

# Parish News

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

**St John, Little Walden and St James, Swards End**

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



**August - September 2026**

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*Front cover photograph by Lesley Green*

## PARISH NEWS - EDITORIAL DEADLINE

The deadline for contributions for each issue is the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the previous month. Hence, the deadline for the **October** issue is **Sunday 6th September**.

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Links also at the bottom of our website pages

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## A Reflection for the Month

From Rev'd Lynda Sebbage

Dear Friends,

Over recent weeks, the news has been full of stories about the dangers — especially for children — of spending hours glued to social media, now to be banned for under sixteens. Adults, too, have found themselves under scrutiny: not only for their own dependence on screens, but for the unsettling realisation that many feel genuinely unable to wean themselves off the constant compulsion to check and scroll.

One radio discussion particularly struck me. It turned the whole issue on its head by asking what we are missing when our noses are pressed to a screen — the changing seasons, the colours around us, the sky above, the quiet insistence of nature calling out to be noticed. How desperately sad that so many of us have drifted into this way of living.

At our recent Church Mice session, despite the intense heat, we spent a lovely morning with Ducklings Class from Debden Primary School and were joined by insect specialist Fiona Hutchings from Wimbish. Together we helped the children search deep into the hedgerows and grass to discover the hidden world of bugs. Fiona used an upturned umbrella to shake insects from the bushes so the children could see them — and what a collection it was. They were mesmerised.

It was a joy to watch five year olds concentrate so patiently, peering closely at the life beneath their feet in the small patches of grass that we adults stride across without a second thought. Their enthusiasm was infectious. Encouraging children at this age to appreciate the created world that lies just a heartbeat away truly pays dividends. Who knows — perhaps one of them will become the next generation's Chris Packham.

One of my favourite poems, *Leisure* by the Welsh poet W. H. Davies, captures this beautifully in its opening lines:

What is this life if, full of care,  
We have no time to stand and stare.  
No time to stand beneath the boughs  
And stare as long as sheep or cows.



This poem has featured twice in our recent afternoon services in both Debden and Wimbish — and little wonder. It has the power to stop us in our tracks and make us think. Davies, who lived a turbulent life and travelled widely as a vagrant in both the UK and the USA, had an extraordinary gift for observing nature with a sharp, perceptive eye. Through his words he articulated the beauty of God's creation with rare clarity.

It is all too easy to take for granted the beauty of where we live: to trample past the ecosystem beneath the turf, to overlook the wonders of the heavens, to let birdsong fade into the background as we automatically turn on the TV or radio. And yet it is all there, waiting.

After our session, the children returned to their classroom brimming with stories to share with their families, teachers and friends. No phones, no screens — just the natural world inviting them to stop and stare. May I encourage you to do the same. It costs nothing, and yet it means the world.

With Blessings, Rev'd Lynda Sebbage, Debden Rectory

## Gelio's Anthology of Obscure Proverbs



You doubtless know the saying that **"actions speak louder than words."**

From France comes this proverb **"they will be hushed by a good deed who laugh at a wise speech."** From England, we have **"a man of words and not deeds is like a garden full of weeds."**



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



### **Peter De Vile**

Peter is another of those people without whom it is hard to imagine how the great choral tradition at St Mary's would have survived. So it came as a slight surprise to me to discover that he was born in Brecon, where his father was Director of Music at Christ College. His mother was the headmaster's secretary. Accordingly, Peter attended the convent there from the age of three. The family moved to Epsom in Surrey when Peter was six, as his father had been appointed Director of Music at Epsom College.

As a boy, Peter was always wandering around the new house singing and his father realised that he was musical and contacted his Cambridge friend George Guest, who had started to make a name for himself as the Director of Music at St John's College, Cambridge. Peter did a voice trial in January 1969 and was accepted as a chorister, starting in the following September. He was to remain at the choir school for a formative five and a half years, loving the choral tradition, the repertoire and being able to sing with the accompaniment of an organ. The more he sang with the organ behind, the more he realised how important that instrument was.

He left St John's aged 13 and went to a local secondary school, knowing that

he wanted to be an organ builder.

