

# Parish News

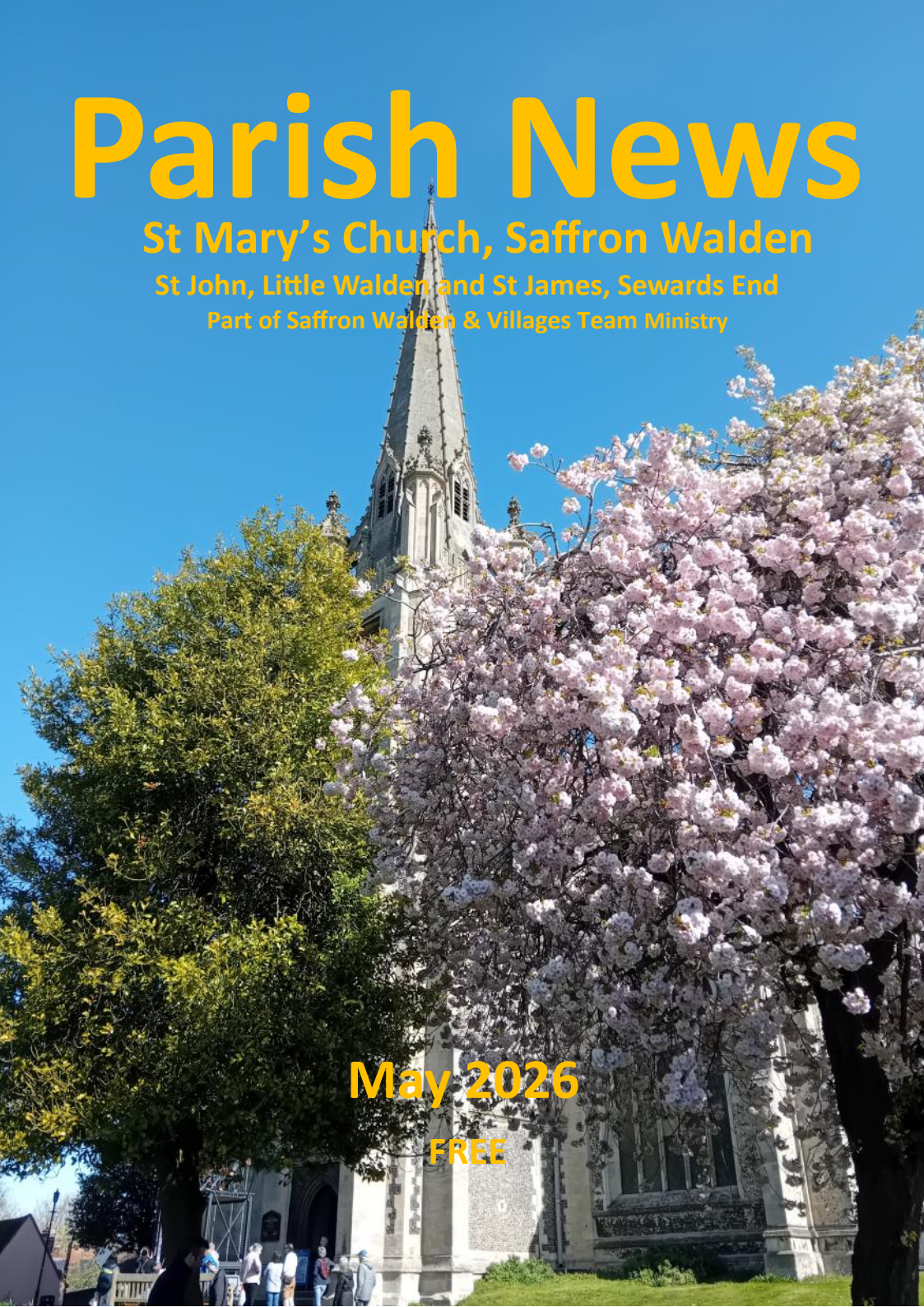
St Mary's Church, Saffron Walden

St John, Little Walden and St James, Sewards End

Part of Saffron Walden & Villages Team Ministry

May 2026

FREE





Left: Martin Stuchfield, Chairman of the Friends of Essex Churches Trust, presenting Vivian Fulk, Churchwarden, with a certificate following the Service of Light, 8th March.

