

St Augustine's Today



Autumn 2026

The Endcliffe Parish Church
of St Augustine, Brocco Bank

St Augustine's

Everyone is welcome at our morning service. It is an opportunity for calm reflection within a dignified setting with music led by our wonderful choir. St Augustine's stands in the liberal catholic tradition of the Church of England. Together we seek to express the Christian faith in liberal and inclusive terms. We are a member of the Central Mission Partnership. We are also a member of the Inclusive Church Movement.

Every Sunday

- The service is at 10:30am
- Children are welcome
- Refreshments are served afterwards in the Hall
- The service uses material from Common Worship
- The Bible readings follow the Common Lectionary
- The text of the readings is provided on a printed sheet

The Parish Eucharist follows the Common Worship order with hymns, sung sections and a sermon. Activities are provided for children led by our children's worker. Once a month there is a simplified service to give children a chance to participate more fully in the service. There are activities for everyone, children and adults, in the first part of the service. See the calendar for the dates of these services.

For details see www.achurchnearyou.com

Find us on Brocco Bank, 100m from Hunter's Bar roundabout. The church postcode is S11 8RQ.

Christ Church Endcliffe holds its services at St Augustine's. The services are informal, focused on Bible teaching.

For details see www.endcliffechurch.co.uk

Front Cover: The eclipse over St Augustine's. Photo: Christopher Hall



Calendar

September – November

We celebrate the Parish Eucharist every Sunday. Activities are provided for children in the Hall led by our Children's worker and materials for children of all ages is available at the back of church.

September

6th	Trinity 14	Family Service	Mike West and Viv Smith
13th	Trinity 15		Bishop Richard
20th	Trinity 16		Ela Nutu Hall
27th	Trinity 17		Ela Nutu Hall (Half marathon and 10k Fun Run)

October

4th	HARVEST SUNDAY##	Ela Nutu Hall
11th	Trinity19	Ela Nutu Hall
18th	Trinity 20	Bishop Richard
25th	Bible Sunday	Mike West

November

1st	All Saints and all Souls	Ela Nutu Hall
8th	REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY	Ela Nutu Hall
15th	2nd before Advent	Bishop Richard
22nd	Christ the King	Mike West
29th	Advent Sunday	Ela Nutu Hall

Bring Harvest Gifts which we will donate to the Cathedral's Archer Project.

Food, both fresh and packets; warm clothes for men and women of all sizes.

Message from Ela

The Joys and Pains of New Beginnings

'Do not remember the former things or consider the things of old.
I am about to do a new thing... do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.'
(Isaiah 43.18-19)

New beginnings are not always easy. Change in itself can be challenging – welcomed by some, dreaded by others. There is always a shift involved: of circumstances; of ways of thinking. Like tectonic plates, when the familiar things that underpin our lives begin to move, well, that requires both agility and resilience on our part. We need to move with the change, either by embracing or by resisting it; standing still is not a good option.

Those who, like me, have a bit of life experience, (I refuse to say 'old'!), have learned that to resist change is not always possible or indeed advisable. Depending on the change, that is. We all must resist bad, indeed evil, kinds of change, of which there can be plenty even in our current times – things like the erosion of democracy and freedom of speech; the rise of populist and corrupt politics; the diminishing rights of certain groups; the increasing violence against women and girls; the neck-breaking elevation of the rich... and I could go on. There are simply too many waves of change that we should resist. But changes can also be good and even then we are tempted to resist, simply because we are comfortable within what's familiar to us.

But, of course, it's also a matter of who is driving the change; of who is behind the new beginning. It is ourselves? Others? Time? Circumstances? Is the change inevitable, or do

we have a choice in it? Are we alone, or are we part of a collective? I would argue that our attitudes to a particular change or new beginning would depend a lot on the answers to some of these questions.

Like, for example, with the choice that we at St Augustine's had regarding whether to undertake the massive project that we knew the organ restoration would be. It took years for us to reach a decision, to choose to go ahead with the project and it hasn't been an easy thing. Indeed, there have been some nail-biting moments, when we worried about funds; we worried about some of the practicalities of not having a working organ for quite some time and, indeed, about how to store bits and pieces; we worried (and still do) about the work around the organ restoration (work in the organ chamber and elsewhere); and we (certainly, I) also worried about the optics – about the impact that the work has had on the aesthetics of our church. Viv, Christopher and Peter had countless conversations amongst themselves and with different builders and other tradespeople... Viv had to put together lots of applications for different permissions. Fred, Michelle and others wrote funding bids, some successful, some not. So many worked tirelessly so far and will continue to do so until the project is complete. And then there has also been the overwhelming generosity – both of spirit and of pocket – of all of you! To say that I have been moved to tears by it all would not be an exaggeration. You, to put it simply, have been magnificent!

