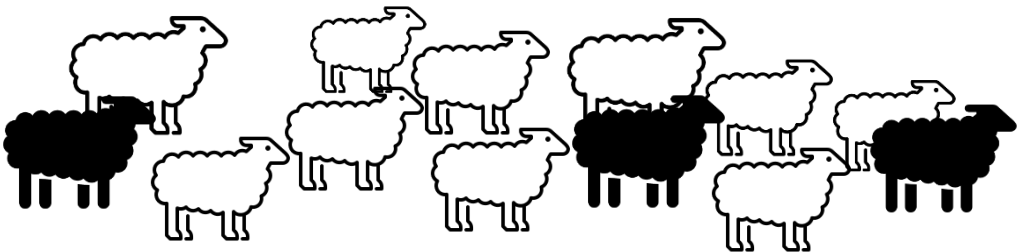


# Oswald's Outlook



May 2020





## From the Vicarage

Well ... what a lot has taken place since my last message to you in Oswald's Outlook. Who could have realistically foreseen the changes that would overtake our lives in such a few short weeks? And yet, here we are adjusting to a very 'new normal' as we consider and contemplate what the next few months might bring us. Might we be able to meet our family and friends once more? Will our Pubs, restaurants, cafes and shops re-open? Indeed: will we be able to gather once again as a family of God back in St Oswald's? All of this, in the words of former US Secretary of state for Defence, Donald Rumsfeld, is a *'Known Unknown.'*

In the meantime, the good things about our community continue to thrive and to flourish. Love and friendship continue to flow, albeit articulated in new and innovative ways. Meals are delivered, telephone calls made, cards and letters written and engaging with platforms such as 'Zoom' and 'Facetime' become more familiar to many of us.

I confess to not yet having experienced any of the deceleration of life that many speak of, but I am engaging in new and different practices that are challenging and engaging me in fresh ways. You may have taken to a new hobby or activity or re-engaged with one long forgotten. Pictures on our website for the Sunday service on May 3<sup>rd</sup> show so many of you engaging in such a diverse range of activities – drawing, painting, knitting, sewing, pottery, reading, writing, gardening, music, baking, cooking, lambing etc etc and yet all under the silent shadow of the virus.

Perhaps the last time our lives as a nation were so interrupted was over 80 years ago with the outbreak of World War 2. I know through recent conversations with many of you that this has not escaped your attention. We have reached in recent days a rather grim statistic, in that the number of deaths now associated with the virus in just 6 weeks is close to half of all the civilian deaths in the UK during the 6 years of war. Silent and unseen without a single siren sounded.

The Queen will mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE day on May 8<sup>th</sup> and it will look very different to how it was originally planned but one very important fact will be remembered and celebrated. Despite the grim and dark days of

that conflict, a new and better future was dreamt of. Returning to the normal that was experienced by so many in the 1930's before war interrupted their lives was not something that was overwhelmingly desired. A better and a brighter future was looked to and planned for. To mark the end of the wartime years of blackout, many celebrated by lighting a lamp or a candle and placing it in a window of their home or business – perhaps we might do the same on Friday evening.

Sometimes we need something big to interrupt the status quo and to help us see what we truly value and hold dear in our lives and what it is that we long to see change and take place. So, I wonder what that might be for us? What are we learning about ourselves and the way that we have lived our lives in recent weeks that we would like to retain and what might we as a community like to see change for a better future? The narrative held in the Bible is one of God constantly seeking to take his creation and mankind onto new and better things. St Paul in his letter to the church in Philippi urges them to look to God in Christ Jesus and to imitate him: '*.. whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things.*'

Phil.4:8

Perhaps we might take some time in the days and weeks ahead to consider these questions and how we might, at this time and in this place, plan for something greater, something truly good that might come out of this extraordinary and upsetting time for all of us. God bless you and keep you.



## **A new Togetherness**

How could we have imagined this current world we are learning to inhabit, when I wrote the last "View"? All of us at St. Matthew's send love, and prayers for our many friends across the Benefice, and those further away.

In the last few weeks we have all had to adjust our thinking, our patterns of life, and our attitudes to each other: the underlying fact is that in this time of isolation, we actually need each other much more than we had realised. Maybe, as we rid our lives of some of what we deemed essentials, it left room for LOVE to come in and warm our spirits. It has been said that the pandemic is a great leveller, and can strike down anyone, regardless of creed, colour or social status, etc., but no one can deny that those least able to cope, or

indeed obey the new guidelines, are often those who are least privileged in society, and will inevitably, bear a terrible burden. For those of us who view the enforced isolation as a sort of prison sentence, it is pertinent to remember most of us have food in our cupboards (some more than we need, shamefully!) and we have roofs over our heads and beds to sleep in. We do not inhabit cold pavements, hungry and desolate, or wait terrified for the next bombing, or anguish over how to feed our starving babies.