Below: Enthusiastic campanologists trying the 'Mini-ring' outside St Mary's, Easter Monday 2026



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<b>NOTICEBOARD</b>		The deadline for contributions for each issue is the 1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday of the previous month. Hence, the deadline for the <b>June</b> issue is <b>Sunday 3rd May</b> .
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Calendar	18	email: office@stmaryssaffronwalden.org
From the Registers	25	01799 506024 or the editor, John Pickthorn:
Ride + Stride 2026	34	jejpickthorn@gmail.com 01799 523311
Summer Lunchtime Recitals	36	<b>Advertising:</b>
<b>REPORTS</b>		Patrick Li. Advertising Manager, 07871 184351;
March PCC Meeting	9	advertising@stmaryssaffronwalden.org or
Friends of the Parish Church	14	Email: office@stmaryssaffronwalden.org
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<b>FEATURES</b>		<b>PARISH NEWS IS A FREE PUBLICATION</b> and can also be viewed <b>(in full colour)</b> on our website: <a href="http://www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org/parish_news">www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org/parish_news</a>
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## TEAM RECTOR:

Rev'd Jeremy Trew is taking a sabbatical from 27th April to 27th July

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Little Walden: Helen and Dave Nash: 01799 524 265; davenash390@gmail.com

## The Rector's Letter

From The Rev'd Jeremy Trew

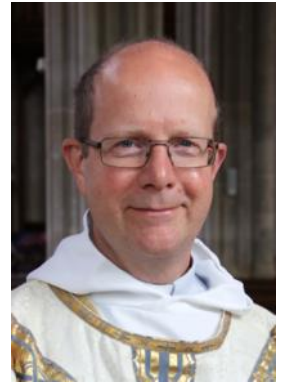
Jeremy writes...

I write this just before Easter, sitting at my desk, surrounded by slowly diminishing piles of paperwork. By the time you read this I shall be a Vicar in absentia, heading off to Italy, at the beginning of my sabbatical. There I will walk the Northern section of the Way of St Francis, starting at the place where he discerned his call from God, and ending up 200km later, in Assisi, where I shall join the English Anglican Franciscan community there for their Sunday service.

A sabbatical is a strange beast; it is neither work nor holiday, but “time out” from the normal round of commitments to refresh and renew. I have had one previous sabbatical in my time as an ordained minister; in 2012, when I revisited Israel, having worked there briefly for their national park's authority in the 1980's. The National Parks where I worked in Israel perform much the same purpose as those in our own country and elsewhere: They have roles to play in conservation and in recreation, and many people enjoy both these aspects, as they do in this country. They also have another primary role; that of re-creation; refreshing our humanity and reconnecting us to our creator. That links me back to the whole purpose of a sabbatical – re-creation.

I'm back in the UK late-May and then shall be both around locally and off on mini pilgrimages; in my last Diocese, Exeter, where a number of small pilgrimage routes have been established in recent years, telling the stories of local saints; then a brief trip to Liverpool for an urban pilgrimage considering the spiritual intensity that cities and deprived areas can bring, and contrasting the very different presentations of our Christian faith offered by the two great Cathedral buildings there; I then head on to Scotland to retrace some of the journey of an ancestor of mine (John Brown of Haddington, if you're interested), whose faith was very different from my own, but whose writings have both challenged and inspired me; then, I end up heading for the Holy Island of Lindisfarne for a few days reflection and retreat. I return to my role as your Rector on Monday 27th July.

To answer a question that has been asked several times: Alison is not coming with me. She has her own full-time role and continues in this. We will meet up at various points and have dedicated a portion of my sabbatical time to holiday together. The fact that this question has been asked more than the



next one; “Who is in charge when you have gone?”, is a testimony to your love and care. Thank you so much. But, to answer that question: We are a Team ministry. Depending on the question, you can either contact any one of the other clergy, the Churchwardens, or the Office. They will do their best to help. They can always pass the matter on to the Archdeacon.

Thank you all very much for your good wishes to me for this time, and for your prayers; both of which I value greatly. I will be sharing some of my musings online as I travel and reflect, and will share details of how these can be found nearer the time.

Yours

Jeremy

## Tuesday Evening Prayer

In a busy weekly schedule it can sometimes be difficult to set aside time to be with the Lord.

You could consider attending Tuesday Evening Prayer which meets on Zoom at 5pm every Tuesday (you don't even have to add travel time to get to and from the Church!). The service usually takes between 20 and 30 minutes.

We are a friendly bunch who go through the service of Evening Prayer. In addition, have you ever wondered what happens to the prayer requests that have been put up on the Church Prayer Board (to be found in the north chapel)? Well wonder no more. Each request is prayed for at Evening Prayer.

You can find the zoom link and the Evening Prayer order of service in the weekly Bulletin sent out by the Parish Office.

We hope to see you at one of our services. If you have any questions about the service, do speak to one of the leaders listed below.

