

Parish News

St Mary the Virgin, Saffron Walden

St John, Little Walden and St James, Sewards End



February 2020

FREE

David's Farewell Service



The bells rang, the choirs sang and the brass group played, at David's final service – and the odd tear was shed. The choirs sang the motets *Jesu, joy of man's desiring* by JS Bach and *Irish Blessing* by Chilcott, the brass group played before and after the service and the choirs and brass group led the congregation in heartfelt singing of the hymns, Gloria and Sanctus. As a farewell tribute, the bell ringers had rung a 5,000 change *Cambridge Surprise Maximus* the previous Saturday. In his sermon, based around the refrain 'Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again', David said that good triumphs in Christ's death, opening grace to all and that in the resurrection we can share in Christ's risen life. As the church

is a focal point from everywhere in the town, so Christ is the centre of our lives and his Kingdom is coming – his followers are here now.

The children presented David with a card which they had made, which he said he will treasure. David is a keen cyclist, having cycled recently from Land's End to John o'Groats and from the south to the north coast of Ireland. Making a presentation of a racing cycle after the service, together with a painting of Saffron Walden and a cheque, Denis Tindley, churchwarden, said that the large congregation of about 400 people today was testimony to the success of his 11 years as rector and an affirmation of all he had achieved. He left behind a church family enabled to use their talents and with their faith deepened. In response David thanked the team of people who had worked on the service and for all the affirmations he had received since he announced he was leaving six months ago. It was a great people and town. He would take them all with him in his heart. The congregation responded with a standing ovation.

Under David's leadership St Mary's Church has grown numerically and in faith, the musical tradition has been maintained and a significant building project has been undertaken making the church more welcoming and accessible. David has overseen significant developments in the Team Ministry and the Deanery. Recently David published his first book entitled *Leading a Church to Maturity in Love* and is currently working on a second on the significance on Christian discipleship with a particular focus on the importance of Holy Communion. Six months ago, David's wife, Jenny Tomlinson, became the Archdeacon of Birmingham and David will be leaving to join her in Birmingham. David is still seeking God's leading concerning what the next stage in his ministry will be, and sought the congregation's prayers for God's guidance.

Clifford Want

Contents for February 2020

THE CURATE'S LETTER 5

NOTICEBOARD

Church Calendar	18
From the Registers	23
Quinqua-Quiz	32
St Mary's Tinies	34

REPORTS

David's Farewell Service	2
St Mary's Christmas Fair	6
Greetings from the Cottams	11
The new Archbishop of York	13
Mothers' Union Reports	30
Music News	33

FEATURES

Time for an ECO Resolution	7
Archive Group: February 1940	9
Fearfully and Wonderfully Made	15
Prayer for the month	17
Gardening Notes	17
St Mary's Book Group	20
You in the Pew	21
For Lent: A Story of Abuse and Shame	25
A Farewell to David	29
Gelio	34
David's New Bicycle	35

PARISH NEWS

EDITORIAL DEADLINE

The deadline for contributions for each issue is the 1st Sunday of the month. Hence, the deadline for the **March** issue is: **Sunday 2nd February**.

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www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org/parishnews

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The Curate's Letter

Dear Friends,

What does it mean to be people of hope?

When we read the headlines there seems to be much cause for despair. Conflicts are rife on a domestic, national and international scale. There are news of awful crimes, alarming statistics and photographs of the climate crisis, and many are suffering. The world seems to be filled with hell rather than crammed with heaven.

When we face such challenges, it may be tempting to numb ourselves or to focus only on the good things of life... And yet, in order to have hope, we must first sit tight to the truth.

When prophets speak in the Bible, they do not sugarcoat the words of the Lord. They offer hard, withering critiques of the destruction they see in their communities. We see that sin ripples out, having an impact on a local, national and global scale. And, uncomfortably, each of us are invited to consider our part in the mess.

Perhaps there's almost some relief in having the diagnosis of 'sin'. In the Christian faith, we see that no one is immune from sin, and all have fallen short of the glory of God. We are all in the same boat. And yet, the boat is not doomed to sink, for Christ offers us a different way. Through his life, death and resurrection, we see that sin, suffering and death do not have the final word. When it looks like Christ too has been swallowed up by the injustice and oppression of the world, the Father raises him from death to life by the Spirit. He takes away our sin and brings us the possibility of a new start. His resurrection means we can be people of hope.

Hope does not mean we get what we want and nor does it mean that everything will come up roses. Hope, instead, is the robust expectation that God will never leave us nor forsake us.

The problem with hope is that it gives us responsibility. Jurgen Moltmann, who came to faith in a prisoner of war camp in Belgium, wrote about this challenge: *"...faith, wherever it develops into hope, causes not rest but unrest, not patience but impatience.... Those who hope in Christ can no longer put up with reality as it is."*

Hope is subversive for it entails admitting that all is not as it should be. As Christ's people of hope, we are holding out for something better: the Kingdom of God, where divine justice, mercy and peace reign. Our task is to live and to trust the message that Christ's gospel means hope for the whole world and for creation.



