Gentle Work of Grace

Healing is one of the signs of God's presence among us. It may come in physical ways, but more often it comes in emotional, spiritual, and relational forms. It does not always come in ways we hope but we need to be open to the possibility of our lives being transformed through prayer, through the support of community, through the sacraments, and through the quiet moments of surrender when we finally let God carry what we cannot.

There is no shame in needing healing. In fact, our wounds often become the places where God's light shines the brightest. As Henri Nouwen wrote, we are 'wounded healers' – called not to be flawless, but to be faithful in our weakness, allowing our own healing journey to be a source of encouragement for others.

Peace: The Gift Christ leaves with Us

Peace is not simply the absence of conflict – it is the presence of Christ. In John 14:27, Jesus says to His disciples, "Peace I leave with you; my

peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives.” This peace is deeper than calm; it is an anchor in the storms of life.

To cultivate peace is to entrust ourselves to God's care. It means choosing love over fear, presence over distraction, and forgiveness over resentment. It means, too, becoming peacemakers in our homes, churches, and communities – not by pretending everything is fine, but by being people of reconciliation.

In a world weary from division, war, and anxiety, the peace of Christ is desperately needed. And it begins with us – one conversation, one prayer, one act of kindness at a time.

Living the Journey Together



On the front cover of this edition of the Messenger, I chose to use a photo of cascading Himalayan blue poppies taken at the Himalayan Garden and Sculpture Park. The sculpture was originally planned back in 2019 but was delayed by the Covid Pandemic. It took on greater meaning than originally imagined, becoming a symbol of the re-emergence and the power of community as people began to relax and socialise following lockdown. Entitled ‘bursting from slumber’ each individually crafted clay poppy held its own story of freedom, loved ones or loss and their creation proved to be a positive and healing experience.

Wholeness, healing, and peace are not pursuits we undertake alone. They are found in the context of community – in worship, in fellowship, in pastoral care. The

Church is meant to be a place where people can come just as they are, and find welcome, compassion, and hope. So let us walk together, gently and honestly. Let us listen more deeply, pray more intentionally, and love more freely. And as we do, may we find that Christ is not only the destination of our journey – but our constant companion along the way.

Shan

HEALING AND WHOLENESS IN THE DIOCESE OF SHEFFIELD AND BEYOND

Blessing the Body

by Jan Richardson

This blessing takes
one look at you
and all it can say is holy.

Holy hands.
Holy face.
Holy feet.
Holy everything
in between.

Holy even in pain.
Holy even when weary.
In brokenness, holy.
In shame, holy still.

Holy in delight.
Holy in distress.
Holy when being born.
Holy when we lay it down
at the hour of our death.

So, friend,
open your eyes
(holy eyes).
For one moment
see what this blessing sees,
this blessing that knows
how you have been formed
and knit together
in wonder and
in love.

Welcome this blessing
that folds its hands
in prayer
when it meets you;
receive this blessing
that wants to kneel
in reverence
before you:
you who are
temple,
sanctuary,
home for God
in this world.

*Circle of Grace: A Book of Blessings
for the Seasons*

In the March Edition of our Diocesan Healing and Wholeness Newsletter, Rev Dr Louise Castle, Bishop's Advisor in *Healing and Wholeness* writes:

“I have been somewhat obsessed with Jan Richardson’s poem ‘Blessing the Body’ since I came across it at an Advent retreat at Holy Rood retreat Centre in Thirsk in December! This same ‘holiness’ is that talked about in Isaiah Ch 6 and at the core of a reading from Revelation Chapter 4 with its vision of heaven. ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty.’

‘Holy, holy. Holy’ is our response to God who is at the centre of our lives. When life is tough, worship focuses us on what truly matters.

Words fail us, don’t they, when we truly encounter God and the miraculous, the birth of a child or breathtaking beauty: A silence of awe and wonder. Jan’s beautiful blessing expresses God and what God sees in each of us so well.

If you are interested in healing and wholeness, do consider attending the following days which are coming up.

Exploration of Healing Day: Saturday 28th June 2025 9–2pm
At the Vine, St Barts, Primrose Hill, Langsett, Sheffield S6 2UW

An experiential day to explore in more depth what wellbeing, healing and wholeness looks like, for us, those we minister to and others. The day will be both inspirational and practical and will include: • Worship, • An exploration of the Theology and Diversity of Healing, • Guidelines for healthy healing ministry • Grappling with the hard questions about healing • Workshops on exploring healing presence and Healing prayer Ministry. • A question and answer session • Prayer resources from church house • A Healing and Anointing service to finish.

Come along and get involved! Meet the Healing and Wholeness team, ask questions and find out how we can resource you! For more information or to share your ideas on what we can include, contact:

healing.ministry@sheffield.anglican.org

All welcome! Refreshments provided. Please bring your own lunch.

Prime Whole Person Care Day Saturday 15th November 2025 9-2pm
At St John’s Owlerton, Hillsborough, Sheffield S6 2DF

Providing spiritual care in the context of disease: A day to explore how the Church and Healthcare Workers can work in partnership to restore those with disease to wholeness. Dr Emma Hayward, a GP and medical school educator in Leicester and a lay reader in her local church and her team of Christian healthcare educators from Prime will run a half-day course on how we can work together with health and social care to enable ourselves and our congregations be healthy and whole.

