

Parish News

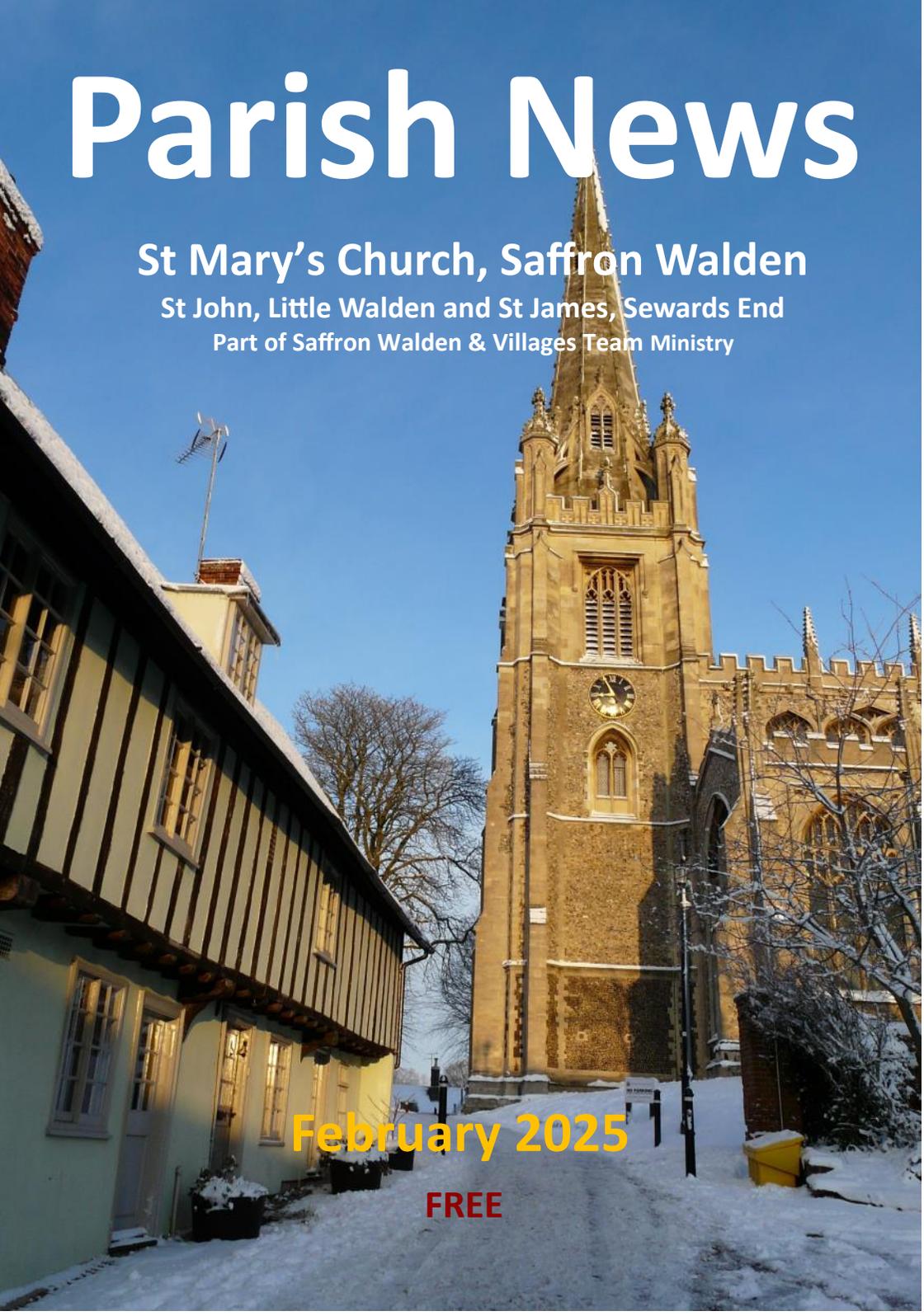
St Mary's Church, Saffron Walden

St John, Little Walden and St James, Sewards End

Part of Saffron Walden & Villages Team Ministry

February 2025

FREE



Rehearsal for the Christmas Carol Service



Contents for February 2025

THE RECTOR'S LETTER	4
NOTICEBOARD	
Calendar	16
New Cathedral Dean	18
Lent Quiet Morning	19
Hope into Action	19
From the Registers	20
REPORTS	
November PCC Meeting	12
Friends of the Parish Church	14
St Mary's Music News	2 and 21
Christmas Fair 2024	30
FEATURES	
You in the Pew	6
Ask the Treasurer	9
A Prayer for February	17
Living Alone	22
Gelio	23
The cracked 7th Bell	26
From the Archive	27
What's In A Name?	28
The Hundred Parishes: winter walks	29

PARISH NEWS - EDITORIAL DEADLINE

The deadline for contributions for each issue is the 1st Sunday of the previous month. Hence, the deadline for the **March** issue is **Sunday 2nd February 2025.**

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Choir rehearsal photographs by Martin Huggall*

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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...