Every blessing

Rufus Barnes, Margaret Collingwood, Paula Griffiths, Judith Hasler and Kathleen Huey - the service leaders

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

Julie says her parents have influenced her life in many ways, her father Ray, a chef, was working in Devon when she and her sister were born. His job then took them back up to London, and they ended up living in Luton. Most of Julie's schooling was there, until her Dad bought a restaurant in a little market town called Saffron Walden. The family then moved to the town, meaning that Julie's GCSE's were taken at SWCHS. The influence of Julie's mum Sue, then came into her life. Sue had been a child minder when Julie was young, as well as volunteering at the local playgroup, and this inspired Julie to head to Harlow College where she qualified as a NNEB nursery practitioner. This led to a career over the years as a nanny, nursery

practitioner, children's club leader, teaching assistant and Learning Support assistant.

Julie also worked in the family restaurant, The Old Hoops, in almost every role from pot washer to restaurant manager, with everything in between, except being the main chef! It was at this time that Julie met Mat in 1994; a year later they married at St Mary's. The wedding featured on front page of the Walden Local as Julie and Mat and many of the wedding party were wearing 17th Century attire due to their involvement in The Sealed Knot Society of Cavaliers and Roundheads. The wedding even featured the firing of a small cannon! After initially staying local, they moved to Devon for a few years; where they started their family before moving back to the town again.

Despite being brought up in the Church of England, Julie had not been a regular church attender, but visiting St Mark's in Enfield with her grandparents was a big influence on her, as were Brownie church parades at St Matthew's in Luton. Julie's faith began to grow when her children went to events being held at St James's, Swards End with their Grandma Kathie, and then as a family they

attended services there. Later there were Brownie Church parades, this time as a parent and then as a volunteer after Julie joined as a leader.

Julie's neighbours suggested she should help at VBS, which she eventually agreed to. However, Julie realised that if she was going to spend a week promoting the Bible, she needed to be sure of her faith. After debating and questioning for a while, she drew the conclusion, rather like Sherlock Holmes, that as she didn't believe there was nothing, there must be something! Julie became a regular volunteer at VBS until it ended, building her faith in Jesus every year.

During this time Julie and Mat also attended a course being held at the Parish Rooms, to find out more about their faith, this led to them both being confirmed by Bishop Stephen Cottrell. As a couple they have also helped with several of the less regular projects around the church. Julie has been on the roof whilst Mat checked for birds' nests blocking drains; helped erect, then remove the Christmas trees for many years and regularly held the tapering candle for the Advent service, including the one during lockdown, where there were choir spaced throughout the church with just Julie and Mat as taperers.

Julie's latest connection with St Mary's, that of being the Children and Youth Leader, promises to be one of the most demanding, but also rewarding roles Julie has had. She is enjoying getting to know everyone that she is now working with.

## Gelio's Anthology of Obscure Proverbs



Members of the congregation, what do you think of these two proverbs on the subject of 'prayer'? One is Latin and the other comes from Denmark.

*"Prayers travel faster when said in unison"* and

*"Pray to God in the storm—but keep on rowing".*

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## Summary of extracts from draft minutes of a PCC Meeting on 18th March 2026

### **Standing Committee decisions endorsed by PCC:**

- a) Stewards - to pay Church Representatives for stewarding at external hires in St Mary's Church, and charging this to the hirer, as for paying vergers at weddings and funerals.
- b) Lightning conductor – PCC to pay for repairs, and the addition of vandal protection, at a cost of £5458 + VAT.
- c) Local community group “Bedazzle” to film outside St Mary's Church without formal contract or charge, subject to their having appropriate insurance and due safeguarding practice.

**Electronic archiving** - It was noted that the church needs an electronic archiving policy and that the iKnowChurch software may well address electronic filing and archiving.

**Slow sign** – a request for a ‘drive slowly’ sign or speed bumps in the churchyard was referred to the Property Committee.

**Communion** – at the 10.30am service on the first Sunday of the month the high altar is used for those who wish to take wine from the Chalice while tincture is available at the south altar.

**Director of Music's report** – the SMMA were very pleased with the Service of Light. Some recruitment is needed to the junior choir: they will have a “bring a friend” Friday rehearsal. Helen Counsell has taken over Joyful Noise from Kate Beare. An Organ outreach concert is planned in late September for school years three and four and the Director of the National Youth Choir has been invited. James Razzell has agreed to continue as organ scholar for another year. Lunchtime concerts will start on 27th May for 8 weeks or so.

**Children and Youth** - the Community Church is organizing a trip to “Dreaming the Impossible” this year and are liaising to see if any young members will go from our churches and to duly consider support.

**Lighting Project** - Project handover had occurred on Tuesday 3rd March. The Service of Light had been a success. Lighting outside West, South and South Chapel doors was still to be installed, together with lighting for the disabled parking area. Emergency lighting had not yet been handed over. The choir had requested new lampshades for the choir stall lights and a sample has been ordered. Some areas in the pews are still too dark (rear pews on South side) and lights will therefore be re-focussed after bats leave, in October. The PCC thanked the Lighting Project Team for their work and are grateful to Chris Knight for undertaking to deal with assessing the

energy footprint.

