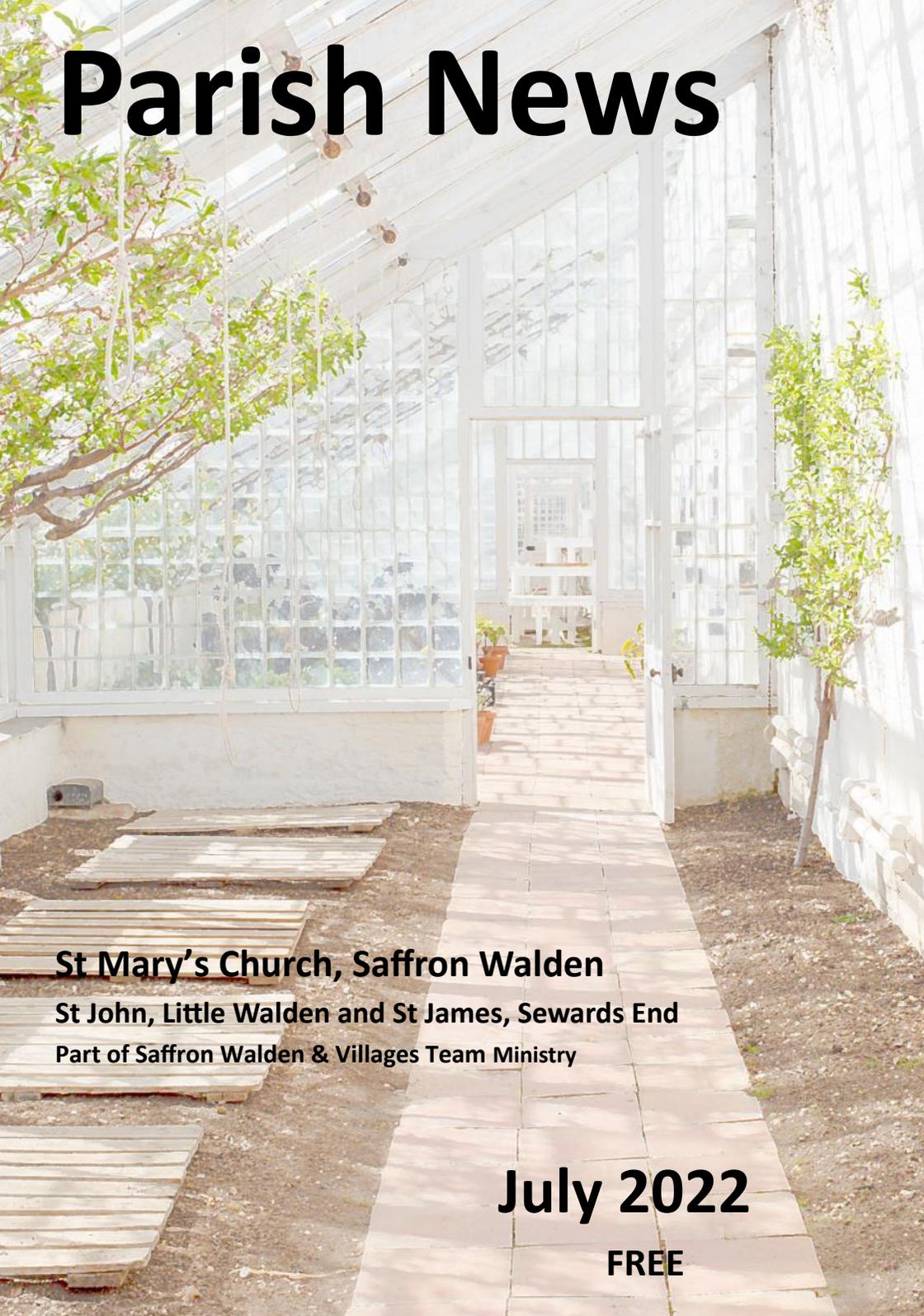


Parish News



St Mary's Church, Saffron Walden

St John, Little Walden and St James, Sewards End

Part of Saffron Walden & Villages Team Ministry

July 2022

FREE

Wonder and Worship: Reflections in a Scottish Rainforest

It can be easier to notice things away from home, when we are relaxed and surrounded by unfamiliar sights in an exotic location. But sometimes the same wonders are there in our own back yard. GK



© Ruth Bancewicz

Chesterton was a great

advocate of intensive observation, and he invited his readers to take a fresh look at things that might be taken for granted. The rewards for this mental adjustment are great, and can feed into our worship in new ways.

I first learned to appreciate old growth forests on the West coast of Canada: the centuries-old tangle of logs and underbrush, and thick layers of moss and lichen, that provide rich resources for countless organisms. Several years later, in Scotland, I stumbled over a few acres of birch and hazel, lush with moss and ferns, and humming with insect and bird life. Fallen logs lay everywhere, vegetation grew up the trees, creepers hung down, and sunlight slanted through clearings.

I later discovered that this patch of woodland is one of the few remaining areas of old growth Atlantic rainforest, so I visited one sunny morning when I had more time to linger. The wood is home to 140 species of lichen and 100 of moss, so I found myself looking very closely at tree trunks and boulders. Each lichen is a unique relationship between a fungus and a particular collection of single-celled algae – an example of the collaboration that is so essential to every ecosystem.

