

Parish News

St Mary's Church, Saffron Walden

St John, Little Walden and St James, Swards End

Part of Saffron Walden & Villages Team Ministry



June 2026

FREE



Above: 1647 Consultation—see pages 9-10

Below: The mini-ring—see pages 32-33



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Front cover photograph by Gilly Hayes

PARISH NEWS - EDITORIAL DEADLINE

The deadline for contributions for each issue is the 1st Sunday of the previous month. Hence, the deadline for the **July** issue is **Sunday 7th June**.

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Links also at the bottom of our website pages

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

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A Reflection for the Month

From Rev'd Romey Poston

Dear Friends,

You may notice something has changed as you come into St Mary's this month. The colours are all different: everything is dressed in green. Why? Because we've entered the season the church calls Trinity, a long season that will take us all through the summer months and well into autumn.

It has the colour green because it is the season of growth. Without the excitement of major festivals like Christmas and Easter, it's the time of year when we can focus on growing as Christians, both individually and as a community. Perhaps it's good that the season is so long because, let's face it, growing in understanding of, let alone putting into practise, what Jesus teaches us isn't easy; in fact, it's a life-long task. As we try, we often slip up, as we say at confession "through weakness, through ignorance, through our own deliberate fault". It ain't easy.

So it's really significant that the season bears the name 'Trinity' because our three- in-one and one-in-three persons God has a fundamental message for us which is at the very heart of our call as Christians. The Trinity tells us that our loving God, in his very self, in his very being, is a God of community, a God of relationship.

Theologians talk of the relationship of the Trinity as being like a dance, where each is sensitive to, accommodating, loving and supportive of the other. There's no treading on toes in the dance of the Trinity. And the truly remarkable thing is that God longs for us to be a part of that relationship - he invites us in.

The truth is none of us can really grow in our faith on our own. We all need the loving, accommodating and supportive help of one another and to hear the wisdom of those who have gone before us. It's no coincidence that the first disciples were a community. When they struggled to understand, when they made mistakes and tried to grow, they did so in community. We too become disciples of Christ in community.

We grow by worshipping together, by being generous to those around us, especially, as Jesus tells us, to those outside our church walls (even those



we don't much like the look of). We grow by how we welcome and look after the stranger. This month, however many years we have been a Christian, we can begin that journey of discipleship anew, and in the many weeks of the Trinity season ahead, we have a quiet and gentle time to reach out to one another, and together, to reach out to the stranger beyond these beautiful walls, slowly growing in, and living out, the faith Christ taught us. Our God of relationship is longing for us to try.

Trinity blessings on you all,
Revd. Romey

Area Dean

The Bishop of Chelmsford, the Rt Rev'd Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani, has announced that Rev'd Gary Fleming, Vicar in the Benefice of Clavering with Langley, Arkesden, Wicken Bonhunt, Manuden and Berden will be the next Area Dean of Saffron Walden. Commenting on the appointment, Rev'd Gary Fleming said "The Saffron Walden Deanery is blessed to have a full complement of clergy in post which is a good place to start from. I look forward to getting to know clergy and lay colleagues even better and hearing about how I can support them in delivering God's ministry in their respective areas." He will be licensed as Area Dean at a Benefice Service at St Nicholas' Church, Berden at 4pm on Sunday 24 May.

A Prayer For June

Dear Lord, we thank you for the intricate pattern of life we enjoy with the rhythm of day and night, and the regular passing of the seasons.

We thank you that you provide opportunities for rest and renewal. As we come to the height of summer - the longest day, and shortest night - we ask you to guide our thoughts and actions.

May we show care for the environment; be mindful of the needs of others; and make the most of every opportunity to grow in experience and wisdom.

Help us not to take our freedom for granted, but to make sure that as far as possible all people will share the wonder of life and all it offers us. We pray in the name of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

AMEN

Provided by the Prayer Team

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

Margaret Walter



Margaret was born in Middlesex, which is now in Greater London. She is one of twins, nicknamed after birth Rose Red and Snow White to tell them apart. When they were very young, the family went to Grimsby, first of all living in the house of a dentist who had gone to the war. To go to school, they walked over the bumps, as they called it, which were bomb sites.

