

Parish News

St Mary's Church, Saffron Walden

St John, Little Walden and St James, Sewards End

Part of Saffron Walden & Villages Team Ministry

April 2026

FREE



Let there be Light

March 8th saw the unveiling of the new lighting system at the Choral Evensong Service. Photographs taken from Live screening by Richard Auty. Above: Rev'd Paula Griffiths preaching. Below: intercessory prayers from (L to R) Ralph Meloy, Noel Starr and Vivian Falk. Full report: page 26



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Front cover photograph by Lesley Green

PARISH NEWS - EDITORIAL DEADLINE

The deadline for contributions for each issue is the 1st Sunday of the previous month. Hence, the deadline for the **May** issue is **Sunday 5th April**.

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St Mary's PCC—Charity no. 1128863

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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...

A very happy Easter to you all! I hope that you will be able to share in our Easter celebrations at St Mary's, St James' and St John's. We have journeyed together across Lent and into Holy Week. Maybe you have joined in with one of our Lent Groups or have followed your own pathway through this season. Maybe you don't feel properly prepared for Easter (who ever does?). Either way, Easter is upon us, and all creation is invited to celebrate the eternal hope it brings.

Although Jesus signposted what returning to Jerusalem would mean for Him, His disciples were still confused and unprepared for what happened there. They still needed the rest of their lives to understand the significance of those few days for them and for their world. They did not complete that task in the remainder of their lives, and the Church they left behind has been working it out ever since. There is a sense in which we should never regard ourselves as being "prepared for Easter", as this would suggest that our task was done and there was nothing left to understand, no mystery still to be solved. That is not the case. In parallel with whatever spiritual preparations we may be making for this season are the events in our news from around the world and within our own nation.

As I write, the USA and Israel are attacking Iran and Lebanon once again, and the dogs of war are straining at the leash. I have about as much understanding of where our world may be by Easter time as those first disciples did as they walked towards Jerusalem. Yet the important thing for me is that Jesus walks with us just as He did with those disciples. Whatever is happening, and might happen, in our world (both globally and personally), He walks with us. From that I take hope that God's purposes surpass any present troubles, and that God's Kingdom deserves my allegiance more than any temporal power.

On a different note: April also brings with it our annual meetings. The reports we receive represent a huge amount of work, love and service from volunteers, staff and clergy over the past year. My thanks to you all. When this is published there will still be time for you to offer your services on the PCC and in other roles for the year to come. Please do consider this. We all have gifts to share.

My thanks to you all

Jeremy

Jeremy's Sabbatical



At the end of the month, I will begin a sabbatical. My last day with you is Sunday 26th April and I return on Monday 27th July. I will not be able to respond to any phone calls or emails received between these dates and will use the quieter weeks of August to catch up with people and new developments, and to prepare for a busy and active Autumn. The Parish and Team will be under the good care of our Team clergy, our Churchwardens, Office Staff, and all those wonderful people who continue to keep things

running so well.

A sabbatical is not time off, but a time set aside for ministry through study, reflection and rest, in a similar vein to those times Jesus took His disciples away from the crowds so that they might rest, learn from Him and reflect on their experiences. I will be focusing my learning on the theme of Pilgrimage – that conscious and reflective Journey with Jesus that takes us into a deeper understanding of what it is to be His companion. I will begin by undertaking a substantial part of the Way of St Francis in Italy, ending in Assisi, where I will spend time with the English Anglican Franciscan community there. This will be followed by walking several shorter pilgrimage routes in this country, including some devised by my previous Diocese, Exeter, an urban pilgrimage, a walk to Lindisfarne (if you haven't been, do try to get there), and retracing a journey an ancestor of mine took as he walked with Jesus nearly three hundred years ago. I will reflect on this using a pile of books I have built up over recent years and also through the medium of photography and will be looking for ways to share what I learn in the Autumn and beyond. I intend to post regular updates online, for those who may be interested, and will advertise how you can follow this through the Grapevine nearer the time.

My thanks for all who have made this vital learning experience possible through taking up the reins during this time.

Yours
Jeremy

From the Registers

Baptisms

22nd February

Dominic Thomas Jefford

Funerals

4th February

Olwen 'Wendy' Linney

11th February

Brian Brooke-Smith

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

Chris Cowling

Chris was born and grew up in Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire. She was baptised, confirmed and later married in her local Church also named St Mary's. After leaving school she worked as a shorthand/audio secretary in Wolsey Hall Correspondence College in Oxford. When a job opportunity came up at the local



National Westminster Bank Training College – Heythrop Park, she jumped at the chance to return to where she had previously carried out some work experience whilst still at school.

Heythrop Park was a stately home set in beautiful surroundings with lovely country views and offered a friendly atmosphere. A love of nature, gardens and enjoying the outside is very important to Chris. It was at Heythrop Park that she met her husband, Graeme, who happened to be attending a training course.