All of this has been possible because we've had, I believe, (and I'm sure I'm not alone in this), that we had God's guidance and approval to sustain and progress this new beginning for St Augustine's. This particular change came after a lot of prayer and contemplation; a lot of research and planning. We were fortunate enough to perceive that God wanted to do a new thing for St Augustine's, to bring some

new water to what had become a bit of an arid time for us. Next, we'll start our communal church garden at the front of the church. At Viv's urging, we're now all thinking about what to plant together, to make this rather long-neglected bit of land a bit nicer. What will we each choose, I wonder?

So yes, there are joys and there are pains with each new beginning. And no, I won't quote any platitudes about eggs and omelettes or lemons and lemonade, (even though they may help me in my argument). And neither will I wax lyrical about the recent solar eclipse – I could say something about this once-in-a-generation space phenomenon, about how the darkness only lasted for a moment and then the sun shone again; about how millions of people in the UK and Europe united in observing the eclipse and thus creating a moment of shared humanity. Or, I could simply spell out what some of us felt: 'what that it?!?'. But I won't... in so many words.

As I write this, the eclipse is almost forgotten, and I'm sure that there are lots of heightened emotions surrounding instead the start of the new school and academic year. We as a family certainly feel it. Our daughter is starting her A Levels, our son will be sitting his GCSEs, and one of our nephews is starting University here in Sheffield... all happening this year.

Many of you, too, will be in the throes of preparing, either for your children or yourselves... for new beginnings. Whether to do with schools, or jobs, or relationships, or homes, general circumstances, health changes, each new beginning will come with both joys and pains. And my prayer is that you will be able to perceive God's presence, love and grace at every point of your journey. Whatever that may be.

*With love and blessings,
Ela*

The theme for this issue is

New Beginnings

Behind the Curtains

Some months ago Ela mentioned how, in preparation for the upcoming wedding, she would like to see the plastic covering over the organ pipe supports, then only partly draped and looking rather dusty, replaced with a fabric material of some kind; a form of curtain arrangement, as she envisaged.

Well, my immediate thoughts were such a feat would be near impossible to achieve, greatly time consuming, involve precarious balancing up the top of the church ladders, costly, and all needing to be done without any fixings into the building. So, having poo-pooed the idea, nothing happened... for many weeks.

It was then just before we left for holiday, Ela tried again, asking if we could just at least find a fabric shop, only to look around to see what was available, and this was where the adventure began.

Google, of course, was to hand and found a few options, helping us choose the shop, Fine Fabrics in Hillsborough, where we visited the next day. After a few moments following stepping through the door, Ela proclaimed she was in heaven, in awe at the extraordinary variety of fabrics stacked up all round the premises in corridor arrangements and on shelves to the ceiling, on tables, against walls and generally in every available space. At least she was having fun!

Despite the vast array of rolls and samples, after only perhaps 10 minutes Ela had found what she believed would be suitable; a heavy cotton, rather fine type of herringbone

weave and which I immediately remarked would likely be entirely unaffordable. However, as it happened, the owner of the business, whom we later learnt rarely visited the shop, being now in his 80s and having recently sadly sold the family mill in Lancashire, was on hand to help. (There was also a happy story of his son inheriting the business to take it forward in a new beginning.) Also, as it happened, the particular batch of fabric that Ela had spotted, he advised, had been ever so slightly affected by damp during a delivery in the rain some short while ago, and so was able to be marked down to an almost giveaway price. Furthermore, there were several rolls available, comfortably enough for the several 5-metre drops we would need.

In short, having enjoyed hearing how the fabric was woven from his own family mill and learnt something of his family background in both football and fabric manufacture, we were able to come away with all that we needed for the curtains





as well as feeling we had a piece of history in our hands – one of the last weaves from a great family owned Lancashire mill. But, next, with no time available, since we were just off on holiday for two weeks, Ela was apparently going to sew surely a near record-breaking size of curtain and we were then just going to ‘put it up’. I wasn’t convinced, but started wondering about it all – no fixings and a possible hanging at around 7.5 metres above floor level, rather higher than the gutter line of our house!

