

Parish News

St Mary's Church, Saffron Walden

St John, Little Walden and St James, Searoads End

Part of Saffron Walden & Villages Team Ministry

July 2025

FREE



HELLO & GOODBYE Above: the arrival of the new Mayor Councillor Jubeyuir Ahmed for the Churching service on 24th May. Below: Joe and Pauline Hordern say farewell on 27th April



THE RECTOR'S LETTER 4

NOTICEBOARD

Calendar	16
From the Registers	17
The Seventh Bell	19
Lunchtime Concerts	30

REPORTS

Annual Parish Meetings	5
A Night at the Musicals	6
Friends of the Parish Church	14
80 years of Christian Aid	18
St Mary's Music News	22
The Cycle Ride & Lighting Project	26-28

FEATURES

Hello & Goodbye	2
You in the Pew	8
For the Asking	12
Don't Throw Out History	13
A Prayer for July	18
The Hundred Parishes	19
From the Archives	20
Gelio	21
What's in a Name	29

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Links to both can be found at the bottom of our website pages

PARISH NEWS - EDITORIAL DEADLINE

The deadline for contributions for each issue is the 1st Sunday of the previous month. Hence, the deadline for the **August-September** issue is **Sunday 6th July 2025**.

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www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org/parishnews

Cover photograph shows Ray Haynes, Tim Mills, Steve Hasler and David Tomlinson on arrival in Cardiff—see page 26



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The Rector's Letter

From The Rev'd Jeremy Trew

Jeremy writes...



Psalms 23 (the one that begins, "The Lord is my shepherd...") is one I often use at funerals, but it's a good'un for many occasions. The writer is David. He's no ordinary man. The youngest of several brothers, he was initially overlooked when Samuel visited the family, guided by God, to find and anoint a new King over Israel to replace Saul who had once looked so promising but was now most certainly failing to deliver. David had been out looking after the flocks of sheep that made his one of the prominent families of the region. Unlike his elder brothers, and unlike Saul when he was chosen, David does not look like kingly material. However, the story goes on: David is anointed. He eventually succeeds to the throne. His rule is successful, finally neutralising the constant Philistine threat, and establishing a golden age, albeit briefly, for the nation of Israel. But, just as with Saul, the rot eventually sets in. David is distracted and his rule begins to suffer. Discontented family members find a frustrated populace will listen to them. And, more than once, David is forced to flee and regroup his supporters, as one son or another briefly usurps his throne. Tradition has it that, during one of these mini-exiles, David is sheltering in a cave in the wilderness. He looks back on his childhood when his greatest concerns were the safety of his father's sheep, and nothing more, and he writes this Psalm: "The Lord is my shepherd..."

I would suggest that, unless you are a very young reader (or possibly a far older one who has learnt more wisdom than most), life gradually gets more complex and therefore troublesome the older we get. The simple black and white of childhood becomes muddled by the many shades of grey that complicate life's decisions. Of course, there are many who seem determined to keep to the simplicity of right and wrong in the face of the nuances of life. Delusional thinking is always attractive.

At Theological College we studied Ethics. One of our tutors was an absolute pain in the backside. He would present us with a scenario and require us to discuss the rights and wrongs, the merits, of the situation, and include in our discussion what our Christian faith had to say on the matter. Debates were always heated. Strongly held convictions and understandings

of faith clashed. But, as we began to move towards consensus, proud of our ability to rationalise and carefully consider, he would throw in another piece of information about the scenario – something that subtly changed how we might view the situation and the people involved in it – and off we would go again. He repeated this, until our two hours was up. The lesson was that life is complex – to each and every problem there is an answer that is short, simple, and easily found, and it is invariably wrong.

Whilst there is outright war in elsewhere, in the West there is more of a grumbling discontent. Too many people are too unhappy with their lot, and many have reason to be so. Populism offers easy answers, usually involving pointing the finger at “others”. “They” are not like “us” so “they” must be the problem. Let us resist the temptation of easy answers, they rarely serve well. Instead we must do the hard work of understanding the complex and convoluted challenges facing our world today.

Best Wishes

Jeremy

Annual Church Meetings appointments

The Annual Church meetings took place on 11th May 2025. At the Meeting of the Parishioners, Simon Potter and Vivian Falk were re-elected as churchwardens, and Bill Rose, Gill Caswell, Pam Russell, Patrick Li and Jan Siewertson were elected assistant churchwardens.

