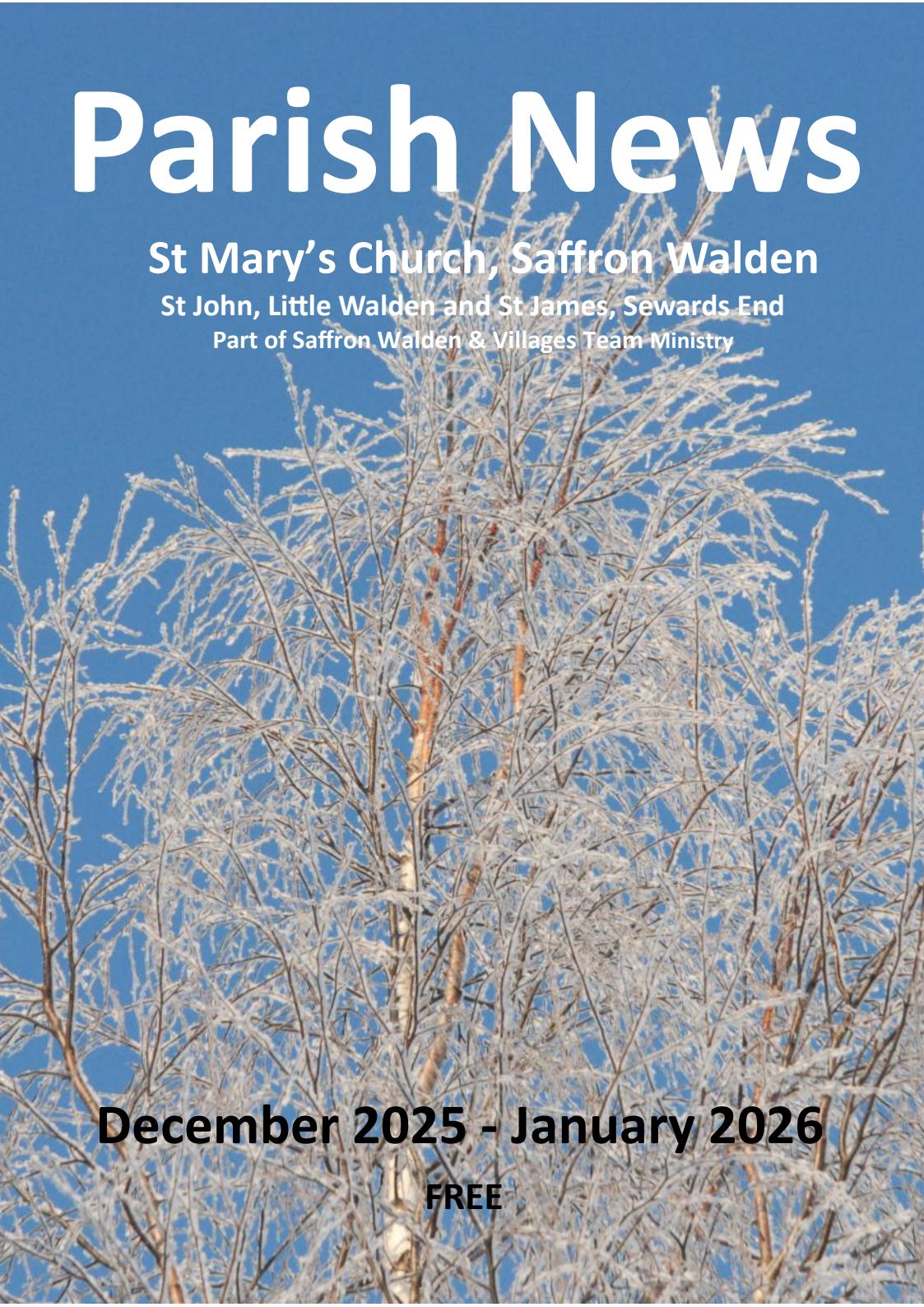


# Parish News

**St Mary's Church, Saffron Walden**

**St John, Little Walden and St James, Seward's End**

**Part of Saffron Walden & Villages Team Ministry**



**December 2025 - January 2026**

**FREE**



Above: Members of the Sealed Knot at the 1647 Reimagined drama, 25th October See page 16. Photograph by Martin Hugall

Below: Choristers at Evensong at St Edmundsbury Cathedral on 18th October. See page 26. Photograph by Peter De Vile.



