

Parish News

St Mary's Church, Saffron Walden

St John, Little Walden and St James, Sewards End

Part of Saffron Walden & Villages Team Ministry



October 2026

FREE

Music

at St Mary's Parish Church
Saffron Walden

COFFEE MORNING CONCERTS

Autumn Series

Concerts start at 11.30am
and last approximately 40 minutes
Refreshments available from 10.45am



Wednesday 7 October
SWCHS

Wednesday 14 October
The Quantz Ensemble
Lizzie Molloy *flute*
Alice Carr *violin*
Hugh Molloy *cello*
Colin Durrant *harpsichord*

Wednesday 21 October
Bob Goldsmith *piano*

Wednesday 28 October
*Sarah Chung *piano*
*to be confirmed



All concerts are free with a retiring collection in aid of Music at St Mary's

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PARISH NEWS - EDITORIAL DEADLINE

The deadline for contributions for each issue is the 1st Sunday of the previous month. Hence, the deadline for the **November** issue is **Sunday 4th October**.

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Links also at the bottom of our website pages

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The Rector's Letter

From The Rev'd Jeremy Trew

Jeremy writes...

I returned from a cool and grey Italy to the deep heat of an English Summer. Sabbatical is over and I return to more regular duties. The suntan is slowly fading, but at least I got a lot of reading done. Thank you to everyone who has welcomed me back, and to all who worked so hard in my absence. I did miss you, and am glad to be back.

I'm of the opinion that we only truly learn what matters to us when we are away from those people, places and things. I've had the privilege over the past three months of travelling around visiting some wonderful places, meeting some fascinating people and worshipping with a rich variety of Christians from many traditions. Each has had something to teach me; and, I dare say, our churches locally; but the thought I have returned to after each experience has been that here is a great place to live, the Church of England is still a good boat to sail in, and you are a group of people I am glad to know. You might want to cut that last bit out and put it in your scrap book as I don't find such gushing sentimentality natural.

To say something about the first two points: The dear old CofE has many faults, but yet; it has space for a greater diversity of Christian opinion than any other part of the Church I am aware of; it strives to represent God over the whole of this land (something no other tradition achieves) which naturally includes the demanding and tricky bits as well as the rich and rewarding; and, at heart seems to want to remain true to the Gospel tradition that it has inherited, above its many other traditions. Britain is also a great place to be; in this small island there is a wonderful diversity of landscape of stunning beauty; we have thousands of years of history of immigration that has provided us with a rich and varied culture, yet which enjoys a strong unity; and we each enjoy a level of personal freedom that is the envy of the vast majority of people on this planet.

Each one of the points I have listed as a strength is under threat. The threats are numerous and varied but I believe there is a common thread. That thread is apathy. It is apathy that refuses to question and challenge prejudice and simple solutions that only serve to paper over the cracks. It is apathy that allows extremists and the self-interested to usurp our commonwealth and make it their own. The task of the Christian, and I would hope of any person,



is to challenge firstly their own apathy. Do that and see where it leads you. For there may be the path of faith. As I am settling back into my role, I am looking at what I can offer to you in leadership that will strengthen our Churches locally and address those concerns. You'll be hearing more about this as the Autumn moves on.

Yours

Jeremy

Remembering St Francis of Assisi

Eight hundred years ago, on 3rd October 1226, St Francis of Assisi, the Italian friar, deacon and mystic, died. One of the most venerated religious figures in Christianity, he founded the Franciscan Order.

He died at the age of about 44 of severe illness, including eye disease, malaria and exhaustion, possibly following a 40-day fast. He was declared a saint by Pope Gregory IX two years later.

Francis' father was a wealthy silk merchant, Pietro di Bernardone dei Moriconi, and his mother a noblewoman from Provence. He was one of seven children – called Francesco by his father, who was an enthusiast for France. At first, he behaved as a typical son of a wealthy merchant, but several things changed his attitude – one of which was his capture and imprisonment for nearly a year after fighting in a war against Perugia.