In any case, we returned from holiday and there were still a few days to go before the wedding rehearsal – a full two days I think it was. So, on the off chance I phoned our friendly builder, Steve Atkins of TB Atkins & Sons, who so kindly offered to drop all that he was doing to come the following day to help, although there wasn’t a plan other than an idea his longest ladders might be needed, I had a spare

curtain pole in our cellar and he would only be needed for half an hour. What followed on the day was a remarkable coming together of skills, the culmination of favourable circumstances and much flexibility and generosity from Steve.

Steve arrived with his two right hand men, Ela came over to church with her sewing machine and while the builders carefully found a way to put up the pole repurposing existing fixings, Ela worked at her machine, first cutting the 5-metre lengths from the roll and then stitching the ends to be hung and preparing hems with holes to fit to the pole.

Somehow, it all came together and, on reflection, not only in a way reminding me of the mysteries of God's helping hand connecting people and opportunity through the goodwill of others – from the availability of the fabric and the availability of our builder at near no notice – but how new beginnings can be part of a continuous journey from one hand to another, and with no limit in momentum if we choose to follow it; some effort is needed to start new beginnings, perhaps like push jump-starting a car, but then once in motion there can be energy and provision enough by God's grace for our visions to take flight; some things we can't do alone, or at first may appear inconceivable against the odds, but when we reach out for help new beginnings are freed and feed impetus to achieve more again and again.

Praise be to God for His grace and the kindness and generosity we see in the hearts of those who help in making new beginnings!

Christopher Hall

Who's who at St Augustine's

Ela Nutu Hall
is our
Priest-in-
Charge

She can be
contacted on
07595 087 441



Mike West is
retired and our
Associate Priest
He can be
contacted on
266 2188



To enquire about banns, weddings and other services
please contact us via our website www.achurchnearyou.com
or staugustines.endcliffe@gmail.com

Christopher Hall is Churchwarden, the
elected leader of the congregation,
with certain legal responsibilities for the
building and finance and Viv Smith is
Deputy Churchwarden.



A New Beginning

In the second part of the War I was living with my mother in Beauchief. It was just the two of us as dad had been called up and was in the RAF abroad somewhere. Mother worked at Mappin and Webb and I was at Abbey Lane School. In the Park district of Sheffield, on Talbot Street, my auntie, cousin and grandpa lived in a small two bedroomed terrace house. We visited them every Saturday. Sadly grandpa became very ill and needed to be looked after. The adults decided it would be best if mother and I went to live with them in Talbot Street until life returned to normal and grandpa got better. The new beginning for us meant that auntie could keep her job, although mother had to leave hers and my cousin continue her education at the Park School. I had to move from Abbey Lane to the Park School.

Our enlarged family fitted together like a jigsaw puzzle, with every room in the house being used to accommodate five people. Mother and I occupied the prized 'front room' with our double bed just squeezed in. This arrangement lasted for some time. I distinctly remember Father Christmas coming to our new lodgings and leaving presents for us. Amazing! I got to enjoy my time at the Park School. One perk of the move was that the headteacher used to give 1 penny (or was it a half penny?) to those who got their sums right. I was once the proud recipient of one of these coppers. It was the price of an ice lolly from one of the local shops! It was an experience I was to remember my whole life. I was very grateful when life eventually returned to normal.

When grandpa was fit again he resumed work as a stone mason at the cathedral. I thought of him recently when we went for a cuppa in the cathedral café.

Heather Snowden

New Garden Beginnings

Recently the front part of the church has been cleared of brambles and overgrown or dead bushes. This has left us an area to be planted, when there has been enough rain. The congregation is being asked to donate a plant/shrub/bulbs from their own garden when they are dividing or clearing. If anyone wishes they can buy some bulbs or a shrub or their favourite plant or make a donation if they can. One thing to remember is that this area is at the west end of the grounds and gets sun all afternoon/evening. Therefore, shade loving plants are not recommended. Similarly watering this area is difficult so drought resistance plants might be better.

Viv Smith



A New Beginning at the University of Bristol

In September 1957 I went to Bristol to begin my three years as a student of Physics. It was my first experience of living in a city and made me want to live and work in cities forever; Sheffield is one of the best. But the early weeks did not turn out to be what I hoped for.

Near the end of the 'Freshers Week' a third year student from my school held a party for us three freshers from that school – at that point the only other students I knew. I woke up the next morning with a serious headache which I assumed was a hangover. It may have been but more significant it was the first symptoms of flu, which kept me in bed during most of the first week of term.