The family moved to London during the winter of 1946 to find a flood in the basement. When she was walking to school there the snow that year was piled above her head! Going to church was very much part of family life as it was for her grandparents who lived in Henley on Thames. Most of her school holidays were spent

with them. Her grandfather gave her the love of gardening - during war time he sent eggs in the post and her father's mother sent kippers!

Margaret left school for a career in nursing and continued until retirement finishing with a stint on night duty. In 1999, Margaret moved to Saffron Walden to help care for her mother, and as St Mary's was the church that the family already attended she continued to enjoy worshipping there. The friendliness, the early morning services, as well as the 9.30 am service on Wednesdays were all welcome. The nicest service she remembers was an evening service when it was dark in the winter with the congregation holding candles, the choir singing and processing from the back with the lights increasing as they came towards the high altar. The Tuesday evening Zoom is also a lovely peaceful short service, a good one for feeling calm after a busy day.

She first attended the Wednesday morning service with her mother when she moved from Debden. In retirement and with two friends, she joined the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers for a time, where they helped with layering hedges, dry stone walling, and coppicing in Hales Wood. She has walked for the charity Hearing Dogs and has volunteered in Audley End kitchen garden since it started as a Victorian organic kitchen garden in 1999.

Her interests are Suffolk Punch horses -going to the Suffolk Horse Spectacular, heraldry, and cricket! She has been part of the Twin Research being carried out at St Thomas' Hospital, London, with regular visits with her twin sister providing more data for their research. More volunteers needed!

She remembers seeing and hearing the making of the film Battle of Britain whilst working as Assistant Matron at the Friends' School. There were dog fights being filmed over the school. Saffron Walden itself is in such an outstandingly beautiful area to live in she feels lucky to live here.

The motto Margaret has chosen as her coat of arms: "Cheerfulness with Industry"- which was her school motto

Annual Parish Meetings

There was a good attendance at St Mary's for the Annual Parish Meetings on April 19th, following the morning service. The Churchwardens, Simon Potter and Vivian Falk, were re-elected for a further term, as were the Assistant Churchwardens: Pam Russell, Bill Rose, Jan Siewertsen, Gill Caswell and Patrick Li.

The PCC now comprises the following:

Clergy: Rev'd Jeremy Trew (Chairman)

Rev'd Ella Harris

Rev'd Lynda Sebbage

Rev'd Romey Poston

Rev'd Hilary Walker

Churchwardens: Simon Potter (Vice-Chair) and Vivian Falk (DSM)

Lay Members:

Marisa Baltrock

Patrick Li

Rufus Barnes

Anna Martin (Secretary & DSM)

David Birchall (Treasurer)

Shawn Martin (Churches Together)

Gill Caswell (DSM)

Helen Nash (Litle Walden Rep)

Bronwen Ferland

Tracey Nicholls

Richard Freeman (DSM)

Robin O'Neill

Gillian Gibson

Hannah Razzell

Judith Hasler (Sewards End Rep)

Hayden Rocks (Electoral Roll)

Steve Hasler

Jan Siewertson

Martin Hugall

Noël Starr

Co-opted Member: Oliver King (Director of Music)

Additional non-member: Nathan Colley (Safeguarding Officer)

(DSM = Deanery Synod Member)

The Meeting concluded with the Churchwardens thanking the Clergy and all the volunteers for their various contributions to the life of St Mary's.



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1647—Consultation

The spring of 1647 saw some extraordinary scenes in our Parish Church of St Mary's. Elections had been held for men to represent their fellow soldiers, and they addressed Commissioners from Parliament during organised meetings. These were unprecedented events, leading to even more revolutionary developments in democracy.



Parliament had also commissioned a five year official study to advise on Church of England practise, doctrine, and government. Scottish commissioners were present, and influence was sort from the British and European reformed church traditions. The result of this study was the publication of the Westminster Confession of Faith.

By 1647 the civil war in England was considered to be over. King Charles, who had sought to govern unchallenged and without a Parliament, had been defeated at the Battle of Naseby, and was held in captivity by the Scots. The successful Parliamentary army, under the command of Sir Thomas Fairfax, could not be disbanded for fear of further skirmishes. Dissent within the army was, however, fermenting as the soldiers expressed concern about a variety of grievances. Further, there was a growing demand for toleration of religious beliefs outside Presbyterian guidelines and a feeling that those who had survived the war had a right to be heard on the way in which England was governed. With the collapse of censorship, these views were set out in a torrent of religious and political tracts, which were being distributed at this time. Perhaps to head off these grievances, and to split up the malcontents, the army was moved from



Nottingham and camped in villages around Saffron Walden, which by March had become its headquarters.