At the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, Noel Starr, Martin Hugall, Rufus Barnes, Jan Siewertson and Gill Gibson were elected as members of the Parochial Church Council (PCC). The Deanery Synod members serving for three years since 2023 remain as Anna Martin, Gill Caswell, Shawn Martin and Richard Freeman.

At the PCC meeting afterwards, David Birchall was re-elected treasurer (the PCC members replied with a resounding and grateful "Yes" when his name was put forward), Anna Martin as secretary, Vivian Falk as vice-chair, and Oli King, Director of Music, was co-opted onto the PCC. Gill Caswell agreed to continue in her role as Team Council representative, and there is one vacancy in this post. Hayden Rocks was appointed Electoral Roll Officer.

Anna Martin
PCC Secretary

A Night at the Musicals

In May, over 180 people came to St Mary's to see A Night at the Musicals, performed by Saffron Walden Town Band. It was a terrific evening – the band really enjoy playing in the church. The programme included something for all ages and tastes: *You'll Never Walk Alone* from Carousel, highlights from *Evita*, *Cats* and *Chess*, an organ prelude from *Sweeney Todd*, and young children were dancing at the back of the nave to familiar Disney tunes.

This is the largest audience the Town Band has had in recent years and we look forward to coming back to St Mary's next spring for another themed concert. If you can't wait until then, our Winter Concert will be on 15th November at the Baptist Church (for more details nearer the time, visit <https://www.swtb.org.uk>).

Alison Trew, Member of Saffron Walden Town Band



The appreciative audience listen to the Town Band. Photograph by Jeremy Trew

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YOU in the PEW interviewed by Chris Bishop**Robin O'Neill**

After many years of living in different countries—Turkey, Senegal, Germany, Gibraltar (where he was the deputy governor), Austria and Belgium (he was the British Ambassador for these last two countries), and enjoying the experience of their varied cultures, Helen and Robin O'Neill decided that, when Robin retired from the Diplomatic Service, they would live in a part of Britain that they were familiar with, and within reach of their three children. The most serious drawback of their peripatetic life had been seeing too little of the children as they grew up, when they had had to go to boarding schools in Britain. Robin was born in



Chelmsford and went to school there, while Helen grew up in Takeley. Also, Robin wanted to be within reach of Cambridge, and Trinity College, where he had read English. They looked at places and churches in north Essex, and on a first visit to Saffron Walden, they saw a house adjoining St Mary's churchyard—and bought it.

Robin's work in embassies had meant negotiating with foreign governments on issues such as economic cooperation in Europe, disarmament and defence, and he brought this interest in getting things done with him to Saffron Walden. He enjoyed walking in Bridge End Gardens, but saw that they were being poorly maintained by the contractor used by the District Council. He resolved to improve things, and, as the first Chairman of the Friends of Bridge End Gardens, and then as a District Councillor, he worked to have the Council itself maintain the gardens. (Today, after extensive restoration financed by a generous grant from English Heritage, they are cared for by the Town Council, and are in excellent shape.) Robin was also chairman of the Anglo-Austrian Society, which was formed originally by refugees from Austria in the late 1930s, and is active today in working for close ties between Austria and Britain, and promoting academic links through a post-graduate scholarship award.

In all the Embassies he worked in where there was no Anglican church,



Robin in ambassadorial uniform for an investiture in Brussels in 1990 with daughter Celia and grandchildren Simon and Sarah

Robin organised regular services by visiting clergy from elsewhere, sometimes in the Embassy's social club, sometimes in a 'borrowed' church in the area. A memorable occasion in Turkey saw him calling on the Ecumenical Patriarch of the Orthodox Church in Istanbul, who, on learning of Helen's good Greek name, presented them with a jar of honey. In Vienna, where there is an Anglican Church, he chaired the PCC. At St Mary's, he became a churchwarden, raising the funds and seeing through the project to replace the south aisle roof and other major works in 2000. He also became a member of the Bishop's Council for the Chelmsford diocese.

Helen and Robin greatly value the inclusive nature of worship at St Mary's, and their membership of the church community, as well as the warmth and friendship they have found here. They much enjoy the historic character of Saffron Walden and the easy access to Audley End park and the surrounding countryside, not least for walking a succession of dogs.

If Robin had to pick a single memorable event in their time in Saffron Walden, he would choose the memorial service held in St Mary's following the death of Princess Diana, when a thousand people packed the church, many bringing flowers. Pressed to come up with a suitable family motto, he came up with "Tell the Truth".