Graeme was born and raised in Enfield, North London and after their marriage they moved to Cheshunt and then soon after to Braughing in Hertfordshire. They had two children and eventually moved to Saffron Walden. Chris and Graeme now have four children who attended the local schools until, in 1998, Graeme's job

took them to Jersey in the Channel Islands for three years.

Once back in Saffron Walden, Chris became involved in St Mary's volunteering on Tuesdays at Tinies which after working as a nursery nurse in a reception class and nursery and pre-schools was a wonderful chance to continue to enjoy the company of children. Along with this, Chris volunteers on the Sunday coffee rota and for the last year or so she has been taking the Home Communion service monthly at Custerson Court and very recently joined the Prayer team.

She says: "All these things have been so special and a privilege to be part of." Over the 39 years that Chris has lived here in Saffron Walden there have been many community events that have been wonderful for her to be part of. These included the town carnival while she was working at the nursery and also volunteering at the vocational Bible school (VBS) where so many of the children from the local schools attended during the summer. All of these moments were memorable to her.

Chris also remembers so many services she has been part of at St Mary's such as Christingle, Christmas, Easter and Harvest Festival and two of her four children being baptised here.

Chris concluded by saying a quote from her children: 'Mum you have so many places to sit in your garden but never have time to sit' – so perhaps my motto should be: "Look up and around you, enjoy each day, be thankful and sit down!"

Ravens at St Mary's

Chris Shennan

Jackdaws are surely the hardest birds to miss when walking around the churchyard during daytime. They fly around the spire and belfry, visible as dark birds against a pale sky, and often noisily making their 'chack' calls (and hence their name combined with 'daw', an old word for a bird).

Recently these have been joined by ravens. They can be harder to spot from the ground, another dark bird though much larger. But their call is unmistakable, a deep resonant croak, sometimes little more than a deep note, sometimes a longer series of croaks. This morning, I saw ravens to the west of the church gathering nesting material and then flying in the direction of the church. In the late afternoon/dusk, I saw two ravens fly up to the tower apparently with nesting material in their beaks. The raven's nest is readily visible on the northwest corner of the tower at the foot of the spire.

We should not be surprised at the presence of ravens. They nest near Audley End and can sometimes be heard in the hills above Littlebury. Last winter, they even came to trees in my garden.

Less common but also to be seen on the spire of the church are peregrine falcons. I don't believe they stay to nest, but they can sometimes be seen on a prominent perch. They too have a characteristic call which sounds like some other birds of prey (but very different to the calls of jackdaws, for instance). Again, we should not be surprised that peregrines sometimes visit the church which is the tallest building around and the town's equivalent of a wild cliff edge. Peregrines certainly breed in Cambridge. So next time you are walking near St Mary's, have a listen for the ravens and keep an eye out for a passing peregrine.

Funding for Listed Places of Worship

For 25 years, listed places of worship (including St Mary's) have appreciated the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme (LPWGS) – a government scheme which automatically repaid the VAT they had paid on repairs and associated works. It was beautifully straightforward. Provided your works qualified, and your church was listed, you received the money: no complicated requirements to justify your repairs or evaluate at length what difference the work would make to your worship or community activities. LPWGS simply accepted that historic churches needed repair, and that repairing them was a 'good in itself'.

Gordon Brown introduced the scheme in 2001 when he was the Chancellor of the Exchequer. It was never permanent. Indeed, at that time the church heritage world hoped to persuade the European Union to reduce VAT on repairs to historic churches to 5% across the board – though we never succeeded. But each time LPWGS came up for renewal, usually every three years, the heritage world made the case for it to continue; and the Government of the day considered and agreed to extend it.

Until 2025, when the Government extended it only for one year, until April 2026 – and said that it would not guarantee the scheme beyond that date. This January it announced that the scheme would not be extended. It has now closed. But the Government has now promised new funding for listed churches: £23 million from April 2026 for each of the next four years, a total of £92 million. This roughly equals the annual amount usually given under the LPWGS. Given the current dire economic situation, this is good news.... So, what's the problem?

The difference is that this money is no longer automatic. The new scheme will be operated by Historic England (previously English Heritage) and applications will be assessed according to published criteria, which are still being worked out. We can expect fierce competition for the money available. Watch this space.

Following up my appearance last July before the Parliamentary Select Committee inquiry into Protecting Built Heritage, I have written to the Chairman welcoming the new money, but regretting the loss of the automatic LPWGS and urging that the application process for the new scheme should be as simple as possible. The Select Committee is no longer taking evidence, and is formulating its report, but the Committee Clerk did write to thank me for my 'thoughtful contribution'. I'll report any significant developments in future issues of Parish News.