Although under supervision the King was still looking for ways to secure his power despite the efforts of his many opponents. However, the exchequer had little money, and the Presbyterian dominated Parliament considered disbanding the army with huge arrears of pay or sending some of it into Ireland. Neither of these options were popular for men who had passionately fought for justice and freedom in religion and politics. Few wanted to serve in Ireland, and most wanted to return to their lives and asked for financial and judicial protection for themselves and their families.

The men elected representatives, known as agitators, to speak on their behalf. They were empowered by the religious and political machinations of the time. To quote a saying from the time, “The world was turning upside down”, and St Mary’s and Saffron Walden found itself the cradle of democracy in the English Revolution! After leaving Saffron Walden, agitators went on to vote for male adult suffrage and regular parliaments, and independent, non-conformist MPs were allowed to return to their seats.

The proposed sculpture to commemorate these events is being designed by well known artist Ian Wolter, and is planned to feature a female pamphleteer and two male characters—one of those elected agitators, and a Commissioner from Parliament. The public consultations held at St Mary’s in April have been incredibly useful in helping us to influence the proposed design and position. The finished scheme is planned to be put before the September PCC.

Mat Lester

Gelio's Anthology of Obscure Proverbs



These two proverbs, from England and Germany, may stimulate discussion in some families:

The older the fiddle, the sweeter the tune and

The old forget, the young don't know.



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.

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What's in a Name (17)?

Gold Street

I wonder how many small children are disappointed when they realise that Gold Street is not paved with that rare metal. Interestingly the Book of Revelation is responsible for that idiom: "And the twelve gates are twelve pearls, each of the gates is a single pearl, and the street of the city is pure gold, transparent as glass." (Revelation 21:21) And the idea was further popularised by the story of Dick Whittington.

Well, perhaps sadly, that is not where our Gold Street gets its name. I have come across two possible explanations:

- It was named after a rich mediaeval merchant who lived in a house at the top of the street, looking directly down the street. His name was Simon de Goul.
- The name might be derived from a Middle English word 'goule' meaning a ditch or a channel, a reference to the King's Ditch which flows along the southern edge of the Common where it can still be seen before disappearing into a culvert under George Street, the culvert coming in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Whatever the origins of its name, Gold Street is a fascinating street to walk along. From the top end it has one of the best views of St Mary's, and there are many interesting buildings along its length. I will mention just a couple to tempt your appetites!

Near the bottom of the street many of you will know the Saffron Walden Laundry, but I wonder how many of you will have noticed the blue plaque mentioning Gabriel Harvey. Gabriel Harvey was the son of an affluent rope-maker. He attended Saffron Walden Grammar School in Castle Street before going on to Cambridge where he became Professor of Rhetoric and a friend of the poet Edmund Spenser. He seems to have been an argumentative chap and was involved in many spats, both verbal and written.





Further up from the Laundry is a very high arch leading to the Gold Street doctors' practice and a cut through to Waitrose. These high arches are usually linked with maltings, the arch being high enough

to allow through a very well-laden cart, and this is indeed the case. The malting building has now been converted into housing.

On the other side of the street there is a beautiful pargetted dolphin on the aptly named Dolphin House, but that will have to wait for another day.

Hilary Walker

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.

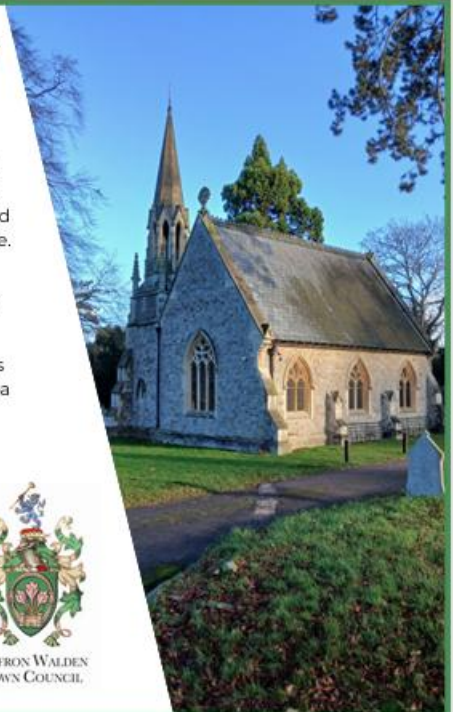
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SAFFRON WALDEN
TOWN COUNCIL





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

The **Recipe Book** will be off to the printers this month.