When we read the news, may we heed Karl Barth's advice to hold the Bible with one hand and the news headlines with the other. Let us remember the hope to which we are called to proclaim afresh to this generation. May God give us the grace and strength to be people full of truth and full of hope.

With love,

Rachel

St Mary's Church Christmas Fair - Follow that Star



Our annual Christmas Fair on Saturday 30th November and raised a magnificent total of approximately £5,500 towards the ongoing work of the church. Visitors enjoying the festivities filled the church, which had the theme *Follow that Star*, with the church decorated with Christmas lights and stallholders dressed in a range of Christmas costumes. The 7th Saffron Walden Brownies, Guides, Junior Choir and youth groups from the church also ran stalls with fun games and competitions; there were also stalls selling home-baked cakes, fashion accessories, books, plants and handicraft. Visitors were entertained with seasonal music and the Parish Rooms were transformed into the 'Starlight Café' serving delicious refreshments and providing an opportunity to relax in warm and welcoming surroundings. Richard Garvey, who led the Christmas Fair team said, 'This was another hugely enjoyable and successful event in St Mary's calendar, demonstrating the church's continuing commitment to the people of Saffron Walden and the surrounding area.'

Clifford Want



© Gerd Altmann from Pixabay

Time for an ECO Resolution

Did you make a New Year's resolution this year? And have you managed to keep it? How about making a resolution for the whole of the Twenties decade? One that will make all the difference to future generations? The UN published an Emissions Gap report in December, saying that Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHGs) needed to fall by 7.6% every year if we are to have a chance of keeping warming to 1.5 degrees. Since we have already seen the horrific consequences of 1 degree of warming, how about we each make a New Decade Resolution to reduce our personal GHG emissions by 7.6% each year until 2030?

The urgency of the situation could not be more apparent. I imagine many of you, like me, have been receiving emails and messages from friends and family in Australia, who are traumatised by the massive and on-going fires in Australia. The messages are heartbreaking and the fears for their homes, health and futures on that continent are real....as is their anger at the lack of leadership from their prime minister. **We could not have been given a clearer message of the future we are creating for ourselves if we don't move on from our carbon based lifestyles.**

However, the COP 25 In Madrid ended in deadlock, with politicians unable to unite behind any binding resolutions or targets. A Christian Aid report calculated that there were at least 15 climate related catastrophes that each resulted in over \$1 billion in damage, let alone the lives lost. I imagine the Australian fires will dramatically inflate that estimate.

Most tellingly for me, on Greta Thunberg's edition of Radio 4's Today programme, the Gas and New Energies Director for Shell, who are spending just \$2 billion on research into renewable energy, while they are spending \$25 billion in developing new oil production, said that the solution was up to the customer. Until we, as customers, demand more clean energy and less fossil fuel energy, Shell will continue to produce the oil and gas to satisfy our needs: that's how the market works.

So it really is up to us. Up to us not to think we don't count; not to freeze like rabbits caught in headlights; not to wait for anyone else to take the lead.

P.T.O.



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As Christians we should be in the vanguard.

So what can you do? Your ECO team have set up a series of pages on the St Mary's Church website (click on 'Other' then on 'ECO Church') and scroll down to the 'What can I do?' option. You'll find plenty of ideas there to get you started. If you click on 'footprintr.me' link in that section you will be able to calculate your own carbon footprint. In a year's time, do it again and see if you've made your contribution to the 7.6% reduction that humanity needs. Get started on the small things by all means, but it is clearly time now to do the big stuff. Good luck!

Edward Gildea

Archive Group *findings...*

February 1940

My Dear Parishioners,

Lent comes this year unusually early and War conditions though they have settled the troublesome question of fasting, has made its other observance anything but easy. Black-out and petrol scarcity make it unadvisable to ask clergy from outside to give us addresses, so I am afraid the congregation must for the present be content with the ministrations of its own clerical staff. We have done the best we can under present circumstances and our arrangements will be found in another column. They are of course subject to alteration and curtailment owing to possible new lighting regulations and to what other changes a state of war necessitate. Anyhow I hope we may be loyally supported in what we try to do in an altogether abnormal time...

The prevailing Arctic weather which has now continued for upwards of a month has cut down the number of communicants, congregations and collections, but I am happy to say that in the last few weeks we have been able to send a little much needed help (over £12) to the Red Cross (of which Swards End contributed £2-9-4) as well as £4-4 to Finland.

L. Hughes. Vicar.



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Greetings from the Cottams

Dear all,
 Warm greetings from (just outside) North Berwick. It is hard for us to believe but it is 6 weeks since we left SW and after 2 weeks travelling round Luxembourg and Scotland visiting family, we moved into a rented house 4 weeks ago. We have now just about unpacked and sorted out. Apologies for the delay in writing, but as you can imagine things have been rather hectic.