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**PARISH NEWS IS A FREE PUBLICATION** and can also be viewed (**in full colour**) on our website: [www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org/parishnews](http://www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org/parishnews)

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Links also at the bottom of our website pages

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## The Rector's Letter

From The Rev'd Jeremy Trew

**Jeremy writes...**

How do you feel about Christmas? Some people love it and have never really lost the wonderful child-like innocence of it all – they can't wait for the decorations to go up, the music to start playing and the anticipation of the big day itself, spent with loved ones. For others, it's one of the toughest times of the year. Cold weather, memories of past Christmases where everything went very wrong, broken relationships and loneliness all take their toll. And Christmas is the hardest time to be alone. For those of us who go to church, Christmas is often the time when we hear sermon after sermon reminding us not to take Christ out of Christmas, or all we'll be left with is M&S. It's clever, but I don't think it goes far enough.

So amid the abandoned diets, merry-making and sorrow, preparations and presents and pies, let me offer three quick thoughts about Christmas.

### **1. Let Christmas blow your mind**

Of course, Christmas is about Jesus being born in Bethlehem over 2000 years ago. And it's a great story to teach children. But so often we leave the Christmas story for the children, and we don't stop to realise how earth-shatteringly huge it is. It's like buying a new car, and only ever using it to enjoy the way the windscreen wipers work! Christmas is when the infinite, eternal God, who made everything that exists became part of His own creation. And not an important part either. He didn't become King of the Universe at Christmas. He became a baby, conceived out of wedlock, born to a poor couple from a conquered race, born in an insignificant backwater of a town in the unfashionable end of the Roman Empire. And that is the same God who spoke and the universe was created. A Christmas carol puts it well: "Our God, Heaven cannot hold Him, nor earth sustain; Heaven and earth shall flee away when He comes to reign. In the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed The Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ."

Or as C.S. Lewis wrote in *The Last Battle*: "In our world, too, a stable once held something inside it that was bigger than our whole world." If that doesn't blow your mind, I don't know what will.



**2. Let Christmas bring you to your knees**

And God did this not just to blow our minds, but to enter into our experience. The God of the Universe became one of us and lived as one of us so that we could know Him and be with Him. God himself bridged the gap between people and God, and at immense cost to Himself. Do we praise and worship God for Christmas? Do we let the facts of Christmas bring us to our knees? I hope you will take some time on your own to just think about the enormity of what God did at Christmas.

**3. Let Christmas warm your heart**

Christmas is also a time to celebrate what we have in this life. Telling people to put Jesus at the centre of Christmas often doesn't work because they don't see how He will help them enjoy Christmas more. We need to show them that Jesus was right when He said "I have come that they may have life to the full," and that the best life to live is one with Jesus at the centre.

So I hope and pray you will all enjoy Christmas, that you will enjoy Christmas all the more because Jesus is at the centre of it, and that you will share that enjoyment with others who don't have as much to rejoice about.

God bless, and have a very Happy Christmas!

Jeremy

**A Prayer as we travel through Advent to Christmas and on to Epiphany**

Heavenly Father,  
as you led your people through the desert towards the promised land, lead us too, on our way through Advent, towards the fulfilment of your promises at Christmas.

Lord Jesus, peace-bringer, joy-maker,  
fill our hearts this Christmas with a peace greater than the world can give,  
and a joy deeper than we can imagine.

Holy Spirit, Guide and Comforter,  
just as you led the Magi by a star, so guide us as we enter an unknown future;  
transform us into the likeness of Christ and bring us the comfort of knowing that we are never alone.

Amen

*Provided by the Prayer Team*

## Ringing Outing—4th October 2025

One of the lesser-known pleasures of being a bellringer is going on a ringing outing. In the early autumn the Saffron Walden ringers went on their annual ringing outing to some churches in and around Sudbury in Suffolk. Stephen Wood, member of the band, organised the itinerary and made arrangements for us to visit five churches.



Saffron Walden ringers and some of our regular visitors had a grand day out, although we were travelling through the tail end of storm Amy. We rang in the towers of All Saints, Little Cornard, St Gregory and All Saints, both in Sudbury, All Saints in Acton and finished at St Peter and St Paul's church in Lavenham.

All sets of bells are unique which is why it is so worthwhile to go on



outings. The most obvious difference is how many bells there are, but other factors are also very important. The age of the bells and the frame they sit in, how long the ropes are and whether they are rung regularly and well maintained all change the experience of ringing enormously. Stephen had chosen very carefully, and all the bells had their own unique charms and challenges.

We were very lucky to finish the day at Lavenham, a very fine church and one of the best rings of eight in East Anglia. It was fascinating to see the board recording the visit including ringers from Saffron Walden in 1881 (see photo). Afterwards those that wanted enjoyed a meal in Long Melford before heading home.

There were some sore hands and tired minds, but lots had been achieved along the way.

On Sunday morning the band came together again to ring for the Sunday service back in Saffron Walden and I reflected that we are very lucky to be regular ringers in this parish with such a beautiful ring of twelve bells.