Paula Griffiths

Radwinter Road Cemetery Saffron Walden

Radwinter Road Cemetery is a peaceful space which offers a natural environment for all types of wildlife and is an important nature conservation resource. There are spaces set aside which are allowed to grow naturally and which provide a habitat where insects and wildlife thrive.

Daily maintenance and gardening are carried out to ensure the space is a welcoming and peaceful place for visitors.

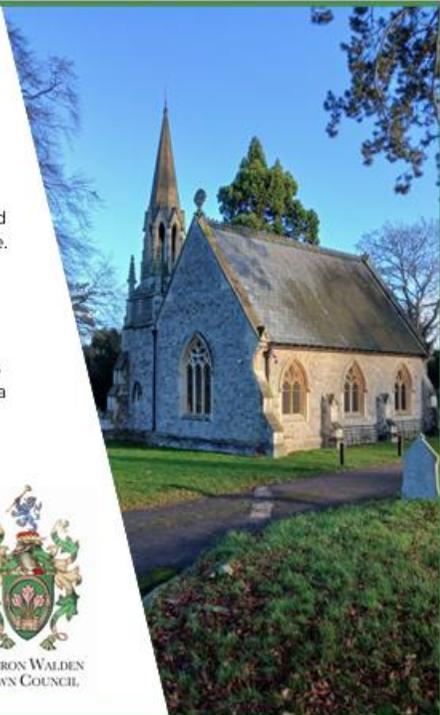
The Cemetery is predominantly laid to lawn, but there is also a Traditional Area, Garden of Remembrance, an area for scattering ashes and a designated section for children. There is a separate section for war graves which are cared for by The Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

The small, refurbished Victorian Chapel is non-denominational and available to hire for both religious and secular services.

Saffron Walden Town Council
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TOWN COUNCIL



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George Pipe Trophy 2026

Karen Semken (member of the band)

On 21st February, members of the Saffron Walden bellringers were in Great Yarmouth, representing the town in the George Pipe Trophy, a striking competition for ringers from the 12-bell towers in East Anglia .

George Pipe (1935-2020) was a well-known ringer from Ipswich, and this competition was set up in his name with the aim of improving 12-bell ringing across the region. East Anglia has nine churches with 12 bells, and ringers from seven of these entered the competition. Ringing most commonly takes place on six or eight bells and making the transition to twelve is a challenge when you are not used to it.

Here in Saffron Walden we are very lucky to have 12 bells in the tower, so we were there to represent the town. Every band had to ring the same 'touch', which means the order in which the bells were sounding was exactly the same for each band. We were looking to achieve 'good striking' which simply means that the bells are ringing with even spacing between them, apart from a little pause (like a breath) after each bell has sounded twice. Because the order of the bells is constantly changing, this is harder than it sounds!

Ringling relies on a strong team of people, so although some of our ringers are very experienced it only takes one person to get out of time and the sound can become uneven and unpleasant very quickly. There were a few tense faces as we climbed up to the ringing room.

We had a quick practice and then it was time for our 'touch'. "Go Grandsire" was called (the piece of ringing was a method called *Grandsire Cinques*), and we were off. For me, time seemed to go into overdrive. I was concentrating so hard on the sound of my bell in the row and remembering what was coming next that it felt like no time at all until I heard 'that's all' and then 'stand'. We stopped our bells and looked round the ringing room in silence for a few moments before cheeks were puffed out and we all began to relax.

The band rang well. When the results were announced we were fourth out of the seven bands; congratulations to Bury St Edmunds, for their convincing win. The consensus is that the George Pipe Trophy has improved 12-bell ringing in the area, and I hope that George was looking down on our efforts approvingly.

So next time you hear bells ringing you can be a judge – are they evenly spaced with a little pause after each bell has sounded twice? If you would like to have a try at ringing bells there will be a **mini-ring** in the churchyard on **Easter Monday** with plenty of ringers on hand to demonstrate and to 'show you the ropes'. A group of young ringers from across the region will be using it for some of the day but it is available for anyone to try from 10:00 – 13:00 and 14:30 – 15:30. Maybe one day you too can be travelling to remote places for a ringing competition.



The Saffron Walden Ringers *Front row left to right* Ali Brooke, Partrick Brooke, Chris Seaman, Alice Kirk, Ann Clinton, Karen Semken *Back row left to right* Roger Collins, John Peverett, Chris McCarthy, Stephen Wood, Ruth Suggett, Oliver Clinton

Quinqua Quiz 2026

The annual Quinqua Quiz took place in the Parish Rooms on 14th February, where competitiveness rather than romance was in evidence. A hard fought tussle ensued, with Ashdon's Black Sheep team winning by the smallest possible margin. Thanks go to the quizmaster, Rev'd Chris Bishop for setting the questions, adjudicating and presiding over what proved a thoroughly enjoyable evening, with £220 raised for the Bishop of Chelmsford's Lent Appeal..

