

Parish News

A photograph of a narrow alleyway between a brick wall on the left and a wooden building on the right, leading to a church with a tall spire in the background. The church has a prominent, pointed spire and a clock face. The sky is overcast.

St Mary the Virgin, Saffron Walden

St John, Little Walden and

St James, Swards End

March 2020

FREE



The Church of England
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St. John the Evangelist, St. John's Close, Colchester CO4 0HP

Wednesdays 4, 11, 18 and 25 March 2020 at:
Chelmsford Cathedral

Wednesday 1 April 2020 at:
Meadgate Church, The Orchards, Mascalls Way, Great Baddow CM2 7NS

Thursdays 5, 12, 19 and 26 March, 2 April 2020 at:
St. Paul's Church, Maryland Road, Stratford, London E15 1JL



Edward Gildea will be a speaker at the session in Colchester on 10th March and join Bishop Stephen on a panel to answer audience questions.

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TEAM RECTOR: Vacancy

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PARISH NEWS - EDITORIAL DEADLINE

The deadline for contributions for each issue is the 1st Sunday of the month. Hence, the deadline for the **April** issue is **Sunday 1st March** and for the **May** issue **Sunday 5th April**.

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www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org/parishnews

Front Cover: *St Mary's Church, Saffron Walden*
Photograph by Andy Colebrooke

Important notice for print-copy readers

As our Parish Magazines are free we will no longer name individual copies – please pick up a copy each month. However, if you kindly distribute and deliver copies please pick up your 'bundle' of magazines as usual. Dawn Saxon

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The Curate's Letter

Dear Friends,

This month heralds the arrival of spring. I wonder if you have a spring in your step. Each year, it surprises me how much more vibrant I feel as the days get brighter and longer, and winter at last turns its back on us.

It is all so easy to underestimate the effect of the seasons on our minds and bodies. In this time of artificial light and perpetual forward motion, we are easily seduced into believing that we are limitless creatures. Rest is optional; solitude is foolish; vulnerability is a weakness. The mantra of the age seems to be: *work hard, play hard, you can sleep when you're dead.*

Lent is a robust challenge to this idea of life without limits. Beginning from the poignant words on Ash Wednesday, *remember you are dust and to dust you shall return*, Lent is a time to remember that we have a beginning and ultimately an ending. In the forty days, we connect again with our vulnerability, our frailty, and our own mortality. We have limits, and we are at our most human when we can acknowledge them and respect them, rather than living in opposition to them.

As I write, I am conscious that this will be my last Curate's Letter before I go on maternity leave in April. Pregnancy has been a time of discovering these limits that change with each trimester. It has been a wonderful, sometimes challenging but mostly very humbling time. Perhaps you too are facing changes in life where you are encountering that your limits are changing. Maybe you are grieving, ill or caring for those who are unwell, changes that have left you feeling out of sorts, unlike the 'you' you once were.

I am comforted by how God comes to be with us, as we are, not as the people we would like to be. In Christ, God becomes human and lives a human life to the full. And yet this fullness doesn't look like ignoring these limits, but rather engaging with them: Christ has needs for company, solitude, prayer and he makes time for these things. Where others might see him as vulnerable, we see that his vulnerability is the pathway to new life. He is vulnerable when he weeps at the tomb of his friend – this compassion is not negated even when he is about to raise Lazarus. He is vulnerable when he is left alone by his closest friends in his hours of need, but he restores them so graciously and gently. He is vulnerable when he dies a criminal's death on the cross, but he brings new life to us all through his death and resurrection. Christ's life gives us a pattern of what it means to be truly human.



I wonder what would happen if we embraced our limits more readily? Perhaps, as we give up trying to transcend them, we might encounter more of God's transcendent power in our day-to-day lives.

With love,

Rachel

Quiet Morning

**Saturday 7th March from 9.30 - 12 noon
in St Mary's Parish Rooms**

'Becoming Human'

Led by Rachel Prior

These are wonderfully refreshing and reflective mornings, if you want to come there is a sign-up sheet at the back of St Mary's church.

For further details contact Sue Walker email:
suewalker619@btinternet.com or 523007.