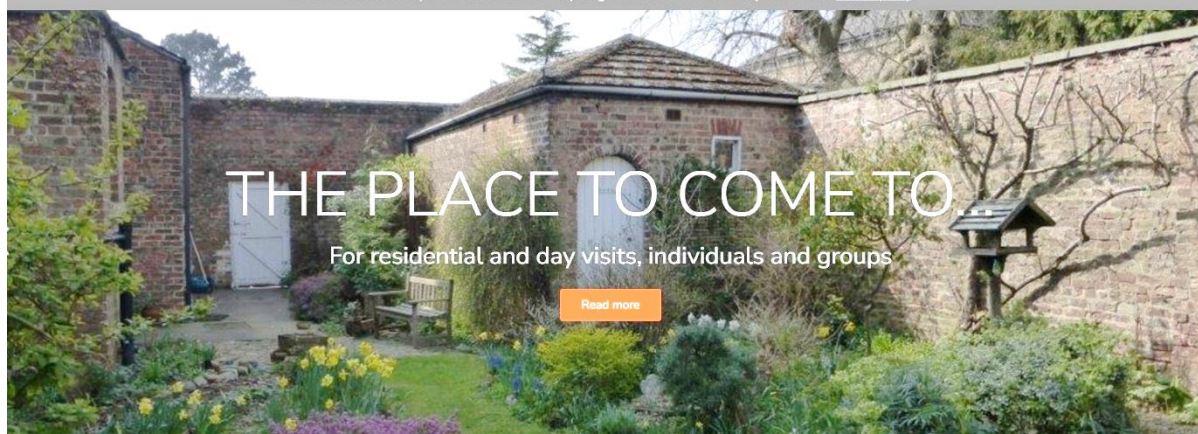
Louise Castle

‘RETREATS’ — OR ‘ADVANCES’?



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Gill and I recently spent a long weekend at Holy Rood House on the outskirts of Thirsk, the place where Sue Hammersley is the CEO and Sybille the lead chaplain. The focus of the weekend was a series of sessions on St Francis and the Healing Power of the Natural World, including music, poetry and film as well as input by the two leaders.

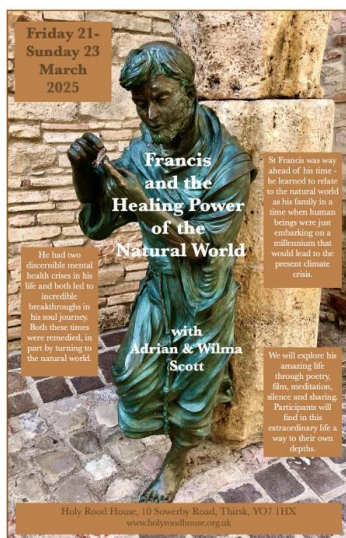
For most people, such a time away would be called a ‘retreat’. Holy Rood is often referred to as a ‘retreat house’. Gill is perfectly comfortable with such language and has taken part in many such gatherings. I have always balked at such a concept. Ever since I once experienced a silent lunch during a Diocesan gathering at Whirlow Grange, I have been **very** sure that that silent contemplation in the presence of others is an awful missed opportunity to share, hear, learn with other human beings. Those of you who know me will not be at all surprised that I find silence difficult, but I have got better over the years at listening to others as well as speaking myself!!! In the past while Gill has gone ‘on retreat’ I have gone on ‘advances’ – discovering more about subjects and places with lots of communication. I have a visceral dislike (and fear) of ‘going backwards’.

So – how was I attracted to go on this weekend with Gill to Holy Rood? I thought I would be in safe hands at any place run by Sue and Sybille and be able to be completely honest at all times. The weekend was run by a former spiritual director of Gill’s and her husband, and I had met them both a few times before. The subject matter was interesting and the programme attractive. I also have a particular affinity with Thirsk and the surrounding area as an aunt of mine farmed nearby and until late last year

my brother and sister-in-law lived not far away. 3 generations of my family had stayed regularly on my aunt's farm and she was buried in one of the fields there. I thought that I could always escape to the town and environs if it all became too much at Holy Rood! (I **did** do that on Saturday afternoon, but it was an authorised 'free period'!)

How did I get on? Much better than I thought! The accommodation was comfortable, the welcome very warm, staff very pleasant and efficient, the surroundings were the gardens of the two houses with public green space opposite across a quiet road criss-crossed by footpaths down to the river and into town. Cherry trees were in blossom – and there is an excellent bookshop and café in the market square! The sessions were varied in content but most involved talking with one of the other 15 or so attendees and reporting back into the group.

This was surprisingly enriching, and the sharing continued around the long dining table at meals together. The high point for us all was the worship gathering in the house chapel on Sunday morning. The central feature was each of us presenting an 'artefact' that we had found or made during the 'free period' the previous afternoon. The variety of objects and the richness of the stories moved us all.



Whatever you want to call such an occasion, it was a good, positively stimulating experience, in and outside the houses themselves. I made others laugh with and at me about my aversion to 'retreats' but it is clear that you can make of Holy Rood what you wish. There is a lot of personal counselling done there and people can just book to stay there for a respite or exploration. There is a range of guided or led retreats/advances and there is the very interesting and welcoming town and countryside close by. Have a look on their website and see for yourselves. May see you there in the future?