Gelio's Anthology of Obscure Proverbs

This month I give you a well-known English proverb, followed by a very obscure Chinese one on the subject of 'friendship'.

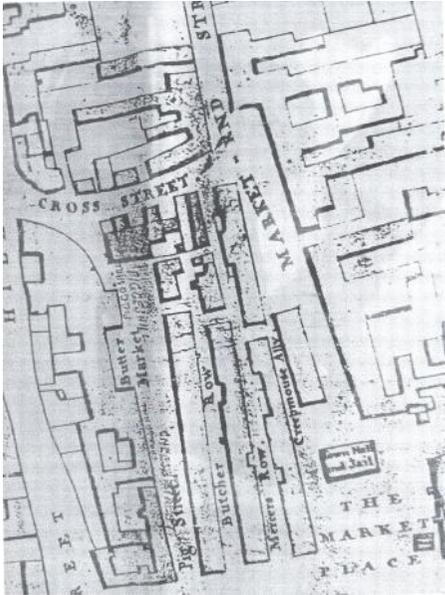
"A friend in need is a friend indeed" and

"Do not use a hatchet to remove a fly from your friend's forehead"



What's in a Name (15)?

The Rows



If you ever wander between King Street and Market Street, you are walking through Saffron Walden's Rows. If you look carefully you may spot the names Butchers Row and Mercers Row high up on walls. I am not sure if the name plates for Tanners Row and Fish Row still exist.

These tiny streets have retained their original names, whereas Market Street was once in part Pig Street and in part the Butter Market. Creep Mouse Alley has disappeared altogether. Butchers Row is the only one that stretches its original length.

If we were to wind back the clock a few hundred years, these little streets were the heart of Saffron Walden's

Charter Market which spread from the Market Place at least part of the way down Market End Street which we know as King Street. It was customary for people following the same trade to group together, hence the names of the little streets. The same arrangement can be seen between Newmarket Road and the River Cam in Cambridge which was the site of the great mediaeval fair of Stourbridge. There are still roads called Garlic Row and Cheddars Lane there.

Over time, as Saffron Walden developed, some of the Rows were pulled down. For example, Middle Row was lost to the widening of what would become King Street. Later, part of Mercers Row was lost when George Stacey Gibson made additions to the town hall in 1879, adding not just the mock Tudor front of the Town Hall, but also the large hall at the back. If you ever get the chance, a visit to the very top storey of the Town Hall, you may be able to peep down into all that is left of that part of a row, fossilised in time with no access at ground level.

The Saffron Walden Rows are a remarkable survival of the original Saffron Walden market layout. You can see the layout on the 1758 Eyre map of Saffron Walden in the Essex Records Office. It's well worth a look as this small version does not do it justice.

Hilary Walker



Do you enjoy Art, Music, Dance, History or Literature?

We are the Saffron Walden Arts Society and invite you to join us for a talk on the third Wednesday of every month on different subjects from the Arts.

We meet at the Quaker Meeting Hall in the High Street. You can choose to come in the morning and enjoy a chat and a coffee or in the afternoon for tea and biscuits, before the lecture. The Arts Society offers you an excellent way to follow your interests, travel to interesting places, visit historical sites and make new acquaintances.

Please have a look at our website to find out more; see previous talks and special lecture days and our outreach activities, visits and travel. Please contact us via our website.

theartsocietysaffronwalden.com

Stamp Sale

In aid of Parish Church Building & Music Funds



Saturday 18 April
10 am until 3 pm
Saffron Community Link
(next to Saffron Building Society)

A Prayer For April

Lord Jesus Christ,

Help me reach out to others, seeing their needs as you see them and caring for them with your compassion.

May I love as you love: extravagantly and indiscriminately. May I care as you do: without counting the cost.

Lead me deeper into your generous, sacrificial heart so that by following your lead, I will move with compassion, especially towards those suffering in places and situations I may never fully understand.

Amen.

Provided by the Prayer Team



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 ranging from a Flower Pedestal to a major contribution to 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 to our many visitors as well as our own congregation. Next to that is a noticeboard which keeps everyone up to date on our various activities. We are also on the Church website under Groups, check us out and see more photos. On the social side, twice a year we travel around the country to visit different towns and cities to tour Cathedrals.

If you would like to learn more, pick up a leaflet from the bookstand which also includes an application form to join us, only £10 per year. Should you wish to help the Friends further by leaving a Legacy there are leaflets to assist you in that process, also to be found on the bookstand.

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

Friends of St Mary's: Dates for Your Diary

As you will have been notified, the date of the **Cathedral trip to Derby** has been changed to May 19th as many of our members were on holiday for the proposed 16th April trip. There are a few other changes too, as the in-town restaurant became a problem for various reasons. We will now be going out of town for lunch, a ten-minute drive into the country, which should be very pleasant. We will then take another 10 mins drive to pay a visit to Kedleston Hall gardens, a National Trust site, before we drive home.