**Finance** - The PCC approved the 2025 Accounts as independently examined by Bentens. The General Fund finished the year better than expected, with free cash reserves continuing to exceed the required minimum. The main movement was in the Fabric fund, due to the lighting project.

**Safeguarding** - Some face-to-face basic safeguarding training courses were held in January. Judith Hasler and Jeremy are reviewing the requirements of the Safer Recruitment process. Jeremy said we were working towards having a role description for each volunteer role and the team are in the process of implementing the Diocesan safeguarding dashboard which includes DBS checking for some roles. Safeguarding training is required for all those undertaking roles with children and vulnerable adults and is best practice for anyone volunteering in the church.

**St James, Swards End** continues well and the committee particularly wanted to record their thanks to Chris Bishop for his ministry.

**Deanery and Diocesan Synods** – the Diocese has been promoting Lent study resources and picking up Bishop Guli’s initiatives ‘Travelling Well Together’ and “100 days of prayer” from Lent to Pentecost. In the Autumn there will be “100 days of listening” (a Diocesan-wide conversation about sustaining future ministry). The Diocese will run some more “Leading your Church into Growth” weekends, based on getting to understand who you are as a church and therefore what you can offer. However, in 2027 the Deanery is hoping to run LYCiG locally, maybe in the spring. At the most recent Deanery Synod there was a presentation on the IKnowChurch software which has been designed to support Church data management, e.g. rotas, baptisms, weddings and funerals. Gary Fleming is trialling it in the Clavering Benefice. Data sets need to be populated and this might involve a temporary paid post. It might work well for our team of 12 churches and help us stay GDPR compliant. Jeremy explained that the first module, on managing people, will particularly help the office staff. The software is cloud-based so can be accessed through any device and, if someone leaves a role, it would be straightforward to give their successor access to the appropriate level of information. Jeremy asked that each PCC member reads the information at <https://iknowchurch.co.uk/>.

**Future events:** PCC dates: 24th June, 9th September and 11th November at 7.30 pm in the Parish Rooms.

Approval was agreed for Hayden to lead an Easter Workshop on Easter Saturday, Julie would also be present and it will be properly staffed with appropriate safeguarding in place. This is aimed at up to 12 primary and pre-school children, accompanied by their parents.

There will be a Mini-ring in the churchyard on Easter Monday: run by Chris

McCarthy and East Anglia Bell Ringers for visiting bell ringers and the general public. This would involve bringing a bell device for youngsters to experience bell ringing. EABR have done their own risk assessment and are responsible for safeguarding.

**Correspondence** – a Pastoral letter from Bishop Guli regarding events in Iran is available on the Diocesan website.

**Service bell.** This would mainly be used before the 8am communion service: the existing mechanism is dangerous and no longer in use. It was deemed that there was not enough enthusiasm to commit to obtaining a replacement bell at this time.

Clifford Want and Martin Hugall



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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.

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## What's in a Name (16)?

### Cuckingstool End Street

Well, I suspect some of you are going 'Where?' Today there is no Cuckingstool End Street in Saffron Walden, the more mundane High Street is now used to cover not only Cuckingstool End, but also Middle Ward, as well as the part originally called High Street.

Cuckingstool End stretched from the Cucking Pond, of which more later, at what is now the junction of Margaret Way and the High Street, to the point where it crossed the Slade (King's Ditch) at roughly Abbey Lane. It changed its name to High Street in 1825. Middle Ward occupied the stretch between Abbey Lane and Park Lane. From 1814 this street was



renamed High Street South. From Middle Ward onward the street was known as the High Street until the junction with Castle Street. After that junction the name changed again to Bridge Street, just as it is today.

So, what about the Cucking Pond? The cucking or ducking pond was a feature of most towns and villages over the centuries. It was here that the 'stool' stood that was used to duck women whose tongues had offended those who ran the town. Cuck is, apparently, a corruption of 'chuck' so these sharp-tongued women found themselves chucked into what was, undoubtedly, a mucky pool of water. Sadly, I have not been able to find any records of the women who were ducked in the pond.

The pond is possibly visible on the 1758 Eyre Map of Saffron Walden as a shallow pond but by 1836 the pond had been filled in, the only remaining part possibly becoming the lily pond in the grounds of George Stacey Gibson's garden at Hill House. I recommend volume one of Jean Gumbrell's 'Down Your Street' if you wish to find out more.

