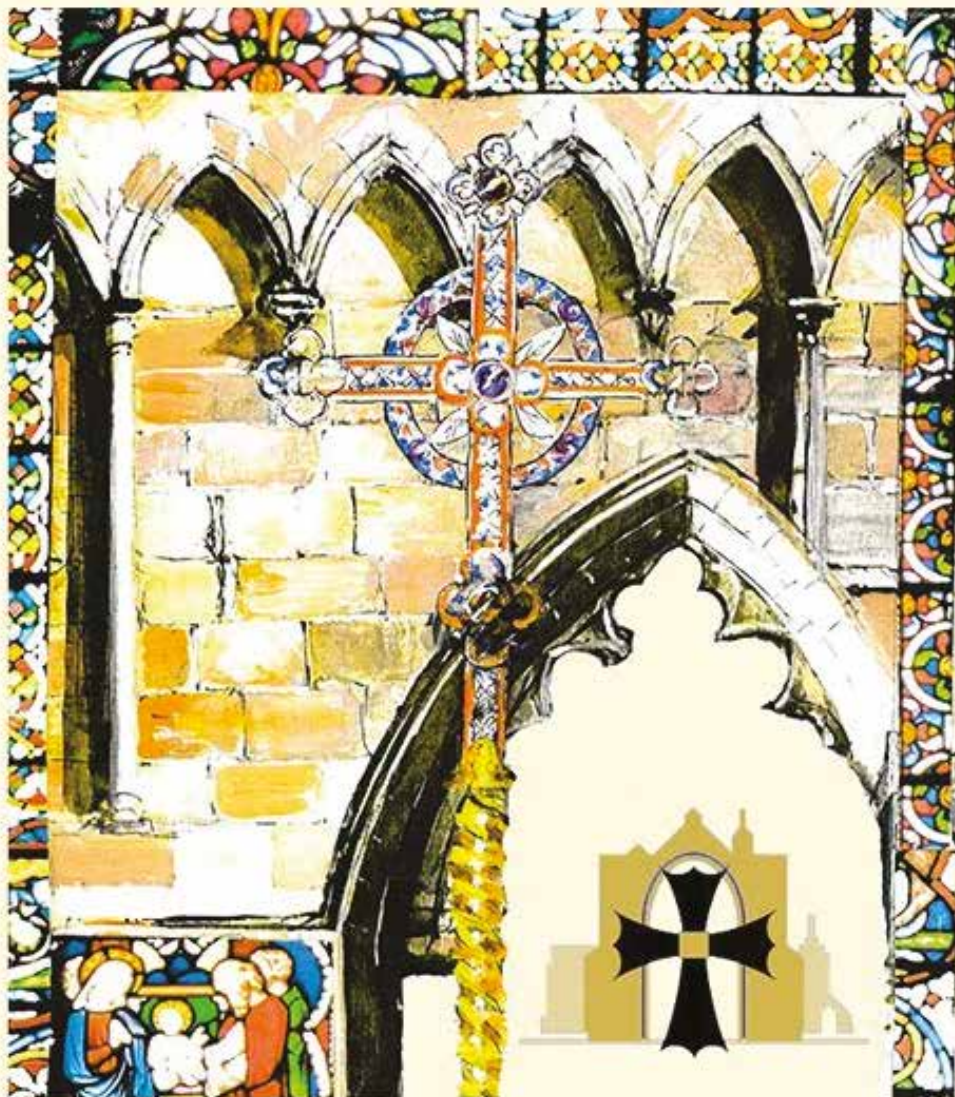


# BOLTON ABBEY PARISH MAGAZINE



MARCH · APRIL  
2025

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*office@boltonpriory.org.uk*

**The Rector**

The Rectory, Bolton Abbey, Skipton BD23 6AL

*rector@boltonpriory.org.uk*

**Deacon**

*Tony.Cantlow@leeds.anglican.org*

**Website**

*www.boltonpriory.org.uk*

---

**SUNDAY**

08.00	Holy Communion
09.15	Liquid Family Service First Sunday of the month
10.30	Sung Eucharist
16.30	Evensong as announced

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**WEDNESDAY**

10.00	Holy Communion
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**BAPTISMS, WEDDINGS and FUNERALS**

By arrangement via the Church Office



# BOLTON ABBEY

## SPRING ON THE ESTATE



**Easter Trail**  
5 - 21 April



**Match the Hatch**  
5 April



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3 May - 28 September



**Dawn Chorus**  
17 May



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**From Revd Nicholas Mercer**

Writing this message in January, I can view the snow-covered fields outside my study window along with glorious clear skies. It is a very beautiful sight, and I love to see the snow on Ilkley Moor, particularly when bathed in bright winter sunshine. Glory be to God.

However, whilst we are battling the cold in the United Kingdom, on the other side of the Atlantic, they are battling another kind of weather and that is the extreme weather which has led to the wildfires which are currently raging in California. As I write, there are over ninety-eight fires which, so far, have destroyed over twelve thousand buildings and thirty-six thousand acres of land. Many of those affected are extremely wealthy and, as one commentator remarked, these people 'have gone from being A list celebrities to climate change refugees'.

Extreme weather affects us all and we are all in the grip of a climate emergency. When I arrived at Bolton Priory in 2019, I articulated one of our marks of mission as being 'stewardship of God's creation'. I am delighted to report that, in January 2025, Bolton Priory became the 67th church in England and Wales to become a Gold Eco Church. This award was given by the Christian conservation charity, A Rocha UK, and reflects our commitment to 'walk in step with nature and put creation care at the heart of what we do'. With over 4,000 Eco Churches, the gold award is a prestigious and impressive achievement.

At the heart of all this is our duty as Christians to look after God's creation. It is so beautiful and precious, as evidenced by the view from my study window. However, we cannot go on raping the earth and poisoning the world entrusted to us by God. Like everything else in creation, we must look after it. If we don't, we too might be the next climate change refugees.

*Nicholas*



# CONGRATULATIONS TO THE PRIORY CHURCH OF ST MARY AND ST CUTHBERT, BOLTON ABBEY: YOU HAVE BEEN AWARDED AN ECO CHURCH GOLD AWARD

## **The Eco Church Team wrote:**

Well done to everyone who has worked so hard to reach this milestone. From everyone at A Rocha UK, thank you. Thank you for becoming a beacon for saving nature. Thank you for joining A Rocha's UK's Eco Church movement caring for God's creation. Nature is crying out. Thank you for answering the missional call for creation. Thank you on behalf of the insects that are now buzzing, the birds that are singing, and the plants that are springing into life.

Working together, we'll see our environment thrive and flourish for God's glory.

## **The Rector wrote:**

This is a fantastic achievement by Elaine Lambert and her team, and we number among a very few churches in the country to achieve this standard. We are a church committed to stewardship of God's creation, and this could not be a greater accolade. Very well done indeed.