I should explain that like the majority of new students at a city university I was in 'digs', living with Mr and Mrs Bannister in their three bedroom house in Westbury on Trym, a suburb about two miles from



the University over the Clifton Downs. They provided bed, breakfast, an evening meal, a shared bedroom and the dining room table when we studied. This was arranged by the University accommodation office so I had no choice in

my roommate. He was John Parker, a first-year Chemistry student from South London. I was already a committed Christian and a socialist – he had no religion and no politics but we managed to get on without too much difficulty, helped in the second term when I acquired a scooter and could transport him to the University. We shared different and better digs in our second year and became friends for life. Three years later I was Best Man at his wedding. We have regularly visited their home, still in Bristol and they us. The handrail to our front door is named Wendy's rail to help her up our steps!

A second friendship forged in those early weeks came about because I missed the first week in bed with the flu. The first day in the laboratory, where we would spend a day each week, people had chosen working partners. In the second week, my first, the technicians found another who had also missed the first and without any choice we were partners. He was Dan Wicksteed from rural Surrey. Importantly he was a Quaker. I had never strayed beyond the bounds of the middle of the road Church of England, so I had much to learn. With Dan's insights and my membership of the Student Christian Movement I became, (and still am) a committed ecumenist. Physics has moved on and left me behind but in events, not wholly under my control, those early weeks in my university career have shaped much of me and my life ever since. Deo Gratia.

Mike West

New Beginnings 1

Well, I could write about the new beginnings at five different houses and schools growing up, as we moved with my father's job promotion moves. Or the new beginning of life in Brazil, and then of life in an indigenous village in Amazonia. Or a multitude of other new beginnings throughout my 85 years.

But really there is one that stands out as uniquely significant, and which happened on the evening of November 19th 1962, changing the course of my life forever: The beginning of a new, reborn life in Christ. It was an evening when, in the words of a well-known hymn, 'My chains fell off, my heart was free, I rose, went forth, and followed Thee'.

And it happened at that particular time because of a little Scottish Brethren housewife's laugh!

The chains of 21 years of hatred of my mother, which had kept me hiding from others in shame and self-preservation, were broken. I didn't immediately love her or open myself to others, but gradually the Lord led me into these necessary changes and redirected my sights for the future from 'a good job' to good service – the giving of His Word to people in their own heart language.

And, being now well past the statutory 'three score years and ten', I look forward eagerly to that last great new beginning: death! and fresh heavenly life, when 'My eyes will see the King [Jesus] in His beauty.' (Isaiah 33:17)
I can't wait.

Joy Tobler

New Beginnings 2

Since our journeys in life are anchored in a God who is ever flowing and renews his mercies each morning, every day will be a new beginning. Perhaps it is a day where we are called to meet someone new, or challenge ourselves, or let something go. Maybe it is a day of stillness, where you think nothing new happens... only to realise it is the first time you felt peace or silence in quite a long time.

Personally, it would seem that everything in my life is new. I moved to another country a year and a half ago. Within this time, I met new friends. I found a loving partner and moved into a new home. I have a new job. I recently joined this church. In all of that, I realised that I am new too.

It is incredibly difficult to let go of old memories, places, and people. But when I focus on my new life here with gratitude, I am reminded just how beautiful and merciful God is. For even though I miss my old friends, I get to go on adventures with new ones. Even though I miss my childhood home, I have a new home here with pictures of my family framed on its shelves.

The land I grew up on is still there, but it is not the same as it was when I left it. My neighbours are planting new flowers in their gardens, new roads are being paved and the houses around my childhood home are welcoming in new families I have never met.

Yet, when I return, I will not be exactly like I was when I left. Through new beginnings, we experience self-growth and foster new wisdom. In mine, God has moulded me to be braver. What a blessing it is when we receive new things.

McKenzie Frist

New Beginnings 3

"Something about New Beginnings" said Pam.

"It's all about Jesus!" exclaimed I to Vicki some 15 to 20 years ago.

We had just been to St Augustine's for the first time.

It was my first visit to Church, other than for Christenings etc, as an adult.

I was in my mid to late 40s.

I had never been one of those people who, it seems to me, are militant anti-Christians.

I had, I think, been simply indifferent to Church and Religion.

My parents were not Church goers until my Mum, in the later years of her life, (she died at only 65), did start to attend.

My Dad did surprise me a year or so before he died, (aged early 80s), when he said "The Good Lord..." I had never heard him refer to God before.

