

IN TOUCH

MAY 2025

£1



Otley Parish
CHURCH



O**TLEY PARISH CHURCH** is the oldest building in Otley. It's at the heart of our town and, for over 1,000 years, people have been gathering here for worship, with significant family as well as community events.

We are a gathering place for pilgrims on a journey of discovery, kindling hope as we go, and helping one another to be more fully alive to the wonders, the joys and the sorrows of life. We'd love you to share the journey with us.

We want to grow in numbers, in spiritual commitment to Christ and in service to our local community.

Join us in worshipping our God together on Sundays and in daily life; be with us as we study and discern how to use the Bible in the 21st century; also learn with us what it is to be disciples in the 21st century following Jesus, and help us, with other churches in the town, to bring good news to Otley and far beyond.

**“There is a place for everyone,
with CHRIST
at the centre of it all”**



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Dear Friends *Letter*



The Quiet Revival

YouGov has recently conducted a poll for the Bible Society called, “The Quiet Revival”, and the numbers suggest that the decline in church attendance in the UK has now stopped; indeed, many churches are quietly growing. The main growth appears to be among 18 - 24-year-olds attending church monthly. This figure has risen among young men from 4% in 2018 to 21% today, and among young women from 3% to 12%.

It seems that life in our secular, individualistic society, with its liberal values, is not satisfying the souls of younger generations. Otley Parish Church is not (yet) experiencing a revival, but I will say there is some evidence of this change locally. I recently got to know one young man who, entirely independently, has repented of various sins (marijuana, pornography, sex outside of marriage, swearing, lustful thoughts, lying) and, alongside adopting daily Bible study and attempting to love God and neighbour, is coming regularly to church for fellowship, support and guidance. And there are other stories like this, of people walking in off the street unprompted to learn more about God. It's hard evidence of the quiet revival, but it is suggestive.

Nationally, it isn't yet clear if these new converts are coming particularly to one denomination or another. Or, whether they are attracted to traditional Christianity more than progressive expressions, but what is clear is that there is a move out of culture into some form of Christianity. The move is

therefore towards the distinctiveness of Christianity, and away from the norms of mainstream culture.

And this is interesting, because for so long churches in the west have been doing down their distinctiveness and seeking to blend in with the world around them. “We’re normal, honest!” seems to have been the cry, and it turns out that being just like the world around us is not what is most attractive about us.

Of course, the single most attractive thing about us, is God. Churches are great at being religiously themed Rotary Clubs, but that is not our identity. We are about more than merely serving others above ourselves (as laudable, and Christian, as that goal is); we are meant to host the manifest presence of God, individually (being filled with his Holy Spirit) and collectively (as we are the body of Christ), and as such we are to do “even greater things” (John 14.12), so that others may come to love him as we do.

The question is: is the church ready for the quiet revival? Will we be able to disciple these seekers, and give them God, or will we fail them, and cry “We’re normal, honest!”

Our current Sunday morning sermon series is seeking to make connections between the values our culture upholds (more or less successfully) and our own Christian traditions. Even back in 1908, GK Chesterton saw that, “The modern world is full of the old Christian virtues...”, but more than that he saw that without being rooted and grounded in the wider truths of Christian faith, these virtues go “mad”. And this is because “they have been isolated from each other and are wandering alone”.

Have you ever looked at the things our society upholds as virtuous, and responded with some version of “Well, yes and no”? Then you may be putting your finger on a Christian virtue that has been uprooted and wondering alone without its proper context.

By the time this is published we will have started the series “The Air We Breathe”, but please do consider taking one of the flyers and using it to invite a friend to come to church.

AARON KENNEDY
Vicar at Otley Parish Church

IN THE **HOT** SEAT



with
Jane Fernandes

**We know that you are fairly new to Otley Parish Church, Jane, and many of us will know you by sight but not really know much about you. Will you please answer a few questions that will help us all to get to know you a little better?
*Thank you!***

When were you born and where did you grow up?

I was born in April of 1956 in Four Gables maternity hospital in Horsforth. I grew up in Rawdon and then Yeadon.