## **The Press Release stated:**

67th Gold Eco Church Award Milestone Achieved by The Priory Church of St Mary and St Cuthbert, Bolton Abbey

*The Priory Church of St Mary and St Cuthbert, Bolton Abbey* has become the 67th Gold Eco Church in England and Wales. The award was given by the Christian conservation charity A Rocha UK, and reflects Bolton Priory's commitment to walk in step with nature and put creation care at the heart of what they do. With over 4,000 Eco Churches awarded, the gold award is a prestigious and impressive achievement.

*The Priory Church*, as part of the Abbey's estate, has a wonderful opportunity to share the eco message with its thousands of visitors each year. They have made a big effort and have plans for more ways to do this, including a leaflet and information boards outside, outlining heritage points of interest and identifying species. The Family Service, 'Liquid Worship' is another great way they explore creation care, especially with the younger members of the congregation. Fairtrade and locally produced items are available for sale at the Church, and the heating system for this Grade I listed building has been upgraded.

A Rocha UK aims to equip churches and individuals to create a movement to help restore biodiversity at a local level in this critical decade for the climate. Now, in its ninth year, the 'Eco Church' award scheme brings together a national community of churches addressing the environmental crisis, using a common framework and an online toolkit to learn and speak up together. The first Eco Church award was given to Hilfield Friary, Dorchester back in June 2016. There are now over 8,000 churches registered with Eco Church - over 18% of churches in England and Wales. By 2025, A Rocha UK aims to engage at least 25%, or 10,000 churches, in ongoing efforts to protect nature and address climate change through their free programme.

Helen Stephens, Church Relations Manager, commented: 'Our huge congratulations to The Priory Church at Bolton Abbey on their well-deserved gold Eco Church award. Becoming a gold Eco Church is not an easy journey, and they are an example of the dedication and perseverance that is required to reach this accolade. We hope that by remaining focussed on the biblical mandate to care for God's creation and love your neighbour, other churches will join them in taking action to care for this amazing world. We wish them all the best as they celebrate their award.'



*Fitting bird boxes 2020*



*Additional bird box fitted 2021*



*Land where Calor tank was situated and now removed to create a small wildflower bank and seating.*



*Tree Planting with Junior church team and Devonshire estates forestry management 2020*



*Army Cadet Volunteers at work*



## RECTOR DELIVERS AI SERMON AT BOLTON ABBEY

In what is believed to be a first, the Rector delivered a sermon generated by Artificial Intelligence using ChatGPT on Sunday 12th January 2025. The Rector was discussing ChatGPT with his children over Christmas when he asked them whether the App could write a sermon? As this was clearly possible, he asked the App, through his children, to write a 500-word sermon on 'The Baptism of Christ in the style of Cardinal John Henry Newman' and, within seconds, the sermon had been written. The sermon was delivered on Sunday 12th January at the main service of Holy Communion at Bolton Priory. The Rector did not attempt to pass the sermon off as his own and made it clear that the sermon had been written by AI. He then went on to ask what benefits AI might bring to the church in the future? He noted that AI had the ability to learn, understand and exceed human intelligence. Furthermore, it can draw on far more source material than any human being and that this could mark an exciting new chapter for theology and the Church itself. He pointed out that AI can also be used creatively and is already in use as a diagnostic tool. He asked, if AI can diagnose what is wrong with the human body, then why not the soul? Amusingly, he then read out what AI had produced when asked to write the same sermon in the style of Karl Marx. He ended by saying that, in future, clergy might start their sermons by saying: 'May AI speak in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost'. This marks an extraordinary milestone in the long and often turbulent history of Bolton Priory. The sermon can be watched on-line at <https://www.boltonpriory.org.uk/>



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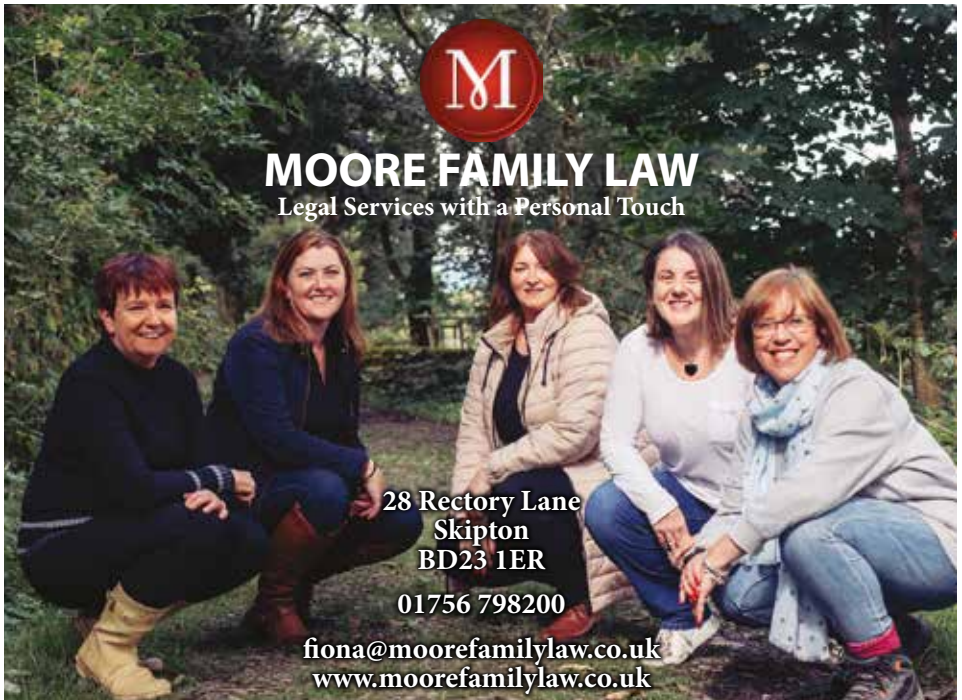
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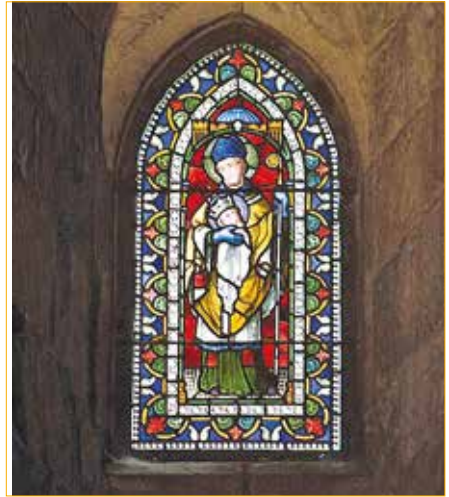


## ROAMING THE NORTH WITH ST. CUTHBERT



A person from Draughton whose walks sometimes bring him into the Priory remarked that the building speaks with an intense and mysterious presence, but, he added, so much more is disclosed to those who take time to seek out its hidden treasures. One such treasure is the small window, in the northwest corner of the Priory, set high above the Choir Vestry. This window was donated by the 7th Duke of Devonshire, in 1885, a final gift as his 20-year restoration of the Priory, under the supervision of the leading London architect, George Street, reached its triumphant conclusion.