I had been attending St Augustine's for many years by then and his words somehow made me quite emotional.

So I guess Church and God were always there somewhere in the background of my life but I managed to live my life without them.

Why was I at St Augustine's that day ?

I can't recall exactly but it was definitely something to do with worries I had at the time.

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock : if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Revelation 3.20.

Thank you William Holman-Hunt for your wonderful painting. It was time for me to open my door.

"It's all about Jesus!"

I had expected it rather to be all about God, but the emphasis of the service definitely seemed to me that day to be specifically about Jesus.

Maybe that seems a strange distinction to make but that is how I strongly recall it.

Jesus : What a New Beginning!

If only many others could have this New Beginning.

I once said in a PCC discussion that I thought we should have a large neon sign on the front wall of St Augustine's which flashed just one word: Jesus.

Sadly PCC decided not to pursue this wonderful idea.

Jesus is the Church's Unique Selling Point (though of course he is infinitely more).

I think that is what struck me that day.

We should shout His Name out to the world louder and more often.

I wish I had been fortunate enough to have this New Beginning many, many years before I did.

Mark Dixon

New Beginnings 4

I am very adept at new beginnings. In the course of the past four years, I have lived in three different countries, three different cities and six different addresses. My fourth city and seventh address will be added to the list in September. So you could say that I'm an expert.

Every time I move house (or begin a new life), I make the same mistakes. No matter how many times I say to myself I'll never do it again, I always pack the night before. No matter how large my shopping list is, I always forget to get toilet paper. I have walked across the streets of Cardiff with my friend carrying my keyboard and me hugging my guitar in an attempt to keep the broken case from falling off. I have caught a coach to Paris and been told by the driver that I look like I'm joining the army. I have packed too much and too little. I have left things on the kitchen counter and in the car.

But I have also made some wonderful discoveries in my

moves. I have discovered that the journey from Sheffield to Cardiff and then back is enough time to listen to all of the albums by The Beatles. I have discovered how kind people are. Once I spoke to someone I didn't know very well about my upcoming move and she immediately offered herself up to help me move the next day. When I walked through London on my way to move to Paris, about five different people along the way helped me with my bags. Every time I returned to Cardiff after summer or Christmas holidays, my dad drove all the way there and back for me.

So new beginnings may be rather a bit too commonplace to me. As I get ready to move to my new flat in Manchester and begin my teacher training, I can't help but feel a bit of anxiety. But ultimately through every time I have begun again, I have learnt something quite important: people are always willing to help. New beginnings are stressful, and yet they become a whole lot easier when you let people help you.

Zara Denno

New Beginnings 5

During my lifetime I have had many new beginnings. All were entered with excitement, anxiety or hope. Some were successful, others not.

However, my last big new beginning was entered with grief, loss and anxiety. After 62 years I found myself living alone. My husband, best friend, companion or supporter in most hobbies and interests had gone. What should I do? I had to make a new life, a new beginning.

My daughter in law had the first suggestion. She knew that St Mark's Church had a lunch and activities group which she suggested I join. It was quite an effort to do this, but I forced myself and found I was very welcome there. I had got over

hurdle number one. Next, she suggested Dance to Health at St Augustine's Church. We used to be quite keen dancers, (modern ballroom and Latin American), and I decided that the exercise would be good. It was not quite so hard when I tried this, though not the type of dance I was familiar with, I was welcomed there too. This was getting easier!

After meeting Viv there I started to come to St Augustine's Church. Next a neighbour persuaded me to go with her to her art group as she knew I used to paint. As I was now partially sighted, I did not think this was a good idea but she assured me the teacher could help. At last, I gave in and went with her. Again I was welcomed and that I could still paint, though in a completely different style. I have found a new happiness through these activities. I now organize a greetings card-making activity two or three times a year for the St Mark's group, as well as just going to enjoy other activities.

I then decided I had the confidence to try a holiday with a group specializing in assisted holidays for older or disabled people. I went to North Wales. Then, as this was a success, I went on to visit Amsterdam. I was asked if I would talk and show photos to the lunch group about these. I feel I am now giving something back. Where shall I go next? I am still looking.

It took a lot of effort to make a new life two years ago, but I have done it! Not only do I have a few new activities, but I have a lot of new friends.