February is often one of those non-descript months, falling as it does between the holidays of Christmas and Easter, between the depths of winter and the hopes of spring. Thankfully, then, there is St. Valentine's Day. A day to celebrate love and relationships; a day to say, "I love you."



It's also the date by which our Team Wedding Preparation Day has occurred. We invite all the couples who have booked weddings across the Team for the year; updating them on details; reminding them of things still to be sorted; and, most importantly, helping them to prepare as a couple and spiritually, for this great occasion. Weddings are one of the parts of my role I enjoy the most. They're times of excitement and hope, when a huge commitment is made, with the determination that it will be made to work. Of course, I'm not naïve, and I have been a priest long enough to know of couples I have helped marry who are now divorced. A Bible reading often chosen by couples for their wedding is from the First letter to the Corinthians, chapter 13. This reading speaks of the nature of love; its cost, its reward, its constancy in times good and bad. It recognises that love is not easy, nor automatic, but that it is nevertheless life enhancing and ultimately fulfilling for those who will nurture its growth.

Weddings are fun, but they're only a step along a journey which may see love grow to its full maturity. The love a couple have on their wedding day is very rarely a mature love. It is full of naïve expectations. There's nothing wrong with that, so long as the couple do not confuse the growth and maturing of their love over the coming years with merely a loss of that first joy, for joy and love are two quite different things. Joy, as with sadness, comes for a moment, and then is gone. Love is long term and must be nurtured if it is to grow.

So, if you are going to celebrate in some way on St. Valentine's Day; whether it is with your spouse, your partner, or if you are at the beginnings of a relationship which may lead... who knows where... enjoy your celebration; enjoy the joy; and also pledge yourselves afresh in whatever commitment you have made to the labour of love which is the nurturing of love.

The Church also offers support, including a service to renew marriage vows, which some couples find helpful in growing their relationship further or

in helping restore something that has been lost. Give me a call if you would like to know more. Love, like faith, is a journey. As Christians, we journey with the one who is perfect love.

Best wishes
Jeremy



Please note:

1. The opinions expressed in the articles in this magazine are those of the authors.
2. The Parish News cannot accept responsibility for the goods and services advertised in this magazine. Advertisements are accepted in good faith.
3. Illustrations and photographs are the property of the copyright holders and should not be reused without permission.
4. This magazine is also available in full colour on the St Mary's Church website.
5. The Editor reserves the right to edit or exclude any article submitted. Please be aware when submitting articles that 400 words fit comfortably onto a page and any articles over 800 words may need to be edited to ensure readability.

YOU in the **PEW** interviewed by Chris Bishop**Christine Ractliff**

St Mary's? Breathtaking! Charles and Christine crept in, straight after moving to Sewards End in 2011 (to be nearer the grandchildren), intending to slumber, unnoticed, in a pew. No chance! The welcome was amazing and when David Tomlinson dropped in and discovered that back in their Oxfordshire village church, Christine had been Churchwarden, Lay Service Leader and Deanery Synod Secretary, while Charles had been Treasurer, they were absorbed into St Mary's and Christine into the St James's Home Team with Jenny. The monthly breakfasts were a treat!



Born on a Good Friday in pre-war Birmingham, Christine's most vivid childhood memories are of wartime in the city and inspirational post-war summers in Stratford-on-Avon. Her Welsh father, an organist, was Anglo-Catholic, her mother a lapsed-Methodist, so Christine went with a friend to a children's service at the parish church. The only adult present was the Rector who sat at the back. Aged 14, Christine was taking her turn at leading services, prayers, and giving a talk! At Wayfarers, the church's fellowship for young adults, she enjoyed Passion plays, concerts, summer camps, and made lasting friendships. Her faith was secured, otherwise just one meeting of the university Christian Union, would have scared her off!

Christine taught drama and dance in Leicestershire and Berkshire. Opportunity took her on a voyage to Australia and NZ but, unbeguiled, she returned to home-base - by now, Henley-on-Thames - with an enduring taste for sea travel! She eventually returned to dance by joining a national liturgical dance company in 2004.

