

**Parish of Saffron Walden  
Annual Review 2017-18 Contents**

St James' Church, Swards End.....	2
St John's Church, Little Walden .....	3
Worship Committee.....	5
Baptism Team .....	6
The Guild of the Holy Trinity.....	8
Music.....	9
Saffron Walden Society of Change Ringers .....	12
Church Flowers .....	13
Sewing Group .....	14
Sunday Morning Car Service .....	14
Prayer Team .....	15
Julian Group.....	16
Coffee, Cake and Company.....	16
Education Committee .....	17
Book Group .....	17
Social Committee .....	18
Communications Committee .....	19
Parish Office.....	21
Weddings Coordinator.....	21
Children and Youth Committee .....	24
St. Mary's Tinies.....	26
St. Mary's Pre School.....	27
St. Mary's C.E. Primary School.....	28
St. Mary's Guiding.....	30
Women's Own.....	32
Mothers' Union .....	33
Women Who Wonder (WWW) .....	34
Men's Activities .....	34
Finance Committee .....	38
Property Committee .....	39
Buildings Project .....	41
Friends of Saffron Walden Parish Church.....	42
Transition Project.....	43
Jimmy's Group .....	44
Archive Group .....	46
Drama Group .....	47
Links with the Worldwide Church: .....	47
Vision Statement.....	52

**Parish of Saffron Walden  
Annual Review 2017-18**

This review has been compiled for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting to reflect the passion, enthusiasm and dedication within the three churches and in the various groups and committees and so provide a flavour of activities throughout the Parish.

*Lisa Brook  
PCC Secretary*

**St James' Church, Swards End**

St James continued to thrive during 2017 with its regular pattern of twice monthly services as well as special services at Easter, Harvest, Remembrance, All Souls and Christmas.



As part of the parish Year of Invitation we focussed on opportunities to reach out to the village in various ways. Coffee mornings at the Village Hall were held on five Fridays with a sixth in the garden of Keith and Rita Willey - these are well attended both by church members and local people. We ran a coconut shy at the Village Fete and sold out at the annual Harvest Supper in October: our speaker was Rachel Prior who, between selecting her “desert island discs” gave a powerful talk about her faith journey which has led her to ordination and to be our curate. Our Remembrance Sunday service now seems to have become an established part of the village year. We had a bumper turnout for the carol singing around the village which included visits to new housing and raised well over £200 for Crisis.

Matt Williamson, Jenny Tomlinson and Gilly Bamber, together with Ali Maslen who lives in the village, continue to lead the monthly youth club for the village which has a growing regular membership. Generous grants from Uttlesford District Council have provided the club with a projector, screen and games equipment. St James offered financial support by paying for the hire of the village hall and making a grant to St Mary's Church towards the cost of youth work.

We ran a Lent home group and a two session course “Exploring Advent” both of which were well attended by church members from across the Saffron Walden team.

Fortunately the quinquennial inspection did not uncover any expensive maintenance requirements but the electricity distribution board needed upgrading so that three phase power could be connected. A full renewal of the timeclocks and switches has enabled us to heat the church more effectively and efficiently which has been much appreciated during the winter months.

We received a community grant of £400 towards the cost of a shed and gardening tools to assist in maintaining our now well-established garden. A group of volunteers from Lloyds of London once again generously gave the village garden a day of their time in which they managed to erect and paint the shed with much coffee consumption and good humour.

Our finances remained strong and the committee decided to make special donations amounting to about 10% of the accumulated reserves in addition to the normal budgeted outward giving. We've been pleased to support our CMS link missionary in Sudan, Diocesan links in Kenya, the Hadstock church roof appeal, VBS and Stort Valley Schools Trust as well as several secular charities.

At the heart of the village, St James has continued to provide opportunities to worship God with regular Communion and Morning Praise services. We thank Jenny Tomlinson for her inspiring ministry and her encouragement to us all to play our part in leading services and sharing God's love in Swards End.

*Judith Hasler*

*Secretary*

## **St John's Church, Little Walden**

Our year commenced with our AGM which was held after our Family Service on the 23rd April, a new committee was formed and some changes were made, our thanks go to Annette Leeman for all the work that she has carried out in her time serving on the committee, Annette, you will be missed, and in Annette's place we welcome Jean Wooderson to the committee. Unfortunately for the second year running a second Deputy Warden did not step forward to fill our vacancy but we hope and pray that this will be resolved soon. With only one Deputy Warden appointed for the year, several duties to assist in the running of our Church had been redistributed to volunteers from the congregation and my personal thanks go to



Kate Beare, and Tracey Nichols for all their help and assistance throughout the year.

St John's Church underwent a three-year programme of maintenance and repairs in preparation for our quinquennial inspection, held on the 15th September'17. A large number of

completed tasks plus some additional items identified in a separate visit in 2016 were completed which included a major repair to the porch with the replacement of the two sole plates. Work continued on improving the church and grounds post the inspection and work was completed on the main, vestry and porch roofs clearing moss, replacing broken and missing tiles and installing gutter brush plus some preventative maintenance was also carried out. As with all churches there is still more work to be carried out including the rectifying the significant discolouration of the porch and possible replacement of the front fence, treatment of all the external wooden doors, front gate and posts.

With the expensive cost of the replacement of the sole plates, roof maintenance and other works carried out a significant depletion of funds has been made to pay for these works. Additional funding was sought, to help strengthen the church finances and a grant application to the All Churches Trust was successful and a donation of £1,000 has been received. Additional funding is still being sought with some early indication that this may prove successful.

In September, we experienced a very successful Harvest Festival Service, lunch, and auction which this year included a 'busking' session from some of our very talented youngsters, the day resulted in generous donations totalling £426.75 which was subsequently donated to Farm Community Network, £205.40 and Self-Help Africa £221.35 there are too many people to thank in this report but thank you for a massive joint effort all round, well done.

The Rev'd Jenny Tomlinson hosted a Vision Day for St John's Church, ideas were sought, participation encouraged, and thoughts and comments freely given. One area identified was the negative feedback from visitors that have been made regarding our 'wild' (bird/bee friendly), garden. A small committee is to be set up to discuss how our grounds could be improved in the future; in the meantime, some spring bulbs, kindly donated, have been used in

the small beds to either side of the porch to try and improve the image on entering the church.

Regrettably we heard that our own Rev'd Paula Griffiths was stepping down as the priest with responsibility for St John's. Paula will be sorely missed and I would personally like to thank her, and Roger too, for all the help and support that they have given to me, Tracey and the congregation.

Advent was once again a busy time for St John's with additional services falling outside of our normal Sunday services with one family service occurring after a heavy snow fall the night before making attendance a challenge for many of us. As usual our carol service was again very well attended and our thanks again to Kate Beare for arranging this annual event.

The heavy storms in the early part of the year caused some small and localised damage to the church roof with a couple of broken and displaced tiles and sections of the newly installed gutter brush being blown off, fortunately most of the gutter brush was recovered and will be refitted soon.

Twelve new pew church bibles were purchased to aid in the family services and finally the church has had the internal lighting improved with new ceiling roses, flex, fittings, and lamp shades fitted giving a more welcome feel than the previous, bare, hanging light bulbs.

*Richard Peet  
Deputy Warden*

## **Worship Committee**

Since the last annual report, the Worship Committee, under the chairmanship of the Rector, has met twice. The committee reviews all services and acts of worship, considers comments made by members of the congregation and looks forward to future planned events.

At the first meeting, held in March, Jenny Kirkaldy stepped down from the committee and was thanked for the contribution which she had made over a number of years. Apart from that the composition of the committee remains unchanged.

During the latter part of 2017 it was proposed that a new monthly fellowship evening be held in the Parish Room on a Thursday evening. This was trialled, and is continuing this year.

The practice of including the sung 'Alleluias' before and after the Gospel was reviewed and it was agreed that this should be continued. The Director of Music may well look to introduce a new version during the coming year.

The new Celebrate Service (replacing 4th@4) continues, with input each time from the children at St Mary's School, with Joyful Noise singing on a regular basis. This service encourages the links between school and church and seeks to build on the work with children and parents started with Tinies and T3.

Last year's introduction of a pop-up choir for one Sunday in August was successfully repeated, led by Simon Potter. This may well become a summer tradition when the choir is away.

There was, in July, a special Memorial Service to celebrate the life of Robin Neville, Lord Braybrook, who was a patron and keen supporter of St Mary's Church. This saw many visitors attending from near and far, representing his varied interests.

Large services often involve movement around the church and, as always, the committee reviewed and revised the logistics of this. During the past year we have had to consider the impact of the building works upon our services. The major impact last Easter was the need to again process outside the church on Palm Sunday, whilst more recently Baptisms have needed to take place at the front of the church until the font has been re-sited once more. There is a rich variety of worship offered throughout the year at our church which embraces the regular weekly services as well as the services for special seasons. Between them they encourage into the church both members of the local community and those who are regular worshippers week by week.

*Bron Ferland*

*Secretary, Worship Committee*

## **Baptism Team**

The Team, comprising Kathryn, Diana, Sandra, Pamela, Bill and Noel, has recently had its annual meeting with David when we discussed the past year. At that meeting it was good to report that the number of baptisms in the previous year had increased to 43 (from 25 in the previous year though not quite the 2011-12 high of 48), including 3 adults, two of whom were the Mums of children being baptised. In fact we had some very exciting Sundays with 1pm services being added on three occasions. 26th November

deserves special mention as there were three services on that day, at 10am, midday and 1pm! It is also interesting that 5 of the



children were of school age and in two instances it was the child who requested that they be baptised.

The midday service continues to be more popular than a baptism within the 10am service, with just five 10am baptisms in the past year. Those baptised outside the 10am service return with

their families for the presentation of certificates (and a teddy bear!) at a Family Service. There has been a move to encourage these families to sit at the heart of the congregation so that they experience the service to the full and will hopefully return to subsequent services.