Places like this are worth preserving, respecting, and appreciating as much as a work of art or a historic city. I'm so grateful to the community that chose to preserve it, and the Creator who used such intricate and patient processes to create it. As the animals and plants around me did what comes to them naturally, I did what I was made for – thanking God for everything I saw. I found myself praising God alongside all those species of lichen, moss and trees. "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord" (Psalm 150).

There is a growing call to take both our personal devotions and our church services outside from time to time, and there are a growing number of resources to help us do this. As you go through your week, can you find one new way to appreciate your surroundings, and praise God alongside the rest of creation?

Dr Ruth Bancewicz, The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge

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PARISH NEWS - EDITORIAL DEADLINE

The deadline for contributions for each issue is the 1st Sunday of the previous month. Hence, the deadline for the **Aug-Sept** issue is **Sunday 3rd July**.

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www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org/parishnews

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St Mary's Church Website:

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The Rector's Letter

From The Rev'd Jeremy Trew

Jeremy writes...

In my less-wise moments, I would like to think that I am indispensable, but thankfully I am aware that I am not. Of course, if I did think that I would have plenty of company. Many of us like to think that our work/home/group of friends/etc (delete as applicable) would grind to a shuddering halt and collapse into chaos the moment we were absent. Thankfully this is usually not the case, and when it is it is often a result of bad management.

In my role as a Rector I am responsible to ensure there's someone there to take the services on any Sunday I am away. Thankfully I have others who coordinate this, and there are many skilled people to call upon for assistance. This has not always been the case, and some years it has been very difficult to find the support needed. Clergy are often not very good at taking time off, and I know of colleagues who would have stayed around if a problem cropped up. However, we might cloak our reasons in humility, it is actually pride that prevents people from letting go. We think we are too important to absent ourselves and so we treat ourselves as unimportant.

We all need holidays. Holidays are about much more than recreation. They serve an important role in our re-creation. This role was at the heart of the foundation of the first National Parks; the realisation that people need spaces which allow them to be re-created, remade. These spaces help repair the "wear and tear" of daily living; recognising that just as our bodies are continually replacing worn and damaged cells, so we need to repair our tired minds, emotions and souls. Christians see this in a God who was not only at the heart of creation as a one-off event, but who goes on creating and re-creating; "Behold, I make all things new," as the Good Book says. Maybe that's because God did not view us as some clockwork machine to be set loose and allowed to run about until our spring ran out, but as a more fragile vessel to be nurtured and re-formed as we live and grow.

So, if like me you find it difficult to take time off, throw away that "Protestant Work Ethic" (it's neither Protestant nor Christian anyway) and enjoy a bit of re-creation with your recreation. Happy holidays!

Best wishes

Jeremy



The Weekend Away 27th May - 29th May

Belsey Bridge Conference Centre



Photograph: Martin Hugall

Coffee Break

We now have a drop-in session from 10.15 to 12 Wednesday mornings at the back of church. An opportunity to meet with others informally in a friendly environment. Pop along and try us out.

Gill Caswell



*Not everyone has a natural gift for
rural ministry*

The Queen has kept *her* pledges. It's time to keep *ours*.

During the Platinum Jubilee, we celebrated and gave thanks to the Queen for keeping the vow she made over 70 years ago to serve the nation and Commonwealth. She has been flawless in keeping that vow.

At the Jubilee service in St Paul's Cathedral, representatives of young people from around the Commonwealth asked the 2,000 strong congregation of political and spiritual leaders: "Will you hallow life in all its richness and diversity?" and "Rejoicing in the beauty of this earth, will you protect and care for our environment?" To which the replies came back resoundingly, "We will!"



Children of the commonwealth leading the congregation at St Paul's in their pledges for the future of humanity.

However, such vows and promises do not have a track record of being kept. At COP 26 there was an agreement and pledge by world leaders to reduce methane emissions. Those emissions have since spiked. The International Energy Agency has calculated that methane emissions from the energy sector are about 70% greater than the sum of estimates submitted by national governments. This is of massive concern.

<https://www.iea.org/reports/global-methane-tracker-2022/overview#abstract>

Moreover, three former UN climate heads say that the gaps between government promises and actions will lead to "catastrophic" climate breakdown, as governments have failed to implement the actions needed to fulfil their promises. The policies and measures actually passed by governments could lead to temperature rises of 3.6°C, which would have irreversible changes to the global climate and "catastrophic" impacts for humanity. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/jun/02/current-policies-will-bring-catastrophic-climate-breakdown-warn-former-un-leaders>

It was heartening that Prince William's speech at the Platinum Party at the Palace had such a strong focus on the environment, reflecting the findings of

successive IPCC reports, saying that, “the pressing need to protect and preserve our planet has never been more urgent.”

While applauding this message, I try to avoid the phrase ‘save the planet.’ The planet will be fine for a few more billion years spinning on its axis and revolving around the sun. It is arrogant to think that anything we do can ‘save the planet’. What we need to do is have the humility to recognise that our lives totally depend on the fragile ecosystems of the earth, and that man-made climate change and biodiversity loss are already massively affecting those systems.