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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For the Asking

The plaque in my sister's loo reads, "Optimist: GOOD MORNING GOD" and "Pessimist: GOOD GOD MORNING".

Mornings are like that. Sometimes I can cheerfully recite with the psalmist "This is the day that the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it." It helps face whatever comes along. Days that are more challenging for me usually come with the lines from the hymn, "The trivial round, the common task should furnish all we need to ask". William Cowper suffered from depression and on those mornings I empathise with him.

It was the subject given for our Debating Society at school. We challenged the local girls' grammar and earnest sixth formers grappled with "should", "need" and "ask". I can't remember whether we voted that the trivial round and common task should or shouldn't furnish all we need to ask. Today's young might argue for wealth, beauty, status.

Classic FM assures me most mornings that those thousands of pounds I might win could bring me untold happiness. My care needs would be sorted if I phoned this number and I could save pounds if I bought into this or that. In contrast the writings of the Catholic theologian I admire, Henri Nouwen, tell me that my happiness is not to be found in things. The Ten Commandments stricture of not coveting what someone else has, is rated alongside murder and adultery. My own life hints that the bits I have accumulated and treasured over a lifetime have become just so much stuff to be sorted at my demise, if moth and rust haven't got there first.

It is when there's nothing specific to do that we appreciate the importance and place of the dull routine - peeling potatoes, emptying the bins, boiling the kettle. And it's when we are less able physically to do the things we used to that we treasure eyes that can see, ears that can hear, legs that still get about. The trivial round, that common task hold more appeal and satisfaction.

The word "should" used to be very powerful. It is now very much out of favour and questioned. Even "need" is variable. What used to be a luxury seems now to be a necessity, or even a right.

The three letter word "ask" is harder. To whom do we do the asking, and for what? Is it enough to be grateful for that ordinary and mundane of the everyday? This is the problem with choice and decisions, optimism or pessimism. The Creator took a huge risk giving humans free will, something we have to grapple with anew each morning.

Margaret Collingwood

Don't throw out history

In the heart of New York City, where life moves fast and change is constant, I recently witnessed a quiet loss—an entire lifetime boxed up and discarded. My 98-year old neighbour decided to move into a retirement home, and, as her apartment was cleared, pottery, glassware, photographs and other fragments of history were simply put out with the trash.

It made me stop and think: what happens to our belongings when we move on? Are we serious about preserving the stories they carry? As collectors, we understand the value of history. We safeguard objects, recognising their ability to bridge generations. But what about the things left behind—the heirlooms and the everyday items that once held meaning for us? How many personal histories are lost, not because people don't care, but because no plan exists?

What will happen to your possessions? Will they endure, passed to hands that appreciate them, or will they vanish, swept away by the tide of convenience? We need a shift—a culture where preservation is the norm. Whether through community programmes, local historians or personal efforts to ensure that our most meaningful items find their rightful place, we must challenge the instinct to discard. Because history isn't just in our museums. It's in our homes.

Steven Zirinski (a stamp dealer friend of Rufus Barnes)



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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

Dates for Your Diary

NB We have had to change the date of our annual Bring & Share lunch to Sun 10th August after the 10.30am service. We apologise for this change, but it is for reasons beyond our control. Do come along as it is a great opportunity for all Friends members to get together and catch up with each other whilst enjoying some delicious food. Hopefully we will be able to meet our new members who have joined since last year. More details to follow. The Patronal Service is **7th September**. The Sewing Ladies have continued to be busy and there will be kneelers to dedicate in the service. Last year we had a wonderful turnout for the AGM so we look forward to seeing you again this year after the service at 11.45am in the Parish Rooms. The **end of September** will be our trip to Canterbury Cathedral, I will let you know as soon as I can confirm a date in their busy schedule. Look out for details of our **next talk** which will be in the autumn. In **November** we will launch the Recipe book with a social event. Thank you for all your contributions. We hope to make some good sales at the Christmas Fair and then the book will be available from our bookstand, where we are assembling quite a library.

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 10.30am services.