During the year we had a 'Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child' service. Parents may choose this option for any number of reasons; allowing the child to make their own decision about baptism when they are older and potential godparents not being baptised themselves (and thus unable to take up that role) are just two reasons.

Our font is not usable for the time being, but to date we have had two baptism services in the nave just in front of the screen and this seems to work well. It was at one of these that John Saxon conducted his first baptism and Rachel is looking forward to her first baptisms shortly.

2018 has started with a sprinkling of enquiries and four visits have been made to date (9th February) by members of the team to interested families. The purpose of these visits is primarily to make contact with the family and to be a support during the process of attending a church service, the baptism itself and, in most cases, returning for the certificate presentation. The baptism process is explained as are the regulations regarding godparents. Lastly we

introduce families to the wealth of activities available at St Mary's, especially Tinies and Team JC.

An especial 'Thank you' to Jenny Cottam who completes the Baptism Register and writes copious baptism certificates, to the Team (especially to Bill for revamping the Baptism Handprint Board every year in time for our Mothering Sunday Service and to those of you who set up and assist at baptism services) and to the producers of teddy bears and their beautiful labels.

Each year brings its little challenges, but the fact that we have stayed together as a Team for some time now I feel is witness to the fact that we all feel this is a very worthwhile ministry.

*Lesley Lancaster*

## **The Guild of the Holy Trinity**

The Guild of Servers at St Mary's, in existence for many years, continues to fulfil an important role in the liturgy of St Mary's. The Servers, with increasing experience, carry out duties of increasing importance. Traditionally, one begins as a Taperer, progress to being a Crucifer and, when licensed by the Bishop, may serve as a Sub-Deacon and administer the Chalice. We, the Servers, are conscious that, in assisting the priest at the Altar, we are also leading you, the congregation in worship.

Occasionally, at festivals, we have a Crucifer and two Taperers but we still have not reached the situation where we can provide a Crucifer and two Taperers every Sunday. In addition to leading the clergy procession and choir, if in attendance, the Crucifer and Taperers accept the Communion elements and the Alms from the Offertory Procession. The range of tasks performed by servers within the ritual of Holy Communion is contained in a small pocket booklet 'Notes for serving at the Altar', which is given to each server. These notes have been revised and up-dated in the last few months by Denis Tindley (Churchwarden), Peter Karolyi (Assistant Church Warden and Server) and Noel Starr (Convener).





Currently, the Guild includes four Sub-Deacons who serve in turn at the 08.00am (1662) Holy Communion. A bigger group provide a team of three Sub-Deacons and a Crucifer at the 10.00am Eucharist. This 10.00am Sub-Deacon Group has fourteen regular members. At this service the Sub-Deacons administer two chalices at the main Altar with a third accompanying a second Priest, Deacon or Ordinand to offer the Chalice at the additional station in the South Chapel. On occasion, if there is no second priest, we need to call upon a fourth Sub-Deacon to administer in the South Chapel. This can also happen when we are under pressure at Festivals and holiday times.

There are also a number of Lay Assistants who do not serve in Communion services in the church but who are licensed by the Bishop to give Holy Communion within the community to the sick and housebound. They have agreed, if needed in an emergency, to administer the Chalice in Church. St John, Little Walden and St James, Swards End also have Lay Assistants licensed to administer the chalice.

Even though the list of servers seems long, many of us also have other duties and responsibilities, as Wardens, Welcomers or Sidesmen, or in other Churches, and it is sometimes difficult to provide a full team. If you are interested in assisting in worship by serving at the Altar, or becoming a Lay Assistant, then please have a word with the Rector or myself. We are happy to welcome new members.

*Noel Starr*

## **Music**

Another action packed year has passed and it is once again time to attempt to summarise a wealth of different musical groups, and activities within the church. Well here goes and wish me luck:

Easter 2017 featured an incredibly powerful rendition of Mozart's *Requiem Mass in D*. This was accompanied by an orchestra made up of musicians from the renowned East Anglia Chamber Orchestra. Soloists were drawn from the choir. The overall effect to me was one of a rollercoaster or myriad of different emotions, not to mention the intense feeling of awe and wonder with the choir and orchestra performing beneath the cross on the screen of St Mary's. It was an incredibly powerful experience and one that I will certainly treasure. Unfortunately, there is not enough room in this particular forum to be

able to go into detail on the abundance of music making within individual services at St Mary's , though I would like to mention a another highlight; the Easter Day Eucharist with Brass. Gordon Smith's arrangement of the Hallelujah chorus (arranged for brass group, choir, congregation, and organ) was a piece de resistance and one which I hope will become a 'tradition' for many years to come!

In July the adults and choral scholars undertook a week's residency in the wonderful and historic setting of Llandaff Cathedral. Musically speaking the choir sounded excellent throughout the week. They worked hard, with good cheer, and were highly responsive to the concentrated demand of a hefty musical turnover within the space of a week. In short, they did this church proud. This is no mean feat given the sheer quantity of anthems, psalms, hymns, canticles, responses and mass settings requiring careful preparation - all the repertoire was executed to an exemplary standard throughout. Bravo Choir!



*Joyful Noise* continues to thrive, and it is entirely due to Kate Beare who continues to drive this choir forward with her warm energy and enthusiasm. I am indebted to Kate for her vision and hard work. She established *Joyful Noise* six years ago, thereby constituting a significant part of my initial development plan for music at St Mary's. Kate has pioneered this project with kindness, creativity, and a spirituality that children simply love and instinctively engage with. Very sadly, Kate will be stepping down from *Joyful*

Noise during the course of late 2018. Thank you Kate – the choir will miss you massively.

Our Junior Choir continues to thrive and numbers are healthy at present, though there is a definite need to maintain low level targeted schools based recruitment. The Junior Choir continue to sing with the adult choir, and also on their own at bi-monthly family services. Recently we implemented a plan whereby the Juniors sing at local churches roughly twice a year. At the time of writing, we are also considering making a short promotional video about life in the Junior Choir - more to follow in the near future. My thanks go at this point to a new addition to the SMMA – Alison Lawrence, who is very kindly coordinating some of the Junior Choir social activities – a less publicised, though vital and enriching aspect of their church life. Choral scholar numbers and commitment remain strong and plans are afoot for a choral scholar led service at some stage – very exciting! The adult choir is full at present and on tremendous form – we currently have a short waiting list. That said, we are short in the bass department for a number of reasons, and an extra bass singer would be a very welcome addition. Rowan Sylvester-Bradley has kindly spent much time pioneering an online tick list for the choir. This is already proving to be a useful tool for the choir – thank you Rowan. Brass group numbers remain stable with some comings and goings. They played at a number of events and services during the year – a particular highlight being the Little Walden Hog Roast in early September. As written previously, we are still on the look-out for a tuba player. We can even provide the instrument!

Looking forward, we are thrilled to be re-establishing the organ scholarship which will be called the Michael Swindlehurst Organ Scholarship. This is a joint venture between, St Mary's PCC, Wendens Ambo PCC and St Mary's Music Association. It is hoped that the holder of this scheme will have the opportunity to develop their church music skills in a demanding, immersive, yet supportive community. I look forward to reporting more on this in due course.



On the public front there was a wonderful array of lunchtime concerts during the summer season. These included organ, vocal

and piano, violin and clarinet and were all well attended. My thanks to Gill Gibson for co-ordinating the ever popular refreshments! There was also a trumpet and organ concert on a Saturday afternoon, plus one evening organ recital given by Ashley Grote, Director of Music at Norwich cathedral.

I would extend my gratitude for the support and commitment of the SMMA - they work tirelessly together to support the music in this church. I would also like to thank Graham Cottam for his continued dedication to the administration of the brass group. Peter Devile continues to take care of our magnificent pipe organ and this is certainly not a task that should ever be underestimated. The instrument is large, old and has to work hard. As a consequence it requires ever increasing maintenance. Our choir librarians, Margaret Jacobs and Hilary Parry-Jones put in many hours ensuring that our sizable and sometimes disorganised choir always has the right music. There are times of year when it isn't uncommon to have up to four+ sung services in a week - each with entirely different music. I would like to thank Jeremy Allen for his continued support and wisdom. In addition to his innate accompaniment skills, he is also a fountain of wisdom and well considered advice. Bron Ferland gives a huge amount of time every week undertaking the considerable administrative tasks for the choirs. She remains fantastically supportive and dedicated to all that we do here – without her dedication; much would simply not be possible.

Lastly, I would like to thank David Tomlinson who remains a hugely insightful and perceptive colleague. It is an honour to be able to work and live in such a spiritual and constructive 'can-do' environment. Long may it continue!

*Oliver King*

## **Saffron Walden Society of Change Ringers**

There is a long and distinguished history of bell ringing at St Mary's which continues to be a significant aspect of church life and Christian ministry today. Of interest, the first record we have of bell ringing at St Mary's was in 1440 when the ringers were paid for ringing when the Queen (Margaret of Anjou) passed through the town. Other than ringing for weddings, (unfortunately!) ringers are not paid today but ringing for both national occasions and local events remains an important task.

The main focus of the Saffron Walden Society of Change Ringers is to call people to worship and enhance the presence of the Church in the town. The bells have been rung every Sunday throughout the year, for major festivals in the Christian calendar, for weddings and for both national occasions and local events. Teaching new ringers and continuation training of existing ringers is an essential activity of the Society and, to that end, we hold a weekly 'practice night' each Tuesday and engage in other training using our ringing simulator for both our own ringers and ringers from many towers in the surrounding area.