Karen Semken (band member)

Pictures by Lauren Porthouse



## Strange Gifts

It took a long time, a long meander,  
to find that stable.  
Especially with baggage -  
a backpack filled  
with quite unnecessary things  
that weighed me down, slowed my step,  
giving me pain.

The long way home is easier now  
I find I've left my pack behind.  
Somehow, it seems, it fell off there  
to lie among the offerings.  
Strange presents for a newborn child:  
Frankincense ... myrrh ...  
a burdenful of care.

Christine Racliff (from *Visitors to the Stable*. 2005)



"It's either an appeal to youth culture  
or we can't afford to service the boiler  
for the Winter season"

## The Snowflake Fable

*A good while ago I came across a fable which I turned into verse. I then added an old English Folk tune to it. My seasonal contribution to the Parish News.*

A fable is told in years long gone by  
 When beasts learnt to speak and birds learnt to fly.  
 That two feathered creatures up high in a tree  
 Were deep in discussion on how things could be.  
 One thinking bird there was a small collared dove  
 Whose mind was mulling the meaning of love.  
 The other was a sparrow who thought about peace;  
 The two were both hopeful that warfare would cease.  
 As these thinking birds viewed their world down below  
 The clouds all turned grey and it started to snow.  
 "If the world wanted peace how long would it take?"  
 Said the sparrow while counting the fall of each flake.  
 The dove didn't answer, still thinking of love;  
 The sparrow still counted the fall from above.  
 Then suddenly after the millionth flake  
 Just one landed gently to make the branch break.  
 Their questions were answered as off the birds flew  
 For now their world had a more hopeful view.  
 For if just one snowflake a stout branch could break,  
 Just one voice for peace is all it would take.

Chris Bishop

### BBC Radio 3 Choral Evensong

On **Wednesday 10th December**, the BBC are recording Choral Evensong, which is broadcast live every Wednesday at 3pm, from St Mary's, with the choir of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. A recorded version will be broadcast on a subsequent Sunday.

You are all invited to be part of the congregation for this recording, which I think is possibly a 'first' for our church.

**The congregation are asked to be in their seats by 2.30pm**, and certainly no later than 2.45pm.

I do hope as many people as possible will be able to attend, especially to join in the singing of the hymns.

If you have any questions, please contact Hannah Razzell or Vivian Falk.

## 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](mailto: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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## What's in a Name (12)?

### Castle Street



Castle Street is one of the most picturesque streets in Saffron Walden. If you do an Internet search for Saffron Walden, it is very likely that "Castle Street" will be one of the first pictures to come up. But take a walk along the street, with its many half-timbered and painted houses and you may well find yourself asking where the eponymous

castle is.

The only visible sign is the slightly curved part of the street where Museum Street joins Castle Street and some parking is allowed. This curve reflects the line of the bailey of the castle but to find the castle itself you will need to turn up Museum Street and enter the grounds of Saffron Walden Museum.

Straight ahead of you stands what is left of Saffron Walden Castle. Sadly, it is not particularly impressive. All that remains is the flint and mortar core of what was once a tower keep structure. The castle dates from the late 11th or early 12th centuries and would have been a motte and bailey castle. It is not known who built the castle but the first reference to it was in 1141 when the second Geoffrey de Mandeville was granted permission to move the market from Newport to his castle in Walden. Geoffrey seems to have found it difficult to decide which side he preferred in the war between Stephen and Matilda, often called the Anarchy. In the late 1150s the castle was partially destroyed on the orders of Henry II. Although the castle owners continue to be listed, the castle seems to have become a quarry for building materials. Certainly, some of the ashlar facing was reused in the rebuilding of the church in the late 15th or early 16th century.

Regrettably, the glory days of Saffron Walden Castle are long gone, but if you want to see what it might have looked like when it was a thriving establishment, a visit to the castle in Castle Hedingham is recommended.

Hilary Walker

## Gelio's Anthology

### of Obscure Proverbs.



From two other faiths come these proverbs on the subject of 'Seeking God'.

A Jewish Proverb "*Whosoever walks towards God one cubit, God runs towards him twain.*"

And a Sikh proverb: "*Many millions search for God and find him in their hearts.*"

### Herbs in the Churchyard

Several years ago, the St Mary's eco-group arranged for various herbs to be planted around the churchyard, to attract pollinators and other insects, as well

as to make the churchyard look more 'natural'. In the intervening period, these herbs have thrived, and in particular the mint, rosemary and sage are in need of an autumnal 'haircut'. As it was always intended that these should be for the enjoyment of the community, please help yourself to any herbs in the churchyard. The sage is mostly



located on the mound between the south and west doors to the church.