Leaving school a few weeks before his 16th birthday Peter started an apprenticeship with the renowned organ building firm of Hill, Norman and Beard. The company folded in 1998 and he continued being self-employed, looking after 220 organs in the East Anglia region.

He has been involved in St Mary's from the early 1980s initially professionally and then when his family moved to the town in late 1980s. His son joined the choir and he was a proud dad. He realised how much he missed singing - particularly Choral Evensong so joined as a bass 28 years ago and is still going!

He has looked after the organ in St Mary's since the mid 1990s and has witnessed its decline in recent years. "There are parts of our organ that are over 200 years old and the time has come to put things right. It isn't going to be cheap but we have an extraordinary Director of Music - Oli King, who is determined to restore/rebuild/renew an instrument which will serve the church for many decades to come."

Peter and Caroline got married in 2014 and had a wonderful blessing service with the former director of music, Andrew Malcolm conducting the choir and the fabulous Oli King on the organ. Peter and Caroline both feel blessed that they are part of such a lovely community.

There are several moments which come to mind in our church. Always the loveliest service is the Advent Carol Service which has its own very special feeling, Evensong is also so special - the words and poetry within the service is extraordinary. From an organ point of view, one of the most memorable is quite recent when he booked his friend Anna Lapwood to give an organ concert who got the biggest audience in nearly 100 years.

As a Star Trek fan, my motto would be "Live long and prosper".

### **A Prayer For The Summer Months**

Lord, may we be like Jochabed, letting go and taking risks as she did with Moses. May we be like Deborah, wise and able to discern your will even when it's uncomfortable. May we be like Naomi, a refugee but tenacious and resourceful. We thank you for the example of these women and their faith.

May our faith be as strong as theirs.

Amen

*Provided by the Prayer Team*

## Summary of extracts from draft minutes of a PCC Meeting on 24th June 2026

Simon Potter chaired the meeting in the absence of the Rector who was on sabbatical.

**Proposed democracy debate statue** in the churchyard: The public consultations had taken place and the Heritage Group will provide an update to the September PCC meeting.

**Memorial service for Paul Garratt** (member of SW Community Church): the PCC approved the service taking place at St Mary's.

**Heritage Open Days:** A request by the bellringers was approved to open and staff the bell tower for visits on Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 September 2026. It is hoped that a mini-ring, church tours and refreshments can also be incorporated.

**Annual Meetings and the PCC meeting held on 19 April 2026:** Some confusion at the Annual Meetings about some of the nominations to the PCC and the Deanery Synod has been resolved.

John Westnedge's re-election as a Foundation Governor of St Mary's CoE School was noted.

**Purchase of a portable replacement electronic organ** had been approved by the church wardens at a cost of £2,485 as the old small organ was reaching the end its life. The new organ had been blessed by the Rev'd Lynda Sebbage at the June Choral Evensong.

**Notice Boards:** The new external church and No Parking signs were installed on 21st April. Thanks were expressed to a church member for the design of these boards and financing of the No Parking signs. Consideration is being given to renewing the notice boards in the West Porch and possibly including a monitor provided by the bell ringers with the dual purposes of showing bells and other video material relating to the church. A noticeboard in the South Porch was also discussed. This is a particularly significant architectural area of the church where approval for a fixed board may be difficult to obtain, but not if it was a freestanding board.

**Market Stall on Saturday 12 September:** The PCC approved hiring a stall on the market square, near the library, to raise awareness of church activities, with possibly a brief enactment of an Open the Book story.

**Music:** After discussion with the Rector, Oli King requested that members of the Junior Choir be renamed St Mary's Choristers to help distinguish them from other local youth choirs and to note their distinct identity from the adult choir.

**Children and Youth:** Hayden Rocks has been in post for ten months and is an asset to the team: it was agreed to extend his contract as Assistant Children and Youth Worker until 31 July 2027, a proposal strongly supported by our Children and



Youth Worker, Julie Lester. Matt Williamson is assisting in structuring the extended role.