This window represents St. Cuthbert, the great saint of the North, who lived, taught and prayed amongst a people in transition, people whose Christian faith was still mixed with inherited pagan customs and values. Cuthbert is depicted as a bishop with mitre and crozier, and he tenderly cradles the head of the Christian martyr, Oswald, King of Northumbria, who was killed in battle against the pagan king Penda in 642. According to legend, King Oswald's body was dismembered after the battle and parts sacrificed to the Anglo-Saxon god Woden, but the head was saved and ultimately placed in St Cuthbert's coffin, sometime after the saint's death which occurred on March 20th 687. In 875, Viking raids forced monks to flee their Lindisfarne home, taking St. Cuthbert's body and Oswald's head with them. Today, St. Cuthbert and Oswald, who in life never met, share a tomb immediately behind the high altar in the church founded in their honour, Durham Cathedral.



Cuthbert's story, originally written by an anonymous monk, and developed by the Venerable Bede, includes several animal stories. The best of them is the story of St. Cuthbert and the otters.

‘When he came up out of the sea, he prayed, bending his knees on the sandy part of the shore, and immediately two little sea animals followed in his



footsteps, humbly prostrating themselves on the earth, licking his feet, rolling upon them, wiping them with their skins, and warming them with their breath. After completing this service and ministry, they received his blessing and departed to their familiar place in the waves of the sea. But the man of God returned home at cockcrow, to join in communal prayer with the brothers in the church of God.’

This story was clearly written by someone who knew how otters behave. The crouching of the animals and their gambolling are interpreted by the writer as humility and kindness. The detail is naturalistic and delightful. Here is a parable for our times, as we become more acutely aware of just how critical our relationship with the natural world truly is.



Cuthbert was born around the year 640, probably in the lowlands of Scotland. As a young boy he profoundly experienced the presence of God and resolved to dedicate his life to God’s service. He was admitted as a novice

monk to Melrose Abbey, and eventually moved to Lindisfarne, where he became abbot and though reluctant for high office, he was consecrated bishop in 685. Cuthbert travelled tirelessly around his diocese, walking and preaching, but also retreating to live as a hermit on a rocky island near Lindisfarne for times of solitude and prayer.



As may happen, Cuthbert found that life in a religious community could be very difficult, riven by conflict. Some of the monks stuck fast by their Celtic way of life and rejected the Roman tradition. Cuthbert was called to bring change to a very entrenched group of recalcitrant monks, who deeply resented everything he was doing. Cuthbert sought to overcome these difficulties by patience and forbearance. But at chapter meetings he

was sometimes worn down by bitter insults, and would put an end to bitter arguments, simply by rising and walking out, calm and unruffled. The next day he would give the people the same admonitions, as though there had been no unpleasantness. In this way he gradually won their obedience. Though inwardly disturbed by the monks' recalcitrance, he managed to keep a cheerful face.

Perhaps this Lent, as we commemorate St. Cuthbert on his Feast Day, March 20th, he will encourage us to seek a little more solitude and stillness; or help us search out and find loving and patient ways to resolve conflict; or, above all, invite us to spend more time with God in prayer.

*Joyce Simpson*

### **Cuddy**

'Cuthbertus' says the dark stone up in Durham  
Where I have come on pilgrimage to pray.  
But not this great cathedral, nor the solemn  
Weight of Norman masonry we lay  
Upon your bones could hold your soul in prison.  
Free as the cuddy ducks they named for you,  
Loosed by the lord who died to pay your ransom,  
You roam the North just as you used to do;  
Always on foot and walking with the poor,  
Breaking the bread of angels in your cave,  
A sanctuary, a sign, an open door,  
You follow Christ through keening wind and wave,  
To be and bear with him where all is borne;  
The heart of heaven, in your Inner Farne.

*Malcolm Guite, The Singing Bowl.*





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## THE COMING

And God held in his hand  
A small globe. Look he said.  
The son looked. Far off,  
As through water, he saw  
A scorched land of fierce  
Colour. The light burned  
There; crusted buildings  
Cast their shadows: a bright  
Serpent, a river  
Uncoiled itself, radiant  
With slime.

On a bare  
Hill a bare tree saddened  
The sky. Many people  
Held out their thin arms  
To it, as though waiting  
For a vanished April  
To return to its crossed  
Boughs. The son watched  
Them. Let me go there, he said.

*R.S. Thomas*

I expect you remember that photograph taken by the crew of Apollo 17, known as The Blue Marble, our globe from space, how it lifted a curtain into the mystery of who and what we are, our place in the universe; this poem too lifts the curtain and gives a glimpse of who we are in God's Providence. In frugal language, in a homely idiom, this poem points towards the mystery addressed in the opening chapter of St. John's Gospel: 'what was in the beginning?'

Thomas takes the long view, not in time, but through space: he uses the panning technique of a film. Just as Julian of Norwich once saw all that is created as no bigger than a hazelnut held in the palm of her hand, so God holds 'in his hand a small globe'. A landscape comes into focus; what we see is disturbing, but still held within God's Providence. The poem offers a glimpse of Incarnation from the intimate, willing, and loving obedience of a son. The Father and Son look together 'far off, /As through water' at a broken earthly landscape, and this God's eye-view moves towards a particular place and time.

As the Son responds to the command, 'Look!', stark images evoke a harsh and blistered landscape, with hints of the Holy Land, but also a more universal image of ecological disaster. The river is no place of Baptism, nor is it Revelation's vision of a 'pure river of water of life, clear as crystal'; here the river is polluted, a death-dealing slime. The world is deeply troubled, seduced by destructive glitter; the word 'serpent' reminding us of Adam



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and Eve's seduction in Eden. In a world that includes both the atomic bomb and radiation therapy, 'radiant' precisely places the ambiguity of human endeavour, uneasily poised between healing and destructive powers, unable to evade the shadow side of human nature. Each line intensifies the images of suffering and pain that the Son beholds as he responds to the command, 'Look!' The river, far from being a source of life, is a source of death.

The second stanza leads towards the Son's response to what the Father has asked him to see. After taking in the full view of human suffering, every image of desolation reaches its climax on 'a bare hill' with 'its crossed Boughs', a proleptic hint of the tree of execution. The Son does not look away; he chooses his commission; he says 'yes' to a world where Paradise has been thoroughly lost. Finally, he responds, 'Let me go there, he said.' Christ comes knowingly into a deeply troubled world. The poem invites us to consider the Incarnation as a different kind of watching: God as Father and as Son watching and looking deeply into human suffering; the Coming as a choice freely made, and with unimaginable love.

By linking the beginning of the Son's journey through time to his death, to Calvary, Thomas draws attention to the fusion of love and obedience in the Incarnation and offers a strangely different angle from which to ponder the meaning of Christ's coming. 'Let me go there': the poem's affirmative close is hard-won.

In the life of faith, what we most long for may still elude us: for desire, not arrival, is the heartbeat of faith. We journey with hints and guesses. As we move once again through the liturgies of Holy Week towards Easter, we seek to enter more deeply the mystery of God. May our seeking slowly transform us by the at-one-ment that God's articulate silence offers. May our hearts and minds be prepared to meet Him in a joyful Eastertide.

