

## **An account of the Centenary Service at St John's Church, Little Walden on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2010 - by Emese Karolyi, a Junior Chorister at St Mary's.**

The small but faithful church has an aura of welcome, blessedness and love. We couldn't help feeling elated as we stepped into the sweet smell of pollen and looked around the cheerful little building. By no means was it as grand as St Mary's but it had a certain magic about it and I was sure that God was sitting there with us, perhaps even in the front pews.

As the church slowly filled, we saw some (dare I say) old faces, curates from a while ago: Lee Batson, David Twinley and Richard Finch with their loving families behind them. Anne Howson led the service, and after welcoming all our friends, welcomes Revd. David Tomlinson and we stand for the first hymn, 'Lord through the Years Your Love Has Kept and Guided'.

After a beautifully put confession, David Twinley introduces us to his chosen hymn. He starts with 'I didn't know which Hymn to choose' but as the speech develops, he explains why the hymn 'Just as I Am' appeals to him, and what it is that makes it so special. After David's delightful hymn, Kate Beare reads to us from Matthew chapter 5:14-16, which is then followed by Anne's famous 'Short Reflection' that would melt the heart of glacier as she tells us about the terrible and hard, struggles St John's faced. And then about how God saved the small but faithful church, after hearing Rene Start and Joan Groom's prayers regarding the church. I'm sure God would not, could not stand by and watch as these faithful women pray fervently for the future of the Church. And their prayers were answered when small and young families moved and came to the Church that had lacked members for a long time. With Kate's eagerness and friends, a weekly Sunday club formed, helping the church to uphold itself and the catholic faith. This flower has been blooming ever since and the church now stands, proud and old, but never abandoning its faith.

Anna Howson unleashes her loving power as she introduces 'Dear Lord and Father of Mankind' and deciphers how this hymn made her cry and how it made her the lovely and determined priest she is now. Hearing Anne speak of the hard times she faced on her way to becoming a priest, made us appreciate exactly how much that hymn can do for you. It was now Lee Batson's turn to unravel his hymn, and armed with baby Anne-Louise of the congregation, he gave thanks for all those future generations that will uphold the church and its building then handed the nearly screaming baby back to her mother just in time for 'The Lord's My Shepherd I'll Not Want'. The offertory was in aid of the Pakistan Appeal, to help them restore order after the devastating floods. After the Blessing comes the 'Blessing of the Kneelers and the Banner', Richard Finch divulges his 50 year old 'New Melody': 'O Jesus, I Have Promised'.

Tracey Nicholls, Ellie and Susie Beare and Jake Nash read the intercessions, after which we proceed outside to dedicate two benches to Rene Start and Joan Groom who "*fought the fight, finished the race, and kept the faith*".

Naturally it was then time for coffee, tea, juice and biscuits!