Hopefully the **Recipe Book** will be off to the printers very soon.

Don't forget the **Bring & Share lunch** on 12th July. John and Alison will send you reminders closer to the date.

We are looking at taking a smaller group to have a tour of the relatively new **Cambridge Centre Mosque** followed by lunch out in a country pub. This would be in the summer. Please let me know if you would be interested.

Pamela Mugliston Secretary

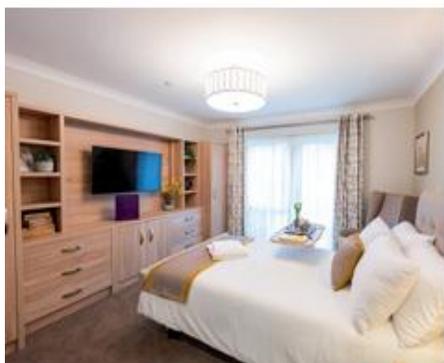




Welcome to Bailey Lodge, Saffron Walden



Our care home in Saffron Walden is now open. It provides the highest quality of care to its residents in luxurious surroundings. Our beautifully landscaped garden offers wheelchair-friendly pathways with raised flower beds perfect for gardening activities.



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Can you help us to run our church?

1. **Come to our Annual Church Meetings** that take place just after the 10.30am service on Sunday 19th April, where you will be able to hear more about the different church groups and a chance to ask questions. Here you can find out what happened in church this year and how we used our resources and how we plan to spend them this year. If you are registered on the Parish roll you can also vote for up to ten new members of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) who are responsible for the running of the church, as well as two churchwardens and five assistant churchwardens who help oversee everything. At this year's meeting, we will also be electing four Deanery Synod Representatives.

If you are interested in being elected as churchwarden or an assistant churchwarden, you could ask somebody to nominate you! But it would probably be wise to chat to us first as experience helps in these important roles. Forms are available on the church website at stmaryssaffronwalden.org/pcc and should be returned to the secretary (that's me) via the Parish Office post-box.

2. **Join our Parochial Church Council.** The PCC meets 5 times a year on Wednesday evenings in addition to the Annual Meeting mentioned above. This is where a lot of the decisions about the running of our church are made such as keeping us safe, outreach and worship issues and repair and maintenance of the church. Members have found the experience most interesting and have valued the chance to be able to help our church in this way.

If you are over 16, please think about it, as there are several vacancies to be filled this year. Before you can join us, you should have been on our electoral roll for 6 months and be a regular attender of our church. A Nomination Form for all the vacant posts can be downloaded from our website and is also available at the back of the church. Just complete the form and pop it into the Parish Office letter box by Friday 17th April.

A list of present PCC members can be found on the notice board in the west porch. Summaries of our meetings can be found in the various editions of our Parish News and on the church website.

If you want to chat about what is involved do phone me on 07562 506 867 or email stmaryssaffronwaldenpcc@gmail.com or speak to anyone who is on the PCC.

Whatever you decide, do come to our Annual Meetings after the 10.30am service on **Sunday 19th April** which are open to all.

Anna Martin, PCC Secretary

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| Small repairs | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | And much more! | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

No job too small or too odd!

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 1 April

7.30pm Compline and Reflection

Maundy Thursday 2 April

9.30am Holy Communion

7.30pm Choral Eucharist

Setting: Cook in E Minor

Motet: *Christus factus est*



Good Friday 3 April

10.30am Walk of Witness, starting at URC Abbey Lane

2.00pm An Hour at the Cross: quiet prayer and structured devotions

Easter Sunday 5 April

6.00am Dawn Communion

8.00am BCP Holy Communion

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

Setting: Mass of St Thomas - Thorne

Motets:

All things Bright and Beautiful – Rutter

This Joyful Eastertide – Wood

Hallelujah Chorus (congregational) - Handel

6.30pm Choral Evensong

Canticle: Wood in Eb No. 2

Anthem: *Glorious and Powerful God* - Wood

Sunday 12 April

8.00am BCP Holy Communion

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

Setting: Hymn Mass

Sunday 19 April

- 8.00am BCP Holy Communion
10.30am Holy Communion [Y] with Sunday Club at 10.25am
Setting: Rawsthorne
Motet: *Cantique de Jean Racine* – Fauré
c.12 noon Annual Parochial Church Meetings