*Joyce Simpson*



**Micah 4:1**

But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and people shall flow unto it.

*Photo by Adrian Hendley*



## THE BRONTËS AND BOLTON ABBEY

I am sure we are all familiar with the extraordinary lives and talents of the Brontë family who made their home at Haworth Parsonage when Patrick Brontë became the minister of Haworth Parish Church in 1820.

During the summer of 1833, a good fourteen years before his daughters found fame with the publication of *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights* and *Agnes Grey*, Charlotte, Emily, Anne, with their brother Branwell, decided to club together and pay for a conveyance for a day trip to Bolton Abbey.

Ellen Nussey, Charlotte's dearest friend, was staying with the Brontë family at the time and decided to join the Brontë children on their excursion.

Thankfully, there is a brief description of the visit included in Ellen Nussey's *Reminiscences* and tells how they set off from the parsonage at between five and six in the morning. 'Branwell seemed to know every inch of the way and could tell the names of the hills that would be driven or walked over'.

According to the Brontë biographer, Juliet Barker, the only pall on the occasion was the mortification which the Brontës felt when their 'shabby-looking conveyance' was regarded with disdain by the hotel attendants at the Devonshire Arms where they breakfasted. No doubt this was not helped by Ellen's family arriving in a 'handsome carriage-and-pair' to take her home!

However, the two parties apparently had a very pleasant and enjoyable walk through the abbey grounds.

It is interesting to note that after the death of Patrick Brontë, who outlived all his family, many of the family's possessions were sold at an auction at the parsonage in 1861. According to the Bill of Sale, the items included two oil paintings in frames, one of Bolton Abbey and one of Kirkstall Abbey.

Over the years, many Brontë possessions have returned to the Brontë Parsonage Museum, and I was intrigued to know whether their painting of Bolton Abbey survived.

In December last year I contacted the museum and liaised with the curator, Sarah Laycock. She confirmed that the museum does possess a picture of Bolton Abbey that the Brontës owned. However, it was not an oil painting, but a pencil sketch actually drawn by Charlotte. It is believed that she copied this directly from the oil painting which is almost identical to J.M.W Turner's painting of Bolton Abbey now with the British Museum.

Sarah Laycock asked if I would like to attend the museum to view the picture, and without any hesitation my hearty reply was ‘Oh yes, please!’

And there was a nice surprise in store upon my arrival. Sarah had also retrieved the Brontë family *Books of Common Prayer*, which included Emily’s, a present from Charlotte, and Parick’s, complete with annotations. I have included some photographs that I took that day.

One further connection between the Brontës and Bolton Abbey occurred in the late 1850s, after Charlotte had died. One of the ‘select few’ who were granted the privilege of an interview with Patrick was the Duke of Devonshire, who stopped for about an hour at the parsonage and invited Patrick and his assistant curate, Arthur Nicholls (Charlotte’s husband) to visit him at Bolton Abbey.

It goes without saying that it was a wonderful privilege to be able to view and handle such precious items at the museum and my sincere thanks go to the curator, Sarah Laycock.

(Quoted source: Juliet Barker, *The Brontës*, Orion Books Ltd., 1995.)

*Tony Cantlow*



*With Parsonage Curator Sarah Laycock*



*Charlotte’s sketch*



*The family Prayer Books*



*Emily’s Prayer book*

## ST. CUTHBERT'S LECTURE

**Saturday, 29 March in Bolton Priory at 4.00pm**  
**THE REVEREND PROFESSOR MARTYN PERCY**

### **The Future of the Church of England - Home-Thoughts from Abroad**

Martyn Percy is Professor of Religion and Culture at the University of St. Joseph Macao and Provost Theologian at Ming Hua College, Hong Kong. He is a Research Professor at the Institut für Christkatholische Theologie, Theologische Fakultät, Universität Bern (CH/Switzerland), and Senior Research Associate at the James Hutton Institute in Aberdeen, Scotland.

Martyn's work spans various disciplines, including theology, religion, education, cultural theory, anthropology, and sociology. His work in contextual theology and ecclesiology delves into denominational performance, policies, practices, and theologies. He pays particular attention to the identity and development of churches in the 21st century. He has taught at Oxford's Saïd Business School, working on moral and social values in public life. Previously Martyn was Principal of Cuddesdon (Oxford) from 2004-2014 and then served as Dean of Christ Church Oxford (i.e., the Head of the College and Cathedral) until 2022, and at Virginia Theological Seminary (2022-24).

With the Faculty of Theology (USJ) and its Xavier Centre for Memory and Identity, he undertakes PhD supervision for Southeast and East Asian students, working in research on ecclesiology and ecumenism. At the James Hutton Institute, his work focuses on religious responses to climate change, ecology, sustainability, and local and global challenges of the 21st century. In addition to his scholarly output, he also writes, preaches, and teaches on Christian spirituality. His sermons and meditations are published globally (several volumes with the Canterbury Press), and his homilies and reflections have appeared in the UK secular press for over thirty years. He also contributes to *Prospect Magazine*, *The Guardian*, and *The Times*.

Martyn's professional contributions extend well beyond academia. He has held numerous roles in public life, demonstrating his ability to contribute to a variety of spheres. These roles include Director of the Advertising Standards Authority, Adjudicator for the Portman Group (the self-regulating body for the alcoholic drinks industry), Commissioner of the Direct Marketing Authority, and Advisor to the British Board of Film Classification. His diverse expertise is further demonstrated by his role as a Home Office-approved advisor for ethical screening in research science, Chair of the University of Oxford's Committee for Reviewing Donors (2017-2021), and Panel Assessor for Social Services in adoption and fostering. Martyn holds a unique distinction in the theological world, as the only living theologian featured in Dan Brown's 2003 bestseller *The Da Vinci Code*. This intriguing fact and other notable achievements led the journal *Theology* to describe him as 'the British Theologian closest to being a missionary anthropologist'. His writings have been the subject of an academic study, *Reasonable Radical: Reading the Writings of Martyn Percy* (Pickwick Publishing, USA; edited by Ian Markham & Joshua Daniels, 2016). His book *The Crisis of Colonial Anglicanism: Empire, Slavery and Revolt in the Church of England* was published by Hurst in January 2025.