Marriage took her to live and work in London but when her second daughter was born, the family "escaped" to a Thames-side village. Just 3 years later, in a double-whammy, her father died and her marriage ended. A hard time as a lone parent was alleviated by the support of church and village friends. A course in Botanical Illustration (already an interest), occasional teaching, and later, miniature painting, kept her going until a reluctant move into Henley resulted in extraordinary, unexpected blessings. A mutual friend introduced her to Charles who she married in 1979, completing a new, loving family with her still-young daughters. Today, one lives near Newmarket, one in West Berkshire.

Christine was appointed Superintendent Registrar. During the next ten years, she conducted 1000 civil wedding ceremonies, working hard to dispel common misconceptions and being open to many unburdenings. Believing that God is everywhere, she could listen while the Church would not.



She used early retirement to channel her lifelong scribbling habit with a writing course, joined the Association of Christian Writers and became published, broadcast and privileged to lead workshops, including poetry at two wonderful Parish Weekends.

Charles died in 2018. It is a comfort to Christine that he spent his last years so happily in and around Saffron Walden. His only regret was that they hadn't come sooner!

The motto of Christine's old school (Edgbaston High): Fideliter, Fortiter, Felicititer (Faithfully, Bravely, Happily) is hard to beat but she would now add "Gerere". (Keep going!)



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ASK THE TREASURER

How much do you know about the Church's finances? What does it cost to run the Church each year? Where does the money come from? Can you help? Where does it go? Who pays the Rector? Are there other paid staff?

Well, here are some of the answers:-

Running a church the size of a small Cathedral does not come cheaply. It costs nearly a quarter of a million pounds to run the Church each year i.e. over £675 a day.

Where does this money go? Over half goes to the Chelmsford Diocese in what is known as the Parish Share. This funds the central administration of the Diocese and contributes to helping Parishes that are less financially well off than ours. In addition, and to answer another question, it pays the salaries of our clergy.

The other main item of expenditure is the cost of our paid staff. These include the Youth Worker, the Director of Music, the Administration Team in the Parish Office, the Weddings Coordinator and Church Cleaner. Together these make up a further 30% or so of our outgoings.

Where does this money come from? From you, our very generous parishioners. The weekly collections in church, general donations and most importantly what is known as the Stewardship income provide over 70% of the Church's income. Stewardship is when people pay a regular monthly sum to the Church, usually with the benefit of Gift Aid. That is why you may see a number of people in Church passing on the Collections bag without putting anything in – they are already committed to their support by standing order. This is the most important part of the Church's income and where you could help the most, financially, if you aren't already doing so.

Other income comes from fees for letting out the Church and Parish Rooms to outside groups, from weddings and funerals, from rent received from the tenant of the Verger's Cottage and other events e.g. the Christmas Fair. We also receive a credit back from the Diocese for providing a house for our Curate. In addition we earn some interest and dividends. I hope that has been helpful. Want to know more? If you do have any questions, just drop me an email at davidjbirchall57@gmail.com and I'll answer you as soon as possible.

David Birchall—Treasurer

Richard Garvey—Chairman of Finance Committee

Radwinter Road Cemetery, Saffron Walden, CB11 3HU

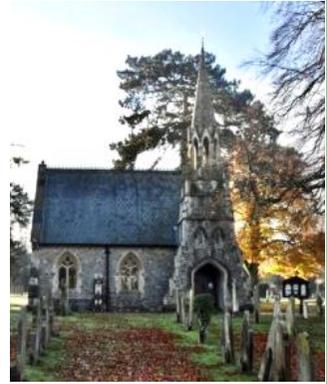
Are you looking for a final resting place for a loved one? The Cemetery at Radwinter Road is an oasis in the town which is open 24/7 and there is tranquillity within.

Further information on burials is available from The Cemetery Officer at Saffron Walden Town Council, Saffron Walden, CB10 1HR Telephone: 01799 516501 or email enquiries@saffronwalden.gov.uk

Our local Cemetery is a peaceful space which offers a natural environment for all types of wildlife and as a result is an important nature conservation resource in the town. Daily maintenance and gardening are carried out which ensures the space is both clean and tidy, where residents and visitors can visit for peace and reflection.

The Cemetery is divided into different areas; Lawn cemetery, Traditional area, Garden of Remembrance, scattered ashes, and areas for children and young people. There is also a separate section for War graves which is cared for by The Commonwealth War Graves Commission. A small well-appointed Chapel is available to hire.