Where did you go to school?

My primary school was Rawdon St Peter's, and I then went on to Aireborough Grammar school.

Did you go to College or University? If so, where?

I had accepted a place on a teaching training course in Hull but decided I didn't actually want to go straight from school to college and then back into school as a teacher. Instead, I ended up embarking on a Private Secretary's course at Park Lane college in Leeds. In 1981 I went to

Leeds Polytechnic as it was then known, to study a 3 year course resulting in a B.Ed. in Humanities.

When did you become a Christian?

As a child I attended Sunday School at St Peter's church in Rawdon. Both my older brother and sister had been Confirmed, probably in their early teens, but I didn't feel I understood enough to take that step. I continued to attend church and the youth club at St John's in Yeadon. When I was aged 25, I attended a Confirmation course which I thoroughly enjoyed as by that stage I felt more able to discuss questions and commit to continue in being a Christian.

When and where did you meet your husband

I first met Jim in Leeds in 1980 prior to which our paths had already crossed a number of times - it felt like 'it was meant to be'!

What was your occupation and where did you work?

I have done a number of jobs in a variety of roles. In the first 6 years I worked as a PA first in a higher education establishment, then in International Banking, and finally in an insurance broker's office. I followed this with almost 20 years in Primary Education, first as a class teacher, then advisory work across the city and finally just over two years as a Deputy Head. My final work prior to retiring was as a school bursar.

Do you have brothers and sisters?

I have a brother David who is 9 years older than me and a sister Margaret, 6 years older.

How many children and grandchildren do you have?

Between us we have three daughters and four grandchildren - 14 year old twins, a boy and girl, and two more girls aged 5 and 21 months.

Did you worship anywhere before coming to Otley Parish Church? How long have you been coming here?

I spent a number of years worshipping at Horsforth St Margaret's where both my girls were baptised and attended Sunday School. I came to OPC for a number of years for Christmas services but have been attending regularly for about four years now.

In what ways are you involved at OPC?

I'm on both the hospitality and welcome teams; I attend Little Rascals with my granddaughter, and I have recently begun helping as a server at Communion.

Do you have a favourite verse(s) of Scripture? If so, what is it?

To be honest, up until a year ago I would have struggled with this question but during the past 12 months, thanks to Phil Moon and our SACRED group, I've read the Bible daily and have been inspired by a number of passages. It was something I listened to on Lectio 365 from which I've chosen some verses - Matthew 6:5-8 (ESVUK). "And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him." Having often questioned what and how to pray, the final line in this passage took all that concern away. I now feel I can word my prayers however feels best, as God knows exactly what I need to say.

Do you have a favourite Christian hymn or song?

There are a number that I love to sing, especially those by Stuart Townend. But the song I have chosen is "Make Me a Channel of Your Peace". The words are just beautiful - it's a song I chose for my youngest daughter's baptism and then again at my mum's funeral.

Do you like classical music? Do you have a favourite piece?

Yes, I enjoy classical music. My favourite piece is Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2. It brings back memories of A-level revision sessions with my best friend from over 50 years ago – and we're still friends today! On reflection, judging by my exam results, I should probably have spent more time on revision and less on appreciating the classical music!

What about modern songs or music - anything in particular?

That's a difficult question - I enjoy such a wide range of popular music and could choose countless songs for different reasons. I think I'll opt for "Wind Beneath my Wings" by Bette Midler or any other artist. It's such a beautiful song with lyrics that could relate to so many situations in life.

Can you play a musical instrument?

Only if the recorder counts - I learnt in Primary School and then taught a number of children during my teaching career.

Do you have a favourite part of Yorkshire that you like to visit?

Almost anywhere in the Yorkshire Dales but Kettlewell has special memories of going with family on a Sunday afternoon when I was just a little girl.

Is there somewhere you'd like to go on holiday where you've not been before, regardless of expense?

I would love to visit India - so much to see there, and everyone I know who has been there has described it as an amazing experience.

A book you especially enjoyed reading. Any special reason?