The highpoint of our ringing calendar is always 'Great Ringing Day' which is usually held on the last Saturday of June; this is a tradition stemming back to 1623 with the death and bequest of Thomas Turner, who directed in his will that 33s 4d should be bestowed on the ringers each year to ring the bells on the anniversary of the day he was buried. Great Ringing Day is a major ringing and social event and this year members of the Society and ringers from nearby churches took part in quarter peals (at least 1250 changes of ringing lasting about 50 minutes) at Arkesden, Ashdon, Clavering, Hadstock, Henham, Ickleton, Littlebury, Radwinter, Rickling, Saffron Walden, Stansted, and a handbell quarter peal was rung at St James' Swards End. Also, on 10 September we took part in the national Heritage Open Day and opened the tower to visitors to give an insight into English-style bell ringing. In October we held our annual outing visiting 6 churches in central London. Christmas is a particularly busy time for us and this year, in addition to festive ringing, we opened the tower for visitors to the Christmas Fair and held our Christmas dinner at St Mark's College.

Any members of the church who would like to see the bell ringing or 'have a go' are most welcome to come up the tower to see what goes on.

*Stephen Wood, Ringing Master*

## **Church Flowers**

During the year the flower team have undertaken flowers in church each week, with Advent and Lent being the exceptions.

I am pleased to report that one new member has joined the team. Men, do not be shy.

We have had a busy year with arranging wedding flowers on numerous occasions, gypsophila being very popular for pew ends.

This year Jane Knight is to take over the wedding flowers and the couples will be lucky in having a Chelsea Gold Medallist doing their flowers. I am indebted to Jane for taking on this role.

As usual the flower team is not full especially with regard to flowers in the North Chapel where a simple bunch of flowers in the glass vase is very easy to undertake. Why not give it a try?

The team are looking forward to having a sink and water supply in our designated flower cupboard which forms part of the servery.

A big thank you as always to the dedicated team for their loyalty and friendship.

*Pam Russell*

## **Sewing Group**

The Sewing Group continues to have an enthusiastic membership and to work away on the ever-increasing tide of kneelers very happily and also for the handicraft stall for the Christmas Fayre. Any new ideas for things to make for that would be very gratefully accepted.

*Tessa Hawkes*

## **Sunday Morning Car Service**

The Sunday Morning Lifts to Church has been running for many years and in several formats. This service has been put in place for members of the congregation who find it difficult to get to the 10.00am service and is taken advantage of by several people either on a regular or random basis.

A church mobile phone number 07582 514741 is manned, usually by Carolyn Mann, on Saturdays from 4.30pm to 6.00pm for those who wish to book a lift to church the following morning. If it needs to be cancelled the next day a call between 8am and 9am is appreciated

We run this service with volunteer drivers by rota, currently on a 5 week basis, two drivers each week. Several of our drivers also take part in the service on Sunday mornings as servers, welcoming or tea & coffee making so we are always looking for other drivers to volunteer to help with driving regularly.

If you wish to join our team of drivers, need a lift to church or know of someone who could use the service



please call Carolyn Mann 01799500311 or Keith Huddleston  
01799525275

*Carolyn Mann*

## **Prayer Team**

Taking over the Prayer committee from Wendy Watts was an awesome undertaking! However I found in the existing committee a measure of immense faithful service over a great many years, which left me both heartened and humbled. One of our first tasks was to discern the purpose of the committee and we decided to move to being a team, committed to pray both individually and as a team, enable prayer events to happen with the responsibility for putting on two quiet mornings a year.



Our first event was 4 evenings of prayer between Easter and Pentecost. The purpose being to ground the building work in prayer so that the mission of St Mary's being a church of welcome and sharing the love of God would be deepened, while joining in with the Archbishop of Canterbury's initiative of Thy Kingdom Come. We were encouraged with the response to these times so are planning 4 more evenings this year along with organizing 12 hours of continuous prayer from 8 am – 8 pm on Saturday 19th May.

Margaret Taylor continues to administer and lead the prayer chain, intercession board and prayer ministry with great love and effect. Likewise Anne Rose has continued faithfully and lovingly leading the Silent Prayer meetings on the 1st Thursday of the month, along with setting up the Easter table from Palm Sunday to Ascension. As I write this Joe Horden is updating the monthly prayer diary with his usual faithful diligence waiting until after The Annual Parochial Church Meeting to publish it.

We welcomed Judith and Mike Felgate and Anne Rhodes onto the team and have really benefited from their wisdom and knowledge of St Mary's. Among other things in their beautiful and loving preparations of the Parish Rooms and refreshments for the Quiet mornings the Felgates contribute a vital part of making the mornings welcoming and safe for us all. Rachel led the November quiet morning titled THE EMBRACE OF GOD, which in her combined opening up of scripture with religious art fed, challenged and inspired us, giving us a rich morning to reflect upon.



We have also responded to the initiative from the PCC to have Evening Prayer once a week. We are hugely grateful to all the volunteers who are helping us to lead them. It is early days but suffices to say that after one month we have had to print more leaflets. This has been such a team effort by all and has been a real joy and privilege to work with everyone. All my thanks go to the Prayer Team and to those who help for without you none of these things would happen so calmly.

*Sue Walker*

## **Julian Group**

Due to the simplicity of the Julian Meetings there is really nothing new to report.

There continues to be a gathering of strong "core members" who meet on the second Tuesday of the month as ever, at 7.30 p.m. at *The Priory*, Common Hill. Newcomers welcome.

*Tessa Hawkes*

## **Coffee, Cake and Company**

CC&C began as an initiative primarily to provide a welcome to anyone experiencing issues around mental health. We have continued to grow into a diverse community with a range of people, many of whom would not otherwise have contact with the church. Anyone and everyone is promised a safe space just to be themselves and enjoy the opportunity of a little hospitality, a time for spiritual reflection, and to experience God's love. Both longstanding group members and new faces are assured an equal place and the warmest welcome.

*Marisa Baltrock*



## **Education Committee**

Our principal aim is to facilitate and support home groups and new opportunities when they arise. We are fortunate in having a number of well-established groups that are self-supporting. We have been less successful in setting up new, on-going groups, primarily because people's changing lifestyles make them reluctant to enter into long-term commitments.

Churches Together in Saffron Walden ran a very successful series of four clergy led Lent talks and reflections in 2017, and this is being repeated in 2018 with four talks on the Gospels. These are excellent opportunities to learn from the other churches in our community. We are very grateful to Jeremy Collingwood for continuing to host and lead the Lent Men's group, which this year will be studying St John's Gospel, and to Marisa Baltrock for leading the Lent groups in Saffron Walden, this year on the Letter of James.

Other events to note include Rachel Prior's five-week Parenting Children course which commenced in January, the Rector's six session Living Questions course last autumn, and the Colchester area conference 'Sounding Sweet – becoming Communities of Grace' on February 3rd that provided much challenge and inspired thought on inclusivity.

Lastly, I would like to thank all who lead and participate in study groups which are so valuable in enabling us to get to know each other better as we learn more of God's Word.

*Denis Tindley*

*Chair, Education Committee*

## **Book Group**

St Mary's Book Group had another active and well-attended year in 2017.

Our membership is entirely open-ended, and the number coming to each meeting may range from seven or eight to more than a dozen. Much depends on how interesting members have found the book to be discussed, but there is always a lively discussion over coffee or tea, with a log fire in winter.

The books we have covered over the past year ranged from Jane Austen's *Persuasion* to a science fiction novel, *Wool*—which most people did not much like, but at least it introduced them to the genre— together with two spy novels, Joseph Conrad's classic novel *The Secret Agent* and John Le Carré's *A Delicate Truth*. We

also discussed William Hague's biography of William Wilberforce and David Niven's very different autobiography, *The Moon's a Balloon*. Richard Harris's novel about the election of a new Pope led to a particularly interesting discussion.

We meet in principle on the last Friday of each month, with a break for summer and for Christmas, and details of the next book can always be found in the Grapevine.

*Robin O'Neill*

## **Social Committee**

I reported last year that we were looking forward to the new servery at the back of church. At long last after a number of delays the work has been completed and it is now fully functional with boiling water on tap, hot/cold water, a fridge and a dishwasher (we can use proper china mugs!).

We welcomed John and Dawn Saxon with a drinks reception in St Marys. John will serve as curate in Wimbish and Debden. Rachel and Sam Prior also joined us in July at St Mary's where Rachel will serve her curacy. We had a 'bring and share' lunch for Sam and Rachel after a family service. There was a good number of young families present but it was noticeable that only one of the families with children stayed to the lunch. What does this say to us as a church? It will not have escaped our attention that there has been a massive social change over the last 20 years. The gospel and the need for community have not changed but the way younger generations engage has.

To aid the process of engagement we are starting a regular brunch after the family service. At the time of writing a regular rota of providers is being formed.

On July 1<sup>st</sup> the Saturday Team spectacular was held at St Mark's College. We provided hot drinks throughout the day and lunch for the participants.

We continue to provide hospitality for a wide range of services/events in church. Activities in which members of the team are involved range from providing hot drinks and biscuits for the occasional service, to serving mulled wine at the Epiphany Carol service and lunch for the quarterly Clergy Chapter meeting. Again we've been able to provide wine plus nibbles after a morning service to celebrate a special milestone in the life of members of our

congregation. John Sibson celebrated the anniversary of his ordination and Robin & Helen O'Neil their Diamond Wedding.

The Autumn Fair proved a milestone for us this year when we made just over £1000 profit towards the Fair total. This was not at the expense of excellent food at bargain prices!

Regular events each year include the refreshments at the Churches Together March of Witness on Good Friday and an Easter Eve buffet supper.

A particular thank you to all members of the coffee rota team and to all members of the social committee for their commitment and skills freely given. Also thanks to others who offer their help as needs arise.

This will be my last Social Committee report since I shall be 'retiring' from the committee at the end of July. Margaret and I are also moving away from Saffron Walden later in the year.

*Peter Taylor Chair, Social Committee*

## **Communications Committee**

I should like to begin this report by thanking members of the Committee for the considerable amount of work they put in to make communications within the church work, month in and month out and week in and week out, as well as contributing to the work of the Communications Committee.