Marjorie Jowett

Starting School

John's mother and father moved from St Augustines' Vicarage to Conisborough Vicarage in 1937. On May 8th 1940, it was time for John, aged 7 and his brother Francis, aged 6, to go to school. It was decided to send us to St Hughes School, Falkland Road in Doncaster. This was close to the Doncaster Playing Fields. The school uniform included blue caps with a white cross. They walked the two miles to the Waterdale Bus Station and caught the bus to Doncaster. There an elegant, 5 foot 9 inch Miss Shaw would escort us to school.

They say that clergymens' sons are the worst to bring up and John certainly lived up to this as he encouraged his younger brother to run from the bus station on our second day. This, of course, caused much distress and annoyance to Miss Shaw. The headmaster, Mr Crowther, duly reprimanded us and John, as the elder brother had to apologise to the elegant Miss Shaw. Not a good start!

Mr Crowther was an excellent headmaster and the school lasted 21 years. In his youth he was an outstanding half-miler and usually won with a smile. He enjoyed team events or games which he probably thought was character building, after all most things in life are about doing and helping others.

John Eddershaw

(New) Beginnings

In the beginning there was no beginning;
for there was only He who had no beginning.
He was, He always had been; is, and always will be;
without beginning and without end.

He who was without beginning decided to make a
beginning – not a new beginning, for there had been no old one.
This beginning was the beginning of all that we know:
the beginning of creation, of everything, seen and unseen.

This beginning began with nothing, and from it He made
something. Something utterly new. At first formless,
yet from the formlessness He formed the entire universe –
stars and planets, land and sea, fauna and flora; and then,

humanity – to be like Him in nature and attributes.
And He who had no beginning looked at all He had begun –
the beginning of all life forms, all created matter –
and said, This is really good! Beginnings are good!

But soon He saw that un-goodness had entered His creation;
and un-goodness was spoiling His lovely beginning;
and He regretted having begun this universe project.
He decided to sweep it all away in one massive flood.

But there was one good man, called Noah. So God decided
to save him and his family and representative animals; but all else
–
and everyone else – would perish in the overwhelming waters.
Then, He thought, He would begin again with this one boatful.

And so He who had no beginning, who had invented a beginning,
now began a new beginning, from which we owe our existence.
And He has plans for an even newer beginning to come:
when His Son returns, to inaugurate His new kingdom.
And that will be the last-ever new beginning.

Joy Tobler

Amateur Dramatics

My first amateur dramatics role came when I was 18 months old, re-enacting a scene from 'Postman Pat' at nursery. I've found it difficult to keep away from the theatre since, from school plays to current amateur dramatics performances. People sometimes ask me if amateur actors get paid at all. The answer is no, we do what we do for the love of theatre and because the feeling of being in the spotlight is unutterably amazing. Some used to be professional, (I've even performed with a retired magician) but nobody ever gets paid for being in an amateur production.

Generally, amateur companies operate in similar ways. Any member of the society is permitted to put themselves forward to direct. They present a play they wish to direct, although some societies will have a pre-set list of plays, as it costs money to license the plays. Even this has its pitfalls; on one memorable occasion, the licence for a play was withdrawn halfway through rehearsals! Plays in the public domain like Shakespeare don't have this problem and attract larger audiences; people are more likely to go and see a name they recognise. This is also why many companies do adaptations of older but well-known TV shows like 'Blackadder' or 'Dad's Army'.

Once the play has been chosen, the casting begins. Auditions, (following an open read-through of the script), will usually consist either of an actor reading a speech or two actors enacting a scene. This isn't always the case; some companies choose random extracts from other texts – my strangest audition ever involved Mark's Gospel, 'Dante's Inferno', and 'The Devil Wears Prada'.

Most societies try to strike a balance in casting – if someone was the lead in the previous play, they might get a more

junior role, or if someone is new to the society particular effort might be made to find a part for them. Casting is generally done by committee to ensure there's no favouritism. Whatever the size, I've always tried to live by the maxim that there aren't any small parts – only small actors!

Recruitment is also done at this time for set builders and tech people, along with people to manage costumes, front-of-house and publicity. Usually, amateur companies don't have hair and make up done, as it's rare to find someone who is skilled in these – we were very fortunate in my latest performance, ('Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde'), to have someone who volunteered to do exactly that.

Rehearsals then begin and last about 10 weeks, (or longer if you're only rehearsing once or twice a week). The shortest time I ever did a play in ('The Hound of the Baskervilles' with the Theatre Royal Youth Company in Bath) was three weeks, where we were rehearsing all day every day. Usually, amateur productions will rehearse between once and thrice a week for 10 weeks, until it comes to the night before performance week. Then comes the dreaded tech rehearsal, which is often the first time the actors and the backstage staff work together. This is where the acting and the lights, sound, special effects, etc come together, with it often being necessary to stop and start again a lot to get it just right. This means the tech rehearsal is also the longest rehearsal – for 'The Hound of the Baskervilles', we started at 4pm and didn't finish until midnight.