## 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.

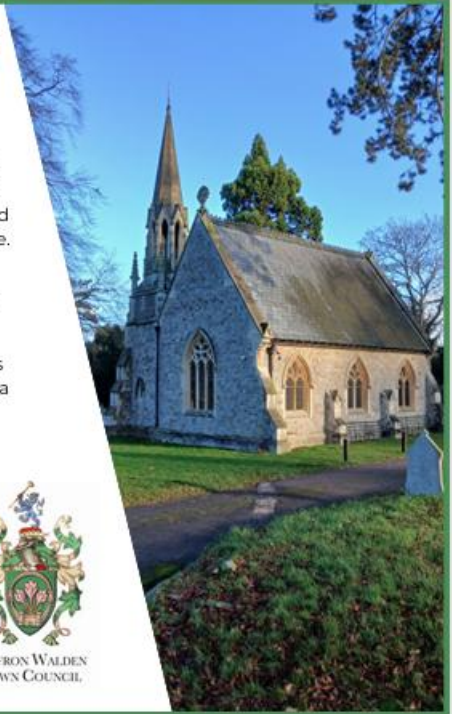
The small, refurbished Victorian Chapel is non-denominational and available to hire for both religious and secular services.



**Saffron Walden Town Council**

**01799 516501**

**[enquiries@saffronwalden.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@saffronwalden.gov.uk)**



### A Prayer For Pentecost (May 24th)

Spirit of Christ,  
Calm the chaos of our thoughts,  
As you hovered over the waters of creation:  
Bring us peace.  
Fill our lives  
With the fire of your presence:  
Lead us on.  
And open our hearts  
To hear your still, small voice.  
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

Everything is booked for the **Derby Cathedral trip** on 19th May. After the tour of the Cathedral we will be going out of town for lunch. We will travel to Kedleston Hall and gardens, a National Trust site, before we drive home. The **Recipe Book** will be off to the printers very soon. First we have to take the group photo after the 10.30am service on 10th May. Please remember to bring an apron and a small kitchen implement.

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 of Friends to have a tour of the relatively new **Cambridge Central Mosque** followed by lunch out in a country pub. This would be in the summer. Please let me know if you would be interested.

The **AGM** this year will be 6th September after the Patronal service.

The **Autumn Talk** will be "Of Penguins, Whales and Icebergs" by Edward Gildea on 14th September in the Parish Rooms. His talk captures a month spent sailing around the Antarctic.

Pamela Mugliston Secretary



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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.

### Sunday 3 May

8.00am BCP Holy Communion  
 10.30am Holy Communion [Y] with Sunday Club at 10.25am  
 Setting: Harris in F, Gloria: Rawsthorne  
 Motet: *O pray for the peace of Jerusalem* – Howells

### Thursday 7 May

10.00am Silent Prayer in the Parish Rooms

### Sunday 10 May

8.00am BCP Holy Communion  
 10.30am Second Sunday Holy Communion [Y] with Sunday Club at 10.25am  
 Setting: Mass of St Thomas  
 Motet: *If ye love me*—Tallis  
 6.30pm Choral Evensong  
 Canticles: Sumsion in G  
 Anthem: *Evening Hymn* - Balfour Gardiner



### Thursday 14 May Ascension Day

7.30pm Choral Eucharist  
 Setting: Darke in E  
 Motet: *O Jesu Christ, meins Lebens Licht* - JS Bach

### Saturday 16 May

11.00am Mayor-Making Service

### Sunday 17 May

8.00am BCP Holy Communion  
 10.30am Holy Communion [Y] with Sunday Club at 10.25am  
 Setting: Malcolm  
 Motet: *How beauteous are their feet* – Stanford

**Sunday 24 May Pentecost**

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

**Sunday 31 May Trinity Sunday**

- 8.00am BCP Holy Communion
- 10.30am Deanery Service [Y] with Sunday Club at 10.25am  
Setting: Rawsthorne  
Motet: *Holy, Holy, Holy* – Schubert
- 6.30pm Celtic 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**

*Sunday 3 May*

- 10.30am Holy Communion

*Sunday 17 May*

- 10.30am Morning Praise



**St John's, Little Walden**

*Sunday 10 May*

- 10.30am Family Service

**Sunday 24 May Pentecost**

- 10.30am Holy Communion



## A message from local fire officer Kevin Jenner

As the Station Manager covering many fire stations in your area, keeping our community safe is at the heart of everything my team and I do. Over the last 12 months, firefighters have attended 731 house fires across Essex, and here in Uttlesford alone there have been 23 house fires, tragically resulting in one fatality. Behind every number is a home, a family, and a life affected.



From attending incidents locally, we know that cooking is the leading cause of house fires, accounting for 23%, followed by electrical devices/appliances at 14%. Many of these fires were preventable with small changes, such as never leaving cooking unattended and regularly checking electrical appliances and cables.