Special thanks must go to Martin Hugall, our indefatigable web master, to Riina Driscoll who keeps our Facebook page up-to-date, to Liz Lingley who was our Press Officer throughout the year and to John Sibson and Clifford Want who co-ordinate the work of *Parish News*. On the Committee we were indebted to Lisa Brook who served as our hard-working Secretary for a number of years until she took on the role as Secretary of the PCC, a role she swapped with Clifford Want who ably stepped into Lisa's shoes on Communications Committee.

Rosie Shaw's departure from the Parish Office left us with the potential of a serious communications blip. In fact every cloud has a silver lining and the gap resulted in Martin Hugall and Judith Hasler stepping in to ensure that internal communications continued to work and in so doing they identified issues that would benefit from

change. They are now working closely, along with Dawn Saxon, to ensure that our systems work even more efficiently in the future.

Having made recommendations to the PCC in 2016 on a new church logo, the Committee was asked to come up with versions including a strap line and to make suggestions about the use of the logo. This we did and the new logo is now in use and seems to have been well received.

The Committee reviewed three of the church's range of leaflets to bring them up-to-date. The *'Death and Bereavement'* leaflet was the subject of lengthy, prayerful review and is now in use. A revised *'Children and Young People'* was produced after consultation with Matt Williamson, but is now subject to further review because of concerns that it overlooked reference to Choral Scholars. The Committee also carried out an update of the information on the *'Welcome to St Mary's'* leaflet.

We are grateful to Jim Butler for having updated the photographs at the back of the church. We have implemented a change to the photographs included on the church website so that they now include retired clergy who remain active within the parish.

We have made successful representations to the Saffron Walden Initiative to include a leaflet about St Mary's in the Initiative's *'Welcome to Saffron Walden'* pack.

We have worked with the Arts Society on their new *Children's Trail Quiz* for St Mary's. This project should be completed before the onset of the summer 2018 tourist season.

We are grateful to an anonymous donor who has enabled the church to insert a monthly advertisement in the local press providing details of some of the special services at St Mary's. Our Press Officer has been in charge of drawing up the contents of these adverts.

Although the change took place in early 2018, it was being finalised in late 2017 and I am including reference to it here to ensure that it gets maximum publicity now. After a number of years as our Press Officer, Liz Lingley indicated she would like a different role on the Communications Committee. She and Clifford Want have swapped roles and Liz is now our Secretary and Clifford has become the Church Press Officer. Our thanks go to Liz for her work with the press over many years.

*Rufus Barnes Chair, Communications Committee*

## **Parish Office**

I have enjoyed my first few months in the Parish Office as Parish Administrator. Thank you all for making me feel so welcome. What a wonderful place to serve the Lord. A big thank you to our amazing team of Parish Office volunteers who give their time and talents to help in the office and are willing to go the extra mile. Chris Kerrison has joined around Christmastime and is now part of the Parish Office team.

Rosie Shaw, our previous Parish Administrator retired in the summer, thank you Rosie for all your tremendous work and for those who manned the office in the interim until I was appointed in October.

We continue to provide admin support for the work at St Mary's and sister churches together with the Team Villages. Our net goes wider to print, copy and collate for the surrounding area including Clavering Benefice, and Thaxted, The Sampfords and Radwinter with Hempstead.

Thank you to everyone who has helped with the Christmas and Easter Card folding working parties – we need each one of you as we produce nearly 7,000 to distribute to the residents of Saffron Walden. Thank you to those who deliver the cards too.

We aim to help and enable communication to happen not only to our church members but also in communications to our community of Saffron Walden.

No two days are the same and it is a joy to be able with others to serve St Mary's and the Villages team ministry and wider afield.

*Dawn Saxon  
Parish Administrator*

## **Weddings Coordinator**

My role as Weddings Co-ordinator continues to be rewarding and fulfilling. I especially enjoy seeing couples whom I have helped prepare for their wedding returning for a service or walking around town pushing a pram!



In 2017 there were 28 weddings: 17 Saffron Walden and 11 in the villages - 1 Hadstock, 1 Littlebury, 3 Gt Chesterford, 1 Sewards End, 2 Debden, 2 Ashdon and the very first wedding in St Peter's, Littlebury Green for which David had to apply for a licence in order to proceed. This was a very happy occasion for the family and the village residents many of whom had worked hard to decorate the church and cut the grass! There were also three wedding blessings, two in Saffron Walden and one at Sewards End.

Last year, it was a particular pleasure for me to help prepare three couples from the church family for their special day.



There were two weddings at St Mary's – in April, Andy Finn returned to marry Elli Harpum and Sam Flicos who both sang in the choir (and we choir members like to think this experience brought them together!) then in July, David officiated at the wedding of my eldest son Alex, former chorister and organ scholar, and Viktorija, then in September at St James', Swards End, Jenny Tomlinson blessed the marriage of Fiona Lawrence, another former chorister, and Debopam Sen whose wedding had taken place in India in 2016.



I also value the opportunity to develop a close rapport with couples who wish to get married in St Mary's but are not connected so are required to attend services regularly in order to qualify. These couples always comment on the friendly welcome they receive and often become more involved with the church community than those who live in the town and therefore are not obliged to attend services.

During last year, I had been concerned about potential disruption caused by the building works and unsightly scenes outside St Mary's but, thanks to a convenient gap in the weddings schedule from mid-August to mid-October and to Steve Hasler's dedication in organizing the builders to ensure minimal disruption, there was little cause for concern. Well done and thanks, Steve!

So far this year, there are 19 weddings booked in the team ministry, so fewer than this time last year but there are a few enquiries in the pipeline which I hope will come to fruition.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who support the work I do in this area. I am particularly grateful to David, Judith Hasler for their continuous support and the Marriage Preparation leaders – Tim & Karen Game and Richard & Becky Auty who give up two Saturdays in their busy schedules to lead discussions for the couples who attend this very important course at St Mark's College. Thanks are also due to Anona Clark as she stands down as principal wedding verger (though she will still be helping out occasionally), and to the bellringers and Oli whose patience is often tried due to the late arrival of the bridal party. Pam Russell and the flower arrangers do a brilliant job too. Pam has now handed the role of Wedding Flower Co-ordinator to Jane Knight so I thank her for her sterling efforts and look forward to working with Jane.

Finally, I ask for your prayers for all the couples getting married this year.

*Caroline Goulder, Wedding Coordinator*

## **Children and Youth Committee**

This committee meets three times a year, soon after the beginning of each school term. As its name suggests we concern ourselves with all the activities provided by our church for children and young people. The youngest groups, Tinies and T3 also work with the parents of the small children, hopefully providing a springboard into church for the whole family. *Joyful Noise*, the Junior Choir and the Choral Scholars provide for children from 6-18 to enter the musical life of the church, whilst *Team JC* and *Aftershock* provide for youngsters from 3–18. Clearly there is overlap between the various groups, with several youngsters attending two or three groups. We also hear about the Rainbows,





Brownies and Guides who meet in the Parish Rooms each week and provide a uniformed presence from time to time at the Family Service.

Our Youth Worker, Matt Williamson is involved with a number of these groups, but also works at both St Mary's Primary School and Saffron Walden County High School each week, providing church outreach to both schools. He is also involved in ventures with other churches, including the annual VBS week in August, which draws in children from Saffron Walden and the surrounding villages.

Membership of this committee includes the leaders representing all the relevant church groups, (Matt Williamson, Oliver King, Alison Knights, Kate Beare, and Margaret Jacobs) and the committee provides a useful forum in which to discuss the various activities planned, both on and off the church site throughout the year.

Our other role is to ensure that proper safeguarding procedures are in place throughout each group, and we are guided in this by Kathryn Bennett, the PCC Safeguarding Representative. All adult volunteers have to be checked by the Diocese and approved for work with young people by this committee.

We take to the PCC for its approval any off site activities proposed by the various church groups and inform PCC members of other events too. This past year has seen *Aftershock* members attending the annual *Soul Survivor* event and celebration evenings, camping in the Parish Rooms, visiting Chelmsford Cathedral, and spending time bowling and visiting *Lazer Quest*. In January they held what has become their annual fundraising meal for Jimmy's Night shelter and then visited to present the money raised.



T3 held an Easter event for children and families, *Joyful Noise* have sung at Celebrate services, Christingle and on Christmas Eve. The Junior Choir have sung regularly at Family Services, at the Christmas Fayre and on Christmas Eve. They recently sang the morning service at Wendens Ambo. Visits off site have included a trip to hear Evensong at Ely Cathedral and to visit the Stained Glass Museum and a visit to the Fitzwilliam Museum followed by Evensong at Kings College Chapel. The Choral Scholars joined the adult choir to be the choir in residence at Llandaff Cathedral last July and also attended the recent SMMA annual dinner at St Mark's College.

We are fortunate in the variety of our youth activities here at St Mary's and grateful for the many who lead and those who volunteer their support - without them such a varied programme would be impossible to sustain. Matt is always looking for further offers of help, particularly with *Team JC* on Sunday mornings, so if you might be interested do contact him. As a committee, we are privileged to look at all the work carried out and fully realise that these young people will be the church of the next generation. As such they need our prayerful care and support.

*Bron Ferland Chair, Children & Youth Committee*

## **St. Mary's Tinies**

St Mary's *Tinies* meet each Tuesday afternoon during term time at 2pm in the church for a short age-appropriate service



which includes a Bible story, songs,

instruments and

prayers followed by refreshments, craft

and toys in the Parish Rooms. This year

we have welcomed Hazel Colebrooke

onto the team. As well as welcoming the

Reception classes from St Mary's and St

Thomas More Primaries to *Tinies* once a

term, we have also invited the Church Pre

School to join us once each half term

which has proved popular with children

and staff alike.



Most weeks we offer a craft activity connected to the Bible story, but sometimes we ‘experience’ rather than ‘make’. After the recent story of the baptism of Jesus we enjoyed copying John the Baptist using dolls and copious amounts of water – full immersion was very popular.