For me it’s not just the wildlife of polar bears, albatrosses and tigers that we must save, but the micro-organisms of the soil and the oceans, on which we and all wildlife depend. The damage we have done to our soils, seas and skies has placed us in a precarious position. The war in Ukraine is showing how vulnerable our food supply chains are. Food prices are rising sharply already. Repeated harvest failures in India, China, the USA and Canada will have an even greater impact.

Prince William spoke of hope and optimism. On such an occasion that was indeed the right note to strike. But it is an optimism I am unable to share. Extreme weather conditions will become ever more frequent as we head to carbon zero. It is only after that that future generations will slowly turn the world carbon negative, extracting the emissions that we continue to pump into our fragile world, and slowly bring temperatures back down.

But it is not for children and grandchildren to bear that burden yet. It is for us, the adult generations, to do everything within our power, personally, locally, nationally and internationally to start the long overdue transformation of global economies and politics that are needed to change our global trajectory.

Failing to keep the pledges made at St Paul’s Cathedral would be unforgivable.

Edward Gildea, Eco Team Leader

Smile Lines

Solar power

Somebody finally invented a solar-powered laundry dryer. It’s called a ‘clothes-line’.

Grandchildren

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MU Ascension Day Festival Service

On Thursday 26th May the Mothers' Union gathered together in the North Chapel to celebrate Ascension Day, to celebrate our membership of the Mothers' Union and to give thanks for its vital overseas work. We thank our Rector, Rev'd Jeremy Trew, for taking the service. We welcomed our guest preacher, The Very Rev'd Rod Reid, who is the Mothers' Union Diocesan Chaplain, and five ladies from the Lady of Compassion Church.

Members participated in the service. Sheilah led us in alternate verses of Psalm 96 'Sing to the Lord a new song'; Pamela read from Ephesians 'that Christ was made to sit at God's right hand'; Jenny read Luke 'Jesus, parting from his disciples and being lifted up to heaven'

Rev'd Rod Reid spoke about 'looking up' – at starry nights or golden sunsets – at God's wonderful creation. 'Living up' to the teachings of Jesus and following 'the way'. Mention was made of Mary Poppins – you have to 'look up' to see her and he compared the pull on a kite when almost out of sight in the sky to God's pull on us, always being there, especially when we drift.

Prayers of thanksgiving were offered for our founder Mary Sumner, the Queen, who is our patron, the worldwide President and those who lead us in the diocese. Also, for the vital work being carried out in health, education and practical skills in many of the poorer Mothers' Union countries.

Gwynneth, our Deanery Contact, then introduced Helen to read the Aims and Objects of the Mothers' Union and Rev'd Rod Reid led members in the Affirmation of their Commitment. Gwynneth completed this by saying, 'We commit ourselves to the work of Jesus Christ through our membership' and led us into the Mothers' Union prayer.

We thank Oli very much for pushing a piano into the North Chapel, enabling us to sing the hymns heartily. After the blessing before members departed for tea, he played a lively performance of 'Let's go fly a kite' from Mary Poppins which Rev'd Rod Reid enjoyed very much.

There was a retiring collection for the MU Summer of Hope Project for the training of Mothers' Union Leaders overseas particularly in marginal countries. Everyone enjoyed afternoon tea in the parish rooms afterwards.

Brenda Sheath

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Archive Group

A monthly record of pieces of interest from our past Parish Magazines

Having experienced all the Jubilee festivities last month, this month I have gone back to 1952 and 1953 for obvious reasons.

March 1952

The death of the King has United us all in a common grief and we have thanked God for his grand example of duty shouldered and carried through to the end.....Every Sunday without fail the earthly monarch gave his homage to the Heavenly King and on the working days he gave himself to his heavy task of Kingship. We each, no less, have our task in life to do efficiently for God, hallowed and directed aright by our weekly act of homage in the House of God.

July 1953

On all sides one hears how tremendously impressed people were by the dignity, reverence and grandeur of the Coronation Service as it was followed by millions of folk through the wonders of science in their own homes. To us church folk it was very specially inspiring to find the great acts of the anointing and crowning of our Queen set in the midst of the Choral Eucharist with the familiar and much loved words from the Book of Common Prayer.

Canon Chris Bishop. Archivist



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From the Registers

Baptisms

22nd May Octavia-Wyllow Talamantes-Wicks
 Margaux Talamantes-Wicks
 Naomi Evelyn Parry-Wicks

Funerals

25th March Majorie Mahoney
30th March Doreen Hill
1st April Norma Starte
5th April John Sibson
6th April Minnie Armstrong
12th April Trevor Cranwell
20th April Vera Hamilton
29th April David Curtis
4th May Frank Port
5th May Edward O'Connor
9th May David Boreham
11th May John Hiley
17th May Ian Sibbald
24th May Dorothy Young
 Charles Probert

Weddings

21st May James Dickens & Charlotte Barlow

28th May Samuel Bryan & Rebecca Tomlinson



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Prayer for the month *provided by the Prayer Team*

Christ has no body now but yours.