(Just one thing to say – Holy Rood did not have any alcoholic drinks available! You may want to abstain but if not, the Co-op in the centre of Thirsk is about 25 minutes' walk away!)

Sandra Newton

ST MARK'S CAMPING WEEKEND @ THORNBRIDGE OUTDOORS



59 children and adults of our congregation gathered at different stages of the weekend; camping, walking, playing, eating, praying and exploring together.

Here is our shared summary of the things we loved most about the weekend:

Toasting marshmallows x2

Barbecue

Seeing the children of different ages enjoying playing freely together

Running around

First time camping

Moon and stars

Bird song... and cow song!

Sun shining

Walk

Climbing

Lighting a fire

Eating with lots of people
Food
All the different things to pray with
Girl gang doing each other's hair
Exploring
There **weren't** Portaloo toilets! – good facilities!
Whisky
View down the valley
Journey here was nice
Going exploring
Football
Spontaneous congo and dancing in the yurt!
Having conversation... and getting to the end!



A large number of us had a lovely time completing the 4 mile walk for Christian Aid! If you haven't yet sponsored us, please do consider following this link: <https://fundraise.christianaid.org.uk/envelope-2025/st-marks-church-broomhill>



There are studies that demonstrate how spending time in nature can improve mood, lower anxiety and help promote feelings of peace and relaxation. The children loved the freedom to play and explore. The parents came back tired but it's a positive sign that they want to go again next year!

Children & Families

PEACE BUILDING:

CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION AND RECONCILIATION



While divisions, conflicts and violence grow in many parts of the world, Christians and Christian churches are entrusted with the ministry of peace and reconciliation. The World Council of Churches response to violence and violent conflict today is based

on decades of ecumenical deliberation, understanding, practice and advocacy, assisting churches to make progress toward greater unity for peace. This ministry calls for ecumenical engagement by the churches against any form of violence – on the international and national level, in our societies and our families.

Rob Wilks shares his experience of one of their projects back in 1970.

Northern Ireland Camp – 1970

In 1970 I had the privilege along with 24 youth leaders of helping with organisation of a youth 'Adventure Camp' for 50 Catholic and 50 Protestant boys chosen from youth clubs in Belfast. It was organised by the World Council of Churches and led by the Revd Dr Gordon Gray, who had a lifetime commitment to fostering inter-church relationships. He was a Presbyterian Youth Leader for Northern Ireland and ran the camp with the assistance of other youth leaders in the city alongside 25 youth leaders (male and female) who came from several European countries and five or six from America and the Argentine.

The camp was held in the grounds of a youth hostel sited on the coastline of Castlerock, a seaside town, yet the 'project' was two-fold (a) the camp and (b) youth club redecoration back in Belfast. The theme of the camp was 'Peace and Reconciliation' – something that we felt we achieved with the boys, some of whom initially found this difficult to accept.

Once back in Belfast we, along with the army, undertook playground restoration projects and redecorated several youth clubs with the boys. Some boys came to see us at the Methodist College where we stayed and joined us at a nearby park where we played games whilst the army youth team helped with canoeing on a river.

It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience that brings back memories of what it must be like living in a war time environment. Fortunately for us, only two bombs went off whilst we were there and they exploded several miles away in the city centre.

Memories of my visit to Northern Ireland include:

1. Crossing the Irish Sea with 400 troops drawn from all over Britain and our arrival at Belfast where we were greeted by a bagpiper.
2. Staying at the project sited on the seafront at Castlerock.
3. Worshipping together on the beach.
4. Staying at the Methodist College, our 'home' whilst we were in the city of Belfast.
5. Seeing a burnt-out pub which had been bombed when the landlord refused to give people empty bottles he knew were destined to manufacture petrol bombs.
6. Getting to know and forming friendships with the leaders and seeing the boys in their home environments.
7. Walking through "Peace Lines" - the barriers that physically separated the Protestant and Catholic Communities.
8. Visiting Corymeela, an ecumenical settlement which is still active today supporting people from different backgrounds to deepen their respect for each other so they can live well together.

Robert Wilks

The Autumn edition of The Messenger will be edited by Frances Gray. Please send any articles you would like to submit to Frances by the 3 August. Thank you.

HEALING THROUGH ART THERAPY, SHARED STORIES & PRAYER

From February 22nd to 24th, Sheffield Cathedral showcased an inspiring exhibition featuring paintings created by wounded Ukrainian soldiers, widows and mothers who have lost sons in the Ukrainian war. Much of the work was created during art therapy sessions at Veteran's House in Rivne, Western Ukraine. The Centre began offering free art therapy when the manager, Viktoriia Shynkarenko began painting to help with her severe insomnia after returning from the frontline. She would paint when she was unable to sleep. For her, this was healing and she wanted others to benefit. After selling her first painting, she put the money into helping others.

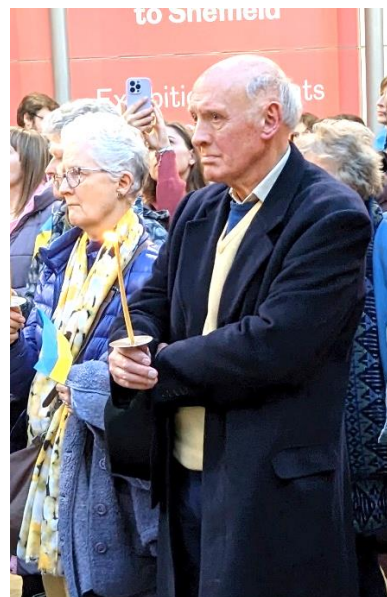


Photo by Michael Miller

The art therapy has many benefits and contributes to those injured, relearning fine motor skills following head injury or upper limb damage. The Centre provides trained psychologists to work alongside the classes. For the mothers and widows, the sessions are more about connecting with a network of people in a similar situation, sharing their stories and supporting one another in their grief.