He also had visions and underwent a change in character leading him to a strong commitment to help the poor – an attitude which led to estrangement from his father, whom he eventually renounced.

He aligned himself strongly with the poor, on one occasion begging with them at St Peter's Basilica in Rome. He also spent times in lonely places, seeking divine illumination, and was said to have received the stigmata during an angelic vision.

Often pictured wearing a plain brown habit tied with a rope of three knots, symbolising poverty, chastity and obedience, St Francis is one of the most honoured people in Christianity. He is a joint patron saint of Italy with Catherine of Siena, and in 2013 Archbishop Bergoglio of Argentina chose the papal name of Francis in his honour, becoming Pope Francis.

Many pilgrimage routes lead to the tomb of St Francis in Assisi, and he is honoured by many churches, including Lutherans and Anglicans.

Tim Lenton

YOU in the PEW interviewed by Chris Bishop



Ian Sutherland

Ian was born in Hornchurch. His parents were from London but his father's work soon took them to the Reading area. Ian didn't enjoy school, left at 16 and started work in an accountant's office. After qualifying as a chartered accountant, he was offered a partnership in the firm but declined the offer, thinking that there might be more to life than 50 years in Staines, Middlesex.

Around this time, he met Janet and after he had completed a post-graduate course at City University, they were married at a village church on the Berkshire

downs in 1972. They had both become Christians in their teenage years, Ian through a Covenanters class and Brethren church and Janet as a student in London listening to Martin Lloyd-Jones at Westminster Chapel.

After City University, Ian's first job was in the shipping industry in London. They bought a cottage in Takeley and joined the Baptist church in Bishops Stortford. Two years later, he was seconded to New Zealand and they settled in Wellington where their daughter, Jacqueline, was born.

Returning three years later, the cottage was rather small for their growing family. Janet remembered Saffron Walden with warmth from when she worked as a speech therapist at the clinic in the High Street. By now, Ian was a management consultant with no fixed base, so Saffron Walden it was. They moved into Thorncroft in 1978. In 1986, the family (now three children, all at St Mary's primary school) moved the short distance to Mill Lane where they still live.

Ian's final job was his longest and most enjoyable. He joined a group of former colleagues to start a new technology consulting business. It was immensely successful but after 15 years, he chose to take early retirement. Ian admits he didn't have any firm plans for his retirement. However, he soon joined an organisation that supports Christian businesses in the third world,

particularly Asia. His role as a mentor involved numerous visits to India, Egypt, Turkey and Palestine. These connections led to invitations to work with other Christian organisations, usually as Treasurer and Trustee which continue today. He still organises the Saffron Walden squash league, although a non-player these days. Cycling is now his main source of exercise. Ian is also a keen supporter and life member of Essex County Cricket Club.

For Ian, the most moving event in Saffron Walden is undoubtedly the Good Friday walk of witness. It brings all the churches together and quietly reminds the town of Jesus' crucifixion.

Saffron Walden is not only a beautiful town but it is surrounded by quiet lanes and attractive countryside which are a pleasure to cycle around. For a more adventurous ride, Ian takes the train to Ely or Sawbridgeworth and cycles home. Again, the convenient train service is a real asset for the town.

Ian's motto would remind him of his grandparents' wartime experience. Their house was bombed but, in the debris, undamaged they found a small wooden engraving with the words "Don't worry; it may never happen."

A Prayer For October

Thomas Chisholm was a Methodist minister and poet from Kentucky; as the seasons begin to change, here is a well-loved poem of his, reminding us of God's unchanging care and faithfulness in a world of change.

Great is thy faithfulness, O God, my Father;
There is no shadow of turning with thee.
Thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not;
As thou hast been, thou forever wilt be.

Great is thy faithfulness,
Great is thy faithfulness,
Morning by morning new mercies I see.
All I have needed thy hand hast provided;
Great is thy faithfulness,
Lord unto me.