Wednesday 2 July

1.10pm Lunchtime Concert: Joanna Lam *Piano*

Thursday 3 July

10am Silent Prayer in North Chapel

Sunday 6 July

8am BCP Holy Communion

10.30am Holy Communion [Y] & Sunday Club followed by Fair Trade stall

Wednesday 9 July

1.10pm Lunchtime Concert: Derek Scurll *Piano*; Stephanie Reeve *Clarinet*

Saturday 12 July

5pm Organ Recital by Wayne Marshall

Sunday 13 July

8am BCP Holy Communion

10.30am Second Sunday Communion [Y] and Sunday Club

6.30pm Choral Evensong

Canticles: Murrill in E; Anthem: Praise our God – Moles;

Voluntary: O Lux Beata Trinitas

Wednesday 16 July

1.10pm Lunchtime Concert: Joanna Byers *Flute*

Sunday 20 July

8am BCP Holy Communion

10.30am Holy Communion [Y] and Sunday Club

6.30pm H2H café-style contemporary worship service



Sunday 27 July

8am	BCP Holy Communion [Y]
10.30am	Family Service
6.30pm	Taizé Service

Regular weekday services at St Mary's

Tuesdays

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

8am	Morning Prayer
9.30am	Holy Communion (with Prayers for Wholeness and Healing on the 1st Wednesday of the month)

St James', Sewards End

Sunday 6 July

10.30am	Holy Communion
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Sunday 20 July

4pm	Hymns and Pimm's Celebrating the 30 th Anniversary of the naming of St James' Church
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St John's, Little Walden

Sunday 13 July

10.30am	Family Service
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Sunday 27 July

10.30am	Holy Communion
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From the Registers

Funerals

8th May	Harry Cornell
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80 Years of Christian Aid

I was honoured and surprised to be invited to a reception and service in Cambridge in May to celebrate the 80th anniversary of Christian Aid. However hard times are, Christian Aid is there to remind us who our neighbour truly is. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Christ tells us that our neighbour is the stranger, whom we should love as we do ourselves.

I wasn't quite sure whether I'd been invited because my father was a director of Christian Aid in the 60's and 70's, organising the street collections around the parishes of South Norwood when I was a child. He was a great believer in 'Practical Christianity', putting aside any thoughts of an afterlife while there were practical things to do amongst our neighbours, near and far.

The highlight of the inspirational service was the sermon by Bishop Rowan Williams. He celebrated the aspirations of Christian Aid, founded, amazingly, the day after VE day at Westminster Abbey, when the first collection was held. What a seminal moment! How determined we were to build a better, fairer world out of the horrors of the war! The NHS, the Education Act, Social Security, council housing...My father too, having fought in the Navy, became a committed internationalist, as my grandfather had done after the 1st World War.

Here in St Mary's, Christian Aid week passed very quietly. Our door-to-door collections ended with Covid and only 7 envelopes were filled in the Sunday services. Thankfully these were by some wonderfully generous people and amounted to £275. My thanks to them!

Edward Gildea

A Prayer for July—A Prayer for Peace

Almighty God, from whom all thoughts of truth and peace proceed;
kindle, we pray you, in the hearts of all people the true love of
peace and guide with your pure and peaceable wisdom
those who take counsel for the nations of the earth:
that in tranquillity your kingdom may go forward
till the earth be filled with the knowledge of your love:
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Rt Rev'd Francis Paget (1851—1911)

The Seventh Bell

The bell, currently in small pieces at the Loughborough Foundry, will be delivered back to St Mary's on Fri 11th July and be on display in the church over the weekend until Monday 14th. I understand there will be a 24 hour presence in the church, to safeguard against theft, over that weekend, arranged by the bellringers. The bell will be lifted back into the belfry on Monday 14th July and then manoeuvred into place that day or the next. The bellringers plan to carry out some other refurbishment of the rest of the bells in the week of the 14th too, (e.g. to the bearings). It is hoped that we will all be able to hear the 'new' bell when it is rung on Friday 18th, and that a service of blessing will follow.

The topography, geology and fertile soils of the Hundred Parishes have combined to provide suitable conditions for farming. Currently, cereals cover about two-thirds of our arable fields with crops of winter or spring-sown barley, oats and wheat. 20% of fields have been planted with oil seed rape or vegetables. Grasslands make up the remainder of fields, providing forage for cattle, sheep or horses.

Inevitably the weather influences the crops. This spring was exceptionally warm, very dry and sunny so there are concerns about a possible drought, reduced crop growth and lower yields. Some farmers started earlier than usual to irrigate vulnerable crops, and all are hoping for some more rainy days ahead as plants need moisture to absorb the nutrients they require for growth.