An invitation to join The World Day of Prayer

The World Day of Prayer is a women-led, global, ecumenical movement. The annual service is a great wave of prayer encircling the globe, which begins as the sun rises over Samoa and ends some 36 hours later back in the Pacific as the sun sets over American Samoa. Over 120 countries and islands around the world will be sharing the same service. Each year the service is written by a different country. For 2020 the service has been prepared by the Christian women of Zimbabwe and St Mary's Church will be hosting it in the parish room on 6th March at 10.30am. We are encouraged to reflect on the difficulties and unrest that has plagued their country over many years. They share the challenges they have met and the hopes for the future and invite us to support them prayerfully as they continue their often turbulent journey towards full reconciliation.

Ruby Parsons

St Mary's Saffron Walden Epiphany Carol Service

On Sunday 26 January we celebrated the end of the Christmas season at St. Mary's with the Epiphany Carol Service. There was a goodly sized congregation with many holding lighted candles as the service began with the choir, conducted by Oliver King, at the west end, singing Brian Moles' *Tribus Miraculis* (We honour this holy day, adorned with three miracles), a modern setting of ancient Latin words.



Following the bidding prayer the choir sang the *Nunc Dimittis* from Stanford's setting in A. We all sang *Hills of the North Rejoice* with a fine descant in the last verse, followed by a new piece for the choir, *Lo Star-Led Chiefs* by William Crotch. Other choir pieces included the beautiful *O Magnum Mysterium* by Morten Lauridsen, Stainer's *I Saw the Lord*, and a setting of *Ave Verum Corpus* by June Nixon, which was well conducted by Elliott Randall, our Michael Swindlehurst Organ Scholar, who is developing his conducting as well as his organist skills.

The congregational carols included other well-loved pieces, only sung at this time of year: *Brightest and Best*, *Hills of the North Rejoice*, *As with Gladness Men of Old*, and of course, *We Three Kings*.

Our organist Jeremy Allen enriched our worship by turn, with appropriate, gently uplifting and powerful accompaniments to the service music.

The Bible readings interspersed between the musical items helped us to review the Christmas story, from Isaiah's prophesy, through the arrival of the three Kings, to St. John's vision of the new Jerusalem in Revelation.

Rowan and Sue Sylvester Bradley

In other music news, we were delighted to award surplices in December to Jolame, Matilda, William, Chloe, Evangeline and Bryony. At the start of February, Hayden, on his first Sunday as a probationer in the Choral Scholars, was presented with his dark blue ribbon, and Noah, having completed his probationary period as a Choral Scholar was inducted to the Choral Scholar ranks. With all three Carol Services now behind us, we look forward to Lent and Easter....

Bron Ferland

The SMMA AGM will take place in the Parish Rooms at approximately 11.45am, following the morning service on Sunday 8th March.

All are welcome to attend.



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It is time to take sides

It was clear at Davos last month that there could be no more sitting on the fence; it is time to take sides. We can side with Donald Trump, who urged us to 'reject the perennial prophets of doom and their predictions of apocalypse' and claimed that it is 'a growing and vibrant economy which lifts the human spirit.'

Or we can side with the young woman who beat the president to receiving Time Magazine's Person of the Year Award: Greta Thunberg. She told business and political leaders 'The facts are clear, but they are still too uncomfortable for you to address. You just leave it because you think it's too depressing and people will give up, but people will not give up. You are the ones who are giving up.' Is there a middle way? We either cherish and protect God's wonderful creation for future generations, or we don't. We are either with Trump or with Greta.

On 25th January Uttlesford's planning committee took sides. They rejected Stansted Airport's application to expand further, citing climate change and air quality as key considerations. It was a courageous decision, but as one councillor said, 'Whatever the legal complexities are here, we also have a moral decision to make.' It may well prove to be a landmark moment nationally, in which company profits were set aside for the health and prospects of current and future generations.

The church is also taking sides. The Church of England's Environmental Advisory Group has said that all parts of the Church should recognise the Climate Crisis and step up its action to safeguard God's creation. They have recommended a revised carbon reduction target of net zero carbon by 2045, with an interim target of 57% reduction by 2030. That's quite a challenge for large, historic buildings like ours! In addition, the Church's national investing bodies have already divested from companies deriving more than 10 per cent of their revenues from coal and oil from oil tar sands and are committed to divest further in 2020.