"The Salt Path" by Raynor Winn - an inspiring fact-based story of courage and determination in the most difficult of times. The film is due to be released in May and I can't wait to see it!

Do you have a hobby or something you enjoy doing to relax?

I enjoy reading, walking and have always loved doing jigsaws giving me the name 'jigsaw Jane' when I was little. I almost always have a good puzzle on the go and like nothing better than spending hours hunched over the work in progress while listening to a good playlist.

What would be your favourite meal - 2 or even 3 courses?

Most people I know agree I'm not much of a 'foodie'. I eat to live rather than the other way round. However, if pushed to make a choice it would probably be steak pie and mash, followed by homemade apple crumble with fresh cream.

If you were to spend a year on a desert island on your own, what luxury would you take with you?

A classic book collection such as Jane Austen or Charles Dickens. It would finally give me the time to read some of the works I've always promised myself 'I'll get round to it one day'!

Which one word best describes your life right now?

Blessed.

Creation Care

A monthly column for us to share environmental and sustainability ideas.

A different emphasis this month, encouragement in the form of a Thought for the Day email received by Eileen Barr from the Iona Community, one of whose goals is *Engaged together, and with people of goodwill across the world, in acting, reflecting and praying for justice, peace and the integrity of creation.*

This modern version of the Beatitudes was written by John Polhill and comes from a book called “Eggs and Ashes” published by Wild Goose Publications.

The Beatitudes

Blessed are those who use low-energy light bulbs,
for theirs is the light of God’s wisdom.

Blessed are those who travel by train,
for their lives are on God’s track.

Blessed are those who choose a car with low fuel
consumption, for they are in God’s fast lane.

Blessed are those who insulate their homes,
for theirs is the warmth of God’s love.

Blessed are you when you put yourselves out
to use energy from renewable sources,
for you have kindled the flame of the future.

*Copyright © John Polhill, from Eggs & Ashes
(Wild Goose Publications 2004)*

<https://www.ionabooks.com/product/eggs-and-ashes/>

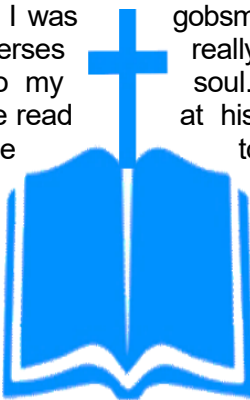
Look out for more encouragement and tips in future In Touch magazines or you may wish to share any actions you have taken with the rest of the Parish.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE BIBLE *Verse?*

*"You knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful"*

*Psalm 139: 13&14
NIV*

I will never forget the first time I heard Psalm 139. I was in my twenties and attending my Godfather's funeral. It was held in the church where he had been rector for a number of years. I was audacious and challenging verses immediately and directly into my questioning be something he more human and humbler to be. Fast forward to my undergo surgery to remove a permanent ileostomy. This saved me from a gruesome that we are so fearfully and that we are able to relieve



gobsmacked! Could these intimate, really be in the Bible? They spoke so soul. Not only that, but my Godfather at his funeral. Could this depth of too experienced? That made him than I had really imagined him forties when I was eventually to diseased bowel and fashion amazing surgery undoubtedly death. I praise God every day wonderfully made. I thank God pain and extend lives with

modern surgery and medication. I marvel with Walt Whitman at the plenitude of miracles each breathing day in God's created world. (See his poem "Miracles" <https://poets.org/poem/miracles>)

Rachel Wilson



● *In last month's In Touch, we learned that 'Open the Book' is an exciting storytelling project where Bible stories are shared with children in a way that is fun, interactive and memorable. As invited guests in school, storytelling teams use the Open the Book programme to prepare and present a 10 to 15-minute scripted Bible story to a school assembly, involving the children as much as possible. Otley Parish Church has two teams that regularly visit Westgate School and All Saints Primary School in Otley.*

Westgate Primary School have welcomed an Open the Book team from OPC for over twenty years and clearly value our visits. We share Bible Stories with children aged 6-11 during the Tuesday morning assembly, going there roughly every 2 weeks. The current team are Norman and Eileen Barr and Gisela Moulds (OPC), and James Dannenberg from Beech Hill Church. We collect everything we need from Otley Christian Resources Hub, based in 'The Chestnuts', then practice on a Monday afternoon. We have amazing costumes/props to help bring each story to life and are well supported by Mandy Thorlby at Otley Christian Resources Hub. Mandy organises story plans and props boxes, not just for the Otley teams but for more than 20 other teams in the wider local area.