Don't forget the **Bring & Share lunch on 12th July**. John and Alison will send members reminders very soon.


With regard to the **visit to the Cambridge Central Mosque** followed by lunch out in a country pub, could you please let me know by 15th June if you are interested in joining us. I have some names already so no need to notify me again.

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 in the Antarctic. Further details closer to the date.

The **Autumn Cathedral Trip** will be to Coventry Cathedral. Date to be announced once I hear available dates from the Cathedral itself. This will be a three-in-one visit as there are remains of the very original Cathedral plus the remains of the one bombed during the last war and, of course, the new Cathedral, so a busy and interesting day.

Pamela Mugliston Secretary



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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.

Thursday 4 June Corpus Christi

10.00am Silent Prayer in North Chapel
7.30pm Choral Eucharist
Setting: Darke in F (Gloria - Haugen)
Motet: *Ave Verum* - Elgar



Sunday 7 June

8.00am BCP Holy Communion
10.30am Holy Communion [Y] with Sunday Club at 10.25am
Setting: Missa Brevis - Ives (Gloria - Rawshorne)
Motet: *Verleih uns Frieden* - Mendelsohn

Sunday 14 June

8.00am BCP Holy Communion
10.30am Second Sunday Holy Communion [Y] with Sunday Club at 10.25am
Setting: Mass of St Thomas—Thorne
Motet: *Never weather-beaten sail*—Campion
6.30pm Choral Evensong
Canticles: Ireland in F
Anthem: *God is gone up* - Finzi

Sunday 21 June

8.00am BCP Holy Communion
10.30am Holy Communion [Y] with Sunday Club at 10.25am
Setting: Malcolm (Gloria—Jones)
Motet: *How lovely are thy dwellings* – Brahms

Sunday 28 June

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

Sunday 7 June

10.30am Holy Communion

Sunday 21 June

10.30am Morning Praise



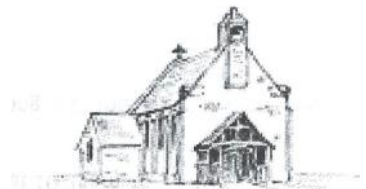
St John's, Little Walden

Sunday 14 June

10.30am Family Service

Sunday 28 June

10.30am Holy Communion



Grove Lodge Open Garden



Come and enjoy the wonderful summer display at Grove Lodge, Chater's Hill, Saffron Walden CB10 2AB on **Sunday 14th June** between 14:00 and 17:00. About 10 minutes walk from St Mary's, Grove Lodge faces the Common on the east side, 100 yards from the maze. A large walled garden, with unusually high bio-diversity. Semi-woodland on light free-draining chalk soil allows bulbs, hellebores and winter-flowering shrubs to thrive. Geraniums, roses, hydrangeas and salvias should be looking their best. Tea and cakes will be available and live music (clarinet and piano) will be performed.

Full details are available on the National Garden Scheme website. All money raised goes to charity, and already this year almost £2,000 has been raised for various nursing charities. The Garden remains open to groups by prior arrangement throughout the year so people are welcome to come, as agreed with the owner, later in the summer for instance.



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News from the Younger members of the Church

Our April Family Service was all about sheep, as we heard about Jesus being the gate keeper and protecting his flock. The first activity was to round up several lost sheep from around the church, some very well hidden and to build a pen for them using giant blocks. During breakout time the children were invited to stick a lollipop gate together, colour and stick a door hanger, or to make cotton wool sheep.

Sunday Club

Sunday Club started April with activities in the Church on Easter Day, then had an Easter egg hunt in the Parish Rooms organised by Gill, while the adults listened to the sermon. The Sunday after we talked about spreading the good word of Jesus and discussed different ways to do so, including what we could use now. We had fun sending the message that Jesus is alive, across the room on paper aeroplanes. We then finished the month learning about St. George as the adults in the Church were. We looked at the armour of God as found in scripture.