Provided by the Prayer Team

What's in a Name (20)?

King Street—part 1



King Street is very much a central feature of Saffron Walden, but the name King Street only appears in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Before that the narrow part of King Street nearest the High Street was known as Market Lane but by the time that Eyre produced his map of the town in 1758 the whole street between what we call the High Street and the Market Place was known as Market End Street.

Were we to be able to travel back in time to the first half of the eighteenth century or earlier, I wonder how much of the street we would recognise. The end of Market End Street where it met the Market Place was almost blocked by the now vanished Guild Hall and Gaol. It is thought that the Guild Hall, originally built as the Guild Hall of the Guild of the Holy Trinity, may well have resembled the Guild Hall in Thaxted. The ground floor served as the town gaol while the first floor housed two chambers, probably originally the meeting place of the Guild of the Holy Trinity. The Guild Hall was demolished in 1761 when the new Town Hall was built facing onto the Market Place. Three lean-to shops which backed onto the old Guild Hall were also demolished, as was a row of buildings which stood in more or less in the centre of today's King Street, opposite the south wall of today's library. These shops may well have been known as Middle Row or Le Draperie.

The Guild Hall and Le Draperie are long gone and the end of King Street,



or Market End Street, is now dominated by the building housing the Library. Many of you will have visited the Library, entering through the grand entrance in the Market Place, and some of you may have gone upstairs to look at an exhibition or to visit Zofia at the

Essex Archive Point, but I suspect rather fewer of you will have ventured through the door that leads to the Gibson Library.

Like the building of which it forms a part, the Gibson Library has had more than one name and function over the years. In 1832 it was set up as the Literary and Scientific Institute with the intention of providing educational facilities for working men, or as it was put at the time 'for working men's reading and mental improvement'. A laudable aim if a little patronising, but it soon transpired that very few working men could afford the modest fee and it became a middle-class subscription library.

Among the most prominent supporters of the Institute were the Quaker Gibson family and, in particular, George Stacey Gibson, founder of Gibson's Bank, whose portrait hangs in the reading room that now bears his family's name. He was a prominent local botanist and many of the books from his own library are now to be found in the Gibson Library in the bookcases which his wife donated.

The Gibson Library contains many other treasures as well as Gibson's own collection including a rare manuscript volume still with the chain which once attached it to a bookcase in a much older library. The Gibson Library is well worth a visit. There is much to be discovered including a wealth of information about local villages and local maps dating back to Chapman and Andre's 1777 survey of Essex. It is also an oasis of tranquillity in the business of King Street.

Part 2 will follow next month

Hilary Walker



**Fairtrade
Fortnight**
21st Sept - 4th Oct

Fairtrade Stall

Fairtrade Fortnight (21 September – 4 October 2026) celebrates the farmers and workers behind many of the products we love to buy. This is a good time to consider the story of the things we buy – Who made them? Where do they come from?

Many of the foods and drinks we consume every day in the UK rely on communities already experiencing the effects of rising temperatures, unpredictable rainfall, flooding and crop disease. Major coffee-producing countries are predicted to lose between 30% and 60% of suitable coffee-growing land by 2050. The best tea-growing regions in Kenya are expected to reduce by approximately a quarter. You might assume businesses are already required to identify and address harm occurring within supply chains but this is not always the case.

You may know that through Fairtrade, producers earn fairer prices, better working conditions, and the power to shape their future. The Fairtrade Foundation also supports smallholder farmers to adopt climate-smart practices, advises brands, retailers and governments on ethical sourcing, certification and trade policy, and campaigns for trade justice. This is why I support Fairtrade.

On 4th October, I will host a Fairtrade stall at St Mary's Saffron Walden, after the 10:30 service. I am grateful to Lucie, manager of the Oxfam shop in Saffron Walden, who supplies me with products to bring to church. After that, the next stall will be on 29th November (in time to buy a few Fairtrade Christmas gifts!)