So what should we each do as individuals? Greta is very clear that it is ACTION that is required now, not fine words or posturing. Prayer is a form of action, but it should be prayer that stimulates and inspires further, tangible actions. The Eco church pages on our website include a section entitled 'What can I do?' so do read that if you haven't already. It's full of suggestions. There are little things you can do, and big things. I suggest that it is now time for each of us to do at least one BIG THING!

Edward Gildea, Eco team leader



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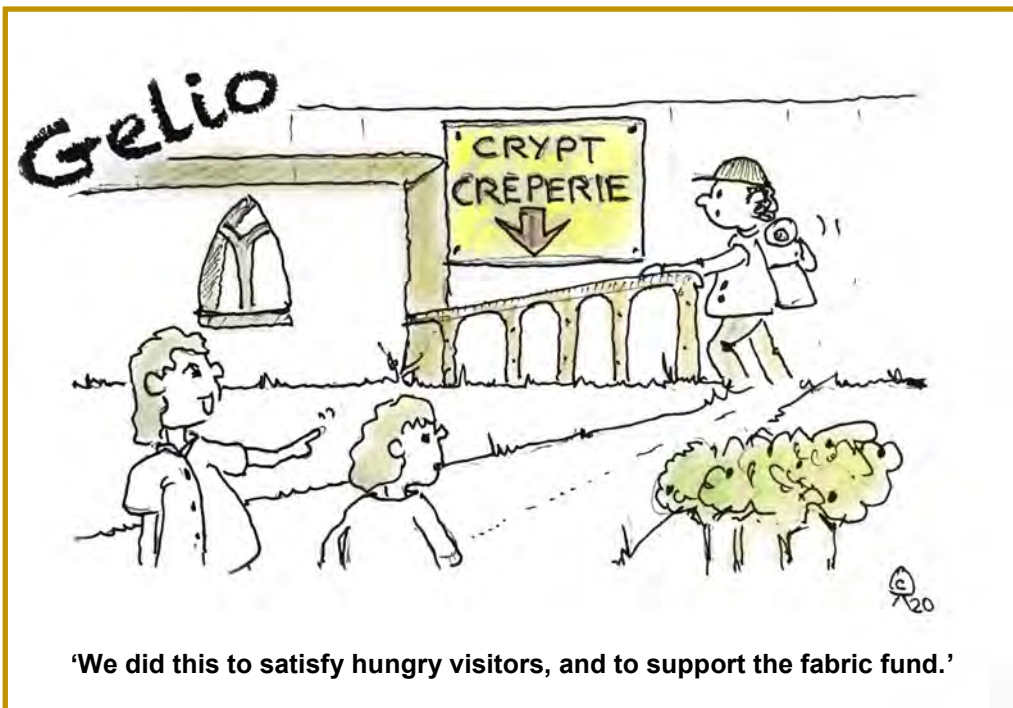


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© Chris Bishop

Prayer for the Month *provided by the Prayer Committee*

A Prayer for Lent

Almighty God,
in whom we live and move and have our being,
you have made us for yourself
and our hearts are restless until they rest in you:
grant us purity of heart and strength of purpose,
that no selfish passion may hinder us from
knowing your will,
no weakness from doing it;
but that in your light we may see light,
and in your service find our perfect freedom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

St Augustine



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'And the Lord God planted a garden'

When I was a child I spent many happy days playing in Chislehurst Woods. In those days we were allowed to roam freely so my friend and I climbed trees, made little places to sit, built dams and had picnics. We spent time watching little mice running through the leaves and small birds grubbing around looking for their lunch. I can remember eating hawthorn leaves and calling them bread and cheese. We would catch the bus, clutching our jam jars for collecting tadpoles. Quite an adventure.

Nowadays, with our woodlands under threat from construction works of new roads and railways, we need to think hard about our trees and, in these days of climate change, we have to consider all the trees on our planet. The environmentalists tell us trees are the lungs of the planet, they are among the oldest living things on earth.