Healthy soils will retain more moisture; some farmers are planting 'cover crops' beneath the main crop as this will help to reduce water run-off and leaching of nutrients. Leaving wildflower margins around fields encourages assorted predators that eat pests of crops.

Healthy soils will retain more moisture; some farmers are planting 'cover crops' beneath the main crop as this will help to reduce water run-off and leaching of nutrients. Leaving wildflower margins around fields encourages assorted predators that eat pests of crops.

In recent years, some have been able to realise the potential of their south-facing fields, conveniently located over underlying chalk, to plant grape vines. Guided by the results of detailed soil analysis, coupled with careful selection of appropriate species of grape, these winemakers are now producing first class sparkling English wines and also bottles of excellent red, white or rosé wine.

Tricia Moxey, Trustee.



www.hundredparishes.org.uk



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

*In the light of the 7th Bell article in the June Parish News I thought readers and ringers might be interested in this piece that appeared in the Parish News in :-
July 1966*

Long Draughts and Quarter Attempts

This is not a ringer's report on the local, nor of less than half-hearted bell ringing, but an eavesdropper's guide to some of the odd phrases and words heard in the belfry.

I went up Saffron Walden Tower one practice night, and was surprised to find that Sally is a woolly bit, and that Yorkshire Tail Ends are most uncommon this far south. They talk of getting the bells up – though why when you've already climbed so high do you want them any further up? And I couldn't see what difference it made. It looks the same and when I tugged one to see, the rope jerked my arms and burned my hands, and you should have heard what was said!

Of course, the bells themselves can be In Course or Out of Course, and the definition of a Surprise method is one which internal places are made at all crossovers, to distinguish between Delight and other methods. One of the less reverent suggested that it was so named because it was a surprise when it all came out at the end, five minutes later, but this explanation is frowned upon.

Ringers also have Principles. Apparently Stedman's is the most popular of these, but what effect this has on them I don't quite know, because when one of them was told to go out quick he didn't obey, and then they argued about striking. They didn't stop ringing though, until later, when they were talking about an outing and the road between two of the churches was described as: Thirds, Fourths, Point blow lead, Fifths, Sixths, Fifths, out to Eighths, and Lie behind, Seven-Eight dodge. It sounded mad, but one of the other ringers said she had driven it from these instructions, and it was a very good description. I was getting a bit confused then, and when they said someone had better get the tenor down I remembered what had happened when the bell was up and thought I'd better go down too.

If you want to know more, why not come along one Tuesday evening – or on an open day we hope to hold later this year.

Gelio's Anthology of Obscure Proverbs.



So, here are a few proverbs on that dubious sentiment that we call 'doubt'.

From England, there is the well-known one **"When in doubt, do nowt."** From France comes **"He who knows nothing, doubts nothing"**, and the Greeks came up with **"The wise are prone to doubt."** Finally, in this little collection, the Poles have **"To believe with certainty, we must begin with doubting."**

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St Mary's Music News

June got off to a flying start with an organ recital by our organ scholar, Ziyi, given after the morning service on the first of the month. Ziyi has been a tremendous asset to music at St Mary's, accompanying services with great confidence and honing her skills under the watchful eyes of Oli and Jeremy. Prolonged dry

weather tends to give our organ the collywobbles, but Ziyi tamed the fickle beast with considerable authority, most notably with Léon Boëllmann's *Suite Gothique*. We would like to thank Ziyi for her hard work and dedication and wish her well.

The annual SMMA AGM took place in the Parish Rooms at the end of May. There was much to be thankful for, not least the contribution our new chairperson, Hannah Razzell, who has breathed new life into the SMMA, raised considerable funds for its work, and, as a result of the new coffee concerts and outreach work, has opened the doors of St Mary's to a broader spectrum of the public. Jeremy Trew also praised Oli and Kate Beare for their work to bring young people into the church, through their invaluable work with Joyful Noise and the Junior Choir.

The lunchtime concerts began again on the fourth of June and continue with return visits from stunning pianist Joanna Lam, pianist Derek Scurl who accompanies clarinettist Stephanie Reeve, and flautist Joanna Byers, a former choir-member, performs on flute. If you have not yet attended a Wednesday lunchtime concert, please do!

July will mark the appointment of our new organ scholar – auditions will take place in July, so our prayers are with the audition panel as they make difficult choices to find the best candidate.