Each piece tells a story of resilience and hope.

Nicky and Janet bought one of the pictures at the exhibition. It shows watermelon slices – very much a product of the area – an image of peace and prosperity.



Photo by Janet Morley

On the evening of 24 February, a vigil was held at the Winter Gardens in Sheffield city center to mark the third anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. A few people from St Mark's attended to show solidarity with the people of Ukraine and to pray for peace.

Shan

THE UNITED SOCIETY PARTNERS IN THE GOSPEL

PROUD TO BE A PARTNER IN MISSION WITH THE CHURCH IN TANZANIA



The United Society Partners in the Gospel, commonly known as USPG, is the Anglican mission agency that partners with churches and communities worldwide in God's mission to enliven faith, strengthen relationships, unlock potential and champion justice. St Mark's supports their work through an annual donation via the International Committee. Through their Partners in mission Scheme, we are now developing a link with The Anglican Church in Tanzania. A representative from USPG has been invited to preach at St Mark's on Sunday the 7th of September to help us understand how the money we donate is used. Michael's article is an introduction to the work we are supporting.

Shan

USPG's' programme to end mother to child transmission of HIV

USPG has supported the Anglican Church of Tanzania in its preventing mother to child HIV transmission programme since it began in 2014. It is implemented in partnership with Mvumi and Muheza mission hospitals in Central Tanganyika and Tanga dioceses.

Working in collaboration with Tanzania's Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, the main objectives are: primary prevention of HIV/AIDS, the prevention of unwanted pregnancy in HIV positive women, the prevention of HIV

transmission from HIV positive mothers to children, and care and support for HIV positive mothers and their children and families.

Tanzania is one of the countries in Africa most severely affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The transmission of the HIV virus from mother to child during pregnancy, birth and during the period of breastfeeding is by far the most common way of infection in children. Since the survival time, the period from infection to the development of Aids and consequent death, is much shorter for children than adults 20% to 25% of them will die within the first two years of life and 60% to 70% before reaching their 5th birthday. In Tanzania about 1.6 million women become pregnant each year and the prevalence of HIV infection among pregnant women is 8.2%. This means that an estimated 114,800 pregnant women are infected with HIV annually and more than 48,800 babies acquire HIV infection through mother to child transmission every year. 90% of HIV infection in children below 2 years is due to mother to child transmission.

This programme aims to help bring down the number of new HIV infections among Tanzanian children. Along with this, it is also committed to ensuring that 95% of pregnant women living with HIV receive lifelong HIV treatment.

One side effect of the programme is that the stigma that often surrounds people with HIV is going away. Men used to be reluctant to accompany their partners to HIV clinics, but now more men are accompanying their partners to reproductive and child health services. In a related programme the aim is to raise the level of men visiting the health facility from the current 750 [15%] to 4,000 [80%].

A story

“My name is Justina. I have two children and I live with HIV. My second son is 2 years old and he lives with HIV. My partner ran away after I disclosed my status. I am currently having a three month pregnancy and I have already received counselling on my health status and now I have started taking ARVs to prevent HIV from reaching my baby in the womb. Before meeting the counsellors I considered an abortion in fear of giving birth to an infected baby.

“I am very grateful for this new Anglican Church project to reach us here in our village, as I could not go to the hospital with the previous pregnancy due to distance and cost, so I gave birth at home and infected my baby. It is my belief that with the services I am getting, the baby I give birth will have no HIV infection. And my health will not be as weak as it was in the previous pregnancy as I will be under the supervision of the staff of this project and especially the health care worker who lives here in the village.

“I pray that this project will continue to serve us and reach more mothers, as there are some of my HIV infected colleagues who have become pregnant and have unsafe abortions for fear of giving birth to children with HIV infection.”

Michael Bayley

BECOMING A DEMENTIA FRIENDLY CHURCH

Why is it important for St Mark's to become more Dementia Friendly?

“So much of our personhood is held in our faith – from the routine and tradition of church attendance and the relationships we form with other worshippers, to the identity we find in Christ. As dementia strips people of these anchors, ***we as a church have the opportunity to help those living with dementia preserve this essential portion of ‘self’ that is encompassed by faith.***”

*Dr Ruth Law, Consultant in Integrated Geriatric Medicine,
Whittington Hospital*

We can offer people with dementia a sense of value and dignity and help to facilitate changes that will bring about their inclusion and participation, enabling them to continue to worship in a way that is meaningful to them. This may not be by attending the church building, but through the teams who visit people in their homes, or care homes within the parish on a monthly basis.

As a church we need to recognise the unmet spiritual care needs of people with dementia, explore what measures we can take to rectify these on an individualised basis and implement these wherever possible. To do this, we need to have conversations with those we know who have dementia or are caring for, or supporting someone with dementia

Raising awareness of dementia amongst the congregation is vital, especially for those who have roles that include welcoming or pastoral visiting.