One of the most concerning trends is that smoke alarms were present in only 72% of homes where fires occurred. Smoke alarms provide an early warning and can make the difference between safely escaping and being overcome by smoke. We also see that 68% of house fires in Uttlesford happened in homes with only one occupant, which highlights how important it is for people living alone to have working smoke alarms and a clear escape plan.

The good news is that there is support available. Essex County Fire and Rescue Service offers free Home Safety Visits to anyone living in Essex. During the visit, firefighters or our safety team can provide personalised advice, help you plan an escape route, and fit smoke alarms where needed.

These visits are completely free and could help save your life or the life of someone you love. If you or someone you know would benefit, please take a few minutes to book a visit.

Phone: 0300 303 0088

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## News from the Younger members of the Church

Our March Family Service was moved forward a week so that we could celebrate Mothering Sunday. Activities for our Mums were decorating a biscuit for them, making a tissue paper flower or giving them a few minutes alone to do some mindful colouring of flowers. The story of Moses being rescued as a baby also provided another activity of colouring in and creating a story cube. I am not sure how many Mums actually got to eat the biscuits, but with Junior Choir, and church parade for the Rainbows, Brownies and Guides, the activities were all busy.

### Tinies

Tinies finished their term off hearing the Easter story and making a fabulous Easter



garden which was displayed in the church, we hope that you all saw it. The week before that we celebrated Palm Sunday early and Sue told the children all about Jesus arriving on a donkey using knitted figures including a famous wonky donkey, after the children had made palm leaves to wave. The week before that they had the story of Zaccheus told using Godly play. The first week in March the children created plates of collage using fish and loaves for the story of the feeding of the 5,000.

### Sunday Club

During March, Sunday Club heard all about how much God loves us so created picture of a mirror and then put hearts

around it of all the people that they could think of that God loves. They also heard a story where Jesus referred to himself as being 'the water for life' from a reading in John, so sprayed some water during their prayers. They also heard about Jesus bringing his friend Lazarus back to life and watched a clip of CS Lewis's version of this, with Aslan the lion breathing life back into his many friends that had been turned to stone in the story 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe'. We finished March with Sunday Club in the church on Palm Sunday, with palm leaf colouring and collage, we also had pictures of Jesus' triumphant

ride on the donkey past all the waving palm leaves and had a go at folding a palm cross from strips of card.

### **Youth Bible Study**

We finished the term discussions on what church might look like, if the young people were planning it. Some interesting ideas came up such as a fishpond, and more comfortable seating, but it turns out all we really need is doughnuts as that was the most popular. There was also a more serious discussion about the faith community too to finish the session off.

### **Aftershock**

Aftershock had two special evenings during the month, starting with an amazing percussion workshop run by Patrick Li. It was great fun and those that participated enjoyed an uplifting session. The second special was a fascinating talk by Edward Gildea about his adventures on various sailing trips, illustrated by lots of beautiful photos of views and animals, and some hilarious video of penguins sliding on ice. Both events were under-attended by the catchment age group but greatly enjoyed by those that did attend, and we would like to thank Patrick and Edward for their work in preparing them.



## St Mary's Music News

Now that Easter has come and gone, the choir and junior choristers have had a well-earned break from their labours. On Palm Sunday, as well as the morning eucharist, the choir and juniors performed a devotional offering featuring two of Mozart's most loved late choral works. The motet *Ave Verum Corpus* was written less than six months before the composer's untimely death and his *Requiem* was unfinished when he met his end. James Razzell accompanied the choir with sensitivity and poise in the *Ave Verum* and Philip Sunderland played the *Requiem*. The choir were superb in both, not only taking the choir parts but



also providing the considerable solo elements of the Requiem. As the final D minor fugue came to its relentless conclusion, there was complete silence in the semi-darkness of the church for a good half-a-minute: a tribute not just to the music itself but to the commitment and power of the performance, led so inspirationally by Oli King.

The Maundy Thursday eucharist was marked by a wonderful performance of *Christus Factus est*, by the cheerfully named Felice Anerio and there were two

services on Easter Day. The morning service, accompanied by brass and organ, came to a joyful conclusion as the whole church rose to sing the Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's *Messiah*. Choral Evensong featured the great Irish composer Charles Wood – and for those of you who like trivia, Wood is buried in the Ascension Burial Ground in Cambridge.

Looking forward to May, Choral Evensong on the 10th of the month is a must for music lovers. The anthem, *Evening Hymn* by Balfour Gardiner, is one of the most joyous and uplifting anthems in existence and this can of course be followed by prosecco and nibbles at the end of the service, which potentially could be equally joyous and uplifting.

On the 17th May, the congregation are warmly invited to attend the SMMA AGM which will follow the morning service. This is an opportunity to hear reports of the musical year, to thank Oli and all the musicians at the church and to enjoy some more prosecco and nibbles before heading home for Sunday lunch. Please do come if you are able: the meeting will take place in the Parish Rooms.