Alison Trew





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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

We hope by the time this Parish News is printed we will have the **Recipe Book** back from the printers. It will be available for sale from The Friends Stall at the Christmas Fair.

By now, we also will have enjoyed the **"Of Penguins, Whales and Icebergs"** talk by Edward Gildea and hope to have a report next month. Watch out for news of the next talk in early 2027.

Do come and talk to us at the **Christmas Fair**, our table will be next to our Bookstand at the West door.

News of the first **Cathedral trip** for 2027 will be out soon, watch this space.

For a photograph of the visit to **Cambridge Mosque**, see page 28.

Pamela Mugliston Secretary

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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.

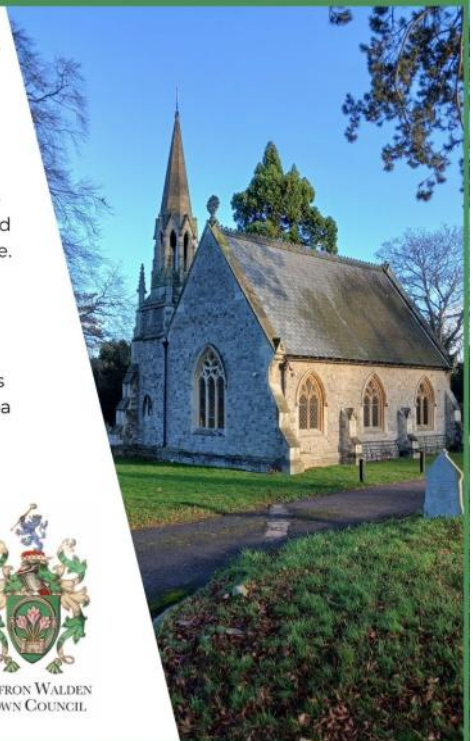
The small, refurbished Victorian Chapel is non-denominational and available to hire for both religious and secular services.



Saffron Walden Town Council
01799 516501
enquiries@saffronwalden.gov.uk



SAFFRON WALDEN
TOWN COUNCIL



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 1 October

10.00am Silent Prayer in North Chapel

Sunday 4 October

8.00am BCP Holy Communion

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

Service setting: Darke in F (Rawsthorne Gloria)

Motet: Cantique de Jean Racine - Fauré

Wednesday 7 October

11.30am Coffee morning concert (Refreshments from 10.45am)

Thursday 8 October

2.00pm Mothers' Union Meeting

Sunday 11 October

8.00am BCP Holy Communion

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

Service setting: Mass of St Thomas

Motet: Ave Verum Corpus- Elgar

6.30pm SMMA Choral Evensong

Canticles: Stanford in C

Anthem: O thou the central orb – Wood

Wednesday 14 October

11.30am Coffee morning concert (Refreshments from 10.45am)

Sunday 18 October

- 8.00am BCP Holy Communion
10.30am Holy Communion [Y] with Sunday Club at 10.20am

Wednesday 21 October

- 11.30am Coffee morning concert (Refreshments from 10.45am)

Saturday 24 October

- 5.00pm Celebrity Organ Recital by Jonathan Scott

CLOCKS GO BACK 1 HOUR

Sunday 25 October Bible Sunday

- 8.00am BCP Holy Communion [Y]
10.30am Family Service
4.00pm Taizé Service

Wednesday 28 October

- 11.30am Coffee morning concert (Refreshments from 10.45am)