**Safeguarding:** Nathan Colley attended for the following Safeguarding items.

**“It’s not just Policy, it’s Personal”** Judith Hasler reported that we had participated in the Church of England awareness campaign for the first two weeks of June to emphasise that everyone in church is responsible for safeguarding and to build confidence in reporting safeguarding concerns. Establishing a new role of **Parish Safeguarding Administrator:** 31 DBS checks had been carried out in 2026, including 12 new applications. We now have 60+ people requiring renewals every three years which takes a significant amount of time. With the Rector’s prior approval, it was agreed that a new role of Parish Safeguarding Administrator (PSA) be created to provide administrative support.

Role descriptions for the PSA and PSO had been circulated and it was further resolved that a Safeguarding Team be established to support the PSO.

**Procedures for Recruitment of Volunteers to Church Roles:** The PCC has used Safer Recruitment procedures for all employees and for volunteers in our children’s work for many years. We have reviewed our existing procedures to bring them into line with the new Code of Practice which went live on 1 June 2026. The PCC agreed to formalise our procedures to recruit volunteers to all church roles, in accordance with best practice.

**IKnowChurch** (Assessment of Church Management Software): We need to introduce this software across the team, particularly in working with funeral directors and it was agreed to take advantage of the offer currently available of two years subscription at £600 for the whole team.

**Lightning conductor:** The lightning conductor on the north side of the spire was re-connected to the weathervane at the top of the spire on 21 May 2026 and is back in full working order. Anti-vandal protection is being investigated.

**Lighting project:** Much work had taken place since the Service of Light in March. External lights and emergency lights had been fitted and the 5 yearly electrical inspection had been carried out, resulting in the replacement of three consumer units. Some minor jobs remain, including the replacement of the choir stall light shades and some high-level work which must wait until the bats leave in September. It is foreseen that the final cost will be within budget.

**Electoral Roll Officer’s Report:** the numbers remain the same: one person has joined the roll and one person has left.

**Finance:** The Treasurer’s Report had been circulated showing total funds of £378,659.

**Health and Safety:** Some minor incidents were reported as well as two cases of cars entering the churchyard at the hazard of our stewards. There was a

discussion about how access to and parking in the churchyard could be restricted during major events.

**Forest Church** had successfully restarted in Little Walden using some private woodland.

**Deanery Synod:** The recent zoom Deanery Synod provided training on the responsibilities of Deanery Synod representatives and voted new officers into post. The lay chair, Graham Cook, gave notice that this would be his last term of office and that an assistant has been appointed to support him and learn the role.

**Future PCC meeting dates:** 9 September and 11 November at 7.30 p.m. in the Parish Rooms.

Martin Hugall and Clifford Want



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## What's in a Name (19)?

### Freshwell Street

I previously wrote about this charming street in the February Parish News, but it is well worth a revisit. Freshwell Street runs from Bridge Street to Park Street but please don't try to drive through to Park Street as the area by the Duck Pond is now pedestrianised.

Freshwell Street has a long history. Steve Bassett in 'Saffron Walden to 1300' suggests that it was first developed between the late 12th century and 1300. It may have taken on the shape of curved pallisade which may have marked the edge of the town before it reached the marshy area, acting as a continuation of the defensive ditch to be found elsewhere which may have also extended here. The famous Battle or Repel ditches.

Over the years Freshwell Street has had more than one name. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries it was known as Fullerestret but by 1758 the Eyre map shows it as Freshwell Hundred. There is also the possibility that it was known as Horn Lane as well, but this name has also been associated with Myddleton Place.



The name Freshwell suggests the presence of water and past industries associated with the area would certainly have needed access to water. Fullerestret refers to fulling, one of the processes involved in the production of woollen cloth, involving the cleaning and beating of woollen cloth to thicken it. Later the water found a new use when tanning took place behind Freshwell House in the late eighteenth century. Freshwell Street must have been quite a smelly place in those days. By the late nineteenth century Robson and Sons were producing aerated water in Freshwell Street.