*Alison Knights*

### **T3 (Tuesday Tea Time)**

T3 (Tuesday Tea Time) continues to be popular with children from KS1 at St Mary’s Primary School. Some of our ‘original’ members are now in Year 3 but still come along with their younger siblings. They are particularly looking forward to the lighter evenings when we can play outside on the grass in front of the church. Matt enjoys showing off his football skills whilst I usually act as backstop to prevent the balls rolling down the path into the High Street!

We held a very successful Light Party in November, which many of the Reception class at St Mary’s enjoyed with their parents and siblings. Some of these children have come along to T3 whilst others have joined Team JC. We have already begun planning our annual ‘BBQ and Bounce’ event in July where we combine with *Joyful Noise*, *Team JC* and the Brownies to celebrate the end of the summer term.

*Alison Knights*

### **St. Mary’s Pre School**

Another year has passed and Pre School has had an exciting, challenging and rewarding 12 months! We have welcomed new families and said goodbye to others.

Our Forest School sessions continue to provide a stimulating, sensory learning environment for the children. The children have been learning about how to be safe around an open fire, making mud pies, learning about wildlife, to ‘have a go’ at new challenges and experiencing different types of weather. A big well done to two staff members, Tricia and Denise, who have worked hard to gain their level 3 Forest School leaders qualification.

During the year the children have learnt about many exciting festivals from around the world and were amazing in our Nativity play in St Mary’s Church. We have held a Mothers’ Day tea party, a Fathers’ Day breakfast and had a very successful fundraising week.

We held our annual Camp Out for our school leavers and their parents. What a wonderful time we had. A picnic on the field, roasting marshmallows, hot chocolate and stories before bed and staying up late! As always the children were amazing and a good time was had by all!

Our end of term party was a celebration of all things that were TV or film. We played games and had a picnic on the field and sadly said goodbye to all our families whose children were moving onto 'big' school.

Last year we were very proud to gain our Good Beginnings Silver award for our Autism Friendly Setting, we are now working towards our Gold award.

A very big well done to Maxine Fenwick who has worked hard this year to become a Regional Tutor in Makaton (sign language)

A thank you to all the staff for all their hard work during the year. Also we would like to acknowledge Lisa's progression into becoming our second session supervisor alongside Tricia.

We continue to be supported by Alison Knights, who visits weekly to sing songs and read stories to the children and to Pam Russell for her weekly visits for her lovely storytelling.

Our thanks also goes out to Saffron Walden Town Council for their support with Forest School and helping us to purchase new resources, to our amazing local Health Visitors Team who offer advice and support to Pre School and our families, to our local Children's Centre, our Speech and Language therapists and the Specialist Teachers team.

Our biggest thanks go to our wonderful children and families supporting Pre School.

As you can see another busy but exciting year for Pre School.

*Faye Jeffs, St. Mary's Church Pre School*

## **St. Mary's C.E. Primary School**

Another very successful and productive year at the school. Yet again the hard work of the children and staff our results continue to improve and were the best the school has seen. The Ofsted inspector finally arrived in November 2017. After the single days inspection the inspector found that the school continues to be Good. The report is extremely positive and the inspector highlighted the

leadership of Karen Cayford and the pupils' positive and respectful attitude and he was impressed with the school's calm and "harmonious" environment. The full report is available to read on the schools website, <http://www.stmaryssw.org.uk/ofsted-reports-dfe-performance-tables>

Through an extensive consultation process, that involved all of the school's community, the school now has 6 new values; Respect, Truthfulness, Friendship, Trust, Perseverance and Compassion. Each of these will be explored during collective worship during each of the half terms.

The School has been awarded BBC's Terrific Scientific School of Excellence award for completing different investigations. The Year Five class undertook a range of different investigations for the website, sleep patterns and reaction times, trees and plants and freezing points over the year. The class then shared their results with different schools from around the country becoming part of a nationwide investigation that was run by the BBC.

Yet again the school has taken part in a large number of sporting events against other local schools, including tag rugby, hockey, tennis, boys football and for the first time this year the girls were able to form a team to take part in some matches. The children also had opportunities to take part in a Sports for Fun day, where they could experience alternative sports such as archery, fencing and curling. For the first time a team of year 6s took part in the local school spelling bee, a different but well received competition.

Continuing the focus on healthy eating and living that was started last year many of the children, parents and staff contributed healthy meals to the schools recipe book.

Again this year the children have experienced a huge variety of learning experiences outside of the classroom, these include an Anglo Saxon day, visits to a sewage works, Audley End House and Gardens, a Enabling Enterprise day and dance festival to name just a few. Year 6 spent 5 days at West Runton Kingswood centre where they had to build their confidence taking on new skills and experiences including zip lines, abseiling and the leap of faith. This year the Year 5 children also had a residential trip. They spent 4 days in Danbury and experienced canoeing, climbing, aerial trekking and making their own beds!

With the hard work of many of the parents, but particularly Kelly Compton, the children had the opportunity to be on a float in the Towns Carnival. All the children and parents that took part produced an amazing float and had a lot of fun making costumes and props for the float.

All of the school took part in the I-sing event. iSingPOP helps to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural and social development of pupils and their place in the community. During the 2 days each class learnt their own songs as well as whole school songs, which were recorded for a CD which parents were able to purchase. It culminated in a concert in the church that many of the parents attended and the enjoyment and enthusiasm of the children was clearly seen and heard.

Again the school has raised money for a variety of charities both local, national and international, including Water Aid, Children in Need, Red Nose day, Save the Children, to name a few. This academic year the School Council has chosen to support 3 charities, 1 per term. The autumn term charity was Uttlesford Food Bank, the children took part in the reverse advent calendar and placed a collection point in reception which was generously supported by the school community. The spring term charity will be The Children's Trust who support children who have suffered brain injuries, including Bobby Hughes, who is a pupil at the school. During the summer term Water Aid will be supported.

The school continues to have regular Services in the Church, which are well attended by parents, these have included the Ascension service, Nativity play and Holocaust memorial service. This year each year group in turn have had the opportunity to take part in the Celebrate@4 service.

*Ruth Angrave*

## **St. Mary's Guiding**

### **7th Saffron Walden (St. Mary's) Rainbows**

Last year was an exciting year for Rainbows as we celebrated our 30th Birthday. We took part in lots of activities including designing a birthday badge and various challenges connected with the number 30. We ended our celebrations with a wonderful party for the division at St. Mark's including a fairy walk and a ride on the miniature railway. We did a sponsored playground games evening where we raised over £100 for Cancer Research. The girls really

enjoyed a visit to The Saffron Walden Pantomime earlier this year. Over the last month we have been doing the Rainbow Roundabout world badge. They have been learning about the environment and how they can make a difference.

We continue to have a full unit with a long waiting list. We have a dedicated team of leaders, including 2 young leaders who all take an active and valuable part in planning sessions.

*Alison Alderman*

### **7th Saffron Walden (St. Mary's) Brownies**

As usual the Brownies have been taking part in a wide range of activities. In March they organised an entertainment in which everyone either performed or helped. They raised over £100 for Comic Relief. During the summer term we went on a successful pack holiday at the Hertfordshire Guide Centre at Cottered, near Buntingford when the theme was Disney princesses, many of whom were strong characters! For 4 successive weeks each Six took it in turns to organise a meeting for the whole unit, which they all did brilliantly, showing great teamwork and organisational skills and we all had great fun. We welcomed several new Brownies in the Autumn Term and worked on our Seasons badge, looking particularly at Autumn. We also attended the Harvest Festival, and Remembrance Day service and sang at the Christmas Fayre.

*Margaret Jacobs*

### **7th Saffron Walden (St. Mary's) Guides**

At the end of the summer term the Guides held a farewell party for Mary Sheil and Alison Alderman as leaders. They became leaders when the unit opened and have served ever since. We are extremely grateful to them. Thankfully a new volunteer, Victoria, has joined the team. The Guides have been working on a wide variety of badges during the year including one on Votes for Women, and held a successful summer camp in Norfolk where they took part in several adventurous outdoor activities. They have also spent an evening at *Clip 'n Climb* in Cambridge and had a fun sleepover on a Harry Potter theme.

### **Saffron Walden District Senior Section**

We have a small and friendly group of girls. During the year they have worked on the Free Being Me badge in which they looked at issues such as bullying and body confidence. Girlguiding nationally

is updating its programme later this year and our girls have been involved in testing some of the new programme ideas - some worked and some didn't! 3 members joined the Guides on the camp in Norfolk in August and had a great time. Several of our members also help in other units as young leaders, help which is much appreciated, and we hope that some will go on to be leaders when they are old enough.

*Margaret Jacobs*

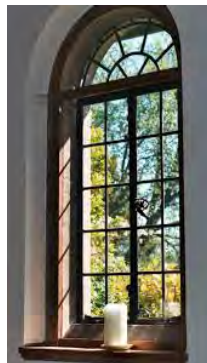
## **Women's Own**

Offering Fun, Faith, Fellowship and Food to the ladies of our parish for one hour on a Saturday morning.

2017 started with an inspiring presentation from St Elizabeth's, Much Hadham. A school for 5-19 year olds, a college for 18-25 year olds, and a residential care home for people of all ages who have epilepsy and other complex needs. Started over 100 years ago, it is one of the only two national centres offering a range of services to all age groups with learning difficulties, and is called "Hertfordshire's Hidden Gem".

In March we enjoyed a humorous sketch, a dialogue between Jesus and Peter talking about people being ordained, and ended with Jesus telling Peter that it wasn't important whether you are ordained, but whether you are a faithful disciple.

In April the warden from Pleshey Retreat House gave us an insight into the history of the centre, which is open to all for Retreats and Quiet days and those wishing to take time out with God. A place which has been "Soaked in Love and Prayer".



In May Joe Hordern gave insight into his career in the British Army and what it meant to him as a Christian. One of the important lessons he had learnt stemmed from his experience in Northern Ireland. He now greatly values the unity (rather than uniformity) which exists here, both within St. Mary's and also between all the Christian churches in the town.