We begin by singing our Open the Book song with some actions, then move to a short introduction, often asking the children what they can remember from previous stories. We are amazed at how much they do retain. They have much better memories than any of us! The stories are interactive, lending themselves to individual children from year 6 participating as characters in the story and/or the whole assembly, doing actions or sound effects. The latter can be quite entertaining! After all the excitement we settle the children down, encouraging



them to reflect on what they can learn from the story and finish with a short prayer. When out and about in Otley we often meet children or young people who remember us from Open the Book. They're keen to say hello and tell us their favourite story. Our prayer is that they also remember some of the important lessons in the stories they have enjoyed.

All Saints C of E Primary School warmly welcomes our Open the Book team on a Friday morning, once a fortnight. The Assembly is made up of children from Year 1 to Year 6 and the staff tell us that the children really look forward to the OTB weeks. We try to include children from the Key Stage 2 classes in the telling of the stories and we aim to provide them with appropriate costumes and scripts. There are always willing volunteers who come and rehearse with us before the assembly starts.

We follow the same procedure as the Westgate team - starting with the song, recapping where we are at in the story series and introducing that week's



story in a way that relates to the children's own experiences. After acting out the story, the leader picks out the main points, reads the prayer, which relates to the teaching in the story, followed by The Lord's Prayer, which is said by all the children, (and sometimes signed, if Rev. Rachel is with us to lead it).

In the revised OTB scheme, which we began last September, there are many stories from both the Old and New Testaments, so it will take us more than 2 years to work through. We are currently in the Old Testament. The photograph, from the story about the parting of the Red Sea, shows 2 of our team, playing Moses and Pharaoh and 2 staff members holding the sea. Children did this in the assembly, as well as others playing the part of Hebrews, but using children in photographs is complicated. Two other team members (not pictured) read the narration for this story. Not all our team members are available – or needed- every time, but the team consists of Pam Beck and Jennifer Angus, who take turns at leading, Martin Campey from Otley Methodist Church, Rev. Rachel Wilson, Rev. Phil Moon and Anne Raftery.

MESSY CHURCH

is back!



BEFORE the covid pandemic, OPC used to run Messy Church events where 100+ children and their families were regularly seen. I remember being phoned by Janet Buttanshaw and asked if I could turn up and run an activity, and finding myself melting a soap base in a microwave, but I also remember the wonderful atmosphere of welcome extended by the Messy Church team and seeing lots of children and their adults sitting and listening to stories fuelled by lovingly prepared snacks.

On Good Friday this year, we resurrected Messy Church and had a really lovely morning where we were able to welcome around 60 children and their families to our Church. We chose as our theme “New Beginnings” and the story of Paddington Bear - extra familiar to many at the moment due to the new film. Activities ranged from a treasure hunt with temporary tattoos as prizes, to marmalade soap making and, of course, proper “messy play” in the form of paint and slime related activities. A small army of volunteers moved chairs in and out of church, strung up bunting, learnt how to do Paddington-related origami and sliced and buttered many hot cross buns.

One of my favourite things about being involved in Messy Church is seeing community in action - people were incredibly generous with their time and support and most importantly made a huge effort to welcome each and every person to our ancient building. And I think we all actually had a really good time doing so.

I looked around at about 10.30 whilst the children were in the thick of their activities and it was really special to see and hear the buzz in the building and watch people chatting to each other. I heard lots of people talking about coming to church before for baby rascals or christenings and it was

wonderful to watch children running around and playing, clearly feeling welcome and safe in our sacred space.