Walking up Freshwell Street from the Duck Pond, the first thing to see is probably the oldest thing in the street – 'The Monks' Doorway'. The Monks Doorway may well date



from the reign of Edward III when Walden Abbey stood where Audley End House now stands. It is believed that the doorway was used by the monks from Walden Abbey en route to the Church.

Almost opposite is the entrance to Freshwell Gardens. This area would once have been occupied by the cottages of Jones' Yard, small and rather cramped. All that remains now is the house called 'Jones Yard' which was probably originally numbers 11, 12 and 13 Jones Yard, the oldest and largest of the houses.

Numbers 19 to 21 are 19th century almshouses built in 1881 by George Stacey Gibson to provide additional accommodation for the needy of the town. A little further on comes Freshwell House, the largest and grandest house in the



street. It dates from the sixteenth century but presents its eighteenth century brick reface to the road. In the Second World War it provided accommodation for the girls from Tottenham High School who were evacuated to Walden.

The properties leading to Bridge Street are mostly smaller, including a range of seventeenth century cottages complete with jettied upper storeys. The range of different buildings makes Freshwell Street an interesting place to explore even if there is no clear evidence for the springs of water which give it its name. Maybe the pump in the little garden halfway down the street offers a clue.



Hilary Walker





## 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** is with the printers and we should have a mock up shortly. It will certainly be available for the Christmas Fair. I will keep you posted via email.

The **AGM** this year will be on 6th September, after the Patronal service. There will be plenty of time at the end of the formal agenda for you to bring along your thoughts and ideas. Do join in as we love to see you all.

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. This will be an open talk so bring your friends. There will be a glass of wine and nibbles too.

The autumn **Cathedral Trip** will be to Coventry Cathedral on 24th September followed by lunch, out of town, by the canal. There will be plenty of time then to take a walk along the canal to Hawkesbury Junction which is where the Coventry and Oxford canals meet. This junction has been left as it was when first built so a little bit of history to discover.

Lots to look forward to so please join in. I wish you all a wonderful summer, which started really early this year. See you in September.

Pamela Mugliston Secretary

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# The Calendar

## St Mary's, Saffron Walden

One service in church each Sunday is streamed on YouTube [Y]: details on the church website. Coffee is served after the Sunday 10.30am services.

### *Sunday 2 August*

- 8.00am BCP Holy Communion
- 10.30am Holy Communion [Y] with children's activities at back of church



### *Thursday 6 August*

- 10.0am Silent Prayer in North Chapel

### *Sunday 9 August*

- 8.00am BCP Holy Communion
- 10.30am Second Sunday Holy Communion [Y] with children's activities at back of church

### *Sunday 16 August*

- 8.00am BCP Holy Communion
- 10.30am Holy Communion [Y] with children's activities at back of church

### *Sunday 23 August*

- 8.00am BCP Holy Communion [Y]
- 10.30am Family Communion

### *Sunday 30 August*

- 8.00am BCP Holy Communion
- 10.30am Team Holy Communion [Y] with children's activities at back of church

*Thursday 3 September*

10.00am Silent Prayer in North Chapel

*Sunday 6 September Patronal Festival*

8.00am BCP Holy Communion

10.30am Holy Communion [Y] with Sunday Club at 10.20am

Service setting: Harwood in Ab

Motet: *A Maiden Most Gentle*—Carter

11:45am Friends of St Mary's AGM

*Thursday 10 September*

2.00pm Mothers' Union Service

*Saturday 12 September*

9am to 5pm Ride and Stride

*Sunday 13 September*

8.00am BCP Holy Communion

10.30am Second Sunday Holy Communion [Y] with Sunday Club  
at 10.20am

Service setting: Mass of St Thomas—Thorne

Motet: *Panis Angelicus*—Franck

6.30pm SMMA Festal Evensong

Canticles: Brewer in D

Anthem: *Blessed be the God and Father*—Wesley

*Sunday 20 September - Stewardship Sunday (see page 26)*

8.00am BCP Holy Communion

10.30am Holy Communion [Y] with Sunday Club at 10.20am

Service setting: To Be Confirmed

Motet: *Thou visited the Earth*—Greene

*Sunday 27 September*

8.00am BCP Holy Communion [Y]