No hands, no feet on earth but yours.

Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world.

Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good.

Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world.

Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body.

Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

St. Teresa of Avila

Christmas Fair Planning Team

As you all know we were not able to put on our usual Christmas Fair in 2020 or 2021 which meant a loss of income as well as a lot of fun.

If we are to hold a 2022 Christmas Fair then we need to put a team together. Someone to manage the event plus a team to handle for instance, the publicity, any legal aspects (licensing etc), set up the day before and on the day, put away on the afternoon of the event plus being there during the event to help with stewarding etc. We will then also need a team to help with refreshments and of course stall holders.

It is a team effort and very rewarding so if you feel you could help by working on the planning team, even in a small way, please get in touch so that we can get together to start planning.

Contact Gill Caswell



Calendar for July 2022

This calendar is provisional. See The Grapevine or the church website for the latest information, particularly for streaming of services.

St Mary's, Saffron Walden

One service in church each Sunday is streamed on YouTube [Y]: details on the church website.

Sunday 3 July

8am BCP Holy Communion
10am First Sunday Communion [Y]
6.30pm H2H

Wednesday 6 July

1.10pm Lunchtime Concert - Elliot Randall, Organ

Thursday 7 July

10am Silent Prayer
1pm Service with Prayers for Wholeness & Healing

Sunday 10 July

8am BCP Holy Communion
10am Holy Communion [Y]
6.30pm Choral Evensong

Wednesday 13 July

1.10pm Lunchtime Concert - Students from SWCHS

Sunday 17 July

8am BCP Holy Communion [Y]
10am Family Service
6.30pm Evening Communion with Prayers for Wholeness and Healing

Wednesday 20 July

1.10pm Lunchtime Concert
Diana Hoy, Contralto
Wendy Watts, Piano

7.30pm Deanery Service of Holy Communion with the Bishop of Chelmsford, the Rt Rev'd Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani. Refreshments from 6.45pm (All welcome)



Sunday 24 July

- 8am BCP Holy Communion
- 10am Holy Communion [Y]
- 3pm Organ Plus Concert: Oliver King (Organ), Kate Llewellyn (Trumpet) & Guy Llewellyn (French Horn). Free Admission with retiring collection
- 6.30pm Evening Prayer

Sunday 31 July

- 8am BCP Holy Communion
- 10am Holy Communion [Y]
- 6.30pm Taizé Service

Regular weekday services at St Mary's

Tuesdays

- 5pm Evening Prayer by Zoom, see weekly bulletin for login details

Wednesdays

- 8am Morning Prayer
- 9.30am Holy Communion

Wednesday Lunchtime Concerts

All the concerts start at 1.10pm and last approximately 40 minutes. Refreshments are available from 12.30pm. Free Admission with retiring collection.

St James', Swards End

Sunday 10 July

- 9.30am Morning Praise

Sunday 24 July

- 9.30am Holy Communion



St John's, Little Walden

Sunday 10 July

- 11.15am Family Service

Sunday 24 July

- 11.15am Holy Communion



Monumental Brass Society
in association with the
Essex Society for Archaeology and History
Saffron Walden, Essex
Saturday, 16th July 2022

The church of St Mary the Virgin at Saffron Walden is one of Essex's largest churches, with a total length of nearly sixty-two metres, occupying a commanding position above the streets of the quaint market town. The present Perpendicular building was begun in the late 15th century with the spire added in 1832.

The church contains a very interesting collection of ten brasses ranging in date from c.1430 to 1619. The majority were returned from Audley End House in 1901 by Charles Cornwallis, 5th Baron Braybrooke and mounted on the north aisle wall. A brass inscription records the fact (LSW.XX). David Lepine, our Hon. Editor, will focus on the two 15th century clerical brasses. The earliest dated c.1430 depicts a priest in mass vestments with an unusual device of a pelican in piety renewed in 1901 (see illustration opposite). The building also contains twenty-one indents many of which pave the floor of the south chapel.

The one outstanding monument by Cornelius Harman commemorates Thomas Lord Audley who died in 1544. The black touchstone tomb is a rare example of the provincial influence of Henry VII's Italian memorial in Westminster Abbey. David Carrington, the renowned conservator from the Skillington Workshop, will share his knowledge of the tomb and explain the proposals to move it from the south chapel to the north aisle.

Programme

- 2.00pm **Welcome**
by Martin Stuchfield, President of the Monumental Brass Society
- 2.05pm **The medieval town of Saffron Walden**
by Liz Allan
- 2.35pm **'He fed his sheep well': the clerical brasses of St Mary's, Saffron Walden**
by David Lepine
- 3.00pm Tea and viewing of the brasses
- 3.30pm **The tomb of Thomas Lord Audley, Lord Chancellor, 1544**
by David Carrington

The Church will be open prior to the meeting and all are welcome. The meeting is free with no booking required.

Martin Stuchfield, President of the Monumental Brass Society



Pelican in piety engraved in 1901 from the brass of a priest in mass vestments, dated c.1430.

Kathryn Fiddock, Saffron Walden Historical Society, writes...