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', Swards End

Sunday 4 October

- 10.30am Holy Communion

Sunday 18 October

- 10.30am Harvest Festival



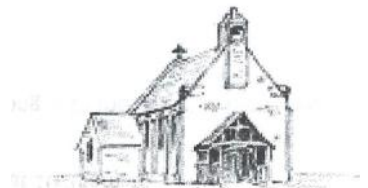
St John's, Little Walden

Sunday 11 October

- 10.30am Harvest Festival

Sunday 25 October

- 10.30am Holy Communion



News from the Younger members of the Church

Over the summer we held two Family services, July's centred around Matthew 13, fish were coloured and 'caught', and cress was planted in response to the Bible reading. Our August service was a family eucharist and was based around Matthew again, verse 16. There was a family who were visitors to the area who



enjoyed our service and took part in a colouring activity as part of a big poster 'We are Church'. All were challenged as they came in to answer the question 'who are you?' and write the answer on a sticker, something that proved quite a philosophical question for 10:30 on a Sunday morning!

Sunday club

During July Sunday club heard the story of Rebekah offering a drink from the well to a stranger and his camels. We played with water whilst telling the story together. The week after we heard that after Rebekah married Isaac, she had two boys Esau and Jacob, and that Jacob tricked his brother. We played a game about good choices and bad choices then made a

keyring using beads so that we could move one when we made a good choice. We finished before the summer hearing about Jacob's dream from Genesis 28, and thinking about rocks for pillows, we decorated some small rocks with kind messages and placed them in the churchyard. During August, activities happened in the church, children attending the service got to create a story box about Joseph and his amazing coat, potato printed crosses and thought about faith while colouring in a dog picture.

Tinies

Back in July, Tinies had a good end of term, we heard the stories of Jesus walking on water, and the parable of two builders, and their choice of foundation. We did crafts and activities based around those two stories, including trying to build a Duplo house on soggy sand. We were sad to say goodbye to some of our regular



children, who would not be returning in September as they are going to school, but they left with all of our prayers.

We held a summer special during August that went really well, a few old friends were able to return, and we had some new families too. We chose the story of Jesus telling the storm to stop and the children enjoyed making a glitter bottle to swirl a storm and then watch it stop, like the storm did when told to by Jesus.

Other activities

July's "Open the Book" story at St. Mary's Primary was Saul's conversion and the children watched with wonder as the scales fell from his eyes. For the final Assembly of term, I had help from Ladybird class (year one), who helped me by miming some summer activities, such as eating an ice cream or playing tennis, but also washing up and hanging out laundry. By the end, all of the children had thought about how the holidays can be for our parents too, if we can remember to help them! Swards End

Youth club, supported by St James's, finished the term with a bouncy assault course, which they all really enjoyed.

Julie Lester

Gelio's Anthology of Obscure Proverbs



My monthly contributions to Parish News are always entitled "obscure proverbs", and I think you'll agree that you can't get much more obscure than these. The first, on the subject of 'Mistakes' comes from Germany:

'An error no wider than a hair will lead a hundred miles away from the goal.'

The second concerns 'Trouble', and comes from Spain:

'Trouble will come on those who are already wet.'

Make of them what you will!

St Mary's Music News

The Choir have now returned refreshed from their well-earned August break and started the term with a bang as the choral scholars gave their annual concert in the parish rooms on the evening of the 11th September. Various scholars performed solos, both vocal and instrumental and showed a considerable wealth of talent and ability. The audience then were able to access their inner dancing queens as the scholars performed a lively medley of Abba songs. A particularly joyous evening, with catering provided by members of the choir.

The organ has not enjoyed the months of dry and hot weather and frequently sends out an *SOS*. Several more stops have had to be silenced, and it has become more difficult to play for services and voluntaries without very loud and obtrusive ciphers disturbing the peace. *Mamma Mia*, we are working hard to consider its long-term replacement.

Thanks to baritone David Pike who sang for two Sunday services during the holiday period. At the first he performed three of the *Five Mystical Songs* by Vaughan Williams and the following week *The Lord bless you and keep you* by John Rutter.