10.30am Harvest Family Service

6.30pm Taizé Service

## Regular weekday services at St Mary's

### *Tuesdays*

9.30am Tinies – Baby and Toddler Group in school term

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', Sewards End

### *Sunday 2 August*

10.30am Holy Communion

### *Sunday 16 August*

10.30am Morning Praise

### *Sunday 6 September*

10.30am Holy Communion

### *Sunday 20 September*

10.30am Morning Praise



## St John's, Little Walden

### *Sunday 9 August*

10.30am Family Service

### *Sunday 23 August*

10.30am Holy Communion

### *Sunday 13 September*

10.30am Family Service

### *Sunday 27 September*

10.30am Holy Communion



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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.

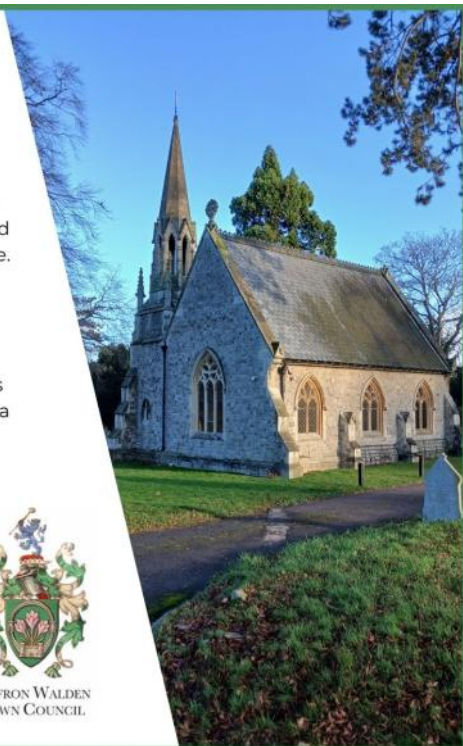
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**01799 516501**

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



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## News from the Younger members of the Church

Our June Family Service was based on the themes of kindness set out in Matthew 10. Even offering a “cup of cold water” is encouraged by Jesus. This inspired our activities of creating an ‘acts of kindness chooser kit’ and the making of a water collage. A ‘water’ race was then held, and eventually won by one of the enthusiastic dads.

### Sunday club

Sunday club also looked at Matthew for its readings and activities, they started the month with thinking about sadness and how Jesus can heal even the broken, then created ‘Kintsugi’ using card and gold pens. The week after we talked about overcoming difficulties just as the disciples did when Jesus sent them out. We made shields with picture of the animals that Jesus named and then made journey sticks. The following week we discussed ways to show that we were Christians and made cross shaped badges. We also made prayer placards.



### Tinies

June was a busy month at Tinies as there were five Tuesdays in the month. We started the month with Pentecost then went on to hear stories about Jesus meeting Saul; Jairus's daughter; the good Samaritan, and heard the Lord's prayer. Crafts made tying in with those stories included a flame crown and wind streamers, a paper doll in bed picture, hands holding a heart (for kindness), a collage of the light shining on Saul, and a card for a Father, tying in the 'Our Father' of the Lord's Prayer and Father's Day, each family were also given a Lord's prayer fridge magnet. The service being back within the Church itself continues to be popular with the children and their grown-ups.

### Other activities

St Mary's "Open the Book" team have continued to visit and retell their Bible stories, with the pupils at St Mary's Primary enjoying, and participating in, the story of the Ethiopian treasurer during June.

I have also been going into St Mary's to run their assemblies once a week. I have covered several subjects, starting with Pentecost, then talking about celebrating our differences, then perseverance, where the Bible story of David and Goliath was compared against Michael Rosen's 'We're going on a bear hunt'.

Seward's End Youth club, supported by St James's, had a quiet meeting, (clashes with a party and a scout camp) but the members that came enjoyed their meeting. They were invited to comment on if they would like a bouncy castle type thing for the July meeting, which they did, so that is planned.