<https://saffronwalden.gov.uk/services/cemetery/>



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Summary of Items from the PCC meeting on 9th November 2024

1. Cracked 7th bell: Our 12-bell peal is a nationally significant heritage asset, rung by local and visiting ringers. Losing the 7th bell (see page 26) limits ringing options and no visitors have come to ring since. The team established by the PCC has assessed the options and propose that the bell is re-cast rather than repaired. John Taylor and Co, Loughborough have quoted £11,271 plus VAT for the removal of the bell, recasting and re-installation. When they visited they noticed that the crack is due to accidental damage, caused by the impact of a clapper from an adjacent bell which came loose when the bells were being rung. The Loss Adjuster for Ecclesiastical Insurance has agreed with this assessment and noted that he will be recommending that the cost of the work is covered under the church insurance. The PCC approved a proposal that a Faculty application is made to recast the 7th bell on the understanding that the cost will be covered by an insurance claim.

2. Proposed statue in the churchyard relating to the democracy debates held in the church during the civil war: The PCC were advised that a group was hoping to raise money with a view to an eventual application for a faculty and planning permission. Members debated whether the proposed site was appropriate and suggested alternative sites, but there were no objections to the group's investigating the idea and to further consultation.

3. Children and Youth: Sunday morning Wiggle Church has been temporarily suspended since most of the volunteers are away. Other groups are continuing to function under stress during the Children & Youth Leader vacancy.

4. Lighting Project: A Faculty application was submitted on 5th November. It will probably take up to five months for a decision. This includes consultation of Historic England and the Church Buildings Council and the statutory requirement for a one-month period of public consultation. Tender documents for the installation were issued in early October. Five contractors with experience of lighting installations at large parish church buildings and cathedrals have been asked to bid. Three of the contractors have visited St Mary's with the fourth indicating that they will bid based on the detailed plans. The report and recommendation from the Lighting Designer is expected by the end of November. The PCC will be consulted at the January meeting on the choice of the recommended installer and on which options, such as spot lighting and highlighting, if any, to include at extra cost. It is most likely installation will start in September 2025.

5. **Finance:** The Lighting Gift Day raised £51,800. Accounts for the early part of the year show a small surplus.
6. **Health and Safety:** the updated policy had been circulated and comments were invited.
7. **First aid training:** Training Organisations were being investigated. It was suggested 10 church members in key positions should be trained at PCC expense, with a view to inviting others to join the course at their own expense.
8. **Safeguarding:** Judith Hasler pointed the PCC to the Safeguarding webpage where members can see what courses that they are legally required to do every three years.
9. **Eco Church Report.** Edward Gildea will step down next year. Edward and the group were thanked for their work
10. **External giving:** It was agreed that David and Sari Gardner's work with the Wycliffe Bible Society should be funded as in previous years but that the PCC secretary should write to them now informing them that we are reconsidering our funding policy and there is a possibility that funding will change.

Extracted from the draft Minutes by Clifford Want



Technically, the Parish Share is a voluntary contribution



FRIENDS OF THE PARISH CHURCH

The Friends of the Parish Church is a very active group and has been so for over 90 years. We are able to help financially with minor and major projects at St Mary's. They range from the new Advent candle which we have just purchased to a substantial sum to help the proposed Lighting Project.

Almost 40% of our members have active and varied roles in the Church. We have a bookstand with an assortment of items on sale and next to that a dedicated noticeboard which will keep you up to date on our many activities. We are also on the Church website under "Groups" so do take a look.

If you would like to learn more, pick up a leaflet from the bookstand which also includes an application form to **join us**. Just hand it to any of the Friends' Council members or pop in the Parish Office letterbox. If you feel that you would like to leave us a legacy, there are forms available on the bookstand for this too.

Chairman: Denis Tindley, Secretary: Pamela Mugliston, Treasurer: Sandra Marsh

NEWS FOR 2025

Firstly the Friends' Council would like to wish all our members, and all the congregation, a very Happy New Year, may it be a healthy and peaceful one for us and for everyone around the world.

Plans for the coming year include two Cathedral trips for our members, news of the spring visit is imminent so watch your emails. We plan two interesting presentations during the year which will be open to all so do watch our notice board, the website and this column for dates and details. We will also be holding our members shared lunch around June time so look out for the date.

As you know we will be donating a large sum towards the Lighting Project as and when required. Smaller upcoming projects include refurbishment of the A-frame notice boards plus new mats for the West Door entrance and maybe others as the year goes on.

Best wishes to you all. Pamela

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The Calendar

This calendar is provisional. See The Grapevine or the church website for the latest information.

St Mary's, Saffron Walden

One service in church each Sunday is streamed on YouTube [Y]: details on the church website. Coffee is served after the Sunday 10:30 services.