The situation has brought out the best and sadly, though perhaps less obviously, the worst in humanity. I personally, have experienced such kindness and love that it has brought me close to tears. We are filled with admiration and awe for those in the most tiring, dangerous and undervalued jobs which are least rewarded, Heroes are not difficult to find, and we must not make the mistake of having short memories when the day of reckoning comes. Rather than imagining things will go back to "normal " eventually, we would be wise to understand that it must indeed be a very different "normal". We can be hopeful that those values which we aspire to, as part of our faith, are in plentiful supply: Hope, love and trust and better understanding of each other will, with God's Mercy, not be as thin on the ground as PPE has been for some doctors, nurses and carers and other service providers. As many of us have held our hands cupped for years to share communion, we have had to learn that this symbol is of giving and receiving, graciously, this is no time for a misplaced sense of independence. There is grace to be learnt in receiving. Big lessons in humility. How pertinent the words " Deliver us from Evil..." as we all know of someone who is gravely ill, and perhaps dying. Lord, have Mercy. Christ have Mercy, Lord have Mercy.

As the smaller things in life take on a new significance, the tiny celandine and intricate minute moss form, become a galaxy of pattern, in their own right. I watch the sunlight scud over the fields, and spread out across the peaceful dale, so quiet, so still; and I can see the signs of new life in young lambs. There is a symphony of birdsong like we haven't heard since I was a child .My garden is full of fledglings revelling in the bright blossom of quince and early fruits, signs of bluebells in my wild wood, guide us to take heart and respect the natural world in a more responsible way. Whilst our church pattern of togetherness recovers from the body blow of being apart, built so firmly on Our Lord's own words, "when two or three are gathered together in my name...", we are led to strive for new and inventive ways to be together. After all He made us in His image and as creative people embracing that gift, we can become more creative, more inventive and resourceful. We are blessed with gifts and graces, each and every one of us, and we must not forget the sustaining gift of laughter, one of the world's best medicines!

My Prayer is that we step forward with courage, in a new spirit of togetherness, In the sure and certain knowledge that nothing can separate us from His love. May God bless us and walk closely with us in these days to come.

With love, Lesley

## Parcevall Hall

Parcevall Hall Gardens are a lasting testament to the remarkable insight of Sir William Milner (1893-1960), 8th Baronet of Nun Appleton, near York;



who in 1927 began on a project to rebuild the derelict early 17th century shell of Parcevall Hall at Skyreholme,

near Appletreewick in North Yorkshire. It is now a retreat house run by the Church of England Diocese of Leeds, hosting both secular and religious groups, since 1963. Recently, Tricia and Betsy stayed at the Hall and their report follows.

The lovely Parcevall Hall in Wharfedale was the perfect venue for the three-day Ripon Cathedral retreat which we joined at the end of January. A Journey from Epiphany to Candlemas was the title, with bible readings and study sessions - none of them compulsory - appropriate to the theme. Reading, reflecting, and entering into the bible readings (the Visit of the Magi and the Wedding at Cana), in the way of Saint Ignatius who inspired the "immersive" approach, was a new experience for both of us and despite having very different beliefs and practices (Tricia as a church-going, practising Christian, Betsy as a lapsed one) it worked for us both.

Led by the Revd Caitlin Carmichael-Davies, assistant curate at Ripon Cathedral, it was a mix of prayer, study, rest and relaxation - we were both good at that. No pressure whatever to attend ANY of the services or sessions meant that, mostly, we did. But we also appreciated the chance to do nothing (without feeling guilty) in the lovely 17th-century manor house set in the famous Parcevall Hall terraced gardens.

We were a mixed bunch of 14, and although made up mainly of cathedral people we were welcomed as friends and fellow travellers. The food was

superb, the staff kind and obliging, the rooms sparse but comfortable, with a view over Simon's Seat and the call of an owl to send us to sleep. There was a writing room to be quiet in, and a comfortable lounge where we relaxed, chatted, drank tea and ate cake.

Caitlin was an excellent leader. Always available but not intrusive, responsive to our needs without being overly-anxious to please, and every session had been thought through and thoroughly prepared. If you thought a retreat was not for you - think again. This one was for everybody.

Tricia Selby and Betsy Everett

## **Spring is Sprung!**

SPRING! Green shoots, sticky buds, catkins, daffodils and crocuses and now, spring lambs skipping about in the fields, bouncing up and down, for the sheer fun of it! These are the lucky little critters! Not all are so lucky.

After moving to the village, Farmer Allen ensured that we were here to stay. "Good! You can 'elp wi' t' pet lambs, then!" "Ooooh ... YEEES!" and then he passed by, clutching a milk bottle. I grabbed my old coat and ran after him. "Right. 'Ere you are ...feed that one there ... not too much, mind - it's not good to overfeed 'em". This "newbie" was excited and delighted to be part of a working farm.