## 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 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

## Friends of St Mary's: Dates for Your Diary

The **next talk** will be 26<sup>th</sup> January 2026 based on the Camino De Santiago Pilgrimage walked by Julie Kendall and her husband Mark Vernon back in May 2024. We look forward to seeing you there, bring your friends along. This will be in the Parish Rooms as usual and will include some light refreshment and a glass of wine. John and Alison Forster will be in touch very soon with full details.

Watch this space for detail of our **spring Cathedral trip**, something to look forward to.

The **Recipe book** is progressing. A few more photos and anecdotes would be really great and add some personal interest to the book.

If you have any ideas for events in the coming year please get in touch we would love to hear them.

The Council would like to wish all of The Friends members and indeed everyone a **Very Happy Christmas** and best wishes for 2026.

Pamela Secretary.



Join us for  
our next  
event

Bailey Lodge care home,  
Radwinter Road,  
Saffron Walden

Mulled wine and mince  
pies with neighbours  
Wednesday 17th December 2025  
2pm - 3.30pm

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[michael.faulkner-dunkley@careuk.com](mailto:michael.faulkner-dunkley@careuk.com)

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## 1647 Reimagined



The Saffron Walden Heritage Development Group is keen to promote the history of our town, and the period when the soldiers of the New Model Army were headquartered here in 1647 is an important part of that story, as well as being of significance to students of the momentous changes of the 17th century. The debates

that took place in the Church (the obvious place for a large group to assemble) in May 1647 were not merely about how the soldiers were to be paid, but foreshadowed the well known Putney Debates later that year, when the government of the country was robustly discussed.

Plans are already well advanced for the commemoration of these events of 1647 by the erection of a statue in front of the Church to mark the 380th anniversary in 2027. Ian Wolter, a nationally recognised sculptor, (see below) is working to create a bronze sculpture of three representative figures (an elected Agitator, a Parliamentary Commissioner and a woman distributing pamphlets such as those printed at the time by the Levellers and the Army). To start preparing the town for this, members of the Sealed Knot Society were invited to perform a costumed interpretative drama in the church, followed by a demonstration of their weaponry in the grounds of the Museum and around the Castle.

John Pickthorn

Photographs by Martin Hugall



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**No job too small or too odd!**

# The Calendar

## 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.



### *Thursday 4 December*

10.00am      Silent Prayer in the Parish Rooms

### *Sunday 7 December*

8.00am      BCP Holy Communion

10.30am      Holy Communion [Y] with Sunday Club at 10.25am

### *Wednesday 10 December*

3.00pm      BBC Radio 3 broadcast of Choral Evensong, with the choir of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. **Please be in your seats by 2.45pm**

### *Sunday 14 December*

8.00am      BCP Holy Communion

10.30am      Second Sunday Communion [Y] with Sunday Club at 10.25am

4.00pm      Christingle Service

### *Thursday 18 December*

7.30pm      Blue Christmas Service

### *Sunday 21 December*

8.00am      BCP Holy Communion

10.30am      Holy Communion [Y] with Sunday Club at 10.25am

6.30pm      Service of Nine Lessons and Carols [Y]

### *Wednesday 24 December—Christmas Eve*

4.00pm      Lighting the Christmas Tree

6.00pm      Lighting the Christmas Tree

11.30pm      Midnight Holy Communion

*Thursday 25 December - Christmas Day*

10.30am      Christmas Family Communion [Y]

*Sunday 28 December*

10.30am      Team Communion Service [Y]

*Sunday 4 January 2026*

8.00am      BCP Holy Communion

10.30am      Holy Communion [Y] with Sunday Club at 10.25am

*Sunday 11 January*

8.00am      BCP Holy Communion

10.30am      Second Sunday Communion [Y] with Sunday Club at 10.25am

4.00pm      Epiphany Choral Evensong

*Sunday 18 January*

8.00am      BCP Holy Communion

10.30am      Churches Together United Service [Y] with Sunday Club at 10.25am

*Sunday 25 January*

8.00am      BCP Holy Communion [Y]

10.30am      Family Service

4.00pm      Taizé Service

## **Regular weekday services at St Mary's**

*Tuesdays*

5.00pm      Evening Prayer by Zoom, see weekly bulletin for login details

*Wednesdays*

8.00am      Morning Prayer downstairs in the Parish Rooms

9.30am      Holy Communion (with Prayers for Wholeness and Healing on the 1st Wednesday of the month) in the Parish Rooms