Sunday 26 April

- 8.00am BCP Holy Communion [Y]
10.30am Family Service
6.30pm Taizé service

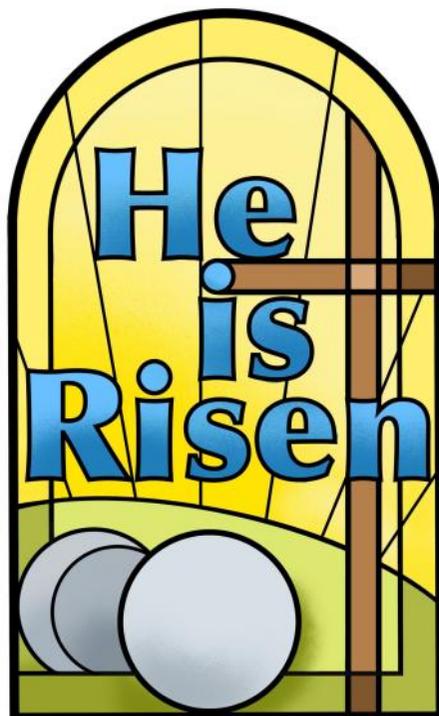
Regular weekday services at St Mary's

Tuesdays

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

Wednesdays

- 8.00am Morning Prayer
9.30am Holy Communion (with Prayers for Wholeness and Healing on the 1st Wednesday of the month)



St James', Swards End

Good Friday 3 April

12.00 Hour at the Cross

Easter Sunday 5 April

10.30am Easter Communion

Sunday 19 April

10.30am Morning Praise



St John's, Little Walden

Easter Sunday 5 April

10.30am Easter Communion

Sunday 26 April

10.30am Family Service



An Eastertide Reflection: Darkness turns to Light

'Early in the morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb.' (John 20:1) The Sabbath is over at last: she can go out again without worrying about Sabbath restrictions. She simply has to be at the tomb as soon as she can: she doesn't know what she is going to do, but knows she can't not be there. So, she leaves home, or her lodgings, while it is still dark. And for her the darkness feels complete, because her Lord is gone, and she expects never to know the light again. Even when she finds the tomb is empty, and the disciples have come but gone home no doubt amazed and utterly perplexed, she can only stay there weeping.

And yet, the most wonderful day dawns as the risen Lord speaks her name, and she sees him at last through her tears. Light has prevailed; darkness is conquered; the world is born anew.

Extract from 'The Mystery of John: reflections on the Fourth Gospel' by Paula Griffiths. Available from Hart's Books or from Paula, price £13.99. All author's proceeds will be shared between the churches of the Team Ministry.

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News from the Younger members of the Church

Our February Family service was based around the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness, as He was able to resist temptation, one of the activities was a wax resist painting, revealing God at the centre. A collage poster was also created of the wilderness, and a story dice was coloured and formed.



Tinies

Tinies had a week off during February for the half term holiday but still managed to hear three amazing Bible stories. First, they heard about a man that could not walk who wanted to meet Jesus but couldn't get to him, so his friends lowered him into the building through a hole in the roof, then they made a man in a

bed craft. The next story they heard was how Jesus calmed a storm when he was in a boat with his friends. The children made bottles with blue glitter water in, to swirl like a storm and then watch as it calmed down. Finally, they heard about Jesus healing a blind man and created eye pictures and used a mirror to look at their own eyes.

Sunday Club

During February, Sunday Club heard about Simeon and Jesus, then prayed as it was Candlemas. The week after they heard about Jesus telling everyone not to

worry about material things, as His Father looks after the birds in the fields,. The children created two pictures, one showing God's wonderful world, one showing wants and needs. In the final week of February the children heard the story of the transfiguration in 2 Peter and played games to understand what an eyewitness account meant.

Youth Bible Study

This is held jointly with Saffron Walden Community Church and we meet there. This term we have looked at how God accepts injustice around the world, and how as Christians we feel about death and hardship, both those created by man and those that are natural disasters.

Aftershock

Aftershock have met three times during February and have played games and enjoyed hot chocolate.

Julie Lester

St Mary's Music News

March was an exceptionally full and musical month for our choirs and musicians. With the build up to Easter upon us and finally a vernal spring in our step, we enjoyed the culmination of several months' diligent work learning the *Spark Motets* for their performance for the Service of Light. Members of St Mary's Brass and guests also accompanied the hymns, which added extra lustre to the occasion! Joyful Noise and the Junior Choir combined forces to sing for Mothering Sunday which was a delight as ever; we are fortunate to boast a very healthy number of youngsters keen to sing within our worship.

On Palm Sunday, Mozart's *Requiem* will be presented as a Devotional Offering, featuring soloists from within the choir and a beautifully sensitive and skilful accompaniment from the organ.

This month, the choir will sing for Choral Eucharist on Maundy Thursday, singing the late-renaissance motet *Christus factus est* by Felice Anerio (who succeeded Palestrina as composer to the Papal Choir). On Easter Day, we will again enjoy St Mary's Brass joining our choirs for the celebration of the most important day in the church's year, with music to include Wood's *This Joyful Eastertide*, Rutter's *All Things Bright and Beautiful* and, hopefully, a rousing, congregational rendition of Handel's *Hallelujah Chorus*!