We work with The Sheffield Dementia Action Alliance which has been rebranded as 'Our Dementia Commitments – Sheffield'. They offer free resources, training and support through the Dementia Stars Workshops. These run several times a year and can be booked via: <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/sheffield/our-services/dementia-services-professionals/das-training/>

If you would prefer to attend face to face, please contact Grace Stead from Enrichment for the Elderly on:

gracestead@enrichmentfortheelderly.org

and she will let you know when the next dates are.

Let's aim to be a church that encourages supportive relationships, facilitates communication, creates an accessible environment, encourages creativity, links with local networks and is willing to learn from others. These concepts, which contribute to healing, wholeness, and peace, are as deeply relevant for people with dementia, as they are for anyone facing physical, mental or spiritual challenges.

Shan

PLEASE REMEMBER ME FOR WHOM I AM

Please remember me for whom I am
The Father, the Mother, the Lady, the Man.
Not the person that I became.
Not the one that couldn't remember your name.
My life is worth much more than that,
After all this time don't leave me flat,
Families raised and friendships made,
Working for years in the trade,
Going out, having fun,
Long summer holidays in the sun.
These last few years are so short,
What about the others? I retort!
Please don't remember my dementia days,
They are nothing but a distant haze.
So,
Please remember me for who I am
The Father, the Mother, the Lady, the Man.

Poem by Norman (Norms) McNamara

PERSON CENTRED SPIRITUAL CARE IN DEMENTIA

— *A Holistic Approach*

Holistic care is essentially our response to recognising the unique make-up of the person we see before us and guiding our relationship with them. It is the unique combination of the physical, psychological, social and spiritual parameters of them that makes them 'them'. The Alzheimer's Society use the symbol of the forget-me-not to draw us to the **me** that lies, often concealed and forgotten, beneath the dementia symptoms. This is particularly important when we are involved with providing spiritual support to people on the dementia pathway as the way our support is given will need to change as their journey progresses. One size does not fit all! The lady who was once fluent with the communion service, some years later and now having difficulty with language, may well need a simple service tailored to her current needs, in a 1-to-1 setting allowing her to worship by listening (and often singing) to hymns familiar from her early years. The expression on her face shows that it has been meaningful for her; she has experienced the 'sacrament of the moment', a phrase used by Prof John Swinton in his book *Dementia-Living in the Memories of God* (which he 'borrowed' from Jean Pierre de Caussade).

The 3 Spires Mission area (St John's, St Mark's and St Mary's) Dementia Core Group came into being a few years ago to raise the awareness of dementia for members of congregations and since then it has organised two annual dementia friendly services in church for people with milder symptoms, providing a 'supporter' to sit with somebody with dementia during regular services if needed, regular services in the care homes, more special ones, eg at harvest, for their residents and visitors. These were assisted by visual aids (which became tasty harvest samples!) and the Christian symbology of Bible, Cross and Candle. The time for tea and socialising after the service enabled the residents to experience a treat and feel valued.

[Anna Chaplaincy | Offering spiritual care in later life](#) is now a highly respected organisation, totally committed to furthering the holistic spiritual care of older people in churches and the community, particularly those with dementia, and is for those of any faith or none. It could be regarded as the gold standard in this area of care. It has produced (to date) 12 very informative (free and downloadable) leaflets each discussing a different aspect of the holistic spiritual care of the older members of our congregations.


Wendy Weeks

***Chair of The 3 Spires Mission Area Dementia Core Group
and member of St John's Congregation***

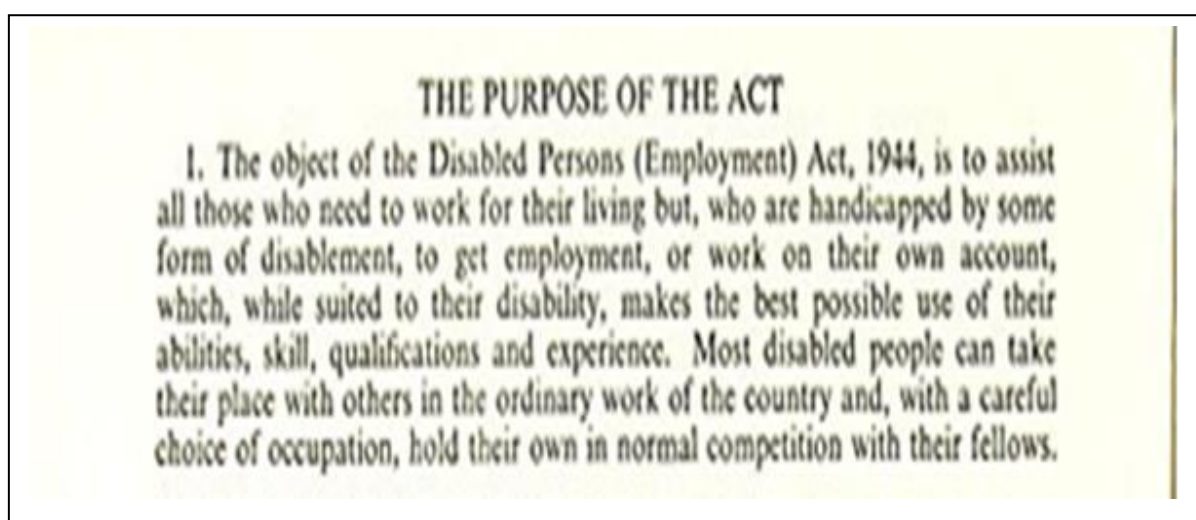
MY WORK IN AN IRU

My first job after a 'mature graduation' was with SPCK – the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge – initially as a trainee bookshop manager in Derby (including selling candles and wafers to the nearby cathedral), then as assistant and later full manager of the university bookshop in Exeter; thus I have a 1968 Diploma in Bookselling!

