



# CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

from

**ST. LEONARDS'  
WORTLEY**

## FORTHCOMING SERVICES

**Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> December** - Holy Communion at 11.00 am

**Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> December** - Holy Communion at 6.30 pm

**Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> December** - Holy Communion at 11.00 am

**Friday 25<sup>th</sup> December** - Christmas Day Communion at 10.30 am

**Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> December** - Closed Service on you tube only

**Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> January** - Holy Communion at 11.00 am

ST. LEONARDS' CHURCH WILL ALSO BE OPEN FOR PRIVATE PRAYER EVERY WEDNESDAY THROUGHOUT DECEMBER AND UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE. EVERYONE OF ALL FAITHS AND NONE WILL BE MOST WELCOME

*The Rev. Canon Keith Hale, Church Wardens  
and members of the Parochial Church Council  
send you "Tidings of Comfort and Joy" this  
Christmas and throughout the coming year.*

## CHURCH CHAT

Although life at St. Leonards' has been very far from normal over these past long months there has been



some activity. Following our very successful Snowdrop Festival in February, sadly, the Children's Art Exhibition was suddenly cut short by the 1<sup>st</sup> lock-down, access to the building was forbidden and church life was put on hold only returning via You Tube and Zoom as the weeks went by. Once guidelines relaxed a little and after a thorough clean - the spiders had not been inactive – St. Leonards re-opened with lots of safety measures in place, first for private prayer and then on 2<sup>nd</sup> August for a trial 'socially distanced' Communion Service. Regular Sunday Services resumed in September and are returning once more in

December, dates and times above. St. Leonards continues to be open for quiet reflection and private prayer every Wednesday between 11am and 1pm, everyone is most welcome, sanitising precautions are in place at all times.



Of course, the traditional programme of Concerts, Fairs, Christmas Concert Bolsterstone Choir and Carol Service with Thurlstone Brass Band are very much missed, besides causing a major funding headache, overheads and maintenance costs go on!

Despite everything Remembrance Sunday was observed in a very subdued way with Canon Keith recording a video Service at St. Leonards for those able to watch on You Tube and 2 minutes silence was observed in Church on Armistice Day. All the village organisations and businesses presented poppy wreaths, as the impressive display on the lychgate War Memorial shows.

During this quiet time small improvements within the Church continued to be made and it is hoped to instal broadband and Wi-Fi facilities very soon to improve community communications. A new, larger notice board is to be erected for the same purpose, the latter thanks to a generous grant from Penistone Ward Alliance. The much more ambitious plans for extensive alterations to make St. Leonards more suitable for both church and community activities are on-going but on the back burner for now.

Len's Friends continue to support St. Leonards and have done significant work to keep the church yards looking good including the laborious task of painting the railings which now look splendid! They continue to explore and record the history of the graves and have discovered many interesting stories, all of which are being put on-line, but here is one to perhaps whet your appetite:

### **If These Stones Could Talk**



*Researched by  
Dawn Johnson*

There are many stories to be told in our churchyard. Some are tragic, some are scary, some are full of admiration. And many are just

stories of simple families coping with life in the best way they can. I found one such story quite by chance.

Grave number 317 is by the Wharncliffe door at the side of the church. Surrounded by quite large and 'busy' stones it has a short and simple inscription.

*HERE lieth the remains of Mrs Mary Rook  
Daughter of John Walker Yeoman, of Dodworth  
bottom. She departed this Life July 25th 1787 Aged  
26 Years*

*Also, Jane Rook her Daughter who departed this  
Life March 19th 1788 aged 2 Years*

A young mum, and her baby daughter, who died quite close together. It made me think, what happened to them? And who took care of baby Jane when her mum had died? I started trying to find out more. I started with the surname Rook, quite unusual in our churchyard. This quickly took me to grave number 387;

*SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF SARAH ROOK  
Daughter of Mrs Mary Rook, and Granddaughter of  
John and Elizabeth Walker late of Dodworth. She  
departed this Life June 27th 1842 Aged 56 Years  
With patience to the last she did not submit,  
And murmer'd not at what the Lord saw fit,  
After a lingering illness grief and pain,  
When Doctors skill and physic prov'd in vain:  
She with a Christian courage did resign,  
Her soul to God at His appointed time*

These were obviously linked, the names Mary Rook and John Walker appearing on both. But Sarah was the daughter of Mary Rook, just as Jane was on the first stone. Sarah and Jane were sisters. Sarah died in 1842 aged 56, so she was born in 1786. Jane died in 1788 aged 2 years, so she was also born in 1786. So Sarah and Jane must have been twins. It must have been very difficult giving birth to twins in 1786, and as Mary died in 1788 maybe this was a result of complications following the birth of her twins?