One more shout to remind you to put July 12th in your diary. Following the enormous success of last year's recital by the world-famous Jonathan Scott, we welcome another giant of the organ world, Wayne Marshall, who will give a recital at 5pm. The music will be wonderful, the catering exquisite: there will be no finer way to start a Saturday evening!

Philip Sunderland



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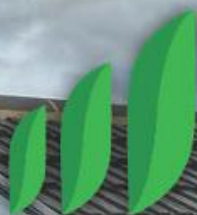
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The Cycle across Wales – What was it really like?

I was struck when at St Mary's on Sunday 11th May, having returned from my ride across Wales, by the very warm welcome and many congratulations which I received – thank you so much. It was also interesting to hear the many questions that I got, such as “was it tough” “how did you deal with the wind”, “did you get any punctures”, and which Judith got such as “is Steve really not stiff and tired” and “wasn't it boring for you”? So, I thought I'd try to explain before I forget what it was like.

First, let me deal with Judith's role in the support car, which is to get the suitcases from the start to the finish each day and to carry spares in case of a major problem, for example if a tyre gets shredded and we need to change it. All we ask is that Judith is within about an hour of us by car in case



we need help. Other than that, she went off sightseeing wherever she fancied although a trip up Snowdon by train would lead to her being too far away! After the first day Judith was joined by Jenny Tomlinson and they walked and talked and sat on the beach at Barmouth, spent a day in Hay-on-Wye, walked Brecon and the cathedral and got to Cardiff ahead of us to take the chance to look around. And they got the wonderful views too in the magnificent weather we had.

As for the weather, we had no rain, very little wind, very few clouds and a temperature of about 15 to 16°C, which is just about perfect for cycling. Even when we were at the top of the biggest climb up at just under 2000 feet, there was no wind. I know this is unusual for Wales, it definitely put on its best face for us across the whole week.

Yes, one of our group did get one puncture, not me, and we can repair these quite easily at the roadside, each one of us carries two spare inner tubes. However, the frequency of punctures is much reduced because we all have tyres which contain Kevlar, the material in stab vests worn by the police, and this makes it more difficult for small stones to penetrate the tyre. This type of tyre will last some 2500 miles until the tread has gone and may not puncture at all during that time. What also helped us was the very dry weather, it is much more common to get punctures in the wet because the water helps the small stones to stick to the tyres just a little bit longer allowing them more chance to penetrate into the rubber.

As we all know, Wales is a hilly country with three separate mountain ranges. Snowdonia, which was easy to skirt by staying along the coast from the Menai straight down to Caernarfon then to Porthmadog and finally to Barmouth. However, the Cambrian Mountains run right across the middle of Wales from west to east and we had no choice but to cross them. This is where we found the longest climb, 4.5 miles long and over 1500 feet of climbing. It was tough, not particularly because of the length but because of the gradient which varied from 3%, not much of a slope, to 18 to 20%, quite steep even in a car. That's about my limit over a small distance as long as there is a shallower section to follow! Getting over the Brecon Beacons was equally tough.

What we eat is very important to ensure we have energy for the full day. By eating the right foods during the day and recovering with a good night's sleep on the back of a lot of training ahead of the ride, makes a trip more do-able. The best food? Porridge for breakfast, I ignore the bacon and eggs, flapjacks during the day, a good lunch with plenty of calories and lots and lots of squash to drink along the way. Oats are particularly good because they release energy immediately and slowly over the next four or five hours. Bananas are good too for instant energy! My squash has salt tablets dissolved in it, otherwise cramp can be a major problem.

How do we stay safe among all the cars and large lorries? On this route, which is a national cycle route 8 all the way, we spent very little time on large roads, probably less than 10 miles of the whole ride. The cycle route used B roads or unnumbered roads and in many places tarmac cycle paths. On day three we rode along the upper Wye Valley which has one main very busy road down it, but we were on side roads and cycle paths the whole way. The longest cycle path was from the Brecon Beacons to the finish, which we picked up about 4 miles north of Merthyr Tydfil, and it went all the way down the River Taff valley past Aberfan and Pontypridd to Cardiff Bay. It was 34 miles long and whenever the cycle path needed to cross the big dual carriageway that went down the valley, we went under it or over it but never on it. Progress was slow, nevertheless, because the cycle path was shared with pedestrians and other cyclists and so we

were very careful not to go fast.

Finally, "Is Steve really not stiff and tired?" I'm glad to get to the finish each day for a rest, shower and some food but any stiffness tends to go overnight. The key is the level of training ahead of a ride of this nature, it's all about getting miles into the legs and conditioning one's "seat" to the saddle. I was very happy to get to Cardiff though!!