Tinies

Tinies were on Easter holidays for the first two weeks of April, but the team that run it were not, so we were busy moving everything back into the church now that the lighting is complete. We started the summer term on Tuesday 14th April back in the church, a welcome



return for many of the parents and carers, and the children themselves. Apart from the venue there were no changes, still plenty of tea, coffee and toast. Still a fun service to finish each session and still a great craft to tie in with the Bible story.

The first session back was breakfast on the beach and the children made sparkly fish in a net, the next week we did the road to Emmaus and the children did their own footprints with paint and sand. The last session in April was the story of the lost sheep, and they made little sheep (cotton wool again!) and put them on a green 'meadow' decorated with flower stickers.

During their time in the Parish Rooms, the Tinies team created a new board displaying the children's work, this is still up in the small hall, if anyone is in there to see it at any time.



Other activities

An Easter activity day organised by Hayden on Easter Saturday went very well.

Aimed at primary aged children they made different crafts to help them with understanding the events of Holy week, and the order that they happened in. They made palm crosses from card, used salt dough to talk about Maundy Thursday, cut out and stuck orange film onto black card to make a suncatcher of the empty cross for Good Friday, and created Easter gardens for Easter Sunday.

St Mary's is now coordinating a team of local Christian volunteers that present "Open the Book" in local schools. Open the Book is a structure of telling Bible stories through a short, usually interactive, play and was set up by the Bible Society. Some members of the team are also involved with other Open the Book groups in local villages too. The first story presented at St Mary's Primary was just before the end of last term and was the story of Jesus's betrayal and arrest and was very well received by the children in the school. Since then, the team have done the story of Jacob and Esau, which proved equally popular.

With Jeremy going on Sabbatical at the end of April, the children and youth team have also taken on the assemblies at St Mary's Primary School.

St Mary's Music News

In May, the choir enjoyed a 'Bring-a-Friend' music event at which the Junior Choristers invited their pals to a Friday rehearsal in order for them to observe the work of a chorister at St Mary's. The children were invited to a tour of the organ loft and spent time trying on cassocks, before observing the evening rehearsal. This has resulted in two new choristers signing up as probationers, so a big thank you to Oli and Hannah for facilitating the evening.

June is a Bustin' out all Over with joyous music of great variety. On the 4th (Corpus Christi) there will be a 6.30pm Choral Eucharist, at which you can hear the communion setting by Harold Darke and Elgar's *Ave Verum*. Choral Eucharist at 10.30am on the 7th features the *Missa Brevis* by Grayston Ives. Ives, born in 1948, was a chorister at Ely Cathedral before joining the King's Singers. The anthem is a pure gem, *Verleih uns Frieden*, by the child prodigy Felix Mendelssohn. The voluntary is a work by the Austrian composer and conductor, Anton Heiller. *Tanz Toccata* is a virtuosic romp which should not be missed! Choral Evensong on the 14th, features one of my most beloved anthems 'God is gone up' by the English composer Gerald Finzi. Finzi lost all three of his brothers in the First World War and turned to the poetry of Thomas Hardy as solace. His settings of Hardy's poems are among the finest songs ever written. He was also an expert on apples, which he grew in his orchard at Ashmansworth in Hampshire. The service concludes with the voluntary 'Church Bells Beyond the Stars' by Celia McDowell, one of our most celebrated and wonderful living composers.

Lunchtime concerts continue throughout June, at 1.10pm, with refreshments available from 12.30pm. Krassimira Jeliaskova (violin) and Elizabeth Mucha (piano) return on the 3rd and their recitals are always popular and remarkably virtuosic. Our very own Oli King gives a recital on the 10th, as long as the organ behaves (it really doesn't like the dry weather, so pray for a spot of rain in the preceding week). On the 17th we are delighted to welcome students from Saffron Walden County High School to what is always a tremendously popular concert. On the 24th, organist Ivan Lindford is performing, a newcomer to St Mary's, so please lend him your support.