Initially, just one or two needed bottle feeding. Sitting on my lap, wrapping my coat around each to ward off the icy draught, it was calm, quiet and tranquil. It can be a messy business! Sometimes, milk spilt down my arm and the lamb might have a dirty bottom. Water-proof over-trousers were a "must-have" bit of kit. The numbers grew. Allen's grandchildren and I named some: Mr Porky, Mr Eyebrows, Green Top, Mr Greedy and ... Red Top.

"Pet lambs" need human intervention through being orphaned; rejected by their mother or being the smallest of triplets with the mother unable to feed that number. Some fall prey to infections, exacerbated by cold, wind and rain. Many ills can befall a hapless lamb: like "watery mouth disease"; "pulpy kidney disease" and "joint ill". "Clocking" a poorly lamb early on is key to a positive outcome: one can then break the vicious cycle of hypothermia and hypoglycaemia quickly. Some can be brain-damaged (sometimes caused by bacteria in dog poo left on grazing land) and need more help. Ethical questions arose but decisions of this nature were not for me to make, Palliative care was the issue.

Our unexpected success was “Red Top” – a scraggy little Charolais who could not stand or walk, spending most of his time lying down but occasionally shuffling along on swollen knees. “Dr Google” indicated that prospect of recovery was very slim indeed. Eventually, Red Top surprised us: he got to his unsteady feet and gradually, went from strength to strength, always with his characteristic stoicism and dignity. He was special! It was a sad day, when he inevitably went to market – but that is the way of farming.

Later, when the “gang” roamed around the farmyard, I would sit on the grassy bank, surrounded by lambs, with “Red Top” being the only one needing the bottle. Some would jump on my back; nibble my hair and one time, one pinched an earring! Luckily, he spat it out!

In close proximity to these young animals, I discovered that each has their own distinctive character and personality, forming deep friendships and are not as stupid as is often believed! Their trust was a privilege and it was a real pleasure to be a small part in rearing them, imparting some human kindness. Thank you, Allen and Ian!

Jill Leslie

## **April in Askrigg**

You might remember that we had planned all sorts of events for April both for enjoyment & to raise money for the tower. Unfortunately, the shutdown put paid to that. We were starting with Holy Week prayer stations, a Flower Festival starting on Easter Sunday, (do look on-line to see our virtual Flower Festival), a Big Art Auction, a fantastic Folk Concert, lunches, slide shows and afternoon teas, a treasure hunt.. The month was going to be full of activities some of which, we hope, will now take place in the autumn.

The church has had to be closed and services have all been on-line. Small businesses that had just started up had to find a new way to keep afloat and we all found ourselves social distancing and being in lock-down.

It all sounds like doom and gloom BUT what an opportunity to do things differently. What has gone on in Askrigg & the Upper Dale has been amazing. Mike & Alison in the shop have taken orders and payment on the phone and delivered to the doorstep. The Good Life has been active in sending volunteers to help with shopping etc and this week The Group Hug has delivered 1000 gift bags of eggs, milk, biscuits, sweets and raffle tickets (for when the lock -down ends) to older residents and those who are

vulnerable. The churches 'Open Pantry' has also been delivering bags of groceries as gifts to many in our area.

People are phoning to make sure friends and neighbours are well and offering help if necessary. The church has a prayer chain and many people, who have asked for help, are now prayed for regularly. The village is a lot quieter, no visitors has meant far less traffic and you can actually park in Hawes on Market Day. The plus side of this is that you can hear the birds and see a lot more wildlife - life can be less stressful. The downside is the difficulties for those whose living depends on tourism - pubs, B&Bs and shops - all closed. This has made life very hard for many people.

In spite of all the problems, what we have seen is what a wonderful community we live in. We have much to be thankful for.

MaryRose Kearney

## **Thanks**

St Oswald's is incredibly lucky to have many people who are not regular church attenders but who willingly give their time to help the church in many ways:

- Those who open & close the church & put the A board out, whatever the weather,
- Those who deliver Oswald's Outlook (also whatever the weather)
- Those who make coffee/tea for many church functions
- Those who run the winter monthly coffee mornings
- Those who bake for every event where it is necessary
- Our cleaner who keeps the church looking so beautiful and the ladies who come in periodically to spring clean
- The husbands who come to do small jobs as and when they need doing
- Our wonderful Flower Group who weekly make sure that the church is always full of the most beautiful flower arrangements



- All those who come in to ring the bells
- And last but certainly not least our organist, who although she is a Methodist and has responsibilities elsewhere, plays for our services. Not forgetting our other organist who plays for weddings & funerals across the Benefice.