Finding retail management unsatisfying, I consulted an Occupational Guidance Unit, a free service run by the Ministry of Labour. They suggested I use my joint Eng Lit and Psychology degree to apply for a post as an Occupational Psychologist in an Industrial Rehabilitation Unit (IRU). Following training with an experienced OP in Cardiff, who incidentally had lost both hands in an industrial accident but skilfully used a pair of grasping hooks, I became the OP in Bristol. Run by the Ministry of Labour, IRU's were an effective and humane way of helping those long-term unemployed by injury or illness to return to work. They were set up under the 1944 Disabled Persons (Employment) Act, which gave

 THE DISABLED PERSONS (EMPLOYMENT) ACT, 1944 REGISTRATION CONTENTS	
<i>(Note: The schemes described in this leaflet are for the benefit of men and women, and boys and girls who have left school.)</i>	
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precedence to ex-service personnel. The 'rehabilitees' would spend some weeks in a supportive work-like setting being assessed by a team including a workshop supervisor, the OP, a social worker, a part-time doctor and a Disablement Resettlement Officer (DRO). The workshops included woodworking, metal machining, office skills, gardening and others. The OP's job was to measure their abilities via psychometric testing and interview, to collate the reports of the others in the IRU team, and draft a final report recommending specific training or employment, including some to Remploy, and a few to 'reserved occupations' (restricted to registered disabled people) such as lift operator. As you can see, a far cry from the recent 'punish by sanctions' method.



The work was interesting and rewarding but, for a free creative spirit (tests show I work best in unstructured environments with scope to 'do my own thing'), became samey and constricting. Hence my next move to become a careers adviser at Leicester and then Sheffield universities. In the maelstrom of life, events can seem random and chaotic but, reflecting in later years, it is possible to see a pattern, and I was fortunate to gradually move towards work that utilised my capabilities and was personally rewarding. Incidentally, as a reminder of my IRU work Pauline and I still have a plant trough which was made there; they used to sell the items produced. Visitors to our apartment will have seen it on our landing.

Michael Miller

ST MARK'S ECO CHURCH PLAN: *for managing our land*



“St Mark’s Broomhill and Broomhall, is committed to managing our land equally for the benefit of nature and for the health and wellbeing of people.”

We are signed up partners to Nature Recovery Sheffield and our collective vision is:

“By thinking globally and acting locally, together we will turn around the nature emergency and put nature in recovery in Sheffield”.

In order to achieve this, we have a land management plan that records previous improvements and maintenance and helps us set new goals for the future. A copy of the full updated plan will be available soon. But in a nutshell, this is what we have been doing:

We have responsibility for 1.2 acres of land which support 19 species of trees plus grassland and managed garden. The annual Big Garden Bird Count shows our shrubs and trees shelter significant birdlife and the Churches Count for Nature reveals we host 48 species of wildflower.

Key management principles:

- All work should be sensitive to the sacred nature of the area and to users of the space.
- Innovations should only be implemented if they are sustainable ecologically, financially and from a workload point of view.
- Plans should be wildlife friendly and whenever possible, new trees, shrubs and plants should be native species.
- The carbon footprint of every activity should be minimised
- The use of chemicals should be avoided.



- Clear signage should be used to explain to the public what we are trying to achieve.
- More people should be involved, both from within the congregation and the wider community



Who does what?

- Our Fabric and Finance group have charge of both the building and the land. We have a very small team of volunteer gardeners/mowers and would love more people to be involved.
- Our Caretaker litter-picks and maintains the paths keeping the grounds in good order for safety and access.
- Environment Group does nature surveys, occasional Nature Recovery practical sessions on the Green and plantings to enhance biodiversity.

What we are trying to do:

1. Maintain the health of our mature trees and continue to plant new native trees to the maximum the site can support.

Overhanging branches from the trees on Broomfield Rd have been trimmed where they threaten the roof. Two trees affected by ash dieback

have had to be cut down. Logs from trees cut down are used by the children and families as seating on the green.

Several home-grown native saplings have been planted including beech, hazel, oak and buckthorn (essential to the Brimstone butterfly). A rowan is planned.

2. Identify the grassy mound and the Green as spring flowering grassland and manage accordingly, with planting and mowing to maximise their potential.

We delay mowing as late as possible and continue until the grass stops growing in late autumn. Collecting up the grass will help to reduce the fertility of the soil and encourage wildflowers, especially during the last mow of the year.

3. Nurture spaces for nature.

We maintain an undisturbed brushwood pile for invertebrates and a large leaf pile for compost which was made available to the congregation and a local allotment society.

A bug hotel was built in 2023 and renovated in 2024.

Coconut feeders are regularly renewed. We have some bird boxes and intend applying for permission to install swift boxes.

4. Manage the beds around the church building itself as woodland areas, with appropriate planting and ground cover.
5. Plant more wildflowers on the site, with a particular emphasis on species that support insects and bees.