**MARCH**

**02 SUNDAY**

09.15

**QUINQUAGESIMA**

Liquid Family Service

04 Tuesday

Shrove Tuesday

05 Wednesday

**Ash Wednesday**

10.00

Holy Communion with Imposition of Ashes

**09 SUNDAY**

**LENT 1**

**16 SUNDAY**

**LENT 2**

**17-19th MARCH**

Lent Retreat, Boarbank Hall

**23 SUNDAY**

**LENT 3**

29 Saturday

4.00

**St Cuthbert's Lecture**

**Reverend Professor Martyn Percy**

**30 SUNDAY**

**LENT 4: MOTHERING SUNDAY**

**APRIL**

**05 SATURDAY**

12.00 noon

**Marriage of Matthew Kenny and Moira Adiotomre**

**06 SUNDAY**

**LENT 5: PASSION SUNDAY**

09.15

Liquid Family Worship

10.30

Sung Eucharist

4.30

Cross of Christ

**13 SUNDAY**

**LENT 6: PALM SUNDAY**

10.30

All Ages Palm Sunday Service

17 Thursday

**Maundy Thursday**

19.00

Eucharist of the Last Supper with Foot Washing and Vigil

18 Friday

**Good Friday**

10.00

Children's Service followed by hot cross buns in the Boyle Room

12.00

Three Hours' Devotion

**20 SUNDAY**

**EASTER DAY**

8.00

**Holy Communion**

10.30

Festal Eucharist

**27 SUNDAY**

**EASTER 2**

**MAY**

**04 SUNDAY**

**EASTER 3**

09.15

Liquid Family Worship

**10 SATURDAY**

**Marriage of Harry Ogilive and Georgina Moss**

**11 SUNDAY**

**EASTER 4**



### **Easter Lilies**

People will be in the Tower on March 31st, April 7th and April 14th before and after the 10.30 service to take names and donations for the Easter Lilies in memory of those departed.

### **Giving Envelopes**

The giving envelopes, starting in April, will be available in the Tower in March. Please pick yours up. If you no longer contribute by this method, please just cross your name out and give the box to the sidesman.

## **FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS**

### **HOLY BAPTISM**

15 December Romilly Esther Holmes

### **MARRIAGE SERVICE**

14 December Christopher Bean and Charlotte Henderson

### **FUNERAL SERVICE**

13 December Heather Collinson

16 December Brian Haggas (Memorial Service)

## **BOLTON PRIORY: SPRING CONCERTS**

### **Sunday 13th April at 7.30pm Kantos Chamber Choir**

On the evening of Palm Sunday we shall welcome the Kantos Chamber Choir, a group of young singers setting out on their professional careers. The choir was founded in 2015 by Elspeth Slorach, who had just graduated from the University of Manchester, and had conducted the university's chamber choir whilst still a student there. The Kantos Chamber Choir has demonstrated a strong adventurous spirit in tackling innovative repertoire. The group performs sacred music regularly on the BBC, in Manchester, and on tour in the North of England. Its repertoire also includes concerts of music associated with the beginnings of the Suffragette movement. Come and be introduced to a group of singers for whom the future is bright!

### **Saturday 10th May at 1.30pm Bolton Happy Voices**

This is a community choir based in Bolton. The choir was founded in 2017 by Helen Washington, the Musical Director, who wanted to share her love of Musical Theatre, and from small beginnings the choir has expanded to over eighty members. The Choir sings popular songs from the shows in 2,3, and 4-part harmony, and has raised a great deal of money for charity, especially for hospices. Come along and be entertained!

## FROM THE NILE TO WHARFEDALE: EGYPTIAN SYMBOLOGY IN GOTHIC STAINED GLASS

HERE IS AN INTRIGUING NEW THEORY PUT FORWARD BY A VISITOR:

My research into ancient symbology sometimes takes me to Gothic buildings in the UK, seeking evidence of symbols that trace their origins to ancient Egypt. During a visit to Yorkshire last year, I returned to Bolton Priory, a place I hold in great affection since I sang there in the 1980s with the Ilkley Grammar School choir. I was curious to see whether any Egyptian symbology might be found at Bolton Priory.

My research suggests that Gothic architecture may serve as a kind of ark, preserving elements of a lost canon of art and design that survived intact through the Dark Ages.

During the Dissolution of the Monasteries, we can only imagine the grief of the local community as the bells of Bolton Priory rang out for the last time across Wharfedale.

A thousand years before the partial destruction of Bolton Priory, priests in Upper Egypt must have experienced similar emotions when Roman Emperor Justinian I ordered the closure of Egypt's last remaining temples in 529 AD, extinguishing a spiritual tradition that had thrived for over 3,500 years. The temples fell into disrepair, and the sacred symbology of ancient Egypt seemed to vanish. Or did it?

Through my research I am finding that certain Egyptian symbology in the form of geometric designs - used in their correct context - can be found in Gothic architecture and design.

At Bolton Priory a significant section of the building survived, including the nave and rare fragments of 14th century-stained glass in the three north wall windows. The lower elements contain Victorian Neo-Gothic stained glass, while fragments of original 14th-century glass survive in the tracery lights at the top of the windows.



Image 1 - Victorian stained-glass  
(lower section)

The first symbol to catch my eye in the Neo-Gothic stained-glass section of the window next to the organ is a symbol in the form of a golden circle with a dot at its centre. This is exactly the same symbol as the ancient Egyptian hieroglyph for Ra, the Sun god, or as it was understood by Egyptians, the principle of solar energy, the radiant source of all life on Earth. (Image 1)

This symbol appears in the word "Ra" as written in hieroglyphs:



'Ra' (the sun god)

In Egyptian philosophy 'Ra' forms part of the holy trinity of Amun-Ra-Ptah in which Amun is the principle of cosmic consciousness, Ra represents the principle

of light as pure cosmic energy and Ptah is energy formed into matter.



*Image 2 - Original 14th century stained-glass  
Organ upper left design;  
photo courtesy of Adrian Hendley.*

My gaze was then drawn upwards to the 14th-century stained glass, where a central circular design is flanked by red and golden designs on the left and right, as shown in Image 2.

Towards the upper right of this window, there is a round golden symbol with a central point and five petals. Implied within this design is a pentagram, symbolising the mystical fifth element, or 'quintessence', which represents the essence of life itself. Pentagonal symbology appears extensively in ancient Egypt, explicitly in five-pointed stars and implicitly concealed within artistic designs and jewellery. The

use of gold in this motif aligns with its meaning as the supreme symbol of life, connected to the solar masculine aspect.

The circular red glass design in the lower left, known as the Seed of Life, is an ancient symbol of genesis, the interconnectedness of all things, and the cycles of creation. This symbol consists of a central point or circle surrounded by six circles, which conceal a hexagram. Hexagonal symbology also features prominently in ancient Egyptian art and design.



*'Birth' written in Egyptian hieroglyphs*

The symbolic association of blood red with birth and the feminine aspect is evident.

Interestingly the word 'birth' in Egyptian includes a hieroglyph (shown on the left) consisting of six emanations from a central point:

What's intriguing is the interplay between 5 and 6—the pentagram and the hexagram—is commonly found in Egyptian art. At Bolton Priory, we see it expressed through the five- and six-pointed designs flanking the central circle.

Another fascinating detail is the 'Green Man' in the ceiling of Bolton Priory, painted in red and gold. While this could be pure coincidence, the connection is intriguing.

The stained glass at Bolton Priory indeed reveals designs that correspond to ancient Egyptian symbols associated with the Sun, birth, and life. Furthermore, the colours used by the artisan enhance the likelihood of a conscious connection with ancient symbology.

Are these 'universal' patterns that are likely to emerge naturally in geometric designs, or were they chosen with a conscious awareness of their ancient meanings? While conclusive proof remains elusive, the stained glass offers mystery and a tantalising hint of possibility, captured in glass and light.