There will be some notable music to be heard at October services. On the morning of the 4th, the anthem is Gabriel Fauré's *Cantique de Jean Racine*, written when the composer was just nineteen: it won him first prize in a composition competition at the École Niedermeyer in Paris. Holy Communion will conclude on the 11th with Oli King playing Bach's *St. Anne Fugue* BWV 552, a noble and very tricky piece to perform. On the same Sunday, Choral Evensong is a treasury of British music with *O Thou the Central Orb* by Wood as the anthem and Stanford's majestic setting of the *Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in C*. The service is dedicated to Gordon and Susan Smith – Gordon was a former chairman of the SMMA. As is now the custom at Evensong, refreshments will be served after the service – a good opportunity to meet members of the choir and say *thank you for the music*. On the morning of the 18th the voluntary is the virtuosic *Introduction and Pasaccaglia* by Max Reger, played by your correspondent – let's hope he won't meet his *Waterloo*.

The Autumn concerts have started and if you have not yet attended one of these wonderful musical offerings, *take a chance on me* and come to the church for refreshments and entertainment. The concerts start at 11.30am. In October we welcome students from the County High on the 7th, the Quantz Ensemble (Flute, violin, 'cello and harpsichord) on the 14th, and pianist Bob Goldsmith on the 21st. The concerts are always a delight and indeed my love of music is frequently *bjorn again*. *I have a dream* of filling the church for each concert and the events are entirely free – no *money, money, money* changes hands.

One more plug for October and that is that on the 24th at 5pm there will be a celebrity organ recital by the acclaimed Jonathan Scott. Jonathan has already given a recital at the church and I have to say it was nothing short of staggering: he is an incredible talent. The repertoire for this is currently not known but I hear on the grapevine a medley of Bee Gees hits might be on the cards. *Stayin' Alive* is what we hope for our beloved old organ as he puts it through its paces.

Philip Sunderland



On 12th September, St Mary's hosted a stall in the marketplace inviting everyone to come and find out more about the town's church. The accent was on children's activities, with lots of 'crafty things' and biscuit decorating for them to do. Cold drinks and cake and biscuits were on offer, and a member of the clergy was on hand for those just wanting a quiet chat.

There were also Heritage Day events in the Church over the following weekend.

Photograph by Martin Hugall



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RATED 5/5

From the Registers

Baptisms

16th August
30th August

Ross Bernard Polley
Louis Robert Ray Simmons

Weddings

10th July
17th July
8th August
22nd August

Joe Pate and Jodi Henry
Jonny Hancock and Candice Howes
Ben Ward and Hannah Broughton
Barry Barnes and Georgina Beetlestone

Funerals

6th July
9th July
30th July
28th August
3rd September

Paul David Garratt
Beryl Dorothy Wardley
Lillian Mary Maddams
Louise Josephine Stuart
Holly Alice Francoise Grayson



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

October 1955

Choirboys' Outing.

On June the 25th, the choirboys had a very enjoyable day at Southend-on-Sea. We travelled to London by bus, and joined the Steamship "Queen of the Channel" at Tower Pier.

The voyage to Southend was most interesting. One of our party was Mr Gray, who knew the parts of London which we passed very well. It was exciting to see Tower Bridge open for us.

As we passed Tilbury we saw a very white ship flying the blue-and-yellow flag of Sweden. As we came level with her we could see that she was "Saga", the ship which Mr Burrows would be sailing to Sweden in a month's time.

On arrival at Southend we were carried safely over the mud by an electric train and then we swam or bought presents. After a large supper of fish and chips and cakes, we were able to pay a very short visit to the Kursaal with its bumper cars, etc, before joining the coach to come home.

The journey home was enlivened by songs, such as the one which consists only of the words: "Life is but a melancholy flower", sung to the tune of "Frere Jacques". We arrived home at 10 o'clock, with only one mishap during a rather long coach-ride.

We wish to thank all parishioners who so kindly and generously contributed to our outing.

BILLY CLARKE, Head Chorister

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Waste not, want not

Homework for October (Optional!)

by Margaret Collingwood

Each week we are handed a copy of The Grapevine and a Hymn Sheet for our use and learning. It's a cliché, but we all need to use it or lose it.