In other SMMA news, the SMMA AGM will take place after the 10.30 am Service on 17 May. The Summer Lunchtime Recital Series will begin on Wednesday 27 May, so be sure to pop that date in your diaries! More information to follow next month.

Hannah Razzell



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

April 1952

My Dear Parishioners

As our preparation for Easter, I do ask that of you who are regular communicants throughout the year to help me on Easter Day to give a real welcome to those who are not so familiar as we are with the service of Holy Communion. We shall only be able to do this effectively by each one of us taking a reverent, eager and joyful part in the service so that they catch through us the true spirit of the whole activity.

The Reformation was among other things an attempt to get the people to take a really understanding part in the Church services and especially at the communion. The words were translated into our own mother-tongue and the responses were not just to be said by the server as in the pre-Reformation Church but by the whole congregation. In this parish, so far as the Responses are concerned, we are still very much in the pre-Reformation situation – almost everything is left to the Priest and Server or the Choir. If those of us who love our Church and love our Prayer Book Services would all join in fully, we should soon enthuse the casual worshipper to become more constant.

In the last Sunday or two before Easter, let us prepare for the Easter crowds by practising our part to the full, and, when that glorious Festival comes, let our 'Amens' be like a clap of thunder and our spirit of eagerness and reverence be so apparent that it be quite irresistibly catching...

M Roy Sinker (Vicar 1946-1963)

A Night at the Movies

After last year's popular 'A Night at The Musicals' concert, Saffron Walden Town Band is coming back to St Mary's Church for another summer concert on Saturday 9th May at 7:30pm. The theme is Movies – classic film themes including Harry Potter, Jurassic Park, Lord of the Rings and more! Music will be accompanied by a visual composition of images and video.

Tickets are £12 including a drink and popcorn. Under 16s go free. Available at www.swtb.org.uk, at the Tourist Information Centre and on the door.

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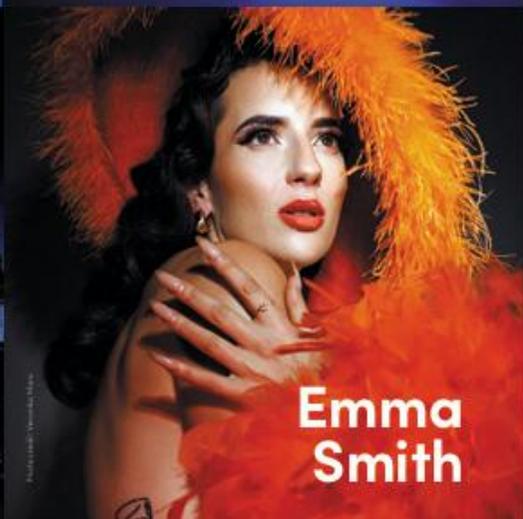
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Service of Light

It was really pleasing to see the church so full for the Service of Light on 8th March to mark the successful conclusion of the Lighting Project.

Regrettably, the Rector was unable to be present, but a more appropriate replacement than Rev'd Paula Griffiths could not have been found, as she has been a key member of the Project Team since its inception. She welcomed the congregation with its distinguished guests, and, following a spinetingling rendition of Thomas Tallis's *O nata lux*, the full choir processed to their seats on the chancel steps to the appropriate hymn *Christ, be our light*.

The *Three Spark Motets* (written by Paula Griffiths with music composed by Brian Moles) received its first full performance with Jeremy Allen playing the organ, bolstered by support from the St Mary's Brass Group, interspersed with readings from Genesis by Martin Stuchfield and from St John's gospel by Ven. Kate Peacock, Archdeacon of Stansted. Paula preached on the vital importance of Light in our lives, and the intercession prayers were led by Vivian Falk, Ralph Meloy and Noel Starr.

The new lights were properly dedicated, and the congregation enthusiastically committed to honouring God's light, following the way of Christ and seeking guidance of the Holy Spirit. The organ voluntary, which concluded the service, was received with applause, as was the demonstration of the lighting which followed, with stirring accompaniment (*Fiat Lux* by Théodore Dubois), played by Oli King. The various lighting permutations were dramatically shown off, and one gained a sense of the wonder that must have been experienced when coal gas lights or electrical arc lights were first introduced.

At the refreshments which followed the service, Vivian Falk thanked the many people who had contributed money, advice and prayers to make the project work. Especial thanks were given to Steve Hasler, who has been responsible for so much of the daily practicalities of the installation as well as imaginatively raising money, obtaining the necessary consents, and keeping the various contractors to a demanding schedule. I must add my own thanks for a series of interesting, and historically useful, articles that he has kindly prepared for Parish News. Martin Stuchfield, on behalf of the Friends of Essex Churches Trust, mentioned that the plans Steve brought to the Grants Committee were among the most complex he had ever reviewed, but Steve had explained it all in such a way that no one could doubt that this would be an important development in the life of St Mary's.