Sunday 2 February: Candlemas

- 8am Holy Communion (BCP)
- 10.30am Holy Communion [Y] & Sunday Club
- 6.30pm H2H Youth led Service for all

Thursday 6 February

- 10am Silent Prayer in North Chapel

Sunday 9 February

- 8am Holy Communion (BCP)
- 10.30am Second Sunday Holy Communion [Y] & Sunday Club
- 4pm Choral Evensong

Sunday 16 February

- 8am Holy Communion (BCP)
- 10.30am Holy Communion [Y] & Sunday Club
- 4pm Living Stones Service

Sunday 23 February

- 8am Holy Communion (BCP) [Y]
- 10:30am Family Service
- 4pm 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 (with Prayers for Wholeness and Healing on the 1st Wednesday of the month)

St James', Swards End

Sunday 2 February

10.30am Holy Communion

Sunday 16 February

10.30am Morning Praise



St John's, Little Walden

Sunday 9 February

10.30am Family Service

Sunday 23 February

10.30am Holy Communion



A Prayer for February

Provided by the Prayer Team

Lord, as we wait for signs of spring, help us to be patient and live each day to the full.

As the buds grow, may we grow deeper in your spirit.

Thank you for all you have already done in our lives.

Amen



New Dean of Chelmsford Cathedral



The Very Rev'd Dr Jessica Martin was installed as Dean of Chelmsford in an awe-inspiring service at Chelmsford Cathedral on Sunday 5th January. For those who have been to the induction of a new vicar in a parish church, the format was familiar but on a much grander scale.

The service started with two processions: firstly visiting ministers, canons and clergy including the acting Bishop of Ely and the Ely chapter, followed by the Cathedral procession, which included no fewer than four Bishops...and me as one of the Lay Canons.

Dr Martin was previously a Residentiary Canon of Ely Cathedral for eight years and was ceremonially 'handed over' by the removal of her Ely Cathedral cope. She was then welcomed and prayed for by Guli, Bishop of Chelmsford. After making a Declaration of Assent, Jessica swore an oath of allegiance to the King and an oath of canonical obedience to the Bishop. This completed the legal part of the proceedings. Jessica was then collated and anointed by the Bishop before being led by the Cathedral wardens to the west door of the cathedral where she was inducted to the benefice of the Cathedral by touching the key and ringing the bell. Returning to the chancel, Jessica was formally presented with the cope of Chelmsford Cathedral and installed into the seat of Saint Peter-ad-Murum and Saint Cedd to signify her office as Dean.

After all these historically significant and symbolic acts, we greeted the new Dean with a hearty round of applause and continued with Choral Evensong. The music and readings very much reflected the Epiphany season of 'worshipping the Lord in the beauty of holiness' and the Dean highlighted both the beauty of the music and the building in her sermon. She contrasted this with the practical matters of settling into a new home and getting her IT to work -all part of getting started in her new ministry. Please pray for Jessica, for our Bishops and the leadership team in the Cathedral and the Diocese as they serve our churches and our community.

Judith Hasler

(Lay Canon, Chelmsford Cathedral.)

Photo—Diocese of Chelmsford

Quiet Morning for Lent

Saturday 8th March from 9.30am – 12.30pm
in St Mary's Parish Rooms

Led by The Ven. Kate Peacock, Archdeacon of Stansted

These are wonderfully refreshing and reflective mornings,
if you are interested, please contact Hazel Colebrooke
hazel.colebrooke@gmail.com

Hope into Action is coming to Saffron Walden

**Providing a safe and secure home for those
who have experienced homelessness.**



Hope into Action is a Christian charity enabling churches to house the homeless. It now has over 120 houses in the UK, all supported by local churches. Saffron Walden Salvation Army, in partnership with other local Christians, is joining this network to provide a home in Saffron Walden.

The great good news is that an investor has been found and a suitable house acquired. We now need to fully equip the house ready to welcome its first family. You can support this project through your prayers, by making a financial gift, or by getting our Amazon wishlist of household items - you can request it at hia@waldenarmy.org.uk.

For more information, speak to Andy Colebrooke or come to our 10.30 service at St Mary's on Sunday, 16th February, when Jeremy is kindly allowing Andy and Anne Wiles of HIA to say more.

Andy Colebrooke

Photograph: hopeintoaction.org.uk (not taken in Saffron Walden!)

From the Registers

Funerals

11th November	Sheila Melhuish
13th November	Linda Walker
17th December	Paul 'Harry' Pledger

Weddings

9th November	Hazel Nezianya and Kunmi Oguntonade
--------------	-------------------------------------

Grove Lodge Open Garden

Come and enjoy the wonderful early Spring display at Grove Lodge, Chater's Hill, Saffron Walden CB10 2AB on **Sunday 23rd February** between 14:00 and 17:00. About 10 minutes walk from St Mary's, Grove Lodge faces the Common on the east side, 100 yards from the maze. A large walled garden, with unusually high bio-diversity. Semi-woodland on light free-draining chalk soil allows bulbs, hellebores and winter-flowering shrubs to thrive. Snowdrops, crocuses, daffodils and daphnes should be looking their best, both on 23rd February and 16th March. Tea and cakes will be available.