We are settling in very nicely up here. The rented house, a converted stable block in the grounds of a large house, about a mile outside the lovely seaside town of North Berwick, is extremely comfortable and well-equipped. It suits us very well, as the day to day accommodation is all on the ground floor so I (Graham) don't need to tackle any stairs unless I'm feeling very adventurous. The current idea is to find a suitable property in the right location (not necessarily a bungalow, but with enough accommodation on the ground floor) and get the builders in to sort out a wet room, widen doorways, install underfloor heating etc etc. So another building project looms! The housing market is fairly quiet at the moment, but they expect it to pick up in the new year - we can see ourselves renting for a good few months to come.

North Berwick has everything we need on a daily basis (supermarkets, good fish shop and butchers, a wide variety of coffee shops and restaurants, GP, dentist, optician etc.) and Edinburgh itself is only 50 minutes away if we can't resist the lure of John Lewis. On bonfire night we enjoyed the firework display over the harbour - very different from the Common, but a lovely setting looking over the Forth and not really too cold at all. So far the natives seem very friendly and language has not yet proved a problem, as most people either have a very soft accent or indeed are English anyway.

The town also has a range of churches (CofS, Episcopal CofS, Baptist etc.) offering a range of worship style - but nothing that quite compares with St Mary's in terms of history, architecture, liturgical style or musical excellence. Over the coming weeks we will continue to explore to discern where we feel most at home.

And most importantly many, many thanks for the lovely sendoff all those weeks ago - we were extremely touched by the kind words and generous gifts and the memory will live long with us. If ever anyone feels brave enough to venture north please do let us know - there will always be a warm welcome.

Our thoughts and prayers are with you as you go through such a dramatic period of change.

With all our love,
 Jenny and Graham Cottam



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The Bishop of Chelmsford to be the next Archbishop of York

Bishop Stephen Cottrell says:

‘I am humbled and excited at the prospect of becoming the 98th Archbishop of York. I will receive the baton from Archbishop Sentamu. These aren’t just big shoes to fill, but a big heart and a big vision. However I am not daunted. Archbishop Sentamu and I have worked together in mission on many occasions and I hope to build on the work he has pioneered.

Working alongside the Archbishop of Canterbury, I hope to help the church be more joyful and more effective in sharing the gospel and bringing hope and unity to our nation.

Although I was born and grew up in Essex, I lived and served in Huddersfield for nine years. I know and love the north of England. Two of our children were born there. I now look forward to returning and being a voice for the North, sharing the liberating good news of the gospel and helping to address the discrepancies of wealth and opportunity that too often favour the South.’

You can see him speaking of his appointment at: -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8iKULiO8njU> and at <https://youtu.be/zjinMprLytA>



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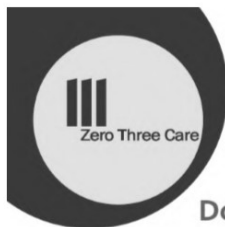
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Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

Dr Ruth M. Bancewicz, the Church Engagement Director at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge, writes on the positive relationship between Science and Christian faith.

Every person who ever lived was once a sperm and an egg. Those two cells fused together, and in nine months they turned into a living, breathing, human being. Each of us emerged from this same embryonic development process, which is highly complex and organised, but variable enough to turn out a unique individual every time.

If you like order – such as neat piles of stationery, or tidy colour-coded files – you will enjoy this story. One of the most important stages of an embryo's development is when each section of the body, from head to rump, takes on its identity. Each part is told what shape to take, and which limbs or internal organs to grow: legs or arms, lungs or kidneys, and so on.

The most beautiful part of this body-patterning process is that it brings the dimensions of time and space together in such a neat way. The DNA instructions for the procedure, known as genes, are organised in the order in which they are needed during development *which is also* the order in which they appear on the body. No other sets of genes are known to be arranged in such a tidy pattern.



So, as the embryo develops, the tissues near the head end activate the first sets of genes. Those active genes then make all the proteins needed for that part of the body to grow and develop in the right way. The tissues just below the head then switch on the second set of genes, and so on. A wave of activation passes down the embryo, specifying each section of the trunk in turn.

The Wisconsin-based developmental biologist Jeff Hardin often quotes Psalm 139 to express the wonder of embryonic development. The Psalmist did not understand how this process happened, but he knew that it was a marvellous thing. *'For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb...your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.'*

The story of the tidy genes brings out the hidden beauty in the very early stages of embryonic development. The more biologists get to find out about how we came to be born, the more we can say, *'I am fearfully and wonderfully made'*!

(from Parish Pump)

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Gardening Notes



I've just received Suttons plant and seed catalogue so I know it's time to give thought to the coming year: I've been looking already at tomatoes as I like to try something new most years and I'm thinking about my greenhouse where I like to have four different varieties, two of each. Before all this I must finish my greenhouse's annual wash and brush up, a very important duty giving the best possible start for the coming season.