Among the brasses mounted on the north aisle wall is a 15th century clerical brass, which includes an unusual device of a 'pelican in her piety' (feeding her young with her blood), which will be discussed. There were once many more brasses in the church which were lost in the 1790s restoration. Those that remain were taken to Audley End for safe keeping and returned in 1901 by Charles Cornwallis, 5th Baron Braybrooke.

The black touchstone tomb of Thomas Audley is the outstanding monument in the church. It was considered appropriate by his contemporaries since it was 'as black as his heart'. It is in the south chapel, now the choir vestry, but there are plans to move it to the eastern end of the north aisle.

All are welcome to come to these free talks.

Stamp Sale for Church Music and Building Funds

After nearly three years, we are holding another Stamp Sale!

Saturday 20th August between 9.30 and 12.30 - but in a new venue, (as the Town Council are now using the rooms at the Town Hall). We will be in the Saffron Community Link premises, which are next to the Saffron Building Society (who are providing the space free of charge), in the premises in Market Street previously occupied by Steamer Trading Cookshop. Come along for a cup of coffee - even if you are not a mad keen philatelist.

We have been holding the sales for over forty years and, over that time, have raised more than £16,000 for church funds. All the stamps on sale have been donated and are usually priced at about 25% of Stanley Gibbons Catalogue values.

The idea of holding stamp sales followed on from a stall at the Annual Fair of our previous church - St Stephen's, Bush Hill Park (in North London). The Youth Fellowship had held a jumble sale and someone gave them a large box of stamps. David was the only person who knew anything about stamps and started with a few packets on the YF stall. It all grew from that!

Diana & David Hoy

YOUinthe**PEW** interviewed by Chris Bishop

Patrick Li

李國雄 That is my Chinese name. 😊

Where were your roots and when and why did you come to live in Saffron Walden? Hi Chris, my roots lie somewhere spread out between Dunfermline/ Fife where I was born, Hong Kong where my father comes from, and a little parish in Angeln/North Germany where my mother was born and where I was baptized at the age of six (and later confirmed). Somewhere and sometime between the swinging sixties and the glasnost nineties there is also

Edinburgh, Croydon, Purley and Banbury as well as Cologne, Munich, Schwerin, Berlin, Frankfurt, Dortmund, Graz and Hamburg where I was awarded an MA in English and Chinese Language and Literature. I have also travelled as a Stage Manager and Director around the German, English and Austrian Theatre World. Why Saffron Walden? It was my wife Jacqueline's wish to live and work as a teacher in England, so when our two boys had reached the right age we decided to relocate in 2001. We needed to live somewhere near Stansted Airport for me to commute and the charm of this lovely market-town, plus St Mary's, plus SW County High School and Newport Free Grammar School round the corner quickly caught our attention and after a short taster-period based in Bishops Stortford we decided to move to Saffron Walden and stay.

What brought you to St Mary's? In the years between 2001 and 2006 I had occasionally worshipped at St Mary's Saffron Walden and I was deeply moved by the spirituality of this Church, its music and warm, welcoming words. When I gave up commuting back to Germany it was a no-brainer to ask for admission to the Church Choir and to become a regular member of the congregation. For worshipping, I have only looked as far as Wendens Ambo and Little Walden ever since – well, the Cambridge Churches and Chapels every now and then.

Apart from being a member of the congregation what other events etc have you enjoyed, or still enjoy here? Non-related to my faith and my music, this would have to be running (surely the slowest runner the Saffron Striders have ever accommodated), walking (again slowly), very light gardening, cooking, the Town Library and watching International Football at the Football Club. Meeting, chatting and eating with the many lovely friends I have made here over the years...



What event in Saffron Walden sticks in your mind as being the most enjoyable/ thought provoking / or moving since you have lived here? This is a tough one to answer. I find it very hard to single out one single event and I feel truly blessed with an abundance of theological and musical inspiration. The reading of the King James Bible to mark the 500th Anniversary of its publication was very special indeed, but also the Weekends Away stand out. The Christian Studies Course with Jeremy Collingwood, Angela Want and Marisa Baltrock was an eye-opener on my faith journey. In music, may I shortlist 4 items? **Only 4?** Singing with our choir for Benjamin Britten's St Nicolas with Oliver King at the helm had a profound impact on me. In 2016 David Briggs from St John-the-Divine, New York popped round to improvise on our Hill, Norman & Beard Organ upstairs over the silent movie "The Phantom of the Opera"; the memories of which still haunt me whenever I look up to the organ loft. My own humble rendition of Schubert's "Winterreise" featuring Jane van Tilborg on the Grand Piano in 2014 was certainly a personal musical milestone, and lastly but not least, singing in Elgar's "Dream of Gerontius" with my eyes glued to Sir Stephen Cleobury's baton at Saffron Hall will stay with me as long as I live and probably beyond. I could go on and on ... the recent concert in aid of Ukraine is another one... the recent Taizé Service with Marisa Baltrock, Oli King and Eden Faith ... Jeremy Trew's Talk at the Thanksgiving Service for the Queen's Jubilee today - let's stop here ... now that I have finally arrived in the present...