Julie Lester



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## St Mary's Music News



News first from our organ scholars, past and present. Elliot Randall completed his studies at the Royal College of Music by giving his final recital in the RCM concert hall, attended by Oli King. It was a truly superb performance and so we wish him well with the results of his degree and for his continuing role as organ scholar at St Martin in the Fields.

Our current organ scholar

completed a week of work experience at Durham Cathedral. James was able to attend the daily rehearsals, received lessons on the cathedral organ and was invited to play before Evensong: a credit to his ability and a fantastic opportunity to experience first-hand the daily work of a cathedral organist. What a tribute to our Director of Music and his expert training of young musicians.

Joyful Noise had a busy summer, singing beautifully at the Family Service on the 5th July. Their production of *The Princess and the Pea*, given in the Parish Rooms on Friday 10th was a tribute both to them and to their new leader, Helen.

The SMMA have funded a replacement for the small electronic organ in the choir stalls, known as "The Toaster" by church organists. The old instrument was in its declining years and the replacement is an invaluable tool at rehearsals and services alike. Many thanks to Oli and Hannah for a day trip to Bicester to pick it up!

Wednesday's lunchtime concerts have concluded for the summer holiday. They have encompassed a wide variety of performers and some beautifully chosen programmes. These concerts involve an enormous amount of work for Hannah and for all those from the choir who help front-of-house and with baking and sandwich making. Details of further concerts and the Celebrity Organ Recital by Jonathan Scott on 24th October will be in the next bulletin.

The choir takes its well-earned August break now and so we thank them for their ongoing support and for the time and dedication they give to St Mary's.

Philip Sunderland



## 150 years on, Mothers' Union is a "powerhouse" - Archbishop of Canterbury

The Mother's Union is celebrating its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. At a recent service in St Paul's Cathedral, the Archbishop of Canterbury said she had seen first-hand the profound impact of its work in communities around the world, "in family life, healthcare, education, social projects — challenging poverty, injustice and violence. . . In fact, I often say, if I need something doing, ask the Mothers' Union to do it."

Her sermon on Ephesians had asked: "How do we sustain ourselves as we serve? How do we nourish our own spiritual, mental, and physical well-being, whilst we are tending to the needs of others?"

The answer, she suggested, lay in St Paul's words: "I pray that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."

She continued. "May *you* know the depth of God's love in the grass-roots work that you do throughout the world. May *you* know the breadth of God's love as you strive to serve this global movement."

"You are salt to our world, in the ordinary, everyday ways you make such a difference to the people you serve, and in the fellowship that you offer to one another."



...Rodney, I've been meaning to have a word with you about your carbon footprint!

## Stewardship Sunday—20th September

On 20th September this year we will be marking Stewardship Sunday, the time when we respond to God's generosity and prayerfully review our giving of time, talents, and financial support. This has, in the past, been held in March to fit with the financial year, but has moved this year so that it falls within Creationtide.

This year we have seen the completion of our Lighting Project, replacing ageing fittings with efficient LED lighting that is expected to serve the church for many years. This has been made possible through generous donations, charitable grants and the faithful support of our congregation.

Alongside future projects, including work on the organ, nave altar and North aisle roof, we must also meet our daily running costs of over £650. Much of this supports our Parish Share, which funds clergy and the wider mission of the Church, while the remainder covers the essential costs of keeping St Mary's open and active.

We invite you to prayerfully consider supporting the church through regular giving. Every gift, whatever its size, is valued and helps us plan confidently for the future. We understand that not everyone is in a position to do this, and we are just as grateful to all those who give their time and talents in service to the church. If you are a UK taxpayer, Gift Aid enables the church to reclaim an additional 25% on eligible donations at no extra cost to you.

As St Paul reminds us, "the gift is acceptable according to what one has" (2 Corinthians 8:12). Thank you for your generosity, prayers and continued support.