Going back to my choice of tomatoes this year, after some consideration I shall go back to four varieties I've grown before, and just looking at them in the catalogue promotes remembered pleasure; all are suitable for both indoor and outdoor growing.

I grow my greenhouse tomatoes in very large pots, 10 ins size, one plant to each: the pots are charged with 50% soil, 50% compost, and a double handful of chicken pellet fertiliser. I leave the greenhouse bench frames in place, removing the slats of course: support is thus easily provided for each pot's 6 foot cane, with weighty haulms and fruit properly supported.

What a delightful thought that is!

Charles White

Prayer for the Month *provided by the Prayer Team*

God of all grace
 in foolishness and pride
 we often dare to speak on Your behalf,
 claiming to know your ways
 and making promises we struggle to keep.
 Help us in humility to learn to be still,
 trusting that You indeed are God.
 Amen.

(found in Celtic Daily Prayer and taken from Common Prayer for Ordinary Radicals)

Calendar for December February 2020

See also *The Grapevine* for the **latest** information

St Mary's, Saffron Walden

Sunday services

Sunday 2 February (Presentation of Christ in the Temple)

- 8.00am Holy Communion (1662)
- 10.00am Parish Communion (Archdeacon Robin)
- 12 noon Baptism
- 6.30pm H2H Youth Led Service

Sunday 9 February (3rd before Lent)

- 8.00am Holy Communion (1662)
- 10.00am Holy Communion (Mothers' Union Centenary)
- 4.00pm Choral Evensong
- 7.00pm Aftershock - Youth Group

Sunday 16 February (2nd before Lent)

- 8.00am Holy Communion (1662)
- 10.00am Family Service + Baptism
- 11.45am Holy Communion
- 3.00pm Coffee, Cakes and Company (Parish Rooms)
- 4.00pm Holy Communion with Prayers for Wholeness & Healing
- 7.00pm Aftershock - Youth Group

Sunday 23 February (next before Lent)

- 8.00am Holy Communion (1662)
- 10.00am Parish Communion
- 12 noon Baptism

Weekday services

Morning Prayer

- 8.00am: every Wednesday
- 8.30am: every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday
- 9.00am: every Saturday (*except 1st Feb when the service will be Parish Prayer*)

Evening Prayer

- 5.00pm: every Tuesday

Holy Communion

9.30am: every Wednesday (26 Feb with Ashes)

Thursday 6 February

10.00am Silent Prayer

1.00pm Service of Prayer for Wholeness and Healing

St Mary's Tinies (*in Church*)

9.30am every Tuesday during term time

Holy Days and Festivals this month

Wednesday 26 February (*Ash Wednesday*)

9.30am Holy Communion + Ashes

8.00pm Choral Eucharist + Ashes

Cook in E minor

Purcell: Hear my prayer

.....

St James', Sewards End

Sunday 9 February (3rd before Lent)

9.30am Holy Communion

Sunday 23 February (next before Lent)

9.30am Café Church



St John's, Little Walden

Sunday 9 February (3rd before Lent)

11.15am Family Service

Sunday 23 February (next before Lent)

11.15am Holy Communion



St Mary's Book Group: Jude the Obscure by Thomas Hardy

Most members of the group found this book quite hard going. It is not so much Hardy's style of writing, which is quite engaging and rather a pleasure to read, but instead the story and subject matter which was thoroughly unenjoyable. This was particularly so since the author has no true insight to offer as he presents his themes. So much so that we also gave ourselves the option of reading some of Hardy's poems - either in addition to or instead of the book. Most agree that the poems are quite good and certainly worth reading.

The novel tells the story of one man, Jude Fawley, and how life has treated him badly through both his own bad decisions and also through circumstances beyond his control. He is an orphaned child brought up by an unaffectionate, though not cruel, aunt. They are poor and of a lower class and so his opportunities for education and bettering his own position are few. Our first glimpse of him as a boy indicates that he is a determined and keen pupil, and yet we soon learn that he sets up in his own mind Education, and specifically a university education, as an idol much detached from reality.

Despite his focus and determination to be self taught well enough to go to university, as a young man he rapidly becomes entangled with a young woman. She successfully seduces him and, believing herself to be pregnant, they are swiftly married. It is at this early juncture that we see Hardy's misrepresentation of marriage. This is pivotal to the novel because, the further you read the more obvious it becomes that the book is in fact a treatise against Christian marriage, and maybe against Christianity generally.

Hardy here smugly tells us, ". . .the two swore that at every other time of their lives till death took them, they would assuredly believe, feel, and desire precisely as they had believed, felt, and desired during the few preceding weeks. What was as remarkable as the undertaking itself was the fact that nobody seemed at all surprised at what they swore." This of course is a complete misunderstanding of marriage, the wedding vows, even love itself. The characters in this book are people who, to their ultimate destruction, prove to be completely enslaved to their own feelings and passions.