Full details are available on the National Garden Scheme website. All money raised goes to charity.



St Mary's Music News

Before we turn to 2025, there is much to record and celebrate in December, starting with the Advent Carol service at the beginning of the month, then Christingles for children on 8th December, the traditional Service of Nine Lessons and Carols just before Christmas, two 'Lighting the Christmas Tree' events for younger children led by the Juniors, and then Midnight Mass, culminating in the morning service on Christmas Day. The Nine Lessons and Carols were enhanced by the Brass Group with splendid fanfares as well as accompaniments. Showcasing the talent throughout the choir, there were around 20 solo performances by members of the choir, including Juniors Poppy and Arthur, as well as by Choral Scholars and Adults. And just in case some people felt they had not done enough carol singing, many of the choir visited two of the new housing estates in town and sang carols outside in the cold.

Of course the SMMA is not just about the musicians. During the Service of Nine Lessons, Paul Chinnock was once again busy in the kitchen of the Parish Rooms warming up welcome quantities of mince pies and mulled wine, which were as always very gratefully received. Hannah Razzell, as Chair of the SMMA, thanked everyone who had helped the organisation in the past year, including Bron Ferland as Choir Administrator, Kate Beare for looking after the smallest children in Joyful Noise, Alison Lawrence who looks after the Junior Choir's social time, Ziyi our current Michael Swindlehurst Organ Scholar, Gill and Paul for the party, Jeremy Allen as Deputy Organist, and Oli King as Director of Music. Sadly we are saying good bye to Ellie Beare who has been mentoring the Choral Scholars. Lewis Colley will be taking over this role.

By the time you read this edition of Parish News, Choral Evensong for Epiphany will have taken place on 12th January, followed by a new Service of Light on Sunday 26th January. Together these 2 evening services combine the regular January Choral Evensong, and the Epiphany Carol Service which St Mary's used to hold.

The next Choral Evensong will be at 4pm on Sunday 9th February in the peaceful period for reflection between the great festival of Christmas and Lenten preparation for Easter.

Otilie Lefever

LIVING ALONE by Margaret Collingwood

It's the shopping that gets you. Two for the price of one. but if you only want one, then the price is exorbitant. You look at the cauliflower and think there's enough there for three meals. Who wants cauliflower three days running? A roast chicken just goes on and on and on. Hot, cold, curried, in a pie, frozen, given to the dog. Much easier to buy ready prepared meals for one to stick in the microwave.

Baking is another hazard. The sponge tins produce cakes for at least eight, the bun tins are for twelve. The freezer is heaving with little labelled plastic pots of stuff you couldn't face at the time and still don't fancy, and not good enough to defrost for visitors.

Making a big double bed is a challenge. Pulling at one corner on one side means going round the other side to level it up. The duvet cover is a nightmare. Shake it and it crumples off in a lump. Loose swathes of cloth have no filling. The poppers don't meet in the middle and have to be pulled apart to start again. And what do you do at 5.30 p.m. Draw the curtains for a long evening? Think about having a drink on you own? Switch on the TV?

Or holidays. Who do you share a room with - when you've recovered from the cost of single supplements? Can you cope with insurance, booking on the computer, paying for a taxi for one, sitting at the airport checking the flight details every few minutes so you don't miss the plane. Easier to stay at home and go on a coach outing. But who do you sit with?

However, you can get up when you want, go to bed when you want. You can snore and not worry. You don't have to please someone else or do it at their timing. You can buy a bar of chocolate and not hide it if you don't want to share it; You can have the second biscuit, or a third. You can put the heating on, or open the window. You can eat pudding first. You can let the dog sleep on the bed.

Things to be aware of include talking too much, getting self centred and pedantic about meal times, politics or potholes. Or the opposite, hiding away and losing confidence and worrying about being a burden. Then there's the health. Every knee twinge is fascinating, but not to anyone else.

Perhaps the hardest is the responsibility. To remember where you've put the keys, where you parked the car. You have to hold the bannisters on the stairs so you don't fall; be aware of scammers and whether to trust the person on the other end of the phone. There's no one there to laugh it off, talk it through, enjoy the joke.

Yet I am my own mistress. I can laugh or cry. I can feel sorry for myself or count my blessings. But I am not an island. At every turn, there are others who get it, who understand, who care. They see me, and I see them. We are not alone.