After the tech rehearsal, there will be one or two dress rehearsals, which ideally are exactly the same as performances just minus the audience. Once that's done, the stage is set, the curtain drops, and the next time it rises, it's opening night!

Amateur companies usually perform for five or six nights across a week. The longest run I ever had was 'Robin Hood', where we performed five evening performances plus two matinees. The experience of being onstage is, in my opinion, one of the best feelings in the world. Standing beneath the lights in full regalia, lines tripping off the tongue, castmates who have become good friends strutting around you, the smell of make up and biscuits in the dressing rooms, the story unfolding through you and, of course, the laugh of a good audience. This last cannot be overstated. Actors get a lot of their energy from the audience; it's very draining to



perform for a completely silent hall. But when you feel from the room and in yourself that your performance is flowing as smooth as you could wish it... it's one of the most exhilarating things I've ever experienced.

There's almost always a point in any play, (generally the tech rehearsal) where you think there's no way it's all going to come together. What's refreshing with amateur companies is that when things invariably go wrong, they are treated as part of the experience. For example, on the opening night of 'Run for Your Wife', we accidentally skipped a third of the second act and one of the doors fell off. A drainpipe in 'Party Piece' was the subject of bets as to whether it was going to fall down when it was supposed to or go too early (about half and half, as it turned out). 'The Hound of the Baskervilles' featured the top of a butterfly net flying off into the audience. But the mistakes are, for amateurs, a huge part of the fun and the memory, (though how many directors would agree I am unsure) and much frivolity is to be found in the dressing rooms afterwards.

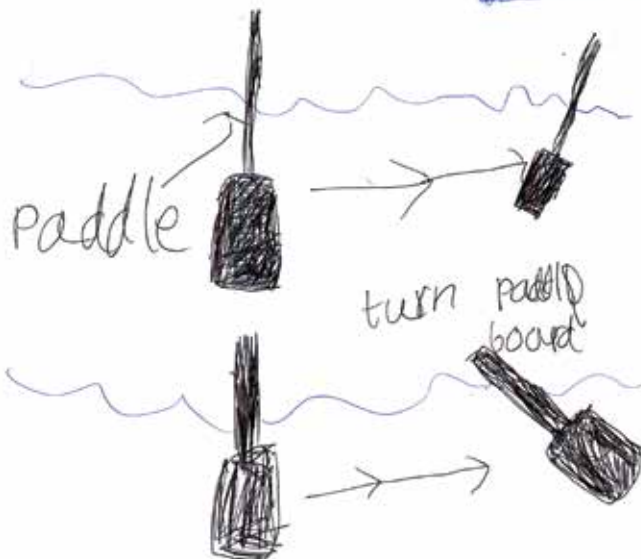
It's a strange feeling to be done – the thing that your life has revolved around for weeks gone in a puff of smoke, the people you've seen every few days reduced to casual acquaintances and the scenery and costumes tidied away ready for the next production but there is always a next production. I once spent three years away from the stage, but coming back felt like coming home. I hope the dramatic arts will form part of my life for many, many years to come.

Tom Pymer

Contributions from two of our younger church members

Paddleboarding

On the 24th of July I tried paddleboarding with my friend annie and her friends. I borrowed the paddleboard from annie's friends hec and otto. On the paddleboard I had a ~~watergun~~ watergun fight because one of annie's friends brought 2 water guns and the paddleboard was a ship and people had to get on it and I never fell off! I can paddle on the paddleboard, turn on the paddleboard, stand on the paddleboard and paddle on the paddle board and I even tried standing and turning on the paddle board. I hope I go again and I hope I have my own paddleboard to go on.



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A Summer Wedding

Sarah Brookes married Kyle Piggott on 8th August, a beautiful Saturday afternoon. The wedding party all looked gorgeous and the church was full with their family and friends. The church had been decorated with ribbons and flowers by members of the church family and the bridal party. Refreshments were served in the hall after the service, particularly enjoyed by several hungry children. Thanks were sent by the bride's father to everyone who helped before and during the day to make this such a happy occasion and an exciting new beginning for the couple.