Vivian and Simon

## From the Registers

### Baptisms

14th June

Peregrin Barber

Douglas Sapkota Ginger

### Weddings

29th June

Simon Phiri and Rebecca Howard

3rd July

James Lawrence and Imogen Doe

4th July

Samuel Scott and Eleanor Game

### Funerals

1st June

Samuel Hill (St John's Little Walden)

11th June

Carl Braybrooke





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**

### September 1953.

The Young Communicants Club is an entirely informal group for communicants under 21, which meets every Sunday evening at 23 Church Street. The evening starts with refreshments, any sandwiches left over from the Parish Breakfast and anything edible I can find in the Flat. (One night I produced a 10 day-old piece of cake which was eaten without remark). We go on to play such games as 'Lotto', 'Coffee-pot', 'Charades' and even 'Hunt-the-thimble' and writing games such as 'Lists' and 'Consequences'. The most effective forfeit or disciplinary measure we find is to make the culprit wash-up! We close about 9.30 with a short act of worship. The first two Sundays of August we varied our programme by going out to Evensong at a neighbouring church, first to Little Walden, where we think we were impressed by the very simple service and realised that we had a very big part to play in it. Next we visited Radwinter a great contrast to the bare austerity of Little Walden Church.

Weather permitting the Club will visit Hadstock and then Swards End on the next two Sundays. The Club has no rules but we hope that every member goes regularly to Church, especially Communion. Finance is covered by a cup handed round to collect contributions towards the eatables.

The only qualification for membership is to be a confirmed member of the Church under 21.

J.E.B



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## Great Ringing Day 2026 – Remembering Thomas Turner

On 16 June 1623, a mercer from the town, Thomas Turner, died leaving a bequest to Saffron Walden's bellringers. He requested that the church bells be rung each year to mark the anniversary of his death.

Each year the bellringers continue this tradition, now celebrated on the last Saturday in June. Over the past 400 years the occasion has taken many different forms. Last year, the ringers and friends visited the bell foundry to watch our broken bell being recast. Happily, the new bell was back in the tower a few weeks later, and we have been ringing our full peal once again.

This year we stayed closer to home with a ringing outing to several local churches. Like any musical instrument, every ring of bells has its own character, which is what makes these visits so enjoyable.

We visited:

- Trumpington
  - Great Shelford
  - Sawston
  - Duxford
  - Whittlesford
  - Linton
- Each church has a



St Peter's Duxford

**Quarter Peal Record**

At St. Peter's, Duxford.  
 On 8th. December 1974. in \_\_\_\_\_ hours \_\_\_\_\_ minutes  
 A Quarter Peal of Three Doubles Methods . 1260 changes  
 Composition \_\_\_\_\_ Weight of Tenor \_\_\_\_\_ cwt.

**Ringers**

|                          |                         |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| <u>1. Julie Roberts</u>  | <u>4. Roger Collins</u> |
| <u>2. Paul Seaman</u>    | <u>5. Ian Stracey</u>   |
| <u>3. Trevor Overton</u> |                         |

Conductor Ian Stracey.

Foot-notes For Evensong.

ring of six or eight bells; Saffron Walden's ringers are perhaps more accustomed to our own twelve bells. It is always rewarding to ring methods (the different patterns of change ringing) that we do not usually ring at home, while also adapting quickly to the distinctive feel of each tower's bells.

I particularly enjoyed two of the towers, for quite different reasons. The bells at Trumpington are comparatively modern, having been installed around 50



years ago. They are easy to handle and produce a lovely sound, making it easier to ring accurately and musically. The bells at Sawston were equally enjoyable, but for the opposite reason. They last underwent major work in 1891 and, sadly, are not rung regularly today. They require more physical effort and concentration to ring well, but for those who enjoy a challenge they have great character and personality.

The day concluded with a meal generously hosted by one of our ringers. Relaxing in Alice Kirk's shady garden was especially welcome after such a hot and busy day. Our thanks go to Alice for her hospitality and to Oliver Clinton for organising an excellent day's ringing.

Karen Semken, *who also took the photographs*.. The 1974 Record of the Quarter Peel from Duxford (left) shows Roger Collins' name; 52 years later, he's still ringing!

## REPAIR GRANTS FOR LISTED CHURCHES

Following my report in April's Parish News, here are more details of the Government's new grant scheme for listed places of worship.