This early marriage quickly breaks down and when his wife immigrates with her parents to Australia, Jude seemingly refocuses on his goal of education. However, instead of pursuing this single mindedly, he soon decides to fall in love with a beautiful cousin whom he has never met but whose photograph he has seen. She lives in the city whither he goes to chase his dream of education. Immediately upon his arrival he nurtures a relationship with her, despite being a married man and before long, she a woman married to an old friend of his. The story continues to wind itself tortuously around these people's lives, becoming more dismal with each chapter.

Some novels can be beautiful and great despite being about sad, desperate, or erring characters. Jude the Obscure misses this mark because the author does not shed any light of truth onto his themes. There are many points of possible redemption along the paths of these characters, but not only do they not take them, Hardy himself does not point them out to us. It is doubtful whether he himself even saw them. It seems as though he shared his characters' very clouded worldview. Perhaps it was no bad thing that he never wrote another novel after this one.

Karen Game

The Book Group's next meeting will discuss Dodie Smith's novel *I Capture the Castle*, in January, and Tara Westover's memoir *Educated* in February. Please see the Grapevine or the website for meeting dates.

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

David Birchall

Having interviewed Lisa the PCC Secretary for the Dec/Jan Parish News I thought it would be good to talk to David Birchall the PCC treasurer, another person doing important supportive work for the Parish.

It appears that David is a bit of a globetrotter for as his parents moved to Durban in South Africa after the war that is where he was born, and as you will now read he has moved about a bit !

After qualifying as an accountant he came to England in 1976 married Sue in 1979 and then they went out to Malawi in 1980 for three years. They eventually moved to Saffron Walden because of his work in 1994 after having spent a number of years living in Chobham Surrey.

Coming from a Christian family he was very active in the church at Chobham and when here in Saffron Walden they gravitated to St Mary's. But being here does not mean that travelling stopped, for they are both enthusiastic skiers and have a narrow boat to keep them occupied, and with annual visits to one of their daughters and her family in Australia you can see what I meant by globetrotting. He says that he enjoys being treasurer as it is his way of saying thank you to the Lord for all the blessings he has had.

But they are not here on their own for their other daughter lives in Saffron Walden and her daughter Penny was baptised at St Mary's (as were their other 'Australian' grandchildren Oliver and Jack) in December last year.

I like to conclude an interview by asking whether my interviewee would ever think of having a motto, or words that summed up their philosophy of life. David said that his would be **'perseverance, tolerance, trust in the Lord'**.



D.S.I.
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From the Registers

Baptisms

We welcome into the family of the Church and pray for:

- 3rd November: Annie Lydia Frances Leggott
17th November: Fleur Emily Romans
1st December: Cody Christopher Cann
17th December: Penelope June Brett
22nd December: Ashton Benjamin Clyburn



Weddings

They offer their Married life to God:

- 28th December Thomas Price & Charlotte Campbell



Funerals

We send our deepest sympathy to the families and friends of:

- 2nd October Ruby Maureen Banks
4th October Faith Audrey Stonham
11th October Betty Elizabeth Green
15th October Ivor Kirk
17th October Brian Lewis Potter
25th October Doreen Ketteridge
15th November Beryl Rowe
20th November Marian Sell
6th December Christopher Ferland
18th December Denise Johnson
19th December Vera Presland

*Praying for them and for those who mourn
"May they rest in peace"*



Marian Sell

Unfortunately it was difficult for some to hear the tribute given to Marian Sell at her funeral at St Mary's Church in November. If you would like receive a printed copy you can request one from the Parish Office: 01799 506024 (Monday to Friday, 9.30a.m. to 12noon), or email: office@stmarysaffronwalden.org



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A Story about Abuse and Shame

A Meditation/Metaphor for Lent by Margaret Collingwood

Lent is a time for reflection, cleaning out the cupboards in our mind full of our own rubbish, as well as the mess we might have been hoarding from other people's actions or lack of action. It's a time to sort the kernel of the grain from the chaff, as Jesus says, and to recognise the sin that is hindering our happiness and progress. The shame, humiliation and powerlessness that is a consequence of what might have come our way is not God's gift to us. We are invited to leave our hurtings with Him, and He deals with accountability, judgement and mercy on our behalf.

A little bird was bobbing on the water.

Along came a boat. Big and powerful. It overwhelmed the bird, then just sailed on without a backward glance.

The gunge and dirt and rubbish left behind by the boat engulfed the bird, who nearly drowned in it. All its beautiful feathers were matted and it could not lift itself up to fly. It swallowed the mucky mess and inhaled the toxic fumes and smell. It was terrified.

The bird drifted on the tide for a long time. It was weary, defeated, shocked and didn't know what to do. It gave up and thought it was going to die. It knew it was no longer a bird that could swim and fly, but just another bit of rubbish, both inside and out, some old flotsam thrown up by the tide.

Passers-by mocked and whispered, 'Look at that horrible, dirty bird.'

But a young child was playing in the water and saw the bird.