The rainforests such as those in Brazil and Indonesia are of great importance for all of us. Did you know that Taylors of Harrogate, who make Yorkshire tea, are members of the Rainforest Alliance which helps to protect the rainforest environment and also the livelihoods of those people living in them. Since 1990 Taylors have planted 3 million trees and thus helped to protect a rainforest area the size of the dales in Yorkshire. Another project, led by the UK space agency, the National Trust and the Royal Botanic Gardens, has managed to send seeds from a Flower of Kent apple tree into space for six months. Now, having returned to Earth, some of the saplings have been planted at the Eden Project in Cornwall. 'One small sapling for mankind' they say, so we shall have to see if they grow. I have also seen apple trees growing alongside the motorways and wondered who planted them. This can apparently be due to people throwing apple cores out of their car windows as they rush past. We sent our friends trees each for Christmas this year. They actually only received a card, but Woodland Trust planted 30 trees on their behalf.

Trees are frequently mentioned in the Bible and it seems that every major event mentioned has a tree associated with it so here is a great verse for you to



Ancient Olive tree in the Garden of Gethsemane in Jerusalem. Photograph: Rufus Barnes

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ponder while you are thinking about the trees the Lord has planted in His garden. You could put your own name in there instead of he!

'For he will be like a tree planted by the water that extends its roots by a stream and will not fear when the heat comes: but its leaves will be green, and it will not be anxious in a year of drought nor cease to yield fruit.' Jeremiah 17.8 (Amplified Bible/Zondervan)

Margaret Barnes

Gardening Notes

I write at the very beginning of February, a dead time in both garden and greenhouse: wrong! It is in fact a very important time as the freedom from mundane tasks like mowing and hoeing allows you to concentrate on the longer term changes you've been thinking about. Perhaps you've a flower bed to move, or machinery and tools to fettle.

My greenhouse is earning its keep - I've large heated trays and am filling them with broad bean seeds, then harden the plants quite early and transplant in blocks when ready. Remember that broad beans are frost hardy and planting in blocks gives some protection against wind damage - and they taste good even after freezing!

The spare greenhouse capacity will carry some very early lettuce in heated and covered trays; I crop when small and early. Later I shall add a trough of very early potatoes, maybe even try a different variety from my usual Rocket: more later!

Now I've to decide on annual flower varieties: though I've moved toward perennials I've still some space to fill. I'm thinking again of mass use of geraniums, trailing for the baskets, adding maybe some lobelia, for the bed areas an upright variety, of course.

Can't wait!

Charles White



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CHARACTER COMEDY SHOW - GET HAPPY

Written and performed by Anna Nicholson with Bobby Goulder, piano

WEDNESDAY 29 APRIL 7.30pm

St Mary's Church, Saffron Walden

Anna and Bobby were thrilled with the warm reception they received at St Mary's in 2018 with 'Woman of the Year' which many of you enjoyed and raised £1200 for the Building Project.

Anna has since won various awards with sell-out shows in Edinburgh and Adelaide. She has also just been commissioned by the BBC to write some sketches for the new Crackerjack series.

'Get Happy' features four eccentric characters, old and new, each on a heroic quest to find happiness - a vicar with a rival, an Instagram influencer, a Yorkshire granny and a retreat-running hippy. Each character is from a different region of the country. Through comedy, the show reflects various aspects of English culture. Anna is a committed Christian but this is not a religious show. It provides an opportunity to fill the pews with people we may not normally see in church.



David Tomlinson wrote after the last show: *'This show worked well in church, particularly for the character Revd. Ruth. Laughter and applause greeted her and working with Anna to put on the fun-filled evening was a joy too.'*

Proceeds will go towards the Australian Bushfires Appeal, a particularly relevant cause as Anna and Bobby are performing in Australia and New Zealand this month so will have seen the effects of the devastation during their visit.