Philip Sunderland

THAXTED FESTIVAL

A Summer of Music

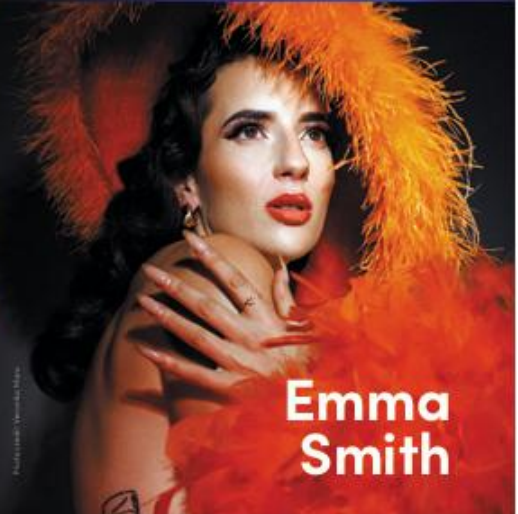
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From the Archives

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

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

June 1926

Mothers' Union Jubilee Festival.

This is being held all over England and our Colonies to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Mothers' Union by Mary Sumner.

The Bishop of Chelmsford preached to a congregation of about 700 members of the Mothers' Union besides many others. They had come by invitation of the Saffron Walden Branch from the deaneries of Braintree, Dunmow, Newport and Stansted.

After the service, tea was served in the Town Hall in two batches. The Vicar welcomed the visitors to his parish and thanked the Bishop for coming. The Bishop also made a short speech, saying how pleased he was to come. The visitors made their way later to Fry's Garden where the Town Band was playing and at about 7.30 they all assembled in the Market Square for their homeward journey in the many motors, chars-a-banc, etc, which had been parked in the square.



Mary Sumner (1828-1921)

The following is an extract from the Bishop's sermon :-

"Fifty years ago a country parson's wife called together the women of her village to talk to them. She was a mother herself and they were mothers. She thought it would be a good thing to talk over their common task. Thirty or forty women came to the Village Hall. The country parson's wife was so nervous when she had called the meeting that she dare not talk herself. So she did what some wives do now, she got her husband to go instead. But she was the right

sort of country parson's wife, so she overcame her nervousness, postponed the meeting for a week and then did the talking herself...

Fifty years ago there was no woman on any school Board of Guardians, nor on the Town Council, nor sitting as a Member of Parliament. There were no Parish Councils, therefore there could be no women on them. There were no women riding bicycles nor driving cars, nor working in offices, nor voting. I am proud of having seen so much progress and freedom come to women...

The Mothers' Union is especially needed with the modern tendency of loosening the marriage tie, partly out of slackness, partly sometimes because people pity hard cases. Women's freedom has made her independent."

Great Ringing Day

Remembering Thomas Turner, a local mercer who died in 1623 who left a legacy providing 33s 4d to the ringers every year, which used to be enough money to feed about 20 ringers for a full day. His legacy means that we can all rejoice in the celebratory peal of bells on this day.

Tall trees, that earlier gave welcome shade,
close in with gloomy shadows now the sun
has set and left the landscape compassless.
The path is dwindling into overgrowth
and fear is his companion in the dusk.
His careless wandering has brought him here
to what may be his final resting place.
He sinks into despair, but suddenly,
across the fields, comes drifting on the air,
the sound of distant bells: the evening peal,
calling from St Mary's lofty tower
to guide him safely home to Walden town.

Four centuries have passed, but still we hear
the bells ring out one day in every year:
The joyful song of one man's gratitude.

Christine Ractliff

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Gala Concert

7:30pm, Saturday 6th June 2026 at St Mary's Church

**Hellier Strings with Granta Chorale
in aid of Uttlesford Foodbank**

With music by:

Mozart, Fauré, Bartók, Elgar, Macmillan, Britten, Handel

Tickets: £ 20 [under 16s £5]

Available on the door and online: ticketsource.co.uk/hellierstrings

Hellier Strings is the East of England's premier string chamber orchestra, a group of professional players from across the region, performing concerts to raise funds for local good causes. The ensemble often performs in partnership with local choirs, the addition of choral music alongside the string sinfonia bringing a dimension of colour, texture, and expression to enrich the musical experience. For this Gala Concert Hellier Strings will be joined by Granta Chorale, a versatile and accomplished local chamber choir with a wide and varied repertoire.

This concert will be raising funds in aid of Uttlesford Foodbank, a charity well known in Saffron Walden and the surrounding area. There will be refreshments for sale during the interval .