'Poor bird! You're covered in slick and rubbish and you can't fly. We must get that off you.'

'But rubbish and dirt is what I am now', thought the bird. 'I'm just yuck. I'm disgusting. I don't deserve to be clean.'

The child lifted the bird gently and cupped it in her hands. 'Let's take you to someone who knows how to get rid of this horrible stuff so we can see you're a beautiful bird again.'

With painstaking care and gentleness the bird was given water to drink and something to eat. Slowly the rubbish was picked off. The bird saw other birds



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strutting around like birds do. 'Will I ever be like that? I wish I could be a normal bird.'

Then the mess and gunge was washed and cleaned. The bird saw the grime come off and dirty the water. Again and again fresh water replaced the dirty water, and gradually the bird began to feel different. But it wasn't enough. The dirt was inside him, in his sweat, in his lungs, in his bloodstream. The bird knew only he could do this bit. He stamped, He croaked. He sweated it off. He shook himself and trembled. He gulped in fresh air and filled his lungs

Then the bird stretched its wings. Wow! It looked around in surprise. The child and helpers beamed with delight. The bird looked at its feathers. They were clean and shiny, beautifully patterned and layered. He felt different.

'My feathers! My body! My plumage!', he sang. 'The dirt and rubbish isn't me, who I am. It's someone else's dirt and rubbish that had stuck to me.' He recognised himself. 'I am a bird!'

It preened its feathers in appreciation, and knew it longed to fly. But it had forgotten how. It couldn't.

The young child held out her finger and it hopped on. 'Go fly again, little bird.'

She lifted him high in the air, and let go.

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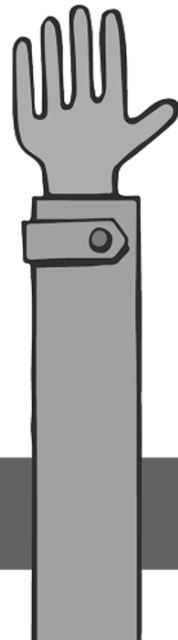
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"Be the change you wish to see in the world"

Gandhi

A Farewell to David

When David and I cycled the length of the west coast of Ireland in June 2019 we passed through County Limerick. Although we didn't go through Limerick itself, we crossed the River Shannon by ferry much closer to the coast, being close by gave us the idea to write a limerick each day to describe some of the events of the day. In view of this, I couldn't resist putting together a number of verses of personal reflection of David's time with us, many of which would be familiar to the congregation too. The verses are loosely, in some cases, based on the form of a limerick! Judith helped by tweaking some of the verses and we offer these verses as a farewell to David with much love.

There once was a vicar from Grays
Who came here to lead prayer and praise
6 themes his priority
Passed by majority
So the DCC minute says.

When told his wife's also ordained
We all very quickly exclaimed
Do we have two for one?
Oh, it could be so much fun
When who wears the trousers is named!

The first thing that David did mention:
Our youth work needs some attention
We found Andy Finn
And then Matt, what a win!
And both added a brand new dimension.

Four cent'ries since King James was penned
We read from beginning to end
In a biblical marathon
Young and old read a portion
And finished it in a weekend.

Now curates, we've had quite a few
David's mainly feminine crew
Comprised Paula and Anne,
Tim and Lydia began
Then Rachel and John joined in too.

Then in the spring of 2012
Our old DCC we did shelve
A new pastoral scheme
Formed a ministry team
Of churches which now number twelve.

Family service attendance was low
So David with focus did go
And improved it immensely
So that now we have plenty
Of parents with children in tow.

We need a new servery and loo
Said David and some agreed too
But what of the noise as we.....flush
That we most surely should hush
Said others, or the plans won't go through.

So a large consultation we had
With sound-proofing the walls would be clad
We drew up some plans
And all became fans
But money we'd need quite a tad.

Let's ride LEJOG, that's lots of miles
A blog will raise funds and some smiles
They've gone mad in the head
The congregation said
Yet we did it and raised piles and piles.

David, you've focused our vision
Led worship, prayer, study and mission
You have taught us so much
About faith, love and such
Not forgetting the Prodigal Son.

So we'll try not to be glum
As you head off to Brum
Knowing that your new role
Is in God's control
And we'll pray for whatever may come.

Mothers' Union November and December Reports

A Medley of Articles from Wiltshire

With just 2 days' notice, the speaker booked for our November meeting was unable to come, so David Sheath kindly agreed to step in at very short notice. David lived in North Wiltshire with his wife Brenda for 25 years in a small village called Great Somerford near Malmesbury. Whilst living there he wrote a series of monthly articles for the 'Signpost', a community magazine which circulated to every house in six local villages. His talk was based on these articles.

David's first subject was about rationing that followed the second world war, how it operated and what foods were and were not rationed. He reminded us of the small quantities that were allowed especially compared to what we eat today. Although unpopular at the time, it seems that by eating less sugar, fat and meat and many more vegetables, people were slimmer and fitter than today and had less tooth decay.