*Robert Hutchinson*

Born and raised in Ilkley, Robert Hutchinson is a personal and executive coach who works with the Enneagram map of human personality patterns. He also researches the ancient Egyptian symbology. He can be contacted by email [robert@authenticlifecompany.com](mailto:robert@authenticlifecompany.com) or via the website: [www.authenticlifecompany.com](http://www.authenticlifecompany.com).



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### **Alan Titchmarsh CBE**

Tuesday 29th April 2025 – 7pm for 7.30pm

The Tithe Barn, Bolton Abbey, BD23 6EX

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**SATURDAY 7th JUNE AT 7.30PM**

**THE YORK WAITS: PILGRIMAGE – ‘AS I WENT TO WALSINGHAM’**

The York Waits take their name from the ancient city band of York, the earliest evidence for which is in 14th century records. Today's York Waits have revived the band as it was in its heyday in the 16th century, playing a wide repertoire of European music as well as their own arrangements of popular dance and ballad tunes.

‘As I went to Walsingham’ is based on the ballad of the same name which tells the story of a lady pilgrim who rejects the suit of a palmer (not for the first time). This programme sets sacred works by Tallis, Campion and Wilder against secular songs and lively dances of the period, including Kemp's jig. Of course, Will Kemp's own journey from London to Norwich was motivated in large part by the need to fill his purse!

**SATURDAY 28th JUNE AT 7.30PM**

**THE MARIAN CONSORT – EARLY ENGLISH CHORAL PIECES AND WORKS BY HILDEGARD OF BINGEN**

The Marian Consort is a vocal ensemble led by founder and director, Rory McCleery, that presents bold and thrilling performances across the UK, Europe and North America. The group is composed of the very best singers in a flexible, intimate ensemble, allowing clarity of texture and subtlety of interpretation to illuminate the music. TMC features regularly on BBC Radio 3 and has released recordings to critical acclaim. Their work was praised in *The Times* for ‘precision and pellucid textures’.

**SATURDAY 12th JULY AT 7.30PM**

**THE WHARFEDALE CHAMBER ENSEMBLE – ALBINONI OBOE CONCERTO AND THE ROMANTICS**

This string orchestra, founded in 2012, is made up of Yorkshire musicians conducted by Ben Crick, the artistic director. The concert programme builds on the success of the Ensemble's first concert at Bolton Priory in the summer of 2023. A highlight of the programme will be the Oboe Concerto in D Minor Opus 9, with its achingly beautiful Adagio.

**SATURDAY 6th SEPTEMBER AT 7.30PM**  
**PINSUTI – PILGRIMAGE – PATH OF MIRACLES,**  
**TALBOT 2005.**

Pinsuti is a chamber choir of about 25 singers, based in Yorkshire, taking their name from the little-known Victorian composer Ciro Pinsuti. Sacred and secular unaccompanied music forms the core repertoire. *Path of Miracles*, for a cappella choir, by Joby Talbot, was commissioned by Tenebrae and premiered in 2005. The work is inspired by the great Pilgrimage to Santiago. The four movements of *Path of Miracles* are titled with the names of the four main staging posts of the 'Camino Frances': I Roncesvalles; II Burgos; III Leon; IV Santiago.

**TICKETS FOR EACH OF THE CONCERTS: £18 PER PERSON,**  
**TO INCLUDE A GLASS OF WINE /SOFT DRINK**

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### WHAT OUR VISITORS SAY

- Calming and beautiful. Thanks for sharing it with us.
- Many memories here where I was christened and lots of relatives in the churchyard.
- Thank you for loving the past.
- A serene and special place we remember from 40 years ago. Listen to the sound of silence.
- Hermoso lugar. (*Beautiful place – Spanish*)
- God Jul. (*Happy Christmas – Swedish*)
- What an incredible start to the New Year.
- A joy to visit my childhood again. Thank you.
- Absolutely beautiful church – an honour to be able to visit.
- Childhood memories of picnics and stepping stones!
- A returning son of Yorkshire to this peaceful and joyful church.
- Everyone needs to see this peaceful place...
- The stillness of this space is beautiful.
- What a truly inspiring place of history and faith.
- Thanks for the lovely history chat.
- Breath-taking architecture! With love and gratitude from Ukraine.
- Lovely. Thank you for your efforts to preserve.
- I've never been anywhere as old as this. (Dalton from Arizona)

In December and January, we had visitors from Australia, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Germany, India, Jamaica, Japan, Lithuania, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, UAE, Ukraine, and USA.

In December we had 4,508 visitors and in January 2,646. Last year we had visitors from all over the British Isles and from 71 other countries. Have a look at the list on the table with the visitors' book. How do they know where Bolton Abbey is?

*Liz Higgins*

## A MYSTERIOUS LIFE



On the 24th August 1836 a lone woman made her way to the Rectory at Bolton Priory where she had an appointment with the Rev. William Carr. Henrietta Vallé Asseretti was aged 49 and employed as a governess by Thomas Mason of Copt Hewick, Sharow, near Ripon. She had no family, few friends, and may have had intimations of mortality, for William Carr was about to draw up her will.

William, a bachelor, was the incumbent of Bolton Priory from 1789-1843 and a member of a clergy family prominent in the valley, his father, grandfather and great-grandfather having all served at Bolton. William's sister, Dorothy, married the Rev. William Crofts, and after their deaths, William Carr took their two daughters, Mary and Henrietta Crofts, into his care, their elder brother, Henry, becoming the Vicar of Linton and Grassington. Mary Crofts would eventually become the mother-in-law of Edward White Benson, Archbishop of Canterbury.

Henrietta's will, which was witnessed by Henrietta Crofts, was largely a simple affair. A pearl locket to a previous 'charge', and a 'chain of hair' from another pupil, now dead, to the dead girl's sister. Her Bible she left to a childhood friend who, unknown to Henrietta, had predeceased her. Her godchild, the daughter of Thomas Mason's butler, received a silver pencil case, the butler a flute which had belonged to her own father. She also made two further bequests. To the Rev. Andrew Gilmour she left all the funds remaining after her death and interment, together with 'a small brooch on which are wrought the initials "A.G." in diamonds'. Andrew, the minister of a church at Greenock in Scotland, is known to have worked in England at some time. He never married. Henrietta's employer, Thomas Mason, whom she appointed executor, was asked 'to preserve my father's walking stick'.

We know only a little about Henrietta. The daughter of a 'gentleman', she was baptised in 1787 at a Catholic mission church in Leeds. As a governess she is known to have worked in the vicinity of Doncaster, Halifax and Bingley before going to Copt Hewick. While working at the latter it is possible that she became acquainted with the Sidgwick family of Embsay, who during the summer months lived with Mrs. Sidgwick's parents at Birstwith, some ten miles from Sharow. In 1839 they employed as their 'temporary' governess, Charlotte Brontë, and she accompanied the family to Birstwith.