You might raise an eyebrow at an Easter Messy Church focusing on that well known character in the gospel, Paddington Bear! The idea for this actually came from my next door neighbour as we were musing on children's stories involving new beginnings. As Maria and I reflected on the story, we realised there was so much to draw out, from welcoming the stranger and the refugee to the importance of family in all its forms (including adoption). However, what we chose to draw out for the children and their families was the fact that Paddington frequently gets into scrapes - flooding the bathroom, leaving trails of marmalade everywhere - BUT instead of telling

him off and making him feel bad for making mistakes, the Brown family love him and accept him just as he is. What a wonderful echo of the love God has for each and every one of us - and what more fitting time of year to reflect on it.

If you'd like to be involved in future Messy Church events do speak to Katie Mayers or watch out for the next sign-up sheets!





HAPPY BIRTHDAY
Chloe



Chloe Joslin celebrated her 7th birthday on Sunday 6th April 2025. She is the daughter of Pipa and Jonny.

GOLDEN WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

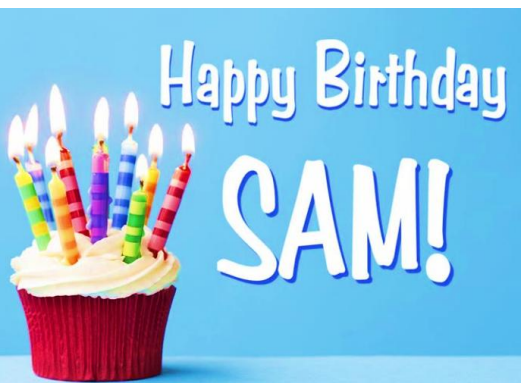


Allan and Jean Boddy celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary on 29th March this year. They were married on Easter Saturday in 1975. This photo of them was taken in front of the door of St. Philips Church, Gírlington, Bradford.



VERY WELL DONE!!

Jane Fernandes of Otley Parish Church with her golfing friend at Horsforth Golf Club, Sharon Cawtheray, raised a substantial sum of money over the past year for Cancer Research UK. They set a target of £3,000 but after a busy year with charity walks, card afternoons, raffles and a 'Gin Bingo Night' (chaotic!), the final sum raised was an amazing £5,200. Jane says a special thank you to those at OPC who made their contributions by purchasing Christmas cards and pin badges.



SAM MAYERS
celebrated his 1st birthday
on 23rd April 2025.
He is the son of
Katie and Rick
and brother of Daniel (nearly 5).



The Baptism of Grace Elizabeth Evans
Baby Grace, the daughter of Jo and Michael, was baptised
on Sunday 20th April 2025

MY SILENCE



MY STORY – Kate Hobson



CHRISTIAN AID has a place in my heart.

So, I have decided to try and keep my mouth shut for 48 hours to help fundraise during Christian Aid Week (11-17 May).

I would love you to help support me.

Please donate any amount you can.

Click on the link below or use the QR Code to take you to my fundraising page.

Thank you very much!

https://fundraise.christianaid.org.uk/challenge-2025/otley-christian-aid-week?utm_medium=sharedbuttons&utm_campaign=&utm_source=copy





My Devotional Thoughts

Jill McKee

“Men ought always to pray and not to faint.”

Luke 18:1 (KJV)



WAITING ON THE LORD

This verse has been on my mind recently.

Apart from sometimes getting depressed, stuck in the house, recovering from an operation, I am struggling with a family difficulty that needs a resolution, the details of which I do not feel free to disclose. Feeling helpless, all I can do is follow the advice of this verse. I can't say I am wrestling in prayer; it is more a question of waiting on the Lord, as in Isaiah 40, 31 KJV, a passage that has always been important to me in my Christian life.

I believe I have received some encouragement, but as yet, the situation has not been resolved. It is a question of persevering in prayer, until the way becomes clear.