The Places of Worship Renewal Fund (PWRF) is operated by Historic England (previously known as English Heritage) and is 'designed to support the repair of England's treasured places of worship and targeted at places of most need'. £92 million has been allocated to the Fund - £23 million per annum for 2026-7 and each of the next three financial years. The Fund is due to close on 31 March 2030 and all grant-aided projects must be completed by then. We must wait to see whether the Government at that time will extend the scheme.

Fuller details can be found on <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/grants/what-we-fund/places-of-worship-renewal-fund/>. Basically the scheme is intended to help with urgent repairs to listed places of worship of all denominations and faiths in England, and will offer grants ranging from £10,000 to £1,000,000 towards capital works that keep buildings safe, open and in public use. Provided that capital repairs are the main focus of the application, essential improvements or adaptations (eg. to aid accessibility), project development costs, and heritage interpretation can also be included.

### **But it is competitive.**

There will be two rounds of applications each financial year. Applicants must start by completing an 'Expression of Interest' (EOI) form online, with brief details of their project, by a fixed date. At this stage they must be able to show that the Diocese (or appropriate church body) supports the scheme, even if faculty hasn't yet been formally granted. The deadline for EOIs for the first round of grants was Sunday 14 June, 2026: Historic England received around 1100 EOIs. A second round is due to follow in September 2026.

Those successful at EOI stage will then be invited to make a full application with more detail. A grant is still not guaranteed. These full applications must also be submitted by a given deadline, and will then be assessed together. If grant is offered, there will of course be conditions, for example about public access to the building, maintenance, and appointing professional advisors and contractors: and of course the relevant church permissions (in our case, a faculty) must be obtained.

Projects must fit Historic England's overall aims (effectively, helping people to connect with and benefit from the historic environment; using heritage to help civic pride, prosperity, and wellbeing; and achieving a sustainable future for historic places). Priority will be given to projects in the most deprived areas of England: those categorised by Government statisticians as Areas of Multiple Deprivation 1-3.

If (and apparently only if) there is enough grant money left in each round of

applications when these projects have been considered, Historic England will prioritise applications from other areas according to the greatest financial need, most urgent repairs, and providing the greatest community benefit. It is of course very good news that churches in deprived areas, with little scope for raising money themselves, will be given priority for these grants. However, we must accept that any application from a church within Saffron Walden and the surrounding villages – our local authority being among the least deprived areas in the country - would need to make a very strenuous case to show that the proposal would bring a major benefit to a part of the community which was itself vulnerable even within this comparatively affluent area, if it were to have any chance of getting a grant.

My concluding thoughts? Government money for church repairs, after many years where it was not forthcoming and when public funding is so stretched, is a positive step forward. It is good also that Government appreciates the major contribution which church buildings and congregations make to the health of their wider communities. I believe that Historic England genuinely want to support applicants as they go through the process, though the timescales and procedures may prove challenging. I still personally regret ending of the LPWGS (VAT repayment scheme), though I appreciate some of the reasoning, and I have just received another letter from the Heritage Minister which makes quite clear that this Government is not going to reintroduce it.

The good work of the Friends of Essex Churches Trust, and similar county trusts and charities, in supporting historic churches is needed more than ever. Thanks to them for everything they do.

Paula Griffiths

### **Heritage Open Days – 19th & 20th September 2026**

As part of the Heritage Open Days national events, the bell ringers will be celebrating the art of church bell ringing at St Mary's. We will be hosting a travelling mini-ring in the churchyard, as we did last Easter, open to the public on Saturday 19th September from 10:00 am – 12:30 pm and 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm and Sunday 20th from 14:00 – 16:00.

Additionally, members of the congregation will have a special opportunity to try out the mini ring and explore the tower after morning service on Sunday.

Visitors will be invited to tour the ringing chamber and discover the rich history of bell ringing in Saffron Walden: Great Ringing Day, the remarkable people who have left a lasting legacy to bell ringing in the town, and a display of fascinating items from the archives. Our ringers will be on hand throughout the weekend to answer questions and explain the skills and enjoyment of modern-day change ringing.





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