We are most grateful for their work & their willingness to help. We are richly blessed and look forward to the day that the church will re-open and these activities can resume.

## **Weather Report**

The month of February started cold with snow on the tops and hard frosts, particularly on 7<sup>th</sup> when I recorded an overnight temperature of -3.4. The following day Storm Ciara hit the Dales with quite a force with 59 mph winds and 54mls of rain collected in the gauge over the weekend. The Ure flooded severely and according to the Flood Alert details the river reached the highest recorded at 4.86m at Bainbridge. Paddock Beck beside our house was the highest we had seen, and we did wonder if this was the time we would be flooded. The beck didn't top, although came pretty close and we did in the end have some water in our workshop due to run off from the garden but nothing major, for which we are very grateful. The Sunday Church service had to be cancelled due to flooded roads.

The weather did not improve with snow and gales during the week beginning 10<sup>th</sup> Feb. Another storm hit on Saturday with 57mph winds and 26mls rain over the weekend. Luckily, the rain held off for Snow Drop Sunday on 16<sup>th</sup> and lots of visitors enjoyed the display and tea and cakes which had to be served indoors in front of the log burner. The rest of the month continued with gales and rain and on 24<sup>th</sup> we had significant snow. Despite the weather I heard my first curlews and saw lapwing flocks that day and lambs out in the fields during this week. The month ended with yet another named storm – Storm Jorge with over 50mph winds and yet more rain. The total recorded was 198.5mls – very wet!

March thankfully was much calmer. We had the remnants of Storm Jorge on 1<sup>st</sup> and rain in the first half of the month but then we had a much drier spell with frosty nights and warm days. The total rainfall for March was 66mls, such a difference to February. Who would have thought in February we would be wishing for rain in March/April!

## Poetry Corner

The following poem was written by Kathleen O'Meara in 1869. It was reprinted many times during the Spanish flu outbreak in 1919 and has been circulated again during the Covid 19 outbreak. Our thanks to Marilyn Cruickshank for submitting it.

*And people stayed at home  
And read books  
And listened  
And they rested  
And did exercises  
And made art and played  
And learned new ways of being  
And stopped and listened  
More deeply  
Someone meditated, someone prayed  
Someone met their shadow  
And people began to think differently  
And people healed.  
And in the absence of people who  
Lived in ignorant ways  
Dangerous, meaningless and heartless,  
The earth also began to heal  
And when the danger ended and  
People found themselves  
They grieved for the dead  
And made new choices  
And dreamed of new visions  
And created new ways of living  
And completely healed the earth  
Just as they were healed.*

## **It should have been so different...**

It will not have escaped your notice if you have read Oswald's Outlook up to this point, that this edition is very different to usual. There is no Register or Diary, for example, for obvious reasons. At this point, St Oswald's is common with all the churches in our Benefice and, indeed, the whole of the UK is closed. This does not mean that the church is not functioning. I heard

a lovely soundbite which said *'the church building may be closed, but the fellowship has been deployed'*. This is certainly true here. Some of the above articles allude to this, but I would like to reiterate some of the ways of remaining in contact with us all at what is a very strange and alarming time.

- We have a prayer chain, so that our fellowship can continue to pray for situations and people. If you have something you would like us to pray for, please contact us.
- The Open Pantry (our version of a Foodbank) is still open. If you are in need or know someone who is, please contact us.
- If you have internet connection, the church website has a large amount of content, including videos of services, children's activities, copies of service sheets etc. [www.upperwensleydalechurch.co.uk](http://www.upperwensleydalechurch.co.uk) If you are on Facebook, please 'like' the St Oswald's page and you will receive information on services, videos etc. You can also access the videos on YouTube.
- The Church in the Home leaflet is produced each week, which lays out the Sunday service, including music, prayers and reflections. This is available on the website and is sent out by email too. A small number of physical copies are available for those without computer access.

If you would like to access any of the above or have any other need and you don't know where to turn, please contact us (numbers below) and we will endeavour to help you or put you in touch with someone who can.

The Vicarage: (Rev Dave & Sarah)                      01969 667553

Stephanie Durrant    01969 667944

At the time of writing, we do not know for how long our church buildings will remain shut. I know that many of you really valued having the church open for private prayer, or just a space to sit in the quiet. However, until we open our doors again, I would like to remind you that whilst St Oswald's is a very special and spiritual place, God is not constrained to this building; He will be with you, wherever you are – at home, at work or on your daily walk.

Stephanie Durrant

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Upper Wensleydale Benefice Office  
The Vicarage, Burterssett Rd, Hawes DL8 3NPTel 01969 667553 [office@upperwenben.org](mailto:office@upperwenben.org)  
Office open Tues 9-1, Thur 12-4