Later on, in the chapter in Luke, Jesus tells the parable of the persistent widow, who sought justice from an unjust judge. She approached him constantly for justice, until eventually he relented, not for reasons of justice, but because of her persistence. Of course, God cannot be compared to the unjust judge, but the parable suggests that we should be bold in prayer and not be intimidated by fear, or even social convention, and to persist. It may be that there needs to be a change within us as well.

Whatever the reason, the answer may only be gradually made clear. I continue to pray as best I can and wait on the Lord for an answer.

Father, help us to pray and not to faint. Even if we feel overwhelmed, help us to keep trusting you to show us the way, and not to give way to fear or panic. Help us to bring our burdens to you, knowing that you desire what is best for us, and that you will always answer if we seek you with a sincere heart. Amen.





Former Vicars of Otley Parish Church

This list is displayed on a plaque at the front of the church nave

1267	Galfride de Bridlington	1708	Henry Humphrey
1268	Will. de S Beverton	1744	Thomas Dawson
1319	Joh. De Brancyngnam	1746	Joshua Crowther
1349	Rob. Bonefaunt de Ottelay	1751	Christopher Alcock
	Joh. Rouclyff	1761	Henry Wilson
1391	Ric. De Ottelay	1782	George Hatfield
1432	Robt Newall	1786	James Bailey
1449	Jac. Carous	1816	Henry Robinson
1452	Ric. Rudd	1834	Ayscough Fawkes
	Will. de Skelton	1837	Joshua Hart
1478	Will. Taillour, M.A.	1865	Sam. Ruthven Anderson
1502	Edm. Mayhew, L.B.	1888	R. B. Machie Chancellor
1504	Ric. Walker	1890	John Trower
1512	Laur. Pecke	1898	Geo. Percy H. Frost
1532	Will. Stanley S.T.P.	1906	Reginald Pattinson
1536	Joh. Barkar	1914	Geo. T. Shettle, L.A.
	Richard Oliver, deprvd 1554	1919	Richard Phipps Hadland
1594	Will. Hardistey, B.A.	1925	Sydney Edward Lowe
1596	Robt Thompson, M.A.	1934	Geo. R. A. Hartley, M.A.
1606	Will. Harryson, B.A.	1937	Thos. Jno. Williams, M.C. B.D.
Temp	Alexander Robertson	1956	Patrick Ashe, M.A.
Com	Joseph Stocke	1965	John Clayton, M.A.
Wealth	John Furnice	1977	Desmond M. Kendrick, B.A.
1662	Lancelot Dennison	1990	Ian T. Rodley
1673	Thomas Harrison	1999	Graham Buttanshaw to 2021
1692	Lawrence Bentham	2022	Aaron Kennedy - <i>current</i>
1701	Thomas Dade		



In the **HOT** seat...

A Look Back at the Life of Eileen Armstrong

**Eileen appeared 'In the Hot Seat' in 2017.
She very sadly died in March 2025 at the age of 98.**

*Hello Eileen,
You've been associated with Otley Parish Church for more years than most of us have been alive! Some of us who are very new to the church may only know you by sight, especially because of your summer fashion wear - shorts! We'd all love to know a little more about you though, so hope you won't mind answering a few questions about yourself. Thank you!*



Q. When were you born and where did you grow up?

A. I was born in 1926 in Otley and have lived here ever since – that's very nearly 91 years!

Q. Where did you go to school and college?

A. I went to North Parade Secondary School in Otley until I was 14 years old.

Q. How long have you been associated with Otley Parish Church?

A. My family have been members of the church for more than 100 years. I was christened here as a baby and then married here 20 years later. As a youngster, I regularly went to the Sunday school and later joined the *Girls' Friendly Society*. I consider I've been a Christian ever since my christening.

Q. How and when did you meet Maurice and how long have you been together?

A. I met Maurice, who is from Northern Ireland, when I was about 20 years old. He was stationed at an army camp at Farnley Hall in Otley. We were married at Otley Parish Church in 1947 by the vicar, Canon Thomas Williams.

Q. How many children do you have? What are their names and ages?

A. I have one son, Paul (68). Also, two grandchildren, William (46) and Charlotte (42), and one great-grandson, Adam (8).