Gelio's Anthology of Obscure Proverbs

I call these 'obscure proverbs', and so here are two for you to ponder, as it is always amazing to think "where on earth did these 'wise' sayings begin their existence?" This month, my theme is **Experience**.



From Belgium, we have "**Experience is the comb that nature gives us when we are bald.**"

Then there is this Danish proverb "**Blacksmith's children are not afraid of sparks**".

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The cracked seventh bell

On Tuesday 28th May 2024 the joyous sound of St Mary's church bells came to an abrupt end when the 7th bell cracked. Alongside restoring our excellent peal by recasting the bell, the Saffron Walden bellringers want to celebrate the wonderful heritage of St Mary's bells and ringing history. As part of a broader project to ensure the bells will sound out over the town for years to come, we will create an exhibition space to enhance the visitor experience to the church and tower; engaging with broader community in the town and beyond. We are inviting contributions of any size to the overall project where we are targeting a fund of £25,000.

On that fateful evening, the seventh bell of the full peal of 12 developed a crack on the sound bow that travelled up the waist of the bell for approximately 25cm. This destroyed the tonal quality of the bell, similar to a cracked wine glass, making the full peal of 12 bells no longer viable.

The 7th bell is one of the ring of eight cast in 1797 by John Bryant of Hertford from a voluntary subscription of Lord Braybrooke and the inhabitants of Saffron Walden. These bells form the core of today's full peal of 12 - one of the finest in the country. The 7th bell weighs in at 340Kg (6.5 cwt in old money..) and in common with all bells is cast in bronze. Our plan is to recast the bell, tuning it to be musically a close match to the 1797 bell and reusing the original bronze, keeping a strong connection with the original bell.

The Bryant bells of St Mary's have always served the church and town, marking important national and local events. Special occasions included ringing to celebrate the end of the Napoleonic Wars at the Festival of Saffron Walden in 1814; in 1838 they rang to celebrate the coronation of Queen Victoria. On 15th November, 1942 members of the Ringing Society came together to ring the bells to celebrate "victory in Egypt and Libya" and on 3rd June 2022 a full peal was rung to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth.

Saffron Walden has been a centre of bell ringing excellence for hundreds of years. We appreciate the renewal work undertaken by previous generations and



now it is our turn. Together with restoring the full ring of bells, we will explain and celebrate our heritage with an exhibition, engaging with the church, town and ringers across the region to continue and develop this tradition. We shall be inviting donors to witness the recasting of the bell at Taylors Bell Foundry in Loughborough.

For further information, please contact Chris McCarthy at keeper@saffronwaldenbells.org.uk

DON'T FORGET THE QUINQUA QUIZ ON MARCH 1ST



Muniments
Room

From the Archives

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

Compiled by our Archivist, the Rev'd Canon Chris Bishop

From Parish News, February 1907

A small Sale of Work will be held in the Parish Room, on Thursday, 14th February, from 3 to 4 pm, for which a charge of twopence will be made. The articles for sale will consist of garments made or contributed by members of a working-party connected with the Parish Church, and will include four men's shirts, several boy's shirts, overalls for boys aged about two, linen aprons, flannel and calico garments, knitted socks and night socks, and a few fancy articles.

It is proposed that the proceeds of the Sale should be given to one or more of the following objects:-

- the National Schools,
- the Saffron Walden Assistant Clergy Fund,
- the Sick and Needy Fund,
- Seward's End School.

The girls who are members of the junior ward of the Guild have for some weeks past been working, both at home and at a fortnightly meeting, and making garments which have been sent to the Church of England Waifs and Strays Society, the Secretary of which has written to Mrs Merrett.

What's in a name? (5)

I had hoped to continue this series by considering the remaining two new estates: Poppyfields up near Aldi and the Little Walden Road estate, but unfortunately these provide little material of historical interest. The Poppyfields estate takes all of its road names from herbs or spices, whilst the Little Walden Road estate roads might be derived, possibly, from field names.

I have, therefore, decided to turn my attention to some of the slightly older developments, beginning with the estate built on what was the sports field of the Saffron Walden Teacher Training College, later the Bell College.

Allard Way takes its name from Geoffrey 'Sammy' Allard. Geoffrey Allard was a Second World War flying ace who was based at RAF Debden. In the course of his flying career, Flight Lieutenant Allard was awarded the DFM and bar and later the DFC. He was sadly killed in an air crash near Wimbish in 1941. He is buried, with other forces casualties, in the Radwinter Road cemetery.