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The Mini-ring



The ancient art of church bellringing took centre stage at St Mary's on Easter Monday, as the church hosted young ringers from across East Anglia and welcomed a miniature set of bells to the churchyard.

Young people from

Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Essex spent the day developing their skills. Using the tower bells, a portable “mini-ring”, and the parish rooms, they worked with ringers in their early twenties from across the country. These mentors, who are all excellent ringers and amazing role models for the students, generously gave their time to help support and inspire the next generation.

The young students' enthusiasm was evident throughout the day. Alongside practical sessions the group reflected on what makes ringing successful, the importance of teamwork, and how ringers can support one another while continuing to improve individually. Many of their observations were thoughtful and impressively mature.

They were also excited in the afternoon to ring with all twelve bells going. There are only nine churches with 12 bells in East Anglia so for many it was a new experience. There was also a long queue of people who wished to try ringing the biggest bell in the tower. Our tenor (as we call the heaviest bell) weighs about 22 ½ hundred weight (1154kg). This is not an exceptionally heavy bell but is a good challenge for youngsters to handle.

The miniature bells—known as “peals on wheels”—arrived by trailer early in the morning and were ready to ring within half an hour. These mobile sets are a relatively recent innovation and are increasingly being used to raise the profile of bellringing. This newly made set from Matthew Higby & Co. is easy to handle and closely resembles the experience of

ringing full-sized tower bells.

While the young ringers were not using the mini-ring, members of the St Mary's band invited the public to come and see it in action—and to have a go themselves. Unlike tower bells, which are usually hidden in the tower out of sight, the mini-ring allows the whole mechanism to be seen. Visitors could watch how each rope connects to a wheel, controlling the timing of the bell as it swings.

Over the course of the day, more than 400 people came to see the bells, with many also trying their hand at ringing. Experienced ringers also took the



opportunity to try the new installation, resulting in both simple ringing and more complex “change ringing”.

The event was made possible thanks to a grant from the Town Council, and the support of members of our band who tirelessly spent many hours explaining, demonstrating and answering questions.

Inside the church, the St Mary's team generously supported the event serving refreshments to a steady stream of visitors exploring our historic building and experiencing its warm and welcoming atmosphere - often for the first time. Almost anyone can learn to ring bells, and the Saffron Walden ringers are always pleased to welcome newcomers. Practices take place on Tuesdays from 7.30pm to 9.00pm. For more information, please visit the tower or email welcome@saffronwaldenbells.org.uk.

Ride & Stride 2026

The Friends of Essex Churches Trust are celebrating 75 years and going for GOLD!

We hope Ride & Stride will raise £44,000 this year to reach a cumulative total of £3 million since the start in 1984. A magnificent sum and the result of huge efforts of so many across Essex - we are truly grateful to you all.

Please help us again - we raised £33,000 last year, and a little extra push should get us over the line. It might just mean one extra rider, strider, or meet and greeter, it might mean one more activity on the day of Ride & Stride, it might mean a group walk around the benefice, it might mean some bell ringing, it might mean involving the Scouts, Guides or local church school. There are so many ways to boost our fundraising and one of them might appeal to you. As ever, all details are on the website (<https://www.friendsof Essex churches.org.uk/ride-stride>), with flyers, forms and posters for you to download. Shout about your plans to everyone you know and enter your church's details on the 'Open Churches' form on the webpage as soon as you can. It's easy to update if the need arises, and people find it very useful when making plans for churches to visit.

Please get involved - the more money we raise, the more grants we can award to all our beautiful places of worship that make Essex so special.

Anyone wanting to raise money, or to sponsor a participant should contact me or visit the FoECT website

John Pickthorn

From the Registers

Baptism

26th April

Lily Amelia Roberts

Funeral

30th April

Victor Rayward Smith (St James', Swards End)



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Lunchtime Recitals 2026

*All the following recitals start at 1.10pm
and last approximately 40 minutes
Refreshments available from 12.30pm*

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

Wednesday 8 July

Anna Le Hair *piano* & Arwen Newband *violin*

Wednesday 15 July

Curlew String Quartet

Wednesday 22 July

Veronica Henderson *cello* & Liz Mucha *piano*



Celebrity
Organ Recital

Jonathan Scott

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Saturday 24 October 5.00pm

All recitals listed are free with a retiring collection