Photographs by Christopher Hall



The Incredible Journeys of Jonathon Powell Wiffen... continued

In this episode I travelled south from Isfahan where I had spent Christmas, to one of the 'bucket list' places of my journey – Persepolis. The city was founded by Darius in 515BC and then followed by his son Xerxes and grandson Artaxerxes whose tomb overlooks the site. Biblical references to these three rulers can be found in the books of Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther. There are several days with no entry as I was travelling through the desert: Zahedan has been described as 'the end of all the deserts of the world.'

Persepolis Wednesday 27th December 1967

I spent a long time looking around the ruins – till about 2. They cover a very large area, built on an elevated platform by the side of 'Mount Mercy'. There is still intact the grand staircase, made of many shallow steps so that horses could climb up, and this leads to the entrance hall, the gate house of Xerxes, called the 'Gate of all Nations'. From here one went into the audience hall, which was almost a 100 yards square and had the remains of 36 huge columns. On the columns and staircases there were marvellous reliefs, dating from 400 BC and really looking very biblical.

In the desert near Yazd Saturday 30th December

Here there was one mosque with some particularly tall and fine minarets. One difference between Mosques here and in Turkey is that the better weather here means that there are very few covered Mosques, they just have a large yard, surrounded by prayer niches. In the middle of the yard there is a pond where they wash their feet, but unless you are actually praying, you do not take your shoes off, which makes it much easier for the tourist. However, the majority of the inhabitants of Yazd are Zoroastrians or fire worshippers. The architectural result of this is the 'towers of silence' which

are brick and wood constructions on top of the temples where the dead are hung out. I must admit I was a little disappointed not to see any corpses, although plenty of vultures circling in the thermals.

Zahedan Wednesday 3rd January 1968

I forgot to say that the student I met in Bam was a Zoroastrian and, this one, who surprisingly is called John, belongs to the Baha'i faith. It is very cold here at night and he has given me a blanket to put over my sleeping bag which is good.

Mashhad Thursday 6th January

According to the travel literature, the only thing to see in Mashhad is the shrine of Imam Reza – it is called the Mecca of the Shi'a sect of the Muslims. However, I now understand why it is so well described – it is because they will not let non-Muslims in. I was ejected, having got quite a way into the courtyard and was then chased off, just for taking a photograph from the outside looking in. It reminded me of the story of a German who was lynched here for taking a photograph of a religious procession.

Herat (Afghanistan) Tuesday 9th January

It was 75 miles to Herat which took 2½ hrs. It soon got dark and very, very cold. We were on a high plain with a small river valley on our left for most of the way. We stopped twice for the drivers to say their prayers towards Mecca – they seem very devout here. The language is almost the same as Farsi, with pronunciation changes, so I have not got to learn a whole new lot of words.

Kalat (Qalat) Friday 12th January

Here was the shrine of the Sacred Mantle which contains the mantle worn by Mohammed and which was brought from Bukhara in Russia by Ahmet Shah. This latter was a

king in the 18th century and was the first to unite the modern kingdom of Afghanistan. I was prevented by two soldiers from going into this place when a man came up to ask what the trouble was. I explained and he persuaded the guards to let me in. This man also took me back to the shrine and took me inside it where I had not dared to enter before. Here were some most beautiful tiles all around, but the mantle itself was showing its age.

Jonathon Powell-Wiffen





St Augustine's is proud to have become part of the Inclusive Church movement whose shared vision is:

"We believe in inclusive Church — church which does not discriminate, on any level, on grounds of economic power, gender, mental health, physical ability, race or sexuality. We believe in Church which welcomes and serves all people in the name of Jesus Christ; which is scripturally faithful; which seeks to proclaim the Gospel afresh for each generation; and which, in the power of the Holy Spirit, allows all people to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Jesus Christ."





Uniformed Groups

Groups are sponsored by St Augustine's and meet at the HQ at 17 Botanical Road. Enquiries about any of the Scout sections should be made to the Group Scout Leader: www.59thsheffield.org.uk

Beavers for age 6-8 yrs
www.59thsheffield.org.uk

Wednesdays 5.30

Cubs for age 8-10 yrs
www.59thsheffield.org.uk

Wednesdays 6.45

Scouts for age 10-14 yrs
www.59thsheffield.org.uk

Mondays 7.30
 Thursdays 7.15

We hope you enjoy reading this magazine and that it gives you a bit more of an insight into the life and work of this parish. If you have any comments or ideas please get in touch with Pam West (Editor).
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