Lunchtime recitals, paused by the lighting project, will restart in May, organised, compered and catered for by Hannah Razzell. The first concert is on Wednesday 27th and sees the return of Derek Scurl, piano, and Sarah Lamont, soprano. This was an incredibly popular concert last year, so please come early if you want a seat as well as a sandwich as they will run out quickly!

One last bit of information, James Razzell has been asked to stay for another year as organ scholar. His playing has come on in leaps and bounds in his first year: he is an equal player at all of St Mary's services. We are very glad he has accepted the offer and look forward to his continued contribution to the musical well-being of the church.

Philip Sunderland. Photograph by Martin Hugall

## From the Registers

### Weddings

13th March Rachel Marshall and Graeme Phillips

### Funerals

2nd March Eric Chapman

4th March Lisa Woollard

27th March Anne Armstrong (St James', Swards End)



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

**May 1948**

### Short history of the Organ

Although the organ in this Church is not the largest in the Diocese, it is considered, on very good authority, to be the finest. It dates back to 1824, when a three manual organ was installed on the Singers' Gallery at the West End of the Church by J. Vincent at a cost of £800.

At a later date the instrument was removed to the northern wall of the North Chapel, where it remained until 1886, during which year it was rebuilt and enlarged at a cost of £1,150 by the well known firm of T.C. Lewis & Co., and placed in its present position in the South Chapel.

During the early 1900's heavy flooding from the roof caused considerable damage to the action. Due to the lead given by the late Lord Howard de Walden, the sum of £1,200 was raised and a rebuild was undertaken by Messrs. Norman & Beard, who besides completely revoicing and modernising, added a detached console on the south side of the Chancel steps. The organ was opened by Sir Frederick Bridge in 1912.

Up to the time that electricity was installed, the organ blower was worked by a gas engine. Unfortunately the fumes penetrated into the organ and seriously weakened all the leather work of the action. The Bourdon and Mixture on the Swell are completely out of action, besides individual pipes in every department of the organ, and the whole action is sluggish and unsatisfactory generally. The restoration of the organ to its 1912 splendour is estimated to cost nearly £600. Will you assist in the preserving of an instrument which in every way matches the magnificence of our Church ?

*[In 1952, the organ console was moved to its present position on the rood screen—Ed.]*

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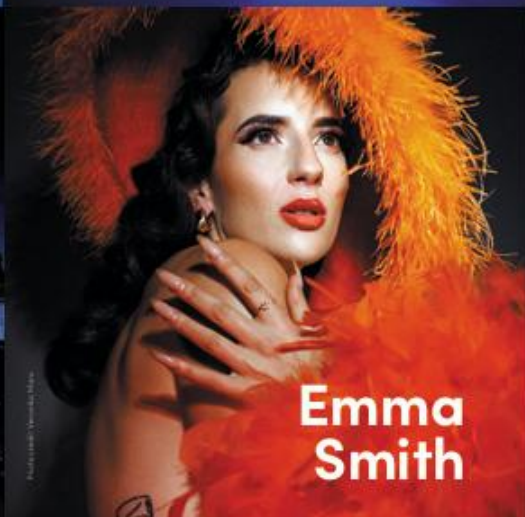
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Now that Summer is on its way, the weather should encourage us to make more use of bridleways and footpaths. Around 150 walk descriptions are available to download free from our website, [www.hundredparishes.org.uk](http://www.hundredparishes.org.uk). As well as saying when to turn left or right, our route descriptions aim to point out things of interest along the way. Some of these will be marked on the local Ordnance Survey map.

Ordnance Survey (“OS”) has been the UK’s official mapping body since 1791, having originated for military purposes. Its activities have left various physical markers which may still be encountered, albeit that mapping techniques have moved forward in recent times with the satellite-based GPS (global positioning system).

The two historic OS markers that are most likely to be encountered are “triangulation pillars” and “benchmarks”. Several thousand triangulation pillars (also referred to as trig points) were installed all over the UK - solid concrete pillars about 4 feet tall, usually erected at a high point with a clear range of vision. Each has a place on top for positioning a map measurer’s tool, a theodolite. The pillar’s location and height above sea level have been precisely measured and recorded so that from here the mapmaker can plot the surrounding landscape.

OS surveyors also left “benchmarks” in thousands of strategic locations. These are additional altitude reference points, a horizontal line indicating height above sea level - chiselled into a wall or milestone from around 1840 until the 1990s. The benchmark was sometimes indicated on a brass plaque attached at the appropriate height. On OS benchmarks, the horizontal line appears above an upward-pointing arrow.

Please look out for trig points and benchmarks. If they are on a Hundred Parishes walk route but not yet mentioned in the description, please let us know.