## St James', Seward End

*Sunday 7 December*

10.30am      Holy Communion

*Saturday 20 December*

5.00pm      Carol Service

*Thursday 25 December—Christmas Day*

10.30am      Christmas Family Communion

*Sunday 4 January 2026*

10.30am      Holy Communion

*Sunday 18 January*

10.30am      Morning Praise



## St John's, Little Walden

*Saturday 13 December*

5.00pm      Carol Service

*Thursday 25 December—Christmas Day*

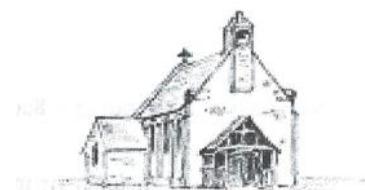
10.30am      Christmas Family Communion

*Sunday 11 January 2026*

10.30am      Family Service

*Sunday 25 January*

10.30am      Holy Communion



## From the Registers

### Baptisms

26th October      Lewis Smart

### Funerals

15th October      Marion Crawley

27th October      Eileen Graves

28th October      John Gardner

29th October      Josephine Squibb

30th October      Joan Towers

## Looking After The Church

### Fabric – It Never Rains But It Pours!

Although in this case, we hope that it doesn't rain or at least not in a thunderstorm! If you look up to the very top of the church spire when standing outside the parish rooms, you'll see a cable hanging down, see photo. We promptly asked one of our regular contractors to fly a drone and give us a close up and it's clear that the lightning conductor cable on the north side of the church, which goes up the weathervane, has become disconnected. Our lightning conductor engineers visited on 5th November and confirmed that we still have some protection against lightning from the duplicate cable that runs down the south side. However, we need to get this repaired and now await the quotation. It will be interesting to hear how the repairers will get up that high; the engineer who visited thought they might use steeplejacks. That will be exciting, but rather them than me! Watch out for more information....

You can see the drone in the photo to the right of the spire, that's a drone not a pigeon! The drone pilot was concerned whether the peregrine falcon that sometimes sits on the spire was in residence. Apparently, they attack drones as well as pigeons, although I'm sure they find the latter to be more tasty.

With thanks to John Mumford who first spotted and quickly reported the problem.

Simon Potter and Steve Hasler



## News from the Younger members of the Church

The Children and Youth groups were all pleased to welcome a new leader, Julie Lester, at the start of September, and as is often the way, after waiting for one, they ended up with an offer, and they got two, as Hayden Rocks has also joined the team. Julie comes from a background of working with children in nurseries, primary schools and high schools, as well as having volunteered for Girlguiding for over 15 years here with St Mary's Brownies and Guides. Julie also enjoyed volunteering at VBS so, when the role of Children and Youth Leader was advertised, she felt the nudge from God to apply.

Hayden has been involved in St Mary's for many years, as a child in junior choir, then moving up to being a choral scholar and now a valued tenor in the main choir. In recent years he participated in the Youth Bible study, running some sessions, and was a member of Aftershock. Hayden has joined the team at St Mary's as an intern, where he can undertake some training and gain experience in running youth groups to add to what he already has as a volunteer with the Saffron Walden Boys Brigade.

### Tinies

Tinies has moved into the Parish Rooms this term due to the lighting project in the church, the time was also adjusted to 10 till 11.30am to save a clash with a library event for babies. The children that have come this term have heard some of the stories from the Old Testament: Creation, Noah's Ark and Moses. The crafts that tie in have been fun to do, especially when they used sand while hearing the story of Moses in the desert. An amazing team of volunteers means that the session continues to be a warm and welcoming place for under 5's with their carers, who all enjoy a hot drink and a chance to chat whilst the little ones play.

### Sunday Club

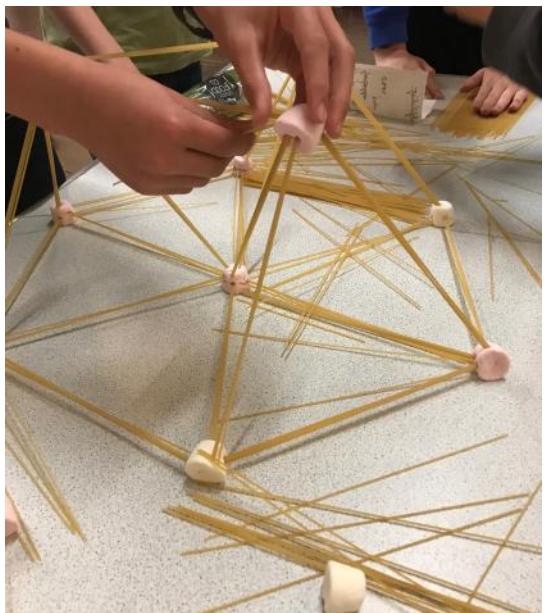
This term Sunday club has been going steadily on, each week hearing a Bible story then doing a craft in the Parish Rooms before going over to the church for a blessing during communion. The start time has been moved to 10.25 to allow time too for the parents or carers to drop the children off and then get into the church and settled before the service starts. One of the stories was the mustard seed parable, and mustard seeds were planted, with success brought down and shown off the week after.