At Copt Hewick in 1842 Henrietta died of 'apoplexy', perhaps a stroke or merely a description for an otherwise unexplained death. She was buried in the churchyard at Wath near Ripon beneath a stone which bears only her name and dates. But why had she been at Bolton Priory in 1836? Perhaps she was staying with the Sidgwicks at Embsay; was she also a 'temporary' governess? Had she met Charlotte at Birstwith? Sadly, we may never know, and even more sadly, we will probably never know the story behind the diamond brooch.



*Diana Parsons*

Draws from research undertaken for a scholarly article Diana published in the Journal of the Brontë Society: Brontë Studies, Vol. 34 No. 1, March 2009, 67-75



## THREE QUEENS AND A CORONER'S REFLECTION



George VI unwillingly, partly because he was shy and suffered with a stammer, but very bravely remained with his people throughout the War. He was supported by his wife, Queen Elizabeth. The Royal family did not seek safety abroad. The King died of lung cancer, no doubt caused by his serious smoking habit, but perhaps also through the strains of the job, particularly in wartime. He probably was concerned too for his beloved daughter, Elizabeth, who would be thrust into a life of service, which it has been suggested, was

not what she may have wished for herself.

George VI was greatly admired and deeply mourned when he died in February 1952. A photograph taken at the time of his funeral is entitled, 'Three Queens'. It shows Queen Mary, the widow of King George V and the dead King's father; Queen Elizabeth, his widow, who came to be referred to as The Queen Mother and the new Queen Elizabeth II. On the photograph they are shown standing together on the platform waiting for the Royal train which would transport the King's body to Windsor for burial.

The three Queens are dressed in deep mourning with almost full-length veils. Such dress speaks of loss, despair, unrelieved grief and 'ending'. The picture depicts an ending, though George VI has never been forgotten.

At the end of many inquests with which I have been involved in my role as Coroner, there have been expressions of thanks for the process, for knowledge brings 'closure'. After such an ending can come both a new beginning and a sense of continuity, the possibility that sadness may be turned into hope. When negative thoughts about the deceased give way to a sense of the goodness of life and the continuation of love, then peace comes, and sometimes the simple trust that those we have lost have gone into the light.

That some ask for bright colours and flowers at their funeral is a rejection of darkness and an embrace of light. Such a choice also expresses hope for continuity.

I am amongst the minority that has enjoyed a happy life. I have experienced a close encounter with death after surgery. I have experienced close family bereavements, including the death of my father when my younger brother was but seven years old, and the effects of that upon him; the loss of a child in childbirth; the loss of a first great grandchild after a very short life. None of these experiences has altered my faith in God. There are members of my close family who might hesitate to declare faith in God, but they passionately believe in love, in caring and goodness.

*James Turnbull*



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Image: Mozart circa 1780,  
Posthumous painting by Barbara  
Krafft 1819 (Public domain)

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## **BOLTON ABBEY VILLAGE HALL AGM**

This will be held on Wednesday 23rd March at 4.30 pm in the village hall. Do come along and support our village hall. We have places for new committee members and if you are interested or you have anything you would like to discuss, please contact Barry.

Barry Cody, Chairman

01756 710587

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- May 2nd    Philip Randles
- June 6th    Alan's Band
- July 4th    Denis Westmorland
- Aug 1st    Silhouette Dance Band
- Sept 5th    Alan Cookson
- Oct 3rd    Elizabeth Harrison, Blackpool Tower Organist
- Nov 7th    Denis Westmorland

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## CECIL F. TOMLINSON MA CANTAB: RECTOR OF BOLTON PRIORY 1917-54



Only a few members of the parish and of the congregation now remember the Rev. Cecil Tomlinson, and his tenure as Rector across more than thirty years, including the periods that spanned two World Wars. One of them, a regular reader, Roger Nelson, who has lived in the hills above Bolton Abbey since 1947, has kept for many decades an old copy of *The Dalesman* from January 1944 which includes a poem by Parson Tomlinson, his short 'Ode to a Grouse'. This is of interest to the Nelson family because the poem presents the Revd

Tomlinson, roused from sleep, to 'sally forth from Norman's lair', and they recall the Rector staying on holiday with Roger Nelson's grandfather, Norman, at Hazlewood Moorside.

Like many of his Victorian predecessors, Cecil Tomlinson was a keen naturalist delighting in the rich bird life filling Wharfedale with early spring cries: 'the drumming snipe', the curlew, 'the golden plover's plaintive call', and the 'cackling chat' of the 'charming' red-pollled grouse. All these arouse a joy that draws from Tomlinson the prayer: 'Long may all your race exist!' It's almost as if he sensed the threats that a mechanised future held. We have challenges to face before a future Rector of Bolton Priory can spend a few post-Easter rest days enjoying such abundance of richly varied bird life on these Wharfedale hills.

### ODE TO A GROUSE

(Written by the Rector of Bolton Abbey during a short holiday on a moorland farm in April).

*Waking from a dreamless sleep, your eyes and ears still clouded o'er,  
Hear you not the warning cry: "Go back! the snow is on the moor."  
Sleep again! The morn is young! The snow is driving from the West,  
Sheep are huddled 'neath the wall, the lambskins curled in woolly nest.  
Look! The clouds are lifting up; the snow has ceased; but listen now!  
Shrill, melodious, whistling notes are wafted o'er the moorland brow!  
Rise! The curlew calls you out to join him in the bracing air;  
Eat your well-cooked ham and eggs, and sally forth from Norman's lair.  
Striding o'er God's boundless heath, I leap the beck, I climb the wall,  
Listening to the drumming snipe and golden plover's plaintive call.  
Spring has won the battle now, the snow has gone, the sunshine fills  
Valleys, waterfalls and rocks, refulgent on the moorland rills.  
Afternoon has sped its course, "Go back, go back, 'tis time for tea!"  
"Oh! you charming red-pollled grouse; You talking, moorland entity!  
Master-bird on all the moor! I love to hear your cackling chat!  
Long may all your race exist! To you I bow my head—baht 'at!"*

CECIL F. TOMLINSON.

In 1950, our Church Warden, Matt Hey, (aged 7) moved with his sister, Rosie (aged 4), and parents to the hamlet of Langbar under Beamsley Beacon. As a young lad Matt watched Old Tomlinson, as he was known, push his bike up the hill to visit the family. Revd Tomlinson loved Rosie, and Matt recalls how she shared a special secret with the visiting vicar. ‘Do you want to see a spider’s nest?’ she asked and took him behind the long curtain to discover a cocoon. The Rector also shared his treasures with the children, taking them through the Office into a living room in the Rectory where he had a large cabinet of birds’ eggs. He liked to show these to the children, and though this way of engaging with the natural world is long out of fashion, no doubt the conversation between the naturalist clergyman and two bright children helped build their love of the great outdoors. Matt remembers him as kindly in a formal way.

Another character was the road man, Charlie Garth, who would walk up the lane to Langbar digging out grates and gutters. He would stop at Matt’s house, have a cup of tea with Matt’s mother, go on to the top of the hill, and then, on his way down, stop again at Matt’s house for another cup of tea. In the terrible winter of 1947, and in later years, Charlie managed the snowplough pulled by a horse, to clear the roads.