Mary's parents John and Elizabeth Walker seem to have been the ones who took over the care of their granddaughters Sarah and Jane after Mary died. Grave 380 was where I found John and Elizabeth. Both having lived to old age, John died in 1797 aged 72 and Elizabeth in 1814 aged 82. 2

was 11 when John died and 28 when Elizabeth died. From the poem on Sarah's memorial it would seem she hadn't enjoyed good health. I wonder if this was lifelong, as a result of a traumatic birth which resulted in the loss of her mother and sister? Was Elizabeth caring for Sarah into her old age? And where is Mr Rook? Someone survived all these family members, the person who provided the memorials and the lovely poems on them...

These aren't just stones in the grass, these are lives, families, people. Now history. Not just a boring old dead graveyard. There is more to learn about life here than in any history book. And it's here for all to enjoy.

*If these stones could talk...*

### Tea & Chat Group

The Wednesday TEA & CHAT GROUP will recommence as soon as it is safe to do so and they look forward to welcoming back old friends and new. A CHRISTMAS CRAFTS Stall is currently in place at the back of the church for those last minute gifts, available between 11am and 1pm on Wednesdays and after Services on Sundays – proceeds to St. Leonards and Yorkshire Air Ambulance.



Dawn has created some lovely Christmas gifts and some seasonal face masks for the Christmas season. They are also on sale in the church.



### BELFRY NEWS

Well what a year this has been.

Ringling was going well until March 2020 when cases of COVID began to rise and we made the decision to suspend ringling as our ringling room is small and ventilation is not good. The week after we stopped the first lockdown came into force, services of worship stopped and so did church bell ringling nationally. The first time since World War 2 that all church bells in the UK were silent for many weeks.

This remained the case until August when consultation between the Church of England and the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers (CCCBR) produced guidance that said provided there was a risk assessment in place and ringers were 2 metres

apart bells could be rung again but only for services. In reality for church bell ringling teams up and down the country this meant getting the tape measures out and measuring the distance between ropes in the ringling room. In most cases this resulted in at best only 3 or 4 bells could be rung by ringers wearing masks, only for Sunday service and for a maximum of 15 minutes. At Wortley it was only 3 due to the small space and provided the windows were open, the doors, the trapdoors to the belfry and the roof space.

This continued until the end of September when South Yorkshire went into COVID Tier 2 then 3. The CCCBR again said no ringling in these tiers. It has remained like that and sadly will continue through the Christmas period.

Our team have kept in touch, some of us have been volunteering with churchyard gardening, railing painting, craft making and working on the Burial Ground Management System. But most of all we miss ringling, the bells are the loudest noise made to the glory of God. Wortley Church has lost its clamouring voice. But as soon as it is possible we will be back; the bells will ringling out again. Perhaps only 3 at first but all 8 eventually.

As always if you are interested in learning to ring, have a word with Tower Captain Andrew and at some point next year we really hope that things will return to normal and our ringling room will be full of happy ringers, including you.

### The BGMS Update

November 2019 saw a strange sight in the churchyard. A man with a backpack out of which sprouted aerials, wires and battery packs. It was our digital churchyard survey being carried out by Atlantic Geomatics. We raised the money through Crowdfunding and lots of local people donated to help us raise the funds to map our churchyard and to record the stones, inscriptions and unmarked graves.

One year on and after a spring and summer of a lot of crawling about in the grass, clearing overgrown vegetation, writing down in a notebook, entering them into the database and trawling through burial book records we are well on the way to completing the first stage.

We know who we have in the churchyard, where exactly they are and the inscriptions on the stones



are stored electronically to safeguard them for the future. We can now tell where the unmarked graves are and those who are interred in them. Each stone has been photographed and that photo is attached to the digital record.



The second stage is to add more details to the records of each person, where they lived, what their occupation was, size and style of monument, safety check results of the monument, what type of stone, next of kin etc. All useful to help us manage the burial

ground but interesting for those researching their ancestry. Searching the data is easy, taking seconds to do what had to be done manually by searching through 300 years of records.

The BGMS also records the trees, species, inspections, height and condition. It records the walls, pathways, memorial benches and other hard landscape.

As soon as we can it is our intention to do presentations in the church of the system so that visitors can see how it works. If you have any interesting facts about your ancestors buried in the churchyard that you would like adding to the database, please let us know.

Personal data is not available to the public, only to our administrators of the BGMS system, but the general details that could be seen by someone visiting the site are available to view on the system.

### Social Media

If you can't get to our services of worship Canon Keith is producing a YouTube video service each week which can be viewed online. If you or someone you know has a Facebook account the service videos are posted each week on here too, usually Saturday evening ready for Sunday.

Tankersley, Pilley and Thurgoland Churches are also posting Keith's videos.

### Photo of the 2020 Remembrance Wreaths on the Lych Gate



**For more information for up to-date event and Service information at St. Leonards and ways of giving or making very welcome donations in view of our lack of income. Please look at:**

**Our Website:** [www.wortleychurch.org.uk](http://www.wortleychurch.org.uk)

**Email:** [wortleychurch@gmail.com](mailto:wortleychurch@gmail.com)

**Facebook page St Leonard's Wortley**

**By Telephone: Rev Canon Keith Hale 01226 744140**

**Church Warden/PCC Secretary: Joan Clark 0114 2887435**