Another subject was his 12-year-old grandson James' Summer holiday visit in 2012. This included going to the Olympic Games football quarter final at the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff when Team GB were beaten by South Korea. There was also a visit to the Dr Who Experience at the BBC Studios in Cardiff Bay. This involved narrow escapes from Cybermen as well as escaping from Daleks who threatened to EXTERMINATE them.

David described their visit to Warwick Castle and finding out about the young wizard Merlin. They also visited the castle dungeons and had to avoid the witch of Warwick before watching knights jousting on horseback. Other days out included ten pin bowling in Swindon, pitch and putt golf and visits to the swimming pool and water slides.

Another big highlight of the week was a trip to the Bristol hot air balloon festival. The huge fun-fair there was great fun, before watching the mass ascent of over 100 hot air balloons.

David quoted from his 'Diary of a pensioner' for a week in the summer of 2010. This included the village monthly walk, a visit to RAF Lyneham, shopping in Bath, harvesting crops from his allotment as well as the annual village picnic.

Another article was called 'Where is the centre of London?'. The answer is Charing Cross and David told us the story of Queen Eleanor, King Edward the first's wife who died in Lincoln in the 13th century. Her embalmed body was taken to Westminster Abbey and an Eleanor Cross erected in each place for every night they stopped on the journey. The final stop was just one mile outside of the walls of London Town at a tiny village called Charing. It is almost ironic that 700 years later, Charing Cross is regarded as the centre of London. Road signs saying how many miles to London are measured to this point.

The Advent Service

On Thursday 5th December Mothers' Union members travelled to St Nicholas church at the village of Berden for our annual Advent service of Meditation. Revd. Margaret Davis based the service on a Celtic Advent meditation and two passages were read from the Northumbrian Community devotional writings, followed by silent meditation. Three Bible readings were read by members: I quote from Psalm 16 'You will show me the path of life':

Isaiah 56 'You shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water that never fails':
 Revelation 21 'I am the Alpha and the Omega. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift of the spring of the water of life'.

We were privileged to have an organist and the hymns were: 'Hark the Glad Sound' 'On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry' 'Hills of the North rejoice' 'Long ago, prophets knew'. Our members find the peace of St Nicholas church, the beauty of the liturgy and the meditation during the service, prepares us for the coming of Christmas. It is a perfect antidote to the hectic commercialism we find in the media and the shopping malls. Refreshments followed the service with mince pies. We thank Reverend Margaret Davis for her thoughtful service of meditation for Advent and the hospitality and warm welcome from the members of St Nicholas Church.

The Christmas Party

On 11th December Mothers' Union members gathered at Custerson Court for our Christmas party by kind permission of the Manager Mrs Gloria Archer. We had a bring and share collection of Christmas nibbles and the facilities to make tea and coffee which we supplied.

Members spent the first part of the evening socialising and enjoying the food. Following this, our Chaplain Reverend Canon Chris Bishop entertained us with folk songs, some of which we joined in, especially the chorus of 'the nonsense song'. We then had a challenging quiz set by Chris which tested our memory and our brainpower! Our MU choir then sang a selection of 5 different Christmas songs and lesser known Carols. We ended on a familiar note with 'Joy to the world' and invited our audience to join in. Carol sheets were handed out and members were invited to request a carol of their choice.

We thank Chris Bishop for his entertainment and humour which we all enjoyed and also Janet Sutherland for training our choir and accompanying us on the keyboard. Finally, we thank Mrs Gloria Archer for offering us the comfortable, warm lounge and excellent facilities at Custerson Court that made our Christmas party possible. We have therefore made a donation to the residents fund as a token of our appreciation.

Brenda Sheath



...er... apart from this little hiccup... it was an excellent church pancake supper...



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Music News: November and December 2019

November is always the start of a very busy period for music at St Mary's, which can be testing for the stamina and patience of all participants in the choir, organ loft and brass group. However, we all recognise that the hard, collaborative work will produce rewards, ideally for the congregation as well as the participants, and this year has been no exception.

The first Sunday in November started with anthems composed nearly 450 years apart. The church celebrated All Saints in the morning with Victoria's anthem *O quam gloriosum* written in 1572, followed at the moving All Souls service in the afternoon by 3 of Michael Tippett's 5 Spirituals from the oratorio, *Child of Our Time*, which he started writing on the day the Second World War was declared.

The sombre war theme continued in the Civic Service of Remembrance Day, with a packed church listening to Guest's *They shall grow not old* and Bainton's *And I saw a new heaven*, with the service culminating as always in the haunting strains of *The Last Post*.

This year a further special event took place on 24 November, as more than 400 parishioners, a very full choir and the brass group joined to say farewell to the Rev'd Canon David Tomlinson. He has been a tremendous supporter of music at St Mary's, and will be sorely missed by all of us. The choir sang the motet *Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring* during the service, then wished David God Speed in the lovely words of the Irish Blessing with music by John Chilcott: "May the road rise to meet you, may the wind be ever at your back, may the sun shine warm upon your face, and the rains fall soft upon your fields. And until we meet again, may God hold you ever in the palm of his hand".