Steve Hasler

May 11th 2025

Funding Our Replacement Lighting – We're Nearly There!

Our funding gap for the new lighting is now down to £14,000 from the £38,000 which I reported in the June Parish News, which is wonderful progress. The Lighting Fundraising Team have now made six grant applications, decisions are due on each of them in June and July and any money we are granted will be matched and doubled. We can also see some cost savings on the project, which will not affect the quality of what is installed, and between these savings and the grant applications we are 100% confident that we'll find the final £14,000. **STOP PRESS - This is now confirmed**

How have we reduced the gap to £14,000? Actually, that's down to all who have donated to the project and to all who sponsored my cycle ride across Wales. On the cycle ride, when gift aid has been claimed and the total sponsorship is doubled with the matched funding, the amount raised is over £12,000. Your wonderful support, encouragement and generosity is truly humbling. Thank you all so much, I am astounded by and so thankful for your support.

The rest of the new funding comes from donations to the project and any associated matching, these were independent of the cycle ride. Thank you to all have donated, your support is amazing and astonishing too.

The next steps are to meet with a representative of those to whom we have made a grant application should they wish to visit. Friends of Essex Churches Trust will be visiting very early in June, for example. In mid-June, we have the pre-start meeting with our lighting designer and installation contractor to discuss the detail of the installation and the contract ahead of signature. The installation work will start on Monday 15th September with some preparative work in the two or three weeks leading up to mid-September. Watch this space for more information! Then there's the matter of ensuring that the lighting is as good as we've indicated that it will be. No pressure there then!

Steve Hasler

May 30th 2025

What's in a name (9)?

Many of you may well have driven round the set of roads who share the word Gibson in their names in search of a convenient parking space when visiting the High Street, but you may not be aware of why there are three road names which all begin with Gibson, viz Gibson Gardens, Gibson Close and Gibson Way.

The Gibson family first arrived in Walden in 1763 from Maldon where they had been millers. The Gibsons were Quakers and soon established themselves in the town, becoming very successful maltsters and brewers before moving into banking. Gibsons Bank was one of the founding banks that combined to become

Barclays. The Zafferano Lounge building in the Market Place was once Gibsons Bank and still bears the Gibson symbol of a crane and the name Gibsons Bank on a plaque on the door.

The most prominent and successful member of the Gibson family was George Stacey Gibson (above) who continued the Gibson family's generous benefactions to the town with gifts including an extended town hall, the general hospital, now the Uttlesford Council offices and the new Grammar School building on Ashdon Road, now Dame Bradbury's School. He was also involved in the founding of Saffron Walden Museum and the Literary and Scientific Institute, now the Gibson Library, which is located upstairs in the Library.

George Stacey Gibson lived in Hill House on the corner of the High Street and Margaret Way. Today his residence there is marked by a blue plaque. In his day there was no Margaret Way, and the grounds of Hill House stretched as far as the Battle Ditches, bounded to the south by the grounds of the general hospital and to the north by the grounds of other large houses facing on to the High Street. Today people still walk past the icehouse belonging to Hill House and Gibson's collection of geological specimens.

Gibson and his wife, Elizabeth, had only one child, a daughter Mary, who had learning difficulties. She lived in Hill House until her death in 1934 after which much of the grounds were developed for housing giving us Gibson Way, Gibson Close and Gibson Gardens. It is good to think that one of the town's major benefactors lives on in the roads built on his gardens.



Music at St Mary's

Saffron Walden

Lunchtime Concerts

The following concerts start at 1.10pm and last approximately 40 minutes. Refreshments available from 12.30pm

Wednesday 4 June

Caroline Law *Soprano*
Elis Reed *Piano*

Wednesday 11 June

Veronica Henderson *Cello*
Liz Mucha *Piano*

Wednesday 18 June

Oliver King *Organ*

Wednesday 25 June

Arwen Newband *Violin*
Anna Le Hair *Piano*

Wednesday 2 July

Joanna Lam *Piano*

Wednesday 9 July

Derek Scurll *Piano*
Stephanie Reeve *Clarinet*

Wednesday 16 July

Joanna Byers *Flute*

Wednesday 23 July

Mitchison Ensemble

Evening Concert

Saturday 12 July, 5pm

Organ Concert

Wayne Marshall *International Concert Organist*

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