## Family Service

Our family services continue to be popular; in September we celebrated harvest with a salt dough craft and made paper plate trees with leaves of thankfulness. October's meeting was on Bible Sunday, and the congregation were able to create scrolls and bookmarks, one with the books of the Bible shown to colour, and one which was for mindful colouring.

## Aftershock



After being a key member of the team at Aftershock for many years and keeping it going since Matt left, Tracey Nicholls was at last able to step down and had her final regular meeting on Sunday 19th October. The thankful members gave her a card, and she will be much missed. At the start of the term a planning meeting was held with the young members, and from that the program was set. They wanted fun and Bible study, so that is what they have been doing, they have been comparing the

different accounts of the Gospels and the language when comparing different editions, from the King James version to Youth Bibles, to The Good News Bible. The fun has involved games, a scavenger hunt, and some fun with food, icing cakes and constructing towers with marshmallows and spaghetti.

Julie Lester





## From the Archives

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

Muniments  
Room

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

**Dec/Jan. 1953**

### **Parish Breakfast**

The Parish Breakfast has been going now for just over 3 months, between 30 and 40 people coming every Sunday to share it and make it a living fellowship; couldn't it be a great many more, it would be lovely to run short of food?

Several people have been very generous in bringing eggs, marmalade, tea and margarine and it would be very nice if more people would bring goods instead of money, margarine, eggs, honey, tins of meat or fish, tea – so that only milk, bread and rationed foodstuffs need be bought. Of course a tin of meat would represent several weeks collection !

There should be several pounds of sugar left over at the end of this eight-week ration period and it would be very nice if someone could volunteer to make marmalade with it, so that we can have home-made marmalade as a treat !

Thanks are due not only to those who give so generously, both of themselves and their goods to make our Parish Breakfast such a very real Family meal, but also to those who do the donkey work, the washers-up and the Youth Fellowship who get it ready every Saturday.

J.Elliott-Banns.

### **Strange Vesture.**

At the Midnight Eucharist at Christmas it will have been noticed that the three officiating ministers were wearing rather strange robes: These robes are called copes and they are the official "best clothes of the Church". They will be very much in evidence at the Coronation Service in Westminster Abbey in June and so we may be happily re-assured that the wearing of them is completely loyal to the tradition of the Church of England: and they will be worn of course in many churches throughout the land to mark that great day.

## The Joys of Making Marmalade

I started making marmalade 25 years ago when my Mum turned 80. She was small and rather frail and I was concerned that she was pouring preserving pans of boiling oranges into scalding jam jars! My Dad always loved homemade marmalade, so she gave me her mother's recipe and I started making it for them. After a few years I thought I might make some to sell at Church to raise some funds for the Church General Fund, which pays all the necessary but unglamorous bills like gas and electricity.

Over the years I have gathered regular, valued customers who seem to really enjoy my marmalade, so the month of January is spent squeezing, slicing and boiling oranges I purchase from our wonderful market stall. They only sell Seville Oranges for the calendar month of January so it is "all hands on deck" when they are available. I use 4 lbs of oranges and one lemon in each batch. All the peel is sliced by hand and I could not make the amount that I do without the help of Kathleen, who prepares about half the batches I make each year. In January 2025 I made 28 batches, producing 195 pots of marmalade and a final profit of £356 for the General Fund.

I hope you will come and buy a pot from me next February when I hope to have made a new supply! Personally, I don't like marmalade!!

Lesley A Green

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## St Mary's Music News

The Choir enjoyed a trip to St Edmundsbury Cathedral at which they sang a beautiful setting of the text “*If ye love me*,” immortalised by Tallis. This version was written by the Leeds-based composer Philip Wilby.



For now, there's an endless cycle of rehearsals. The Christmas Fair on the 29th November will see participation from all the music groups at the church. The brass ensemble will open the fair, followed by a sparkling Christmas medley on the piano, given by Oliver King. Jack will demonstrate his amazing progress on the organ, followed by the choral scholars who are also responsible for enlivening attendees with mulled wine and mince pies. The morning is due to finish with the combined forces of Joyful Noise, the Junior Choristers and Brownies, in a rousing rendition of well-known carols. The Junior Choristers will also be running a craft stall.