John Pickthorn

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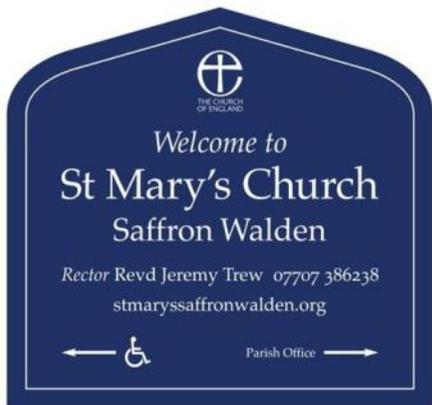
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Our New Church Signs



Above left: Design for the new East Church sign to replace the existing wooden one. Others are similar.

By now I hope that our new church signs will be in place despite the various setbacks our installers have had. The original wooden ones have served us well but in the 14 years since their erection the boards have weathered considerably, and the one facing Museum Street has been repaired several times and was falling apart. They have been replaced with materials that are more robust and weather resistant and which will last much longer and be easier to update.

This gave us a chance to question what information was important to include and to ensure that they were clearly visible, up to date and welcoming to visitors of all ages. We took into account advice from the C of E and Chelmsford Diocese websites about church noticeboards. As recommended, we were able to reduce the amount of information on them but as before included our web address where more detailed information could be found. We have kept to the original shape which we felt was appropriate for a church and chose a tasteful dark blue background which allowed the white lettering to show clearly.

After much discussion at a number of Communications Committee meetings, we arrived at the final draft, and with the help of Jim Butler's design skills were able to gain the approval of the PCC, Church Architect and the Diocese. We were advised not to cut costs but, in the end, they turned out to be much cheaper to produce than the original wooden ones, and we were also able to use a local firm in Pampisford to make and install them.

Martin Hugall

Our New Lighting—March 2026 Update

I'm writing this the day after the Service of Light, described more fully on page 26. If you attended, I hope it felt like a fitting service for the dedication of our lights. If you were unable to attend, you can catch up on YouTube using the following link: https://www.youtube.com/live/_IYISeLnY1I . Unfortunately, we were unable to stream the demonstration of the new lighting which followed the service because it involved turning off all the lights. The cameras do not work when there is no light and do not reset when the lights are turned back on. The picture would have looked like the old BBC testcard—if you can remember that!



In February, we asked Tom Flynn Electrical to prioritise the fitting of the lighting inside the church so that it was ready for the Service of Light, and so we have a few items to complete outside the church. I'm hoping that the replacement lights at the west door, the south door and the south chapel door will be installed before the end of March, and that each of these will be linked to a motion sensor. The only other item to be finished is to install the bollard lighting for the disabled parking area. Unfortunately, at the time of writing the delivery date for these has not yet been confirmed.

As one might expect for a project of this size and complexity, there are a number of “snagging” items to address, and we'll be tackling these over the next few weeks. However, none of these greatly affect the way that we'll be using the lights for services and other events. The programming of the controls, which is down to us, is presently only partially done. When done, each setting will ensure that the lights we require for a specific service or 'other event', e.g. a concert, are switched on right across the church by the press of one button. For example, there are different settings for the



lights needed for services held in the south aisle and at the south altar compared to, say, a second Sunday 10:30 Communion service. As we use the new lighting, if you spot areas that are not well lit or where the lights are too bright causing

glare, please do tell me or the churchwardens so that we can adjust the programme for that service. We can adjust the brightness of every light which has been installed, many of them individually! There is also some 'making-good' to be done, for example where previous light switches and cables have been removed, and I hope to get to this during March and April.

When the project is completely finished, I'll write a final report bringing together the overall cost and how it was all funded. In the meantime, I hope that the photographs of the new lighting included in this article do it justice!

Steve Hasler 9th March 2026



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'Mary Magdalene'
by Mark Hays (2008)



Yes, I was there when they crucified my Lord
Bent low on rugged stones beneath the cross
As watchers saw the life blood of our King
Flow slowly down to dusty earth below

Yes, I was there when Joseph and his friends
Rolled the great stone to seal our saviour's tomb
And saw the whiteness of the robes he wore
Diminish as the heavy stone was placed

Yes, I was there in early morning mist
To find the stone had now been rolled away
And ran to Peter and his friend to say
The tomb was empty and our Lord was gone

Yes, I was in the garden full of tears
And met the gardener at his morning tasks
When suddenly his simple visage shone
With all the glory of my risen Lord.

Yes, He'll be there to guide my life and tasks
And there to smooth my faint and stumbling path
He will be there when sickness strikes my soul
And there to meet me at my journey's end.

Mark was a friend of Vivian Falk, and this poem was read at his funeral service last year.



**Come and enjoy the 'Mini-ring' outside St Mary's on Easter Monday
(6th April) See page 10 for times.**