Matt and Rosie attended Priory services together as children, and even if by the end they had had enough and just wanted to get outside, practical Matt was already keenly alert to what needed doing in the Priory. He noticed the puddles in the centre aisle and knew the roof needed fixing; he noted the lack of a roof on the tower and eyed up the challenge for a later decade. Looking back, he recalls: ‘We always had a good choir’. At a time when almost everyone walked to church, the country people came from miles around. The Priory was a strong community; people worked hard, but there were festivities, and Matt recalls enjoying garden parties at Deerstones in the grounds of a house belonging to a parishioner.

*Editor*





# On Easter morn to tomb they came

(A Hymn for Easter Sunday)

Joyce

Jonathan Dickson (b. 1949)




1 On Easter morn to tomb they came,  
(For Christ two days before was slain).

They find him gone, were sore afraid  
As stand two men in bright array,  
**Say: "Christ is risen on this day!"**

2 The men asked why they search the dead,  
For Jesus rises from the grave  
In Galilee as he had said.

And they recalled his words so brave:  
**That Christ is risen on this day!**



**THE PRIORY CHURCH, BOLTON ABBEY**  
**EASTER SERVICES**  
**2025**

**Palm Sunday**

**13th April**

8.00 am Holy Communion

10.30 am Family Service with Donkey

**Maundy Thursday**

**17th April**

7.00 pm Eucharist of the Last Supper with  
Foot washing, and the Vigil until 9 pm

**Good Friday**

**18th April**

10.00 am Children's Service and  
Hot Cross Buns

12 noon Three Hours' Devotion, including  
the Liturgy of Good Friday

**Easter Day**

**20th April**

8.00 am Holy Communion

10.30 am Festal Eucharist

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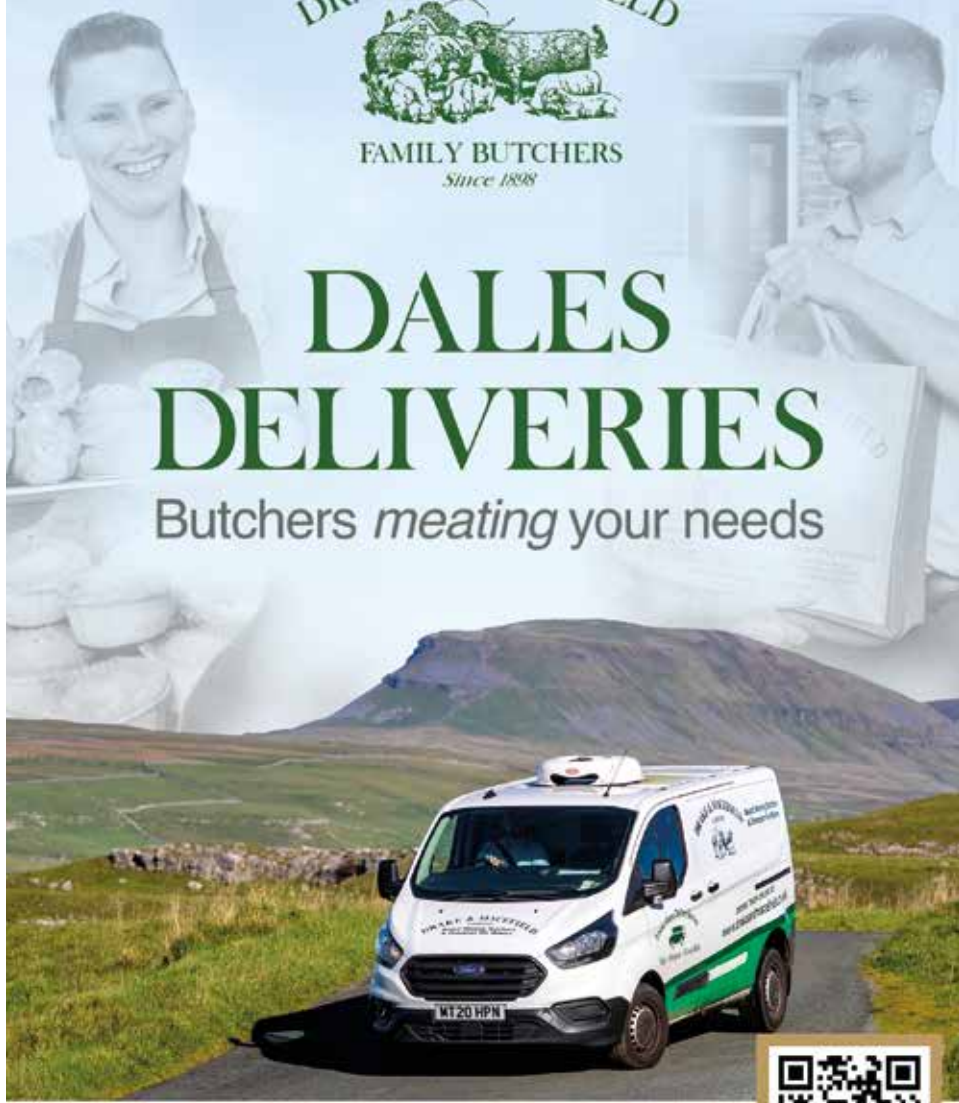
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## DRAMA AND OPTIMISM FROM SETTLE ORCHESTRA

Settle Orchestra's 2024-25 season continues with concerts in Settle (22 March) and Settle (29 March) under our dynamic new conductor Harry Lai. Both concerts will start at 3.30 pm, an earlier start time which is proving popular with audiences.

This term's programme explores the dramatic power of music. As well as perennial favourites of the symphonic repertoire – Sibelius' stirring *Finlandia* and Tchaikovsky's *Fifth Symphony*, with its moving progression from dark pessimism to triumphant optimism – the programme contains a work less familiar to British audiences, the tone-poem *The Noonday Witch*, by the Czech composer Antonín Dvořák. This is based on a chilling story about a mother who threatens her unruly child with a visit from the witch, only to find her threat comes true. Dvořák's masterly score brings this disturbing story to vivid life.

Looking further ahead, our summer concerts (21 and 28 June) will be free thanks to a generous legacy from Dorothy Wrathall, a former member of the orchestra. Ewan Hudson, a regular member of our horn section and one of the younger players in the orchestra, will be the soloist in Weber's breathtaking *Concertino*.

We always aim to keep our ticket prices affordable, but recognising that affordability isn't the same for everyone we have introduced a Buy One Donate One scheme whereby you can donate the cost of a ticket, and we will ensure that somebody less able to afford the full cost of a ticket will be invited to attend one of our concerts. And if you, or someone you know, would like to receive a ticket under this scheme please contact Charlie Dobson in confidence at [charles\\_snaygill@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:charles_snaygill@yahoo.co.uk) and we will let you know when tickets are available.

**Further details and tickets from the orchestra's website at <http://www.settleorchestra.org.uk/>**



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