



St Mary's Church
Saffron Walden
Sharing God's Love

The Michael Swindlehurst Organ Scholarship **Information for applicants**

This organ scholarship was established in memory of the Rev'd Canon Michael Swindlehurst, who died in 2017. Michael was a loyal and committed supporter of the music at St Mary's, and it is hoped that the scheme will honour his memory and provide an opportunity for the comprehensive, holistic and professional training of a young church musician. Funding is drawn from a number of different sources: St Mary's Music Association, Saffron Walden, St Mary's Church PCC, Saffron Walden, St Mary's Church PCC, Wendens Ambo, and (at this point) community funding in Michael's memory. The scholarship will usually be held for one year only.

Background Information, St Mary's, Saffron Walden:

St Mary's, Saffron Walden, is home to a vibrant Christian community in the historic market town of Saffron Walden. Belonging to the Church of England, we are people of all ages and outlooks whose mission is sharing God's love. Services range from cathedral to café style and our strong musical tradition includes an excellent robed choir. The church is open daily for worship and to welcome visitors to a place where the Christian faith has been celebrated for over 800 years.

THE CHOIRS

The main function of the junior and senior choirs (both are mixed) is to lead the worship at St Mary's Church. However, in addition, occasional concerts are given, either in aid of a charity or music funds. There is currently a strong junior choir, while the senior choir numbers 50, of which up to 16 places are for choral scholars. A Choral Scholarship scheme was established in 2011 for teenage members wishing to develop and improve their musicianship. The Junior Choir (up to 20 8–14 year olds) meets on Wednesdays and Fridays. The choir is affiliated to the Royal School of Church Music, and all junior choir members have the opportunity to receive musical training following the RSCM ribbon awards scheme. Joyful Noise, is a singing group for 6–8 year olds which meets in the Parish Rooms after school on Fridays.

BRASS GROUP

Oliver King, Director of Music (DoM), directs the brass group which meets on Monday evenings 6.15–7.15 pm during term time; it plays at various services and events, with an occasional concert.

The St Mary's Music Association provides practical, administrative and financial support to the DoM in order to maintain a wide variety of musical events in the parish. Membership is open to all. In 2017 the Association celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary.

MUSIC OUTSIDE ST MARY'S

From time to time the choir visits cathedrals and other churches to sing Choral Evensong. In the summer of 2014 the senior choir and choral scholars sang services at St Davids Cathedral for a week. In 2017 they were the choir in residence at Llandaff Cathedral for a week in July.

CHURCH INSTRUMENTS

The organ is an impressive 4-manual instrument by Hill, Norman and Beard, with various alterations and additions over the years, most recently in 1997 by David Wells of Liverpool. For full specification go to www.npor.org.uk/NPORView.html?RI=N12896. We are fortunate to have in the church a recently restored Blüthner grand piano.

St Mary's, Wendens Ambo

St Mary's Wendens Ambo contributes financially to the scholarship and offers a small church environment, in which the student is able to practise and develop performance skills within a smaller, more intimate setting. The church in Wendens Ambo has a good quality modern two-manual electronic organ. It is anticipated that the student will learn how the music fits in with the liturgy of the church in this smaller context.

Value of organ scholarship

The scholarship is worth £1242 in total, of which £752 will be payable directly to the scholar in three termly instalments. The remainder will be retained as a tuition allowance. The teacher will be the Director of Music and Organist at St Mary's, Saffron Walden. There will be the equivalent of 14 hours of formal instrumental teaching over the year, the exact composition of which will be mutually agreed. The DoM will also be the scholar's mentor – this will involve regular, supportive verbal feedback on a weekly basis: on certain occasions this will be delegated to the Assistant Organist who in practice is in the organ loft for most choral services.

Personal Expectations and initial skills required:

The organ scholarship would ideally suit sixth form age, though the actual minimum age could be 14 years old. The maximum age is 21 or the termination of full time studies, whichever is the sooner.

The minimum expected standard of keyboard proficiency is a high merit at piano or organ grade 6 ABRSM or equivalent. Previous experience of playing the organ is desirable though not essential.

It is expected that the scholar will actively strive to improve their organ playing and accompaniment skills – the latter may likely also involve accompanying on the piano where appropriate.

The scholar will also demonstrate an enthusiasm and willingness to further their skills within the field of choral music which could include working with singers and instrumentalists/conducting/organising vocal ensembles/junior choir ribbon training etc. The precise nature of this will develop according to the scholar's strengths and interests. Full support and advice will always be given as needed.

The scholar will be expected to attend and actively contribute towards the music for one Sunday per month at St Mary's Church, Wendens Ambo. All other Sunday morning services will be spent at St Mary's, Saffron Walden.

The scholar will be expected to attend and contribute to two evening services per month at Saffron Walden. It is likely that, initially, more playing will take place during non-choral services.

It is expected that the Scholar will be present for the Carol Services (Advent, Christmas and Epiphany), Good Friday, Easter Day and Remembrance Sunday – the Scholar will of course be welcome to attend any other Festivals, if he/she wishes.

The Scholar will be expected at a minimum to attend all Friday choir practices, from 19.30 to 21.00

7 weeks leave between September and the following July to be agreed with the DoM and the Rector in advance, plus August (this makes an annual total of 11 weeks).

The scholarship will run 1st September to 31st July (except in exceptional circumstances).

The scholar's progress will be reviewed at least termly with written and verbal feedback. If the scholar is under the age of 18 then feedback will also be given to parents.

It is expected that the scholar will attend and thoroughly prepare for organ lessons. These will be provided by the DoM in the first instance or as delegated by him. Both Oliver King and Jeremy Allen (Assistant Organist) are Fellows of the Royal College of Organists and are experienced professional musicians and teachers.

Appointment process

Auditions and interviews will take place in early/mid-July. Prospective candidates and their parents should approach Oliver King (domstmaryssw@gmail.com) to meet him informally to talk through the scheme first; it should be noted, though, that this is in no way an interview.

Applicants should complete the attached form and include a statement stating why they wish to apply. Please include names of two referees, one of whom will be your instrumental teacher and the other could be your head of music/head of year at school. Applications will close on 30th June 2018, with auditions and interviews taking place in early/mid-July.

The formal process will consist of the following:

- audition with the DoM and an independent music adviser, and Assistant Organist if available (approx. 20 minutes)
- two contrasting pieces (organ and/or piano)
- sight-reading (approx. grade 6 ABRSM standard)
- aural tests (approx. grade 6/7 ABRSM standard)

Interview (approx. 25 minutes) with the Rector, DoM, independent music adviser, SMMA Chair and the priest at Wendens Ambo.

Safeguarding:

If over 18, the successful candidate will need to have a DBS check carried out. If under 18, the successful candidate will come under the safeguarding procedures employed by the church.