If you had a family coat of arms what motto would you like to have on it? This one is short and easy to answer: "Live and Spread Love and Peace." But easier said than done!





St Mary's Music News

July 2022 SMMA newsletter (written 5 June)

There has been little reduction in pace for the choir, even after Easter. Rehearsals are already underway for Festal Evensong at 6.30 on Sunday 12 June, followed by Choral Eucharist for the Feast of Corpus Christi at 8pm on Thursday 16 June. More complex anthems, such as Stanford's *Beati Quorum Via* and Finzi's *God Is Gone Up*, have returned to the repertory following rebuilding skills after Covid.

Meanwhile, Organ Scholar Yechan has now ventured down from the organ loft where he has become accustomed to playing hymns and voluntaries to conduct the choir for the first time during a service. Choral evensong on 8th May included a rousing performance of Herbert Sumsion's *They That Go Down to the Sea*, which describes a seafarer in a storm "staggering like a drunken man". It may or may not have been a coincidence that shortly afterwards the choir enthusiastically recommenced the pre-Covid tradition of meeting in the pub after the Friday evening rehearsal.

In addition to the usual Sunday services, the choir have supported worship at the Choral Eucharist on Ascension Day, and also the Civic Service to celebrate Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

The Brass Group joined the choir to ensure that the Civic Service raised the roof. For this service on 5 June the choir – like many others in the country – performed an anthem written by Thomas Hewitt Jones, specially commissioned by the Royal School of Church Music for the occasion, with lyrics based on extracts from the Queen's own speeches. It was designed in a similar spirit to the Platinum Pudding, namely that it has to suit a wide range of abilities, from the domestic cook to master chefs, or for singers from the school or village hall to cathedral choirs. To ensure that it can be as long lasting as the Victoria sponge or Coronation chicken, the last verse has 2 sets of words, 1 for the Jubilee, and 1 for use in the years to come. The Brass Group and organ bookended the service magnificently, opening with Haydn's *The Heavens are telling the Glory of God*, and closing with Karg-Elert's *Nun Danket Alle Gott*.

Looking forward to the more immediate future, the SMMA is delighted that its successful lunchtime concert programme, which had to be cancelled

during the last 2 years, is running throughout June and July. Concerts start at 1.10 pm on Wednesdays, and last for approximately 40 minutes. Refreshments are available from 12.30 pm. There is free admission, and a retiring collection.

Click here for a link to the musical treats on offer:

www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org/lunchconcerts

Otilie Lefever

St Mary's Church Wednesday Lunchtime Concerts

All the concerts start at 1.10pm and last approximately 40 minutes.

Refreshments available from 12.30pm.

Free Admission with retiring collection.

- | | |
|---------|--|
| 6 July | Elliot Randall, organ |
| 13 July | Students from SWCHS |
| 20 July | Diana Hoy, contralto
Wendy Watts, piano |



From one of the Daughters

The so called " Occasional Offices" do not occur very often in the "Daughter Churches " so when they do they are particularly special. So it was on Sunday 22nd May when Nicola and Matt Williamson (our Youth worker at St Mary's) brought their two children for " A service of Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child." Joshua Thomas and Emilia Louise were the centre of attention. This was not a baptism but their names were formally announced, promises were made, bibles presented and a blessing given. Matt and Nicola brought their family and supporters and the church was packed to the extent that the regular members of the congregation had difficulty in finding a seat. It was joy to greet Rev'd Rachel Prior (our former curate) and her family. Refreshments were served in the Hall afterwards in the abundant manner for which St John's is well known. Regular worship has now returned to the pre-Covid pattern (with some restrictions). St John's was well represented at the Parish Weekend and it was so good to share fellowship with others across the team.

Michael Lovegrove

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St Mary's Book Group have been reading "Fathomless Riches"

In May St Mary's Book Group met to discuss this book, the autobiography of *The Reverend Richard Coles* (*he points out at the end that he is very keen to always be referred to with his title*).

He is not someone I had known much about. The little I have seen or heard of him has been on occasional appearances on panel shows and from a programme in the 'Winter Walks' series on BBC last year. He was interviewed recently on 'Look East', after he'd announced his retirement from the ministry. It's possible I've missed my chance to hear his regular Saturday slot on Radio 4, though a search on BBC Sounds reveals a few programmes with him as a guest, including an interview with "organist Martin Baker and lapsed organist Rev'd Richard Coles".

The book falls into three sections: his early life, son of a Northampton bootmaker, his first musical steps as a chorister; his pop music career; and his conversion to Christianity - after a brief period on the other side of the Tiber - to his ordination at Boston Stump in 2005. It is a thought-provoking account which is, by turns, sad, humbling and inspiring, though the middle section drags a little (it gets a bit repetitive: same story, different characters).

His has not been an easy life. The wealth he found as a pop star led to the taking of drugs, sometimes to dangerous excess. He struggled with relationships and his earlier attachments seemed to be numerous and short-lived, though there were a few over whom he held prolonged obsessions. All this takes place against the development of AIDS, which claimed the lives of several he knew. Even his theological college, Mirfield in West Yorkshire, was prone to instances of bullying. Yet one can't help wondering if these life experiences might prove good preparation for a pastoral vocation.