Cowslips were planted on the Mound at Easter 2023 and flowered beautifully in April this year. These wildflowers host the Dark-edged Bee. We are therefore planting more and hope to eventually have swathes of them completing the spring sequence from snowdrops to crocuses to daffodils.

We have also planted yellow rattle in the grass. This semi parasitic plant weakens strong grasses and allows for the flourishing of wild flowers .



Our attempts at planting wildflower seeds have not been very successful so far – perhaps because of the tree cover.

6. Maintain the Memorial Garden and the Spring Garden as the only formal gardens.

Volunteers continue to lovingly tend both.

7. Nurture spaces for our congregation and community.

The families continue to use the Green for worship activities and for play.

A temporary nature trail encourages us to notice what is there.

Easter morning sunrise is a very special service.

Our annual picnic in Great Big Green Week has become a tradition.

The Green is also used by folk who never enter our building – school students, hospital workers and patients, homeless people, dog walkers, parents with small children. What does the space mean to them?

The Environment noticeboard hosted a display last autumn about how we care for our Green.

....and to sum up:

Maintaining and enhancing our land is good for us too, and gives us a sense of purpose at being part of something bigger than ourselves. Taking action together, even small steps, helps reduce feelings of helplessness or despair about the effects of climate change and the threats to wildlife. The Christian message of Hope is based on God's generosity to us and that he is in charge of his creation.

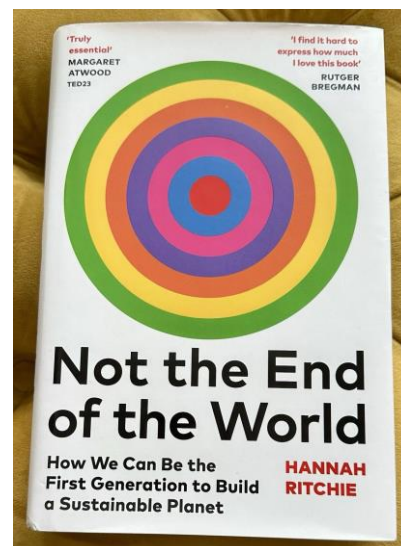
We are proud of achieving Gold in the Eco Church awards. We can't afford to rest on our laurels and now have to keep Creation Care embedded in the life of our church for the long term and share what we have learned with others. Let's tackle these issues together. Do let us know what you can do to help?

Margaret Ainger

BOOK REVIEW:

***Not the End of the World*, by Hannah Ritchie¹**

This remarkable book has changed the way I think about the climate and its related challenges. Hannah Ritchie does not deny the very real difficulties that face us, but she succeeds in talking about them in a way which is both hopeful and realistic. She quotes the 1987 UN definition of sustainable development as ‘meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’. She says: “That definition has two halves. The first is making sure that everyone in the world today can live a good and healthy life. The second half is about making sure that we live in a way that doesn’t degrade the environment for future generations.” (Page 17)



She sets the tone by showing what remarkable progress humanity has made in several areas, for example child mortality. “As recently as 1800, about 43% of the world’s children died before reaching their fifth birthday. Today the figure is 4% – still woefully high but more than tenfold lower... Every single country has made massive progress in the last 50 years.” The same sort of progress has been made in maternal mortality, life expectancy, hunger and malnutrition, access to clean water, energy and sanitation (For example, every day for a decade on average 300,000 people have had access to electricity and a similar number got clean water for the first time.), not to mention education and a fall in extreme poverty. “In 1820 more than three quarters of the world lived in dire poverty. Today that figure (though it is still far too many) is less than 10%.” (Page 26) Ritchie shows us that we are making real progress. It is not enough but we should not dismiss its value but be encouraged.

But this progress has come at massive environmental cost. Ritchie looks at seven big environmental problems. Air pollution, climate change, deforestation, food, biodiversity loss, ocean plastics and overfishing. She shows how we have passed a number of ‘peak’ points, for example the peak for the number of children in the world was 2017 and the number is now falling; the peak in per capita emissions was a decade ago (although overall emissions are still going up as the population is still increasing); because our farming is now so much more efficient it looks as though the world is near the peak of use of land for agriculture and the same looks to be true for the use of fertiliser; sales of new petrol cars peaked in 2017. In a few years we will pass the peak of the petrol cars on the road. In short, we are not fighting

a hopeless uphill battle. Though there are obviously huge challenges, the direction of travel is distinctly hopeful (Page 97).

She shows the overwhelming importance of what we eat and in particular, the impact of meat-eating especially beef. She says: "Food... is at the nexus of sustainability; it is responsible for one quarter of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, 70% of global freshwater withdrawals. It is the major factor in deforestation. Worried about biodiversity loss? Food production is the biggest pressure on the world's wildlife. Farming causes the most water pollution. But, by the same token, dealing with one problem also helps to deal with another.

With each section she also has suggestions for how to deal with it. This is what she suggests for food. Improve crop yields across the world, especially in Africa which is lagging behind; eat less meat, especially beef and lamb; invest in meat substitutes; substitute dairy with plant-based alternatives; waste less food. Her whole approach is driven by the data. This produces some surprising results. Here are two. From the point of view of having a low carbon diet there is no particular value in eating local. What you eat matters much more than where it has come from. Emissions in the supply chain are often very small. The differences in emissions between foods are much larger than changes to transport or packaging.