In September, Pam Jenner shared with us the way she was led to open a counselling



service, called *OpenDoor*, for young people in the Saffron Walden area over 20 years ago. It has now grown with many counsellors, but funded by donations only.

In October Sue Walker shared the “Pathways of Discernment” and gave us a Daily Awareness Exercise to help us become aware of God’s presence in our lives.

In December Kathleen Huey shared words and pictures of the Advent Retreat that she had been on in Israel.

She left us with the words “Live gladly! God doesn’t know how to be absent”

*Judith Felgate, Margaret Taylor, Sue  
Birchall and Chris Cowling  
Committee Members*

## **Mothers’ Union**

St Mary’s Mothers Union has had many interesting meetings in 2017 and there are four in particular that I would like to highlight.

Our Deanery quiet day on 27th July which was attended by our Diocesan President Judith Meadon. It was held at Ashdon Church beginning with Holy Communion by Rev’d Canon David Tomlinson based on a theme ‘*The Servant King*’. This was followed by quiet reflection, a bring and share lunch and an opportunity to listen to our President and ask questions. A very valuable day enjoyed by all.

Our outing on 13th July to Layer Marney, near Colchester, was to visit our former curate Lydia Smith. On the way, we called in to the Wilkinson jam factory at Tiptree for coffee. At Layer Marney, there is a Tudor gatehouse and other historic outbuildings including a church which is one of five forming the benefice that is Lydia’s responsibility. We gathered in the church to hear her speak about her new parishes and work and caught up with the news. It was a joyful meeting for everyone.

Eight members attended the MU Council meeting on 6th November at Chelmsford Cathedral. A huge number of banners were processed from all over the diocese. Bishop Stephen Cottrell celebrated communion which over 200 members came forward to receive. It was a very moving experience. The council meeting was followed after lunch by an address from our Worldwide President Lynne Tembey, who inspired and encouraged us to continue faithfully with the work of the Mothers’ Union.

An MU communion was held on 14th September in the North Chapel at which I was commissioned by Rev'd Canon Chris Bishop as St Mary's MU branch leader. I accepted the role after a six-month trial period following much support from members. The commissioning was also attended by the Agricultural Chaplain for the diocese, Rev'd Janet Nichols. She preached at the service and inspired us with her enthusiasm and sense of fun.

In addition to regular branch meetings we have a monthly prayer group when we pray for members at home and overseas and those in need. We have a small choir who sing at special MU events. Regular visits are made to elderly or frail members who are unable to attend meetings. Every member receives a birthday card. We raised funds for the work of the MU by selling our 'Transport for London' quiz and our cake and preserves stall at the Christmas Fayre raised a record sum for the church. The branch also submitted a design for the new MU Diocesan Banner to replace the current one damaged by vandals.

There is a welcome waiting for anyone who would like to attend our meetings. Please come and try. There is no pressure to join unless you want to. Do contact me, or a committee member, if you would like a copy of our 2018 programme.

*Brenda Sheath*

## **Women Who Wonder (WWW)**

WWW continues to meet on the second Tuesday of most months at Gill Caswell's home and provides an opportunity for Christian women of working age or thereabouts to meet together for fellowship and discussion on various topics of interest. Some members have shared ways in which they feel God has called them to live out their Christian faith in the community – we have learned about the Open Door counselling service and Street Pastoring and look forward to experiencing Godly Play this month.

Our meetings are advertised in *The Grapevine* and we would be delighted to welcome new members at any time.

*Alison Knights*

## **Men's Activities**

The men's activities have continued to flourish during the past twelve months as we seek to encourage and develop social contact, providing fellowship and support as well as inviting further

involvement in the life of our church. Broadly, there are five group activities – a Lent Study Course, Saturday Breakfasts, Suppers, M5 Wednesday Pub Lunches and Saturday Walks.

We thank Jeremy and Margaret Collingwood for again kindly opening their home and making us so welcome for the Lent Study Course. We are also so grateful to Jeremy for his painstaking research in preparing comprehensive notes for the course.

### **Men's Suppers**

Formerly known as Curry Nights, an annual event established over 20 years ago and taking place just before Christmas, the current programme of Suppers has been operating since 2012

As now customary, we have continued with four Suppers during 2017, varying the night and the venue to maximise appeal and opportunity for attendance. As with our other activities all men are welcome both from within the Saffron Walden Team Ministry and beyond. Friends and neighbours are particularly welcome. Numbers attending this year's venues have fluctuated between 7 and 15. The programme took us to *The Mogul* on Wednesday 25th January, *The Jade Garden* on Thursday 2nd February, *The Plough* at Debden on Friday 5th May and *The Crown* at Little Walden on Saturday 2nd December.

Each evening has been a thoroughly enjoyable and rewarding occasion for informal conversation, promoting fellowship whilst sharing good food.

We are now into the 2018 programme and 9 of us met on Wednesday 24th January at The Mogul and our next Supper will have taken place at The Yuva in Debden on Friday 16th March. Later in the year we will gather at The Jade Garden on Friday 18th May, then The Crown at Little Walden on Saturday 1st December. Advanced notification will be given of these events and a sign-up sheet posted on the notice board at the back of church.

### **M5 lunchtime get-togethers at *The Kings Arms* on Market Hill**

Our M5 (derived from St Mary's Men's Monthly Midweek Meet) lunchtime get-togethers are now in their 5th year. We meet at *The Kings Arms* on Market Hill at 12:15 on the first Wednesday of the month for an hour or two of mutual support and fellowship whilst

enjoying a drink and good food. It remains a popular event regularly attracting 12 to 14 men. On Wednesday 6th December when 19 attended in festive mood, we celebrated with a delicious full Christmas lunch.

The event is completely informal. All are welcome. Other than for the Christmas lunch there is no need to book or sign up. Just turn up. Bring a friend and join us from 12:15.

### **Saturday Breakfasts**

Saturday Breakfasts have continued with their winning formula of provided for four breakfasts three of which were, as usual, held in the Parish Rooms where we always much appreciate the hearty full English prepared by Pete Taylor and his team. The last one of the year was successfully staged at *The Saffron Hotel*, paving the way for a return in our 2018 programme. The Breakfasts are always popular, attracting between 2 and 3 dozen men.

We had excellent speakers for all the events. On 11th February we heard David Tomlinson and Steve Hasler, supported by Judith Hasler, talk about 'Le Jog,' their epic sponsored cycle ride from Lands End to John o' Groats. Our ArchDeacon Robin King followed on 8th April with his talk having the intriguing title 'What is the Point of the Church of England?' Edward Gildea spoke on 'Climbing in the Himalayas' on 17th June and Hamish Walker recounted his experiences of Christian Science in his talk entitled 'As the Good Book Says'.

The 2018 programme opened on 10th February with Dr Pamela Jenner giving us an illuminating and inspirational talk entitled 'Young People and Mental Health' in which she detailed the work of the Open Door Counselling Service for Young People, the charity she established in Uttlesford some 20 years ago and continues to lead.

### **Saturday Walks**

Anthony Armon-Jones has taken over from Jeremy Collingwood, responsibility for this group's activities that only occur on the 2nd Saturday of every other month, which may seem a doddle, but enhance the organiser's aging process considerably. Jeremy, together with Mike Watts, had been running the group for several years but now considered it time for a change. We thank them both

for their ability to take us all over the West Essex countryside with occasional forays elsewhere.

Having set out the intentions, I regret that the walk planned for July had to be cancelled because of the hot weather but we followed that walk in November, which was based on one organised for the Bishop of Chelmsford when he toured the Diocese in the form of a centenary pilgrimage.

In January we had a refreshing walk from Wenden to Littlebury Green and back where the surface was mainly chalk, so avoiding the problems that clay can bring.

In March, we resurrected the walk we would have taken the November before, but which had to be abandoned because of a storm. This was a one-way trip to Great Chesterford with lunch at *The Crown and Thistle* and a Number 7 bus back, surprisingly on time.

In May, Andrew Pickering led a walk around Bartlow and Ashdon lunching in the pub at Ashdon.

In September, we explored Rowley Woods at Wimbish with lunch at the *White Hart*.

We are presently in our 2018 programme having already walked perfectly good farm tracks around Newport ruined by hare-courers in their 4x4s. The March walk will have been led by Andrew Pickering on the 10th and the next walk on 12th May will be led by Peter Cooper. I am researching a walk on July 14th around Henham.

These walks are not intended to be arduous and are suitable for all comers who wear the right clothes, as well as those who don't see the need to dress up. We have walkers whose lifespans have stretched from below 20 to above 80. All are welcome without prior notice.

### **Lent Study Course**

Our 2017 Lent Study Course ran for five Tuesday evenings from 7th March to 4th April when we looked at some ethical issues in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. Our evening commenced with a home cooked supper for which we are always very grateful to those men who in turn, volunteer to prepare the meal. Following the meal, Jeremy Collingwood gave his talk after which we broke into

discussion groups to consider issues and questions arising from the talk. Attendance on the Course ranged from 12 to 15 which is the maximum number that can be accommodated.

Our 2018 Lent Course will be devoted to the study of aspects of John's Gospel.

*Bill Rose, Jeremy Collingwood and  
Anthony Armon-Jones*

## **Finance Committee**

The Committee continues to monitor the finances of St Mary's on behalf of the PCC and has met four times since the last AGM. The membership of the Finance Committee comprises the Rector, Churchwardens and Treasurer (all ex officio), together with Jenny Cottam, Michael Dix, Steve Hasler, Robin O'Neill and Stephen Wood (Chairman). The routine business of the Committee is unchanged:

- *To receive reports from the Treasurer on the current financial position;*
- *Consider any change to our investments;*
- *Consider requests for immediate or future expenditure which need authorisation either by the Committee, or a recommendation from the Committee to the PCC;*
- *Review what we pay our employees;*
- *Review the Treasurer's proposed budget for the next year;*
- *Review the draft annual accounts.*

Other routine matters include:

- *Review of quarterly management accounts and variances to budget, monitoring of cash reserves;*
- *Review of the reserves policy;*
- *Commenting on the Diocesan Budget for the forthcoming year.*

From a financial perspective, 2017 was a better year than planned. Having set out with a small deficit of £3.3k (before depreciation and gains on investments), the outcome, at the time of

writing, is expected to be a surplus of £9.5k due in part to greater receipts than originally anticipated from stewardship giving, general donations, legacies and letting of the Curate's house. There was also a gap in employment of parish office staff, organ costs deferred to 2018 and our Christmas Fair again delivered income well in excess of £6k. The expected outcome is after providing for significant unplanned work in the Churchyard amounting to £4.8k.