Finally on 1 December St Mary's was packed yet again for the Advent Carol Service. The transition from darkness to light is always moving, although somewhat challenging for the choir as they navigate the church clutching both music and tiny torches. I am always impressed by how well the Junior Choir navigate the space and the service, not least because they are generally leading the processions. Many pieces of music were familiar, but John Taverner's spine tingling composition *Angels* was new to most of the congregation, and very testing for the organist, Jeremy Allen, a test which he of course passed with flying colours. Another highlight this year was the world premiere of *Adam Lay Ybouden* written by Oli King, the Director of Music.

At the time of writing the church musicians are now preparing for the Christmas Carol Service on 22 December, and the Junior Choir and Joyful Noise are also getting ready for the 2 Tree Services on Christmas Eve. A busy but enjoyable and fulfilling month ahead.

Otilie Lefever

St Mary's Tinies Meet are meeting at a new Time

The team at St Mary's Tinies are now welcoming under-fives and their parents or carers on **Tuesdays at 9.30 - 11.00am**.

Alison Knights, team leader, says: 'We start in the Parish Rooms with toys, craft and refreshments followed by a short, age-appropriate service in St Mary's Church which will include songs, instruments and a Bible story.'

Sessions are free.

Come along and join our friendly group.



Gelio



Let us pray for world peace and nuclear disarmament, the present Crisis the Government is facing, and all who live in Abercrombie Street....the odd numbers.

©20

David's Farewell Gift His New Bicycle

A number of people have asked me about the bicycle that we gave David when he left. It is a road bike, it is not a mountain bike which can tackle any terrain, nor is it a racing bicycle. Road bikes are built to cover long distances and are very light, the carbon fibre frame of David's bicycle without the wheels weighing less than 1kg (2lb). The carbon frame is also very flexible which takes out the roughness of road surfaces giving a very smooth ride.

Road bicycles have 22 gears, more than the 12 or so on David's old bike. The gearing of the lowest gear enables steep hills (e.g. 15%) to be tackled relatively easily at speeds as slow as 3-4mph. The top gear will allow speeds of 25mph to be reached on the flat quite readily. As David mentioned on his last Sunday, the gears are electronic. Mechanical gears have wire cables running from the gear changers on the handle-bars to the cogs on the rear wheel and next to the pedals. Wire cables stretch over time and need adjustment. Electronic gears have small electrical wires running to battery driven units which are next to the cogs and which change the gears. Electronic gears can be totally automatic, changing when they detect the need to do so. The gear change switches on the handlebars need just a light touch, each gear change is very positive and the chain is rarely dislodged unlike with normal bicycle gears.

There's more! The bike has disc brakes, these are much more effective than brakes on the rim of the wheels and much less affected by rain. The wheels are also carbon fibre and are tubeless. They have no inner tube but instead have a very small amount of latex running around inside the tyre and this fills any hole in the tyre sealing immediately on contact with the road.

All in all it's an amazing bicycle and I've had the privilege of cycling with David in the Birmingham area already, once in early December when we rode up the Clent Hills just south west of Birmingham, see photo, and more recently up the Lickey Hills which are south of the city. David's verdict is "it's so light; the disc brakes respond so swiftly; and the gears so easy to use."

Where next? Warm weather training in Mallorca followed by a 150 mile ride around London and a 100 miler around Birmingham, the latter is a day after the choir visit to sing in the cathedral. Roll on the warm weather!

Steve Hasler



Sunday 9th February 2020

at the 10am service of Holy Communion

St Mary's Church, Saffron Walden

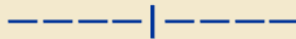
we will mark the **100th** anniversary of

The St Mary's Branch of The Mothers' Union

Celebrant: Revd Canon Chris Bishop, MU Chaplain

Preacher: Judith Meaden, Diocesan President of MU

followed by refreshments (including a celebration cake!)



Saturday 22nd February 2020

Quinqua-Quiz.....up date

For the Bishop's lent appeal



On the Saturday before Lent (Quinquagesima) we will be holding a 'not too complicated' general knowledge Quiz in the **Parish Room** to help raise money for this years **Bishop's Lent Appeal**. This Appeal to help combat poverty, will be supporting a programme of microfinance and microenterprise education in partnership with the Mothers' Union in Marsabit, Kenya where the populace live on less than £25 a month.

Quiz Master Canon Chris Bishop would like to get teams of **5 or 6** at £5 a head.

We will meet at 7 for a 7.30 pm start and please bring your own drinks and nibbles. It will not be a late night finish...and who knows your team might win the **Quinquacup** !

Please let Chris know if you would like to enter a team by ringing him on 523722 or emailing him at chrismitre@hotmail.com by no later than...Saturday February 15th. Thank you.