Ken McDonald, Secretary



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## John Wastell

Those of us lucky enough to be at the Service of Light in March will have noticed, in the service sheet, the photograph taken by Tom Gormally of the reputed likeness of John Wastell (see above). John Wastell is one of the great figures in the last age of British gothic architecture. For most of his life, he lived and worked in the eastern counties, and his home seems to have been in Bury St Edmunds.

We know that in 1485, when he was about 25 years old, he was present at a meeting between the churchwardens of St Mary's and Simon Clerk, master mason at Eton College and Kings College, Cambridge. Although Wastell's name is never found again in the (scanty) documentation concerning the rebuilding of Saffron Walden church, his presence at that meeting, and the unlikelihood that the churchwardens

would have entered an agreement with a master mason in his seventies without some assurance that the work would be completed in the event of Clerk's death, strongly suggest that Wastell was there to provide that assurance. Clerk did in fact die in around 1489, and Wastell is credited with being the master mason responsible for our present church.

The reconstruction of Saffron Walden church began in the 1430s. Bequests in wills date the building of the clerestory and arcades to about 1497. The details of the arcades and of the chancel arch with its ornamented spandrels are typical of Wastell. The nave arcades and the chancel arch and windows at Great St Mary's, in Cambridge, are so similar to the work at Saffron Walden that there is little doubt that they are both Wastell's work.

There are also striking similarities to Wastell's work at Lavenham church, built between 1495 and 1515. St James's Church, Bury St Edmunds, can be confidently ascribed to Wastell—not just because he lived there, but his style can be detected there. The eastern chapels of Peterborough Cathedral are also thought to be Wastell's work.

Wastell dined with the Fellows of King's College several times after 1486, and clearly spent much time in Cambridge, as by 1496 he was master mason for King's Hall (now Trinity College), where he designed the lower façade of what is now the Great Gate. While in Cambridge in 1506, Henry VII determined to complete the chapel of his uncle, Henry VI, and gave "a reward" to John Wastell. The work that took place over the next 7 seasons is recorded in a number of fixed-price, fixed-term contracts which make clear Wastell's architectural authorship and supervisory responsibility.

At King's College chapel, Wastell was responsible for building the whole of the antechapel from a few feet above ground level (inherited from the previous master mason, Reginald Ely), and for completing the choir, 5 bays of which had been roofed in Clerk's time. After the shell had been finished, Wastell undertook the vaulting of the building. Wastell's fan vaulting in King's College chapel is one of the glories of medieval architecture, and has been described as the supreme achievement of English architecture of any age. If you are in Cambridge, do go and visit it, as a finer example of fan vaulting is hard to imagine.

Wastell had at least two sons and several daughters with his wife, who was probably called Margaret. One son, John, was a student of civil law at Cambridge from 1503—Henry VII paid his exhibition in 1506 by way of reward. In 1518, a "widow of John Wastell" was permitted to live in Westgate, Canterbury, with the consent of the Archbishop, William Warham. In the same year, the architect was described in the Bury records as "recently dead", and it is possible that he was buried in St Mary's Church, Bury.

John Pickthorn, with help from Rev'd Canon Chris Bishop

## Ride & Stride 2026

On page 2 of this magazine, there is a photograph of our churchwarden, Vivian Falk, receiving a certificate from the Chairman of the Friends of Essex Churches Trust ( "FoECT", of which I am Hon. Secretary) in recognition of the completion of the Lighting Project. FoECT had provided some of the funds, and some have asked how FoECT raises its money. By far, the largest amount comes from the annual Ride + Stride, an idea copied from our neighbours in Suffolk in the 1980s, and held on the second Saturday in September (i.e. the 12th in 2026).

The concept is a simple one: to encourage as many churches up and down the historic county of Essex (which includes 5 East London boroughs) to open their doors and be visited by cyclists, runners, pedestrians or even on horseback by anyone who has obtained sponsorship. The money raised is split equally between that participant's named church and the central FoECT 'pot', for allocation to other churches in our county.

Anyone wanting to raise money, or to sponsor a participant should contact me or visit the FoECT website [www.friendsofessexchurches.org.uk](http://www.friendsofessexchurches.org.uk)  
John Pickthorn



"Whilst I appreciate the thought, would whoever it is please stop tweeting, 'So far, so good...?'"

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# Music

at St Mary's Parish Church  
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**Wednesday 27 May**

Derek Scurll *piano* & Sarah Lamont *soprano*

**Wednesday 3 June**

Krassimira Jeliazkova *violin* & Liz Mucha *piano*

**Wednesday 10 June**

Oliver King *organ*

**Wednesday 17 June**

SWCHS Students

**Wednesday 24 June**

Ivan Linford *organ*

**Wednesday 1 July**

Mitchison Ensemble

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