The second may be even more surprising. Eating organic is not always better for the environment. Organic farming tends to give us lower crop yields which means we need to use more land. Like 'eating local' what we eat matters much more than whether it is organic or local.

Hannah Ritchie says that a few years ago she really hated palm oil but working on a project on deforestation made her look at it more deeply. She shows that palm oil is amazingly productive. One hectare of palm oil currently gives us 2.8 tonnes of oil in return; soybean 0.45 tonnes; olives 0.3 tonnes; coconuts 0.26 tonnes; groundnuts 0.13 tonnes. If palm oil was boycotted and we used coconut and soybean oil instead we would need about 5 to 10 times more land for oil crops.

Ritchie is good at taking a big global figure and breaking it down and making more sense of it. For example, every two years the World Wildlife Fund publishes the Living Planet Index. In 2022 the index reported a 69% average decline in wildlife populations from 1970 to 2018. Losing 69% of the world's species in such a short period would mean we are just inches away from mass extinction. Thankfully we are still far from that point. Ritchie explains: "There is no doubt that many animals are seeing a worrying and accelerated decline. But dig a little deeper and we find something is going right for some animals too... Almost half of the animal populations were increasing, and half were decreasing... To get such a large average decline across all populations, those that are declining must be doing so much faster or at a

bigger magnitude than those that are increasing.” Richie points out that this does not mean we shouldn’t worry about the state of global wildlife but that to solve this problem we need to concentrate on the ones that are struggling badly and to work out what is going right for those that are flourishing (Pages 195–196). Richie enables us to move from a generalised anxiety to a more focused and effective concern.

Many people have argued that we simply cannot continue growing the world economy because we will run out of resources. We must shrink the economy. Ritchie writes: “This argument hinges on the fact that historically economic growth has been linked with more resource intensive lifestyles. As we got richer, we used more energy from fossil fuels, had a higher carbon footprint, used more land and ate more meat. And it’s true that in a world without technological change, we’ll be stuck with fossil fuel power, petrol cars and inefficient homes. But... new technologies are allowing us to decouple a good and comfortable life from an environmentally destructive one... In rich countries carbon emissions, energy use, deforestation, fertiliser use, overfishing, plastic pollution and water pollution are all falling while these countries continue to get richer... even when allowing for the fact that some countries have exported some of their impacts elsewhere.” Interestingly, she says: “I’m agnostic about growth in rich countries, but the data is clear that we need strong economic growth globally to end poverty, even with lots of redistribution. (Pages 34-35)

At the end of her book Ritchie makes a point which might seem trivial but I don’t think it is: “For years I’ve battled with this personal dilemma: being an effective environmentalist has often made me feel like a fraud. My take on ‘cooking’ looks like an environmental disaster... It nearly always comes from a packet. My avocados come from Mexico and my bananas... from Angola. My food is rarely produced locally... But I know that my way of eating is low carbon... but it still feels wrong... This probably comes back to the good old ‘natural fallacy’: things that seem more grounded in ‘natural’ properties must be better for us... I still get the instinctual pull towards natural’ solutions... Yet it’s something we need to overcome. (When we can do that then) being a good environmentalist might stop feeling so bad.” (Pages 293–294).

The great value of this book is that it shows us how we can be most effective in fighting the climate and nature crisis and stops us devoting too much attention to issues that have little impact like eating local or worrying about food being wrapped in plastic, and concentrate on the big, critical ones. This book is certainly not complacent but its compassionate and data driven approach gives me realistic hope. Do **read it**.

Michael Bayley

¹ *Not the end of the world* by Hannah Richie, publ. Vintage, 2024, £10.99

ART AT THE HEART OF HEALING

Recently I have been making daily visits to the Royal United Hospital in Bath to visit a relative. I was struck by the amount of artwork they have along the corridors and chose to take a different route to the ward as often as I could so I could stop and look at some of it. I discovered it is a project called 'Art at the Heart' who organise diverse exhibitions by amateur and professional artists that really brighten the otherwise dull, long corridors.

Their aim is to enhance the look and feel of the hospital, and to deliver more arts projects that dramatically improve people's health outcomes by supporting the healing and well-being of patients, staff and visitors. It has been shown to reduce stress and increase social engagement as well as provide opportunities for self-expression. A third of the money raised from all sales of the artwork goes to the RUH Arts Fund.

Below is a piece called 'Elements of Healing' created by Rose Flint. that particularly caught my attention

HERE, HERE, HERE, HERE,
they will place a shock of fire on your heart
so your body will remember its living rhythm again,
and how your heart can be warm when it loves.
They will place exotic liquid chemicals
or someone else's blood in needles and syringes,
pierce your own routes of water
(those blue conduits roaring with tides and memories, moods of the moon)
and they will sail you to safe shore.
They will catch the air for you,
in tubes and soft boxes transparent as flayed angels skin
and they will breathe for you, slowly, seriously, kiss you back into life.
On your tongue they will place willow and rosy periwinkle,
chalks and six kinds of sugar, wafered like bread.
Your body will respond, flesh to flesh,
turn away from hurt to blossom and make new delicious fruit.
They will allow the cool magic of ether to move you
from days crowded with clawed fears
into a healing night, peaceful as old winter velvet.
Then your spirit will grow, strong and lovely as amaryllis
that needed a spell of cold darkness before it bloomed like a star.

Shan

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