The major challenge ahead will be continuing to fund the 'building project'. Based on most recent costings, the West End Phases of the project (Serving, Welcome Facilities and WC) are fully funded. The future phases, both vestries and the Audley Tomb, are as yet to be costed; when at that stage a strategy for funding will be drawn-up as the costs will not be able to be met from existing funds.

However, it is the funding of ministry that is the core requirement. Over the past few years we have broadened the base of our stewardship giving, and in total committed giving has risen steadily to £192k pa. Stewardship giving, including Gift Aid, continues to finance over 70% of our total annual expenditure, for which we give thanks. In broad terms our total income for 2018, excluding monies raised specifically for the Building Project, is expected to be around £260k, a shortfall of £4k of the budgeted expenditure.

*Stephen Wood*

*Chair, Finance Committee*

## **Property Committee**

2017 was a year of reorganisation and planning for the future. Joe Stuckey kindly volunteered to take on the new role of Fabric Officer with responsibility for the repairs and maintenance of all of our buildings. John Mumford has taken the role of Parish Rooms Verger and has kindly volunteered to carry out small repairs, set the heating and to keep the various supplies topped up. Finally, Kate Ollerenshaw has agreed to take the new role of Compliance Officer, which includes ensuring that we have implemented fully our Health and Safety Policy which is a responsibility of Property Committee, as well as our Safeguarding and Data Protection policies. These are all important roles and I would like to thank them all for volunteering and for the excellent way that they have taken on their roles.

Early in 2017, we installed a roof alarm on the church, which has greatly reduced the risk of theft of the metal on the roof and

improved our insurance cover in the unlikely event that this happens.

In September, the latest Quinquennial Inspection was carried out and our architect indicated that the copper on the chancel roof might need to be replaced. However, a second opinion, as suggested by our architect and undertaken by an expert consultancy from London, revealed that the roof should last another 7-10 years before it needs to be replaced. As usual, there are a number of items to be addressed in the inspection report but nothing major and nothing that requires immediate attention.

Another large piece of work carried out has been to re-build the grass bank at the west end of the church. The work to install the new WC in the church showed that the bank had been worn away to reveal the edge of a 19th century tomb and measurements showed that the bank was receding at a rate of approximately 4 inches every 18 months. I'd like to thank Bill Rose for carrying out a lot of surveying work and putting a great deal of thought into how the bank and pathway could be refurbished.

Work has continued also to assess the way to mechanise fully the south door. Tasks for the near future include a number of repairs to the church rainwater drains, which have blocked in at least 2 places one on each side of the church, and to assess how to extend the area available for our Garden of Remembrance.

In the Parish Rooms, the main changes are that we have added a nappy changing facility in the disabled toilet and fitted the cooker in the kitchen with a gas safety valve on the recommendation of the gas engineer who serviced the cooker in 2017.

Having let the Curate's house for the first time from September 2016, with our agreement our tenants stayed for 2 months longer than originally budgeted which brought in additional income. This still left time for the carpet in all of the upstairs rooms and on the stairs to be replaced before Rachel and Sam moved in. At the same time many of the rooms were repainted and the hot water cylinder was replaced, the latter unexpectedly and just in time! A number of other, smaller repairs have also been progressed since the summer of 2017.

Members of the Property Committee have done a lot of work in support of the building project in the church, the progress of this project is reported elsewhere, and to help with the repair and maintenance of our buildings. All that has been achieved couldn't



have been done without the help of Property Committee and a number of other volunteers, including the team who keep the church gutters and gulleys clear, who give so much of their time and expertise. I would like to thank them all, maintaining all of our properties is an important and resource-intensive task.

Finally, it was with sadness that we heard of the death of John Parsons near the end of 2017. John was a key member of the Property Committee for a number of years and he did a lot of work to help maintain the church in particular and so it is also with thanksgiving that we remember John's life. He will be greatly missed.

*Steve Hasler*  
*Chair, Property Committee*

## **Buildings Project**

In March 2017 Bakers of Danbury arrived, hoardings went up in the northwest corner of church, heavy lifting gear was moved in and work was (at last) underway. The first flagstones and ledger stones were carefully lifted, although initial progress was necessarily measured, both because of the need for archaeological supervision and because of the size of the stones being lifted (with one weighing in at about 2 tons). Thankfully, nothing of archaeological significance which might delay work was discovered inside the church and the stones were all successfully re-laid in their new position in preparation for the installation of the servery and flower arrangers' facilities and adjoining cupboards, or stored for moving to the south side of church.

The joinery in the northwest corner has now been completed bar one or two remaining snagging issues which are being addressed by Bakers and KPTA (the design architects), and the servery is now up and running. In addition the welcome furniture at the west end of the nave and by the south door and the cupboards under the magazine stand against the north wall are all in place and in use.

The feedback on the new furniture, from both congregation and visitors, has been largely very positive with many favourable comments on the high quality of the workmanship, the artistic detailing (e.g. the carved crocus inserts) and how well it all sits within the church.

The bulk of the external groundworks to install a drain running down towards Castle Street and a new water supply from Museum Street to service the servery and WC has now been completed and after some delay the water supply was finally connected in February 2018 to enable us to start using the servery. Excavation work was necessarily slow because of the need to proceed under close archaeological supervision, with any human remains being carefully recorded and lifted prior to re-interment in the churchyard. In addition, maintaining the necessary gradient for the drainage while negotiating previously unrecorded pipes and drains proved problematic. The PCC agreed additional work to restore the grass bank outside the west door - erosion of the bank due to encroachment of cars had started to expose a 19th century tomb – and to raise the level of the tarmac outside the west end of church in order to protect the new drainage pipework.

Work is now well underway in the southwest corner, with the flagstones and ledger stones lifted and relocated and the font repositioned. The joinery and internal walls for the WC and range of cupboards are now being constructed – as with the northwest corner, careful checking of the dimensions is required to account for the vagaries of the church walls, with all their curves and undulations.

We are very grateful that sufficient funds have been made available to complete this phase of work, thanks to grants, release of church reserves and of course your tremendous generosity in supporting the project.

The Buildings Project Team is now turning its attention to the next phase of the project, namely the much-needed refurbishment of the clergy and choir vestries to make them fit for purpose, and the relocation (to improve access) and conservation (urgently required) of the Audley Tomb.

*Graham Cottam*

## **Friends of Saffron Walden Parish Church**

This has been a busy year for the Friends especially with us being able to make a major contribution, of almost £30,000 to the Building Project to pay for all of the Welcome Furniture. This is the largest donation ever to any single project in the history of the Friends.

This year also saw the publication and launch of the revised version of 'St Mary's Saffron Walden, A History and Guide' by John Read. Copies are available on the new Friends Bookstand near the west door.

New fence posts have been installed around the Garden of Remembrance, which now looks perfect.

The first ever Friends Newsletter was launched during this year and the second will be available soon.

A 'Year of Invitation' was launched during the year to encourage new members to join and be involved in the work we conduct within the Church.

A translation of the detail on the Leche Tomb has been completed and is now in place.

The Ladies Sewing Circle continue to produce their excellent work on the kneelers and more were dedicated at the Patronal Service in September. We await the production of a stand for the new banner made last year.

*Pamela Mugliston*

## **Transition Project**

The work of the Transition Project, providing practical help, advice and support to those facing redundancy or seeking to return to work, has continued at a steady pace over the last year. Although we had a few quiet periods during the year, just when we thought that demand for our services had ended there was an upturn in clients. Over the course of 2017 the team gathered on 48 Tuesday mornings, meeting 64 individuals (57 in 2016) for a total of 115 consultations (123 in 2016). In the first eight weeks of 2018 we have had a total of 24 consultations with 17 individuals, 13 of whom have been new faces this year. In addition, we have had contact by email or telephone with another 2 people who were enquiring how the Project might be able to help them, but have yet to visit us. Typically we see between 2 and 4 people each week, although occasionally we might see 7 people in a single morning (or occasionally no-one). As reported in previous years, these numbers may reflect the relatively low levels of reported unemployment locally, but of course this can be of little consolation for the unemployed individual who needs help.

We have continued to meet people from a wide variety of backgrounds and with differing needs – from school and college leavers looking for advice on finding their first job to parents seeking to return to work after bringing up a family and people who find themselves unexpectedly out of work after several years of stable employment, as well as one or two seeking a new occupation in their retirement. Many of the clients just need to talk about where to start with preparing a CV or looking for a job, which can often be achieved in a single consultation. Others benefit from repeat visits as they explore their options. As well as the face to face sessions on Tuesday mornings, we are able to provide additional support, such as CV and job application review, by email between sessions.

The regular team of 6 interviewers and 2 welcomers has continued to provide a warm welcome to clients, seeking to understand their needs and providing advice and assistance where we can. We continue to accept referrals from the Citizens Advice Bureau, from Uttlesford Frontline and from the JobCentre in Braintree, and of course as a result of the Walden Local advertisement each week (our major expense). And during the past few months we have reviewed our confidentiality and data retention policies in anticipation of the changes to Data Protection Regulation

We don't ask our clients to report back on whether their job searches have been successful, nor do we keep score, but we do get frequent feedback and thank-you messages by email or in person about how much the advice, support and encouragement we provide have been appreciated. Many of our clients have expressed their gratitude for having somewhere safe and non-threatening to come and discuss their problems in confidence – it is clear that looking for work is often not the only thing that needs addressing.