Try this questionnaire for fun:

Research:

How many Grapevines and Hymn Sheets are printed each week?

How many hours are spent producing them?

How many people are involved in the collation, writing, assembling, printing, folding, handing out?

How many are taken home and looked at again?

Midweek Assignment:

What hymns were sung?

Was there a theme for that Sunday?

Was the Gospel taken from Matthew, Mark, Luke or John?

What was the sermon about?

Action:

Open the Grapevine;

Any dates for the diary? A card or a note to someone? An invitation to offer?

Something or somebody to offer a little prayer?

Read the Gospel aloud slowly and see if a word or phrase speaks to you.

Then take the Hymn Sheet;

Read the hymns through as poetry.

Sing them perhaps?

Take a coloured pen and underline one thing to ponder on.



Twenty five of The Friends visited the Cambridge Central Mosque on 21st July and enjoyed a wonderful experience, followed by lunch together at The Hole in the Wall in Little Wilbraham.

Churches invited to pray for all affected by drought, heatwaves and wildfires

British churches have been using prayers written for times of extreme weather. As five successive heatwaves hit the UK this summer, bringing drought, extreme heat and wildfires, local churches have been helping the people affected, both through practical support - and prayers.

The prayers they used are found in *A Time for Creation*, a newly expanded C of E service book (Church House Publishing). There is a section headlined 'Prayers in times of extreme weather' and 'A prayer for the farming community in a time of crisis', as well as intercessions for those affected by extreme weather through drought, lack of clean water, storms, flood, wildfires and other events.

The Bishop of Lichfield, Dr Michael Ipgrave, Chair of the Church of England's Liturgical Commission, has encouraged churches to draw from the prayers. He said that this continues "a longstanding tradition going back to the 1662 Book of Common Prayer", which even includes a Prayer for Rain.

"For centuries, the people of England have turned to prayer in times of extreme weather of all sorts," he said. "The prayer book asks that we may receive 'in our necessity such moderate rain and showers' as we need. Our prayers invite us to ask, to wait and to know the glory and awesomeness of God when they are answered."

Christopher

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Select Committee Report on Protecting Built Heritage

Readers may remember that last July I gave evidence to Parliament's Culture, Media and Sport Committee about historic church buildings. The Committee has now issued its Report: so here is a brief summary.

I think it is a helpful and thoughtful document, clearly recognising the problems facing all historic buildings, not just churches. It stresses the immense social, cultural and economic value of our historic buildings – but notes that current policy and funding don't adequately support their protection or potential. On listed places of worship specifically:-

- a. The Report concluded that the government's decision to replace the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme (LPWGS - VAT repayment scheme) with the new Places of Worship Renewal Fund (PWRF - see August's Parish News) represents a significant shift.
- b. It recommended that the government should ensure that overall funding through the PWRF is at least as generous as that previously provided through LPWGS – with eligibility for the new scheme appropriately balancing measures of deprivation with the heritage value of buildings.
- c. It asked the government to update the Committee about the early progress of the scheme when it responds to this Report, and to give them further updates at six and 12 months thereafter.
- d. It recommended further discussion between the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Treasury about the impact of VAT on listed heritage buildings, and urged there should be some targeted VAT relief on works to maintain or convert them.
- e. It highlighted the growing pressures upon the army of volunteers supporting historic buildings of all kinds, and recommended that the DCMS develop a framework for giving volunteer-led organisations access to practical assistance.

Select Committee recommendations are just that – not requirements. So the Government does not have to adopt them: but they are expected to consider them and take them seriously. The DMCS is due to respond by 9 October. Government machinery grinds slowly, but this process has kept the debate alive, and highlighted some important issues.

I was very glad that I could help make the case for historic churches.

Paula Griffiths

The Select Committee's full report can be accessed at

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/54168/documents/301497/default>



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