As is often the case, the book prompted much interesting discussion; including, in no particular order: other towns with a history of manual trade (such as the cutlers of Thaxted); the pros and cons of living in Brussels; European empires and colonial Africa; and whether any of us had considered training for the priesthood (answer: no).

The author has since published other books - including one on the death of his life partner, David - which the group seemed keen to explore at a later date. Meanwhile, we are reading The Rev'd Fergus Butler-Gallie's "A field guide to the English clergy".

Simon Potter



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The Poetry Workshop at Belsey Bridge Conference Centre 27 - 29 May

I had a lovely group of seven at the poetry workshop at the Weekend Away. In the short time available everyone managed to produce a piece with a working title of "Open the Door", inspired by a Wordsworth quotation – "Fill your paper with the breathings of your heart". Here are three that have been offered for inclusion in the magazine.

Christine Ractliff

Open the door....

Open the door: what will you see?
The path of power
To set you free.

Open the door: what will you hear?
Music, laughter,
To dispel fear.

Open the door: what will you feel?
Compassion for the child
Waiting to heal.

Open the door: what will you smell?
The scents of sorrow
Encased in their shell.

Open the door: what will you taste?
The feasts of heaven
The end to waste.

Carey Dickinson

OPEN THE DOOR

From the Poetry Workshop at the Weekend Away

The door was shut
Clanged, hard and solid, in my face.
Its fierce and powerful wooden weight
Too thick to admit the slightest chink of light
And ribbed with iron bars
Glowered unflinchingly and crushed my soul:
*You **can't** come in.*

The door was shut.
Where was the knocker offering sanctuary?
Where were the kindly warders with the key?
I looked all round: no help, no softness to be seen
And no way back.

Open the door! my heart screamed silently
Not daring to give voice.
Yet in that very instant I perceived
I feared as much what lay beyond:
No comfort, no content, but cold rejection
As icy as this threshold where I stood
Caught on the cusp between despair and fear.

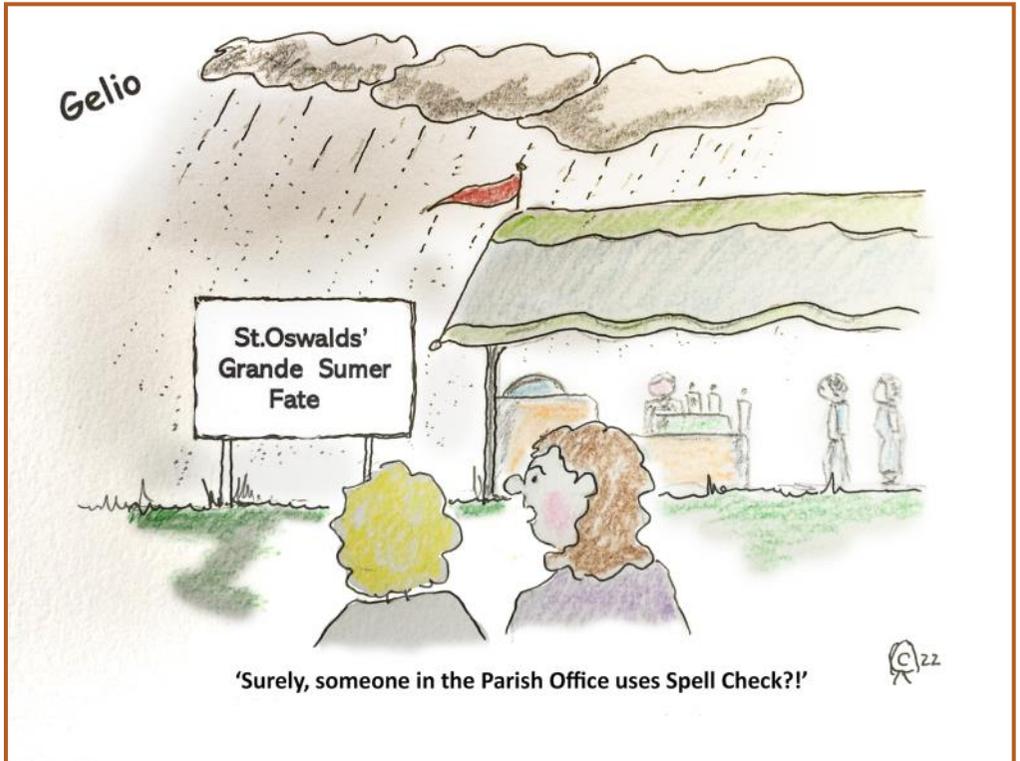
But then my inward voice took courage and cried out:
I will not stay!
Beyond this door is coldness, freezing of all love.
I will away, turn round, and travel
Hard as it may be
To find another door which points the way to love.
There it will open
There I can go through
And find what I am meant to find
And be.

Paula Griffiths

Open the door?

A wobbly lintel casts flakes of paint and dust
as I rattle the door.
Weeds obscure the cracks where mice scutter through.
A rusty lock grips the ancient key
I try to move it but I'm not strong enough
I turn away
Will you help me?
Your hand enfolds mine and the key turns
The latch lifts
Together we open the door and step through.