We are grateful to Computercare who have kindly continued their support and also to Saffron Walden PCC for continuing to allow the use of the space downstairs in the Parish Rooms.

*Graham Cottam*

## **Jimmy's Group**

For over 20 years, Jimmy's has been providing help for the homeless in Cambridge. They work with the local Community, Volunteers and Partner agencies to deliver 24/7 emergency accommodation and supported housing for those who would

otherwise be homeless or vulnerably housed. In the last year, they have worked with over 300 different people, supporting them through positive changes and they have helped over three quarters of them resettle into more suitable and stable accommodation, leading them towards an independent lifestyle.



This year in support of Jimmy's our Church family has collected £933.94 in regular donations and our Christmas Envelopes Appeal. This has been spent on vegetables from the market and donations given directly to Jimmy's. A big thank you to Judith Felgate for the Christmas noticeboard and for the new Spring noticeboard which is just gone up.

The church also gave generously at our Harvest festival in September.

*Aftershock* – our youth group of 11 to 18 year olds – raised £2,023.75 (including GiftAid) for Jimmy's Night Shelter. They helped in preparing the sumptuous dinner, decorating the room, serving the food and providing entertainment. A wonderful result from Matt, Tracy and *Aftershock*. We were joined by Barry Griffiths from Jimmy's who talked to us about the work that they do.



In January *Aftershock* and I visited Jimmy's to present our Christmas fund raising cheques. Henry gave us a small tour and presentation, with Q&A's. Some facts he shared:

- Most common food donation is baked beans
- Coffee, tea, sugar, marmite, peanut butter are always appreciated.
- An army of volunteers serve as cooks and provide reception, music lessons, etc.
- The average stay is 30 days
- It is the last stop for people 18-65 with no alternative (average age 36). They are beginning to see more women, eight last year which was unusual.

We would like to thank you all for your continued generous support of Jimmy's.

*Tim Game*

## **Archive Group**

Three major events feature in our report this year.

Firstly, through an enormous amount of work done by Rosanne Kirkpatrick and colleagues St Mary's now has a complete NADFAS (National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies now the Arts Society) survey documenting all the fixtures and fittings and furnishings of the church. The survey is in 3 volumes of 350 pages with some 600 photographs, and was on display at the Heritage Open Day in September. The PCC has obtained permission for carefully selected photographs to be used on the church web site.

Secondly, as just referred to, we took an active part in St Mary's contribution to the national Heritage Open Day with displays and presentations.

Thirdly, John Read, another member of the group, after a lot of research has just finished and had published an updated history of the church.

Having spent the last couple of years recording events in Parish Magazines that were happening during the closing years of the First World War we have had to change tack and start reproducing articles from 1888 as we could find no magazine record of parish activities during 1918 when the war ended.

Finally we have lost one of our 'founts of information' as Gordon Smith has moved away from Saffron Walden to be closer to his family. As a group we are always alert to any approaches regarding items that should eventually be archived.

*Chris Bishop*

*On behalf of the Archive Group*

## **Drama Group**

The Drama Group is a small group who have explored the ways in which they would like best to operate, the conclusion being spoken drama.

Having decided this the group performed on Good Friday last year where they presented introductory pieces, written by me, to each of the 3 different hours of devotion on the day. The same style of presentation is planned for Good Friday this year.

These are early days for us, and if anyone is interested in being part of this group please ask.

*Canon Chris Bishop*

## **Links with the Worldwide Church:**

### **Lynn Treneary, our new CMS Mission Partner in Maridi, South Sudan**

I am now into my second year for being the CMS Link person for St Mary's CMS partner Lynn Treneary serving out in Maridi at Chaima Institute. I am still on a steep learning curve but one that is proving to be hugely enriching. For me the first highlight is the group that meets



together every 3-4 months to pray for LYNN AND HER WORK. I find meeting with everyone very inspiring and enlightening in itself: Sheilah Girgis-Hanna and Jenny Kirkaldy bring years of experience and wisdom of serving as missionaries, Judith and Steve Hasler, Judith and Mike Felgate bring wise experience of many years at St Mary's, Brenda Sheath brings such faithful diligence as well as the

invaluable support of the Mothers' Union. Graeme's quiet but invaluable support brings a quiet groundedness and space. All bring wonderful enthusiastic, supportive, energy which is such a blessing to be part of. These evenings take place at 3 Springhill Rd, start at 6 when we pray for Lynn and the work that she is involved in, followed by a simple meal sometimes with a Sudanese flavour; my favourite being chicken cooked in peanut butter!

Another highlight has to be the inspiring visit of Lynn Treneary when she came and spent a whole Sunday in October with us all. We were privileged enough to have her to stay with us for a night and found her desire to serve God with a passion and love of the people of Maridi truly awesome. When she was with us all on Sunday her honesty and open vulnerability were inspiring, faith-building and I believe drew us into her vision of her work in a very personal way. The support group were amazing in the way they worked together to put on the lunch, make the Parish rooms so welcoming and set up all the technology as well as invite people to come and meet Lynn. David spared time on a mega busy Saturday to come and meet with her. It was a wonderful experience of Christ's body working together. We got insights into the toughness, danger and poverty with constant conflict going on in South Sudan and I believe we felt challenged and inspired by the faith, love and passion for the gospel that seemed to be being lived out in Maridi through the Christian community in Chaima and Maridi and brought alive to us through Lynn.

The other highlight for me has been going to the CMS conferences at High Leigh once a year. I never fail to come away marvelling at the variety of work that CMS is involved in. One of the delights for me is to listen to the work that is going on all over the world. CMS is very definite about everyone has a calling, nothing is too small and they see their core purpose as enabling us all to fulfil the mission we are called to. This last weekend was all about supporting the work of A Rocha; an awesome charity working globally for the redemption of ALL OF CREATION. Do go to their website and find out about them as CMS have been very instrumental in getting them started. It is also a weekend of hearing from and meeting others who share in mission with CMS in so many different countries and in so many differing ways. I come away from these weekends feeling that mission is possible for us all, not just for a few and the smallest of ideas can grow into something very



wonderful A Rocha being a great example, a charity that started by reclaiming estuary land threatened by being taken over with buildings for tourist apartments in Portugal and wasteland in Southall has now grown into a global movement.

If you would like to know more or get involved do have a word with me or contact me on [suewalker619@btinternet.com](mailto:suewalker619@btinternet.com)

*Sue Walker, CMS Link*

## **David and Sári , serving with Wycliffe Bible Translators in Romania**

A lot has happened in the last twelve months. Sári and David's work, with the support of team members now includes preparing spoken scriptures for use on DVD's and live on the web – one example is the availability of a Roma translation of Galatians complete with images, see [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAokoH0IQAU3nO\\_tGDZWjPg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAokoH0IQAU3nO_tGDZWjPg).

Many Roma are unwilling to read the Bible if it does not reflect exactly how they speak, but they are quite tolerant of dialect differences in audio materials. One highly educated person told them that he only understood about 60% of a printed translation, but when he listened to it, he was surprised to report that he understood almost all of it.

Sári has been working on Romani reading materials. She is just keeping ahead of a couple of kids that come rather irregularly. In spite of their poor attendance, they have made good progress. Other children as well as a mother come occasionally. Sári is now wondering how these reading/learning booklets could be used more widely. Should she approach schools or church-based after school programmes? Should they be made into an app? And how can they be used to get Roma excited about reading? There is a lot to do, and they wish they had someone who knew more about education, was willing to spend the time to get to know the Roma, learn Romani, get to know the education systems in this part of the world and help Roma achieve their goals.

Basic translation work continues with increasing use of the internet to reduce the amount of time-consuming, expensive long distance travel. Translation checking still requires 2 or 3 Roma who have not met the text before, together with the native speaking translator, a consultant linguistic and biblical specialist as well as a

multilingual translator. A recent milestone was the completion of the consultant checking of Acts, in Holland, led by a Dutch team member who hardly needed any help from David and Sari. They will, however, be heavily involved with sorting out the inevitable queries that arose during the checking process.



Both Mark (17) & Aniko (15) are studying intensive IT at school 10 miles from home, catching the bus at 06.00 and usually returning around 16.00 with lots of homework. Emma (12) continues at the village school until June 2020 when exam results will dictate her future education. Meanwhile she is continuing catechism classes every week with a view to confirmation at Easter 2019. Erik (6)

enjoys the junior school, walking both ways (about half a mile), crossing two roads on his own.

The family have now lived in Romania for 16 years and seen many changes since it joined the EU in 2007, including increased prosperity for many but continuing deprivation and poverty for many Roma.

Looming Brexit raises personal and financial concerns. They have all lived in the EU for a long time, Sari is Hungarian, the eldest children were born in England and Eric in Romania – there are obviously no formal statements on the family's future status in the UK.

Financially they remain totally dependent on personal support with no central funding from Wycliffe, which means their actual income has been significantly reduced as the Pound drops in value against other currencies.

As required by Wycliffe, the family will be in England July-August. During this time they will be mainly based in Saffron Walden but they will also be visiting supporting churches, helping at/attending VBS and spending a week at the Keswick Conference.

Take a moment to introduce yourself and organise a visit to their home (Translation Centre) in Romania, either as a guided tour with Mary and Gerald, or on your own, to learn more of their life and work in Romania.

*Jenny Kirkaldy*  
*Mission Secretary*

## **Vision Statement**

### **Our Mission**

Sharing God's love

### **Our Vision**

Our aim as a church is to:  
worship God with joy and reverence  
tell of God's love in Jesus Christ  
learn about and live our Christian faith  
pray and learn about prayer  
serve God's world through prayer and action  
offer Christ's ministry of wholeness and healing  
encourage all to discover and use their gifts for God  
engage with and nurture children and young people  
welcome everyone warmly and offer generous hospitality  
value and care for each other

In all this, we will use the resources we have - our time,  
buildings and money - wisely in God's service.