The Christmas season opens with the Advent Carol Service, starting in darkness as the *Advent Antiphons* by James MacMillan rang through the church. There are some notable organ voluntaries this month. After the Sunday morning service on the 14th December, we have Bach's *Toccata in D minor* (known as *the Dorian* – not the one played endlessly on Classic FM) and on the 21st Buxtehude's *Passacaglia in D minor*. The choir will sing at both services on the 21st and in the morning there will be a chance to hear the lovely setting of *Adam Lay Ybounden* by the former Director of Music at King's, Boris Ord. In the evening it is the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, featuring many of the most popular congregational carols and John

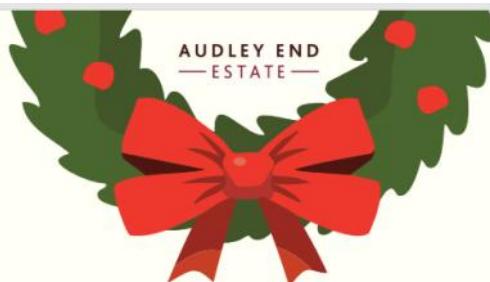
Gardner's foot-tapping setting of "Tomorrow Shall be my Dancing Day," On Christmas Eve at Midnight Mass, anyone feeling sleepy will be awoken by a fantastic voluntary: Garth Edmundson's joyful toccata on "Vom Himmel Hoch." Well- worth a listen!

The SMMA hope you have a wonderful Christmas and our thanks go out to Oli and Jeremy and all the musicians at St Mary's, for all their hard-work and commitment in this, their busiest month.

Philip Sunderland

Photograph by Peter De Vile

*Please mention Parish News when responding to an advertisement.*



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## Christmas Crackers

I'm delighted to be able to handcraft 100 of my crackers this year with proceeds to the Church Fair. So if you would like some for your Festive table, the price will again be £3.50 each.

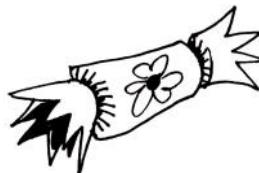
They contain a decorated hat, a snap, a joke or motto, a present and 'something to play with'.

As always it is helpful if you can let me know adult/teenagers/children and male/female/non-specific.

All orders to be with me by Friday 28th November please.

Wishing you all a Blessed Christmas.

Diana Hoy - [dd.hoy@ntlworld.com](mailto:dd.hoy@ntlworld.com)



## QuinquaQuiz 2026

Dear QuinquaQuiz goers and those who might be interested in becoming one. There will be yet another quiz on Saturday **February 14th 2026** in the Parish Rooms. 7pm for a 7.30pm start. (Money raised always goes towards **the Bishop's Lent Appeal**)

As usual, I ask that each team has 6 members with each player paying £5 to join their team. (Please bring your own drinks and nibbles)

If you would like to take part, all you have to do is to give your name and hopefully the Team Name you wish to enter to the PARISH OFFICE by Monday February 2nd.

The QuinquaQuiz is what I might call a light-hearted quiz with a slight difference! I very much look forward to hearing from you.

Canon Chris Bishop (Quiz Master)

07810 851002

[chrismitre@hotmail.com](mailto:chrismitre@hotmail.com)

## Lighting Installation – A Partial Switch-On

By the time that you read this in early December, we will be using the new lighting for north and south aisles and for the congregation in the nave. It is also possible that the new lighting in the choir vestry and north chapels will be in use. Maybe, but less likely, the new uplighters for the clerestory windows and the roof bosses in the nave will also have been switched on. Just how much of this we are using throughout Advent and over Christmas depends on the progress made in November.

During October, the majority of the new lights in the choir vestry and all of the new light fittings in the north and south aisles and north chapel were installed. You may well have noticed the loose cabling which comes down the wall at the west end of the church, on both sides, which connects the lights in the aisles to their power supply. These will be tidied up and the cabling will be painted to match the wall in due course.

November will be an exciting and intensive month. The plan, as I write on 2nd November, is to install the remaining lights in the choir vestry, all of the uplighters in the nave and then the controls for the lights. Throughout December, we will be able to control some of the new lights from a temporary set of buttons on a welcome unit at the back of the nave. Specialist lighting control engineers will be at the church on four days in November to finalise the set up. The buttons used to control the lighting will be programmed into “scenes”, e.g. pressing the button labelled “10:30am service” will bring on all the lights needed for that service. A small group from our lighting team will define the group of lights for each scene, we will be able to adjust these later too.

I also expect that the emergency lights, which will be some of the new lights in various areas of the church, will be livened up during November. This requires the batteries which will power the emergency lights to be installed on top of the servery and children's corner cupboards. Our existing





New lights in north chapel, powered by cables which run across the organ loft under the floor!

that we can redecorate around the chancel windows at the same time, repairing the damage caused by the chancel roof leaks in 2021. The organ will also be protected during this work. We expect the scaffolding to be dismantled and the choir stall lights to be back in place before the end of January.