Q. We presume you are retired now at the age of 90. What occupations have you had over the years?

A. Yes, I am retired!! In my younger days, I was a dressmaker in Westgate, Otley. Later, I taught swimming at Otley's Chippindale Pool.

Q. Do you have a favourite Christian hymn or song?

A. Yes, it's the hymn that we sing in church from time to time, "The day Thou gavest, Lord, is ended, the darkness falls at Thy behest; to Thee our morning hymns ascended, Thy praise shall sanctify our rest."

Q. What kind of music do you like - anything in particular?

A. I love all kinds of piano music - nothing specific. I also love brass and military bands. I love to listen to "Hear my prayer" by Mendelssohn, when played by a brass band.

Q. Do you play a musical instrument?

A. No! I did though have piano lessons as a young girl but dropped them at the outbreak of World War II.

Q. Do you read books, Eileen?

A. I'm far too busy to read books! However, I do read the Radio Times, especially to find out when Rugby Union matches are to be broadcast.

Q. Do you have a favourite part of Yorkshire?

A. It's Filey, although I haven't been there for many years. We often used to camp there most weekends in the summer.

Q. Do you have a hobby or something you enjoy doing to relax?

A. It may surprise you to know at my age that it's walking, especially up the Chevin every day! It's very relaxing on the way back down!

Q. What interesting and enjoyable things have you done in your very long life?

A. Teaching children to swim. Although this was my job, I very much loved it. I enjoyed swimming in the Lake District. I also enjoyed running. I regularly ran around Wharfedale and did 10 mini-triathlons, the last one being when I was 70 years old! Tap Dancing in Ilkley was something else I enjoyed. Also, I enjoyed playing badminton for the ICI club in the Harrogate league.

Q. If you were to spend a whole year on your own on a desert island what luxury would you take with you?

A. Chocolate drops! I love the chocolate drops from Patisserie Viennoise on Westgate, Otley. So, half a ton of these, please!

Q. Which one word best describes your life right now?

A. Fortunate.



**Eileen and Maurice Armstrong
at their wedding in 1947
at Otley Parish Church.
Maurice died in May 2021
at the age of 97.**



Eileen and Maurice Armstrong are seen here in 2018 with Otley's former Town Mayor, Mary Vickers, being recognized with a Civic Award for their many years of teaching swimming and life-saving, coaching triathlon and organizing swimming galas. At the presentation Cllr Vickers said: "This couple should be proud of their contributions, over so many years, to promote health and exercise to so many young people."

Fear...
Lies...
Despair...

TRIUMPH!

by LESLEY NOBLE



Introduction

I was born in 1949 and had a poor childhood filled mainly with fear, lies, loneliness and despair, which impacted my life in a negative way for the first forty years. Then, between 1991 and 1993 my healing process began.

I feel the need to tell my story with the hope that anyone reading it may be encouraged if they ever thought things would never get better for them in their own lives.

I found it very therapeutic when starting to write this book. One of the main wonderful things is that, in the end, I know that for all my past I've not only been forgiven, but I have also learned to forgive.

A STORY TO BE TOLD... TO ENCOURAGE... ALL IS WELL





I Grew Up Angry

I grew up angry, lonely and resentful. My brother Dave had been taking himself off to Castleford to visit granny (dad's mam) and Aunt Dorothy (dad's sister) in Armley since he was nine. He would jump on a bus knowing that he would be fed and given 'pocket money'. Uncle Dennis still lived at home with granny, and he would take Dave to the pictures and buy him comics and sweets. During these times I would be mostly alone. I remember crying once when walking home from school in the snow when my wellingtons got wet and made my legs sore round the tops. My mam was out when I got in and so was the fire. I felt cold and miserable.