Hop Fields is not a name that one would necessarily associate with Saffron Walden, but hops were grown here in the past. Apparently, what is often thought of as a bunch of grapes hanging from the façade of Boots, a sad reminder of the Rose and Crown Hotel which stood on that site and was destroyed by fire in 1969, is actually a bunch of hops as hops were once grown and picked in the Saffron Walden area. Drinkers of real ale might wish that hops still grew beside the houses in Hop Fields.

College Close takes its name from the college which once owned the land on which it stands. Saffron Walden Training College was founded in 1884 to train female teachers for elementary schools, that is schools for five to thirteen year-olds, under the name of the Saffron Walden Training College for Mistresses. It was established with the specific purpose of training infant teachers in Kindergarten methods and principles. George Stacey Gibson, a Saffron Walden Quaker philanthropist, funded the college. The college closed in 1977, and the buildings were taken over by a different college, the Bell College, a language school.

Hilary Walker

The Hundred Parishes Society

Editor: The Hundred Parishes Society aims to increase awareness, enjoyment and care of the Hundred Parishes (450 square miles of northwest Essex, northeast Hertfordshire and southern Cambridgeshire). It is not a church-orientated organisation - "Parishes" referring to administrative parishes. The Society is interested in all things historical and local.



Enjoying a winter stroll along any of the described walks within the Hundred Parishes provides an opportunity to view the landscape features visible from various vantage points. Much of this countryside has been farmed by many successive generations as these custodians of the land have raised livestock and garnered variable harvests of grain. The spring of 2024 was rather wet, and this resulted in poor establishment of autumn-sown cereals. This, combined with the inclement conditions during harvesting, resulted in disappointingly low yields.

However, it seems that with dry weather in the autumn of 2024, the sown wheat, barley and oats have germinated well, with most fields now covered with fresh green shoots. Many farmers have decided to cut back on growing oil seed rape, and they may choose to plant alternative niche crops such as sunflowers or borage once the weather is warmer.

These farmed landscapes have traditionally supported assorted wildlife including skylarks, rooks, ladybirds, bumble bees, butterflies, badgers and foxes. In addition, well-maintained soils contain not just beneficial fungi, but a variety of earthworms and beetles which in turn provide food for many other creatures. Sadly, other less-welcome creatures such as slugs and root-eating beetle or fly larvae are also present. Seeing a sizeable flock of birds following a plough demonstrates this plethora of food!

Recent concerns about the loss of insect life, especially pollinators or those that eat aphids, is encouraging farmers to find ways of enhancing habitats for insects by leaving marginal strips round fields for wildflowers, planting new hedges or creating beetle banks within their fields. These features may be visible from footpaths during the winter months so make a note of where they are and plan return visits during the summer to observe them full of flowers and other wildlife.

Tricia Moxey, Trustee.

Christmas Fair 2024

The annual Christmas Fair took place on Saturday 30th November 2024, the day before Advent Sunday. As usual, there were a wide variety of stalls as well as music, visits to the bell tower and the ever-popular refreshments.

Led by Sue Birchall, an enthusiastic team filled the pews with their produce, and ensured that the whole of the nave was transformed into a 'pop-up market'. A lot of time, effort and expense goes into preparing and stocking the stalls and ensuring that the many visitors to the church would find plenty to get their Christmas shopping under way. It followed a successful campaign to publicise the event with bunting and posters (notwithstanding high winds!) ensuring that everyone passing through the town would know all about it. The church was quickly packed when the doors opened at 10am, and although it became quieter after midday, there was still a steady stream of customers of all ages.

At the time of writing, the Treasurer has banked £4,510, a very welcome part of the annual income of St Mary's. It is currently costing about £650 per day to run the church, so events like this one play an important part in funding the building and the work of the church. It is invidious to single out any of the stallholders for their contributions, most of which cannot fairly be statistically comparable, but the sums raised on the Flowers & Decorations and the Christmas Crackers stalls are especially noteworthy, and the sales of candles, jam, mulled wine and mince pies were well up to their usual high standards. And special mention should be made of the Gingerbread House, won (for the second year running) by the Church Warden.

Thanks also must go to the Brass group, the singers of all ages and Jack the organist for their contributions to the morning. We know that lots of people come to the Fair for the atmosphere and the musical offerings, which create just the right yuletide buzz. It is often felt that this is as important as the profitability and it is certainly reassuring to see St Mary's at the heart of the town's festivities.

Any suggestions for changes and improvements for next year's Fair (Saturday 29th November 2025) should be submitted to Sue Birchall (sbirchall29@gmail.com).

A selection of photographs appears opposite, courtesy of Martin Hugall.



They saw the young child with Mary his mother