The full lighting is targeted to be completed by the end of February or very early March. Until then, the regular weekday services and activities will continue to be in the Parish Rooms with annual services, e.g. the Holocaust Service and the Service for the World Day of Prayer and the associated rehearsal, and funerals taking place in the church.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask or consult the display at the back of the church which continues to be updated each month.

emergency lights will continue to be used until the new ones are available.

As noted in the November Parish News, the lighting contractors will finish for this year on Thursday 27th November and none of our Advent and Christmas services will be impacted by the lighting work. They will take all of their equipment with them and all of the pews in the north aisle will be brought back into use. They will return on Friday 2nd January to remove the choir stall lights to allow access to the clerestory level in the chancel and sanctuary without damaging them. From Monday 5th January scaffolding will be installed in the chancel on the south side so



Working at height in the nave!

Steve Hasler  
2nd November 2025

**YOU in the PEW** interviewed by Chris Bishop**Paula Griffiths**

Paula was born in a vicarage - her father was then Vicar of St Augustine's, Fulham. She became very familiar with pews (falling out of one during Evensong, aged four). However, life was less Spartan than a primary schoolmate imagined: "It must be so uncomfortable, sleeping on those pews every night!" She reassured her friend that she did have another home - and a bed!

Like most clergy children, she moved around: Paddington, Maida Vale, and Bow. After three formative years reading History at Lady Margaret Hall,



Oxford, she entered the Department of the Environment and later joined English Heritage. In 1999 Paula's job moved to Cambridge. She and Roger (who took this photograph) decided to move with it. They drew a circle representing 20 minutes' drive from Audley End station, wanting easy access both to Cambridge and London. They found Greatford Cottage in Stocking Green: a 17th century farm-workers' cottage with a wonderful view over fields. It was exactly right! They made an offer immediately: and



Cathedral and Church Buildings department—and commuted back to London! For this important job, she strove to encourage churches and their work with the community.

When I asked what had brought her to St Mary's, Paula instantly replied "Ordination!" Living in rural surroundings immersed her in creation. She found a spiritual home at Wimbish, and particularly valued walking across the fields to church on Sunday mornings. Vocation developed: after training for ordination at Westcott House in Cambridge, she joined the Team Ministry in 2009, serving hercuracy here, and then looking after the churches in Little Walden and then Hadstock. She retired from licensed ministry in 2021, but still enjoys occasionally taking services - and having the time to write her poetry and her other books.

I asked her what had been the highlights of her time here, and she replied, with a laugh, "Too many to list! Perhaps organising the popular Bible Reading Marathon in 2011, celebrating 400 years of the King James Bible. There have been various enjoyable Team Events, including Bishop Rowan Williams coming to Hadstock to celebrate the Millennium of the Battle of Assundun. And I relished leading Zoom services from home during COVID - a spiritual lifeline for many."

But the standout event had to be her ordination to the priesthood In St Mary's in September 2010, and presiding at her first Eucharist that same evening. It felt so powerful, surrounded by her family and congregation in the church, with the choir singing '*If ye love me, keep my commandments*' as she administered Communion for the first time.

As usual, I asked her what motto she would like to have on a family coat of arms. She reflected for some moments, before replying "Love, and take courage."

quickly embraced the new lifestyle. Both feel the decision to move here was the other best decision they have made.

Ironically, having moved from London for her work, she was appointed in 2002 to head the Church of England's national

# *Everyone at St Mary's Church wishes you a peaceful and blessed Christmas*

We warmly invite you to share in our Christmas services in 2025.

Details of all the services for the Christmas period can be found at  
[stmaryssaffronwalden.org/christmas](http://stmaryssaffronwalden.org/christmas)

## **Advent Carol Service** 6.30pm Sunday 30 November.

Join with members of all the local churches for this special service of readings and carols by candlelight.

## **Christingle Service** 4pm Sunday 14 December.

A Christingle is a symbolic orange with a candle to represent Jesus as the Light of the World. Children are especially welcome.

## **Blue Christmas Service** 7.30pm Thursday 18 December.

A quiet service for anyone who finds it hard to buy into the forced merriment of Christmas, or wants space, or for whom this might be a difficult time of year.

## **Christmas Carol Service** 6.30pm Sunday 21 December.

A traditional service of bible readings and carols sung by the congregation and choir. Also on YouTube.

## **Christmas Tree Service** 4pm and 6pm Christmas Eve Wednesday 24 December.

These services are particularly suitable for children. Children are welcome to dress as shepherds or angels to take part in the Christmas story. A collection will support the Mayor's charity UCAN. Presents will be donated to children in a women's refuge – please don't wrap.

## **Midnight Communion** 11.30pm Christmas Eve Wednesday 24 December.

The first communion service of Christmas.

## **Christmas Day Family Communion** 10.30am Thursday 25 December.

Join us to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ on this special day.

Also on YouTube.