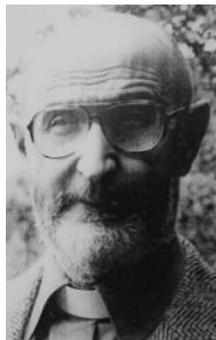
Judith Hasler



Remembering Allan

On Saturday 14th May, as we sat in Great Chesterford Church at the Thanksgiving service for the late Rev'd Canon Allan Kemp I thought back to that busy day in January, the month when we make marmalade in our house. I was busy on line with my family history investigations before the marmalade making started, and thinking about my Granny who died in the Spanish Flu epidemic. A conversation followed with my husband as the oranges were squeezed and cut for the marmalade. I had found my mother, Dorothy, in the new 1921 Census that had recently been published. Dorothy was the illegitimate baby of my Granny and she now appeared to have been adopted. Paying attention to the marmalade, stirring it, and letting it simmer for a while, I glanced at the time. Between discussing family history and marmalade making we had an unexpected online funeral of our dear friend, which we did not want to miss. Taking turns to visit the kitchen to stir the marmalade we watched Allan's funeral, sang hymns and prayed. As the curtains closed behind the coffin, we said goodbye to our friend, who was many miles away that day in January. Zoom has its compensations. I thought too of my Granny dying of the Spanish Flu, with her new baby. Did she have a funeral, or was she alone? A deep sigh, a tear, a solemn goodbye to Allan, then sadly back to the kitchen. Eleven jars of marmalade this year, not so bad after all. A cup of tea, and a nice slice of toast and marmalade was good, before I returned to some more investigations. The service of Thanksgiving on Saturday was a happy one, we met with many friends not seen for some time, caught up with people's lives, chatted about Allan, and enjoyed cake and tea together.

Margaret Barnes



Quote, Unquote

I don't think I can be expected to take seriously any game which takes less than three days to reach its conclusion. – *Tom Stoppard*

If you would like to know the value of money, go and try to borrow some. – *Benjamin Franklin*

Enter my Rest

At this time of the year we are planning and looking forward to holidays: to that welcome break away from the pressures and responsibilities of daily life and work. The book of Genesis opens with a glorious account of God's work of creation and tells us that even God rested on the 7th day.

We all need to find that balance of work and rest, of activity and slowing down in our lives. And we are not always good at that because our world seems to be in the fast lane. We rush everywhere, we rush out of habit, and we rush because everyone around us is rushing.

This month's painting, 'The Potato Planters' by Jean-Francois Millet, a 19th century French artist, portrays two peasants at work. They don't seem to be rushing, but Millet has certainly portrayed the hard toil of their work, digging in the earth from sunrise to sunset to eke out a living. Millet was the son of a farm labourer and many of his paintings convey the severe realism of peasant life. We can sympathise with the couple working on the land, and our eyes focus on them as they dominate the canvas.

But in the corner under the shade of a tree there is a donkey and a sleeping child. The donkey knows only too well the reality of toil and work, but here he is resting, enjoying the peace and the shade. Andy Merrifield, an American philosopher, has just published an account of his travels with a donkey, Gribouille. As they journey together, the donkey teaches him the value of patience, the importance of going slowly through the world, and the preciousness of tender friendship between humans and animals. They are all caught up in the little donkey in this painting.

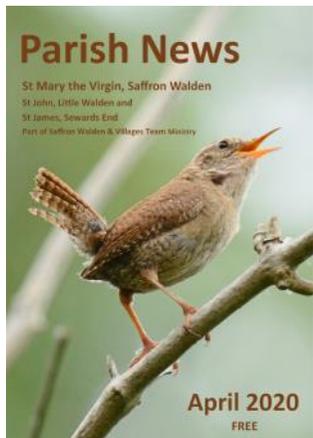
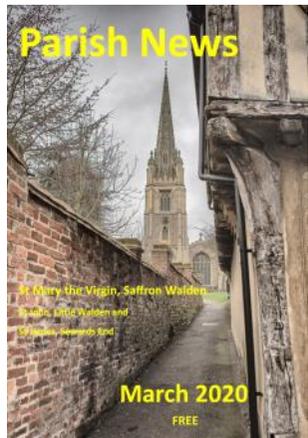
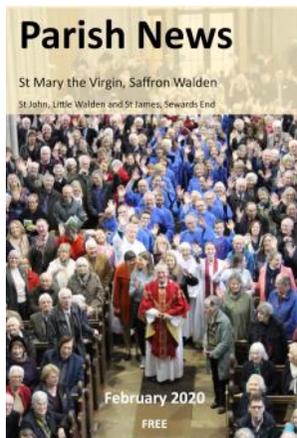
The man and woman in the foreground may reflect our own lives with the duties, the expectations and the demands called of us at work. Take time to focus on the donkey, enjoying his rest. Take time this summer to find relaxation and recreation on holiday. The world may carry on spinning around us, but use that holiday to stand apart and enter into the rest that God enjoyed after His work of creation.

The Rev'd Michael Burgess (Parish Pump)

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