On another occasion when I was about five, out playing on the waste ground (top hollers) at the top of the street I fell over and landed on a broken bottle. Luckily, our Dave was around that day, and I got up with the glass still embedded in my leg which was bleeding badly. As we ran home together the blood was splashing over my wellingtons. I was not surprised that my mam was out, but fortunately Pam, the next door neighbour, was in. She carried me into her house and laid me on the settee and someone went to ring for an ambulance at the phone box down the street. I was in hospital for weeks, and I cried every day when two nurses came to give me an injection. Just the sound of the needles in the metal kidney dish set me off. One nurse held me over her shoulder to keep me still whilst the other one put the needle in!

Not a lot changed for me over the next five years. When my hair grew it was constantly knotted as it was never brushed, and then a lot of tears as a comb was dragged through it. Head lice were rife, so I was sent to the 'nit clinic' to be deloused regularly, and somehow the nurses there seemed to blame the child! They scraped my head with a fine tooth metal comb, put foul smelling lotion on, then cut my hair so short I looked like a boy! So, obviously at school where I had been that day, no one wanted to play with me.

My mam was never there for me. She hurt me emotionally on many occasions. One day when I was about seven, she showed me a catalogue and asked me to



My mam with 3 neighbourhood children and me on the right

choose a dress that she would buy me for Whitsuntide. So, I chose a beautiful navy velvet dress with a coloured embroidery zigzag pattern across the chest. I loved it and couldn't wait for it to arrive. Needless to say, Whitsuntide came along, and I

got a very plain, blue and white check cotton dress with cheap white sandals and socks. I was really upset; mam just gave some lame excuse as to why. Then weeks later I visited my Aunt Gud (mam's sister), and my cousin Carol happened to be there, wearing 'my dress', and she told me Aunt Dot (my mother) had bought it for her for Whitsuntide. I was heartbroken, and in tears for a very long time. My mam was a liar, and I learned very early on not to believe a word she said. I was gutted and never forgot the hurt.

My mam and dad were so different, and I often wondered how they ever got together, but I know why they stayed together. My dad had a strong sense of responsibility and always worked. His first job was down the pit near Castleford when he was thirteen. He met my mam when he was in his early twenties, and she already had Terry from a previous marriage, and they moved to Leeds. I believe dad was happy to change jobs and he worked at the Barnbow Tank Factory in Leeds, for quite a while. Their relationship was rocky, but they stayed together and married after Dave and I had arrived, and just before Ricky was born in 1953.

I suffered with congested lungs as a child (probably due to the fact that both my parents smoked Woodbines, and we would be on the receiving end of passive smoking). I remember one time being very poorly, and was left alone downstairs on the settee with an overcoat over me. The open fire was dying down, and I was coughing a lot. I always felt scared, then I stopped breathing and thought I was going to die. I turned to lie on my side and somehow managed to breathe in some air. I would have been five or six years old at the time and felt abandoned.

● Chapter 3 of "Fear... Lies... Despair... Triumph!" will be published in the July/August edition of *In Touch*.

**ARE
YOU
NEW
HERE?**



**Welcome to
Otley Parish Church**

If you are fairly new to Otley Parish Church, you are indeed very welcome here!

If you'd like to get connected, involved, or find out more about us, please pick up a *Welcome to Otley Parish Church* card which you'll find on the table at the back of the church.

Please fill in the details and return it to us, or put it into the red wall safe on the back wall.

We will use your contact information to help you find a way to connect into the life of our church. We do take care to ensure that your data is kept secure.

Please Keep in Touch

We would love you to keep in touch and tell us what you'd like to see in *your* monthly **IN TOUCH** Church magazine. If you've got something you would like to share with us in the April edition of **IN TOUCH**, please send it to our editor, stephenhey01@gmail.com

NO LATER THAN

Saturday 17th May



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Registered Charity Number: 1153498

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*see our website for details of Church services
and a link to our streamed services on YouTube*

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X (TWITTER): [@otleyallsaints](https://twitter.com/otleyallsaints)

CHURCH BANK ACCOUNT DETAILS

Account name: Parochial Church Council of Otley

Sort code: 20-37-13 **Account No:** 10088811

Gift Aid: if you are a tax payer, please consider signing a Gift Aid declaration, available on the Church website or from the Treasurer, Tony Pike

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