Tickets £10 (£8 conc under 18, over 65):

Parish Office

Caroline Goulder (07775 518892)

Eventbrite (search "Get Happy Saffron Walden")

Calendar for March 2020

See also *The Grapevine* for the latest information



LENT 2020

St Mary's, Saffron Walden

Sunday services

Sunday 1 March (Lent 1)

- 8.00am Holy Communion (1662)
- 10.00am Parish Communion
- 12.00pm Baptism
- 6.30pm H2H Youth-Led Service (Parish Rooms)

Sunday 8 March (Lent 2)

- 8.00am Holy Communion (1662)
- 10.00am Parish Communion - Archdeacon Robin King
- 4.00pm Choral Evensong
- 7.00pm Aftershock - Youth Group

Sunday 15 March (Lent 3)

- 8.00am Holy Communion (1662)
- 10.00am Parish Communion - Lynn Treneary + Baptism
- 12.00pm Baptism
- 12.00pm CMS Lunch with Lynn Treneary (Parish Rooms)
- 3.00pm Coffee, Cakes and Company (Parish Rooms)
- 4.00pm Evensong
- 7.00pm Aftershock - Youth Group

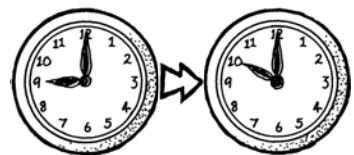
Sunday 22 March (Mothering Sunday)

- 8.00am Holy Communion (1662)
- 10.00am Family Service
- 11.45am Holy Communion (North Chapel)
- 4.00pm Holy Communion with Prayers for Wholeness & Healing
- 7.00pm Aftershock - Youth Group



Sunday 29 March (Lent 5)

- 8.00am Holy Communion (1662)
- 10.00am Parish Communion
- 6.30pm Taizé Service
- 7.00pm Aftershock - Youth Group



Sunday 29 March
British Summertime begins
(Clocks go forward one hour)

Weekday services

Morning Prayer

- 8.00am every Wednesday
8.30am every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday
9.00am every Saturday (*except 7th March when Parish Prayer in Parish Rooms*)

St Mary's Tinies

- 9.30am every Tuesday during term time (Parish Rooms)

Evening Prayer

- 5.00pm every Tuesday

Holy Communion

- 9.30am every Wednesday (*25 March Annunciation*)

Thursday 5 March

- 10.00am Silent Prayer (Parish Rooms)
1.00pm Healing Service

Saturday 7 March

- 9.30am Quiet Morning (Parish Rooms)

Thursday 19 March

- 7.30pm Prayer meeting for filling team rector vacancy (Parish Rooms)

Holy Days and Festivals this month

Thursday 19 March (*St Joseph*)

- 9.30am Holy Communion

Wednesday 25 March (*Annunciation*)

- 9.30am Holy Communion

St James', Swards End

Sunday 8 March (*Lent 2*)

- 9.30am Holy Communion

Sunday 22 March (*Mothering Sunday*)

- 9.30am Family Service



St John's, Little Walden

Sunday 8 March (*Lent 2*)

- 11.15am Holy Communion

Sunday 22 March (*Mothering Sunday*)

- 11.15am Family Service



Four Clocks

I once went on a pilgrimage to see a clock, well four clocks really. The Royal Observatory at Greenwich exhibits the four clocks built by John Harrison between 1730 and 1758 in his attempt to win the so-called 'Longitude Prize'. Finding one's position at sea had always been a great problem; ignorance of longitude resulted in a British Naval disaster in 1707, when a fleet of ships sailed straight into the Scilly Islands causing the loss of over two thousand men. The government of the time promptly offered a prize of £20,000 to anyone who could find a way of determining with precision a ship's longitude at sea. The prize money would equate to several million pounds today.



Many people put their minds to winning the prize including eminent astronomers, using complex calculations, but without success. A carpenter from Lincolnshire, John Harrison, was convinced he could do it more simply with a clock. He had already built wooden pendulum clocks that were accurate to within one second a month, which was unprecedented accuracy for the day. However, the challenge of building a time piece that would cope with the extreme conditions at sea was immense. He also had to contend with the disdain of an establishment who thought him unschooled and ignorant.

The four clocks stand side by side in the exhibition. His first 'sea-clock' is about the size of a car engine and made largely of brass. It is magnificent to behold, with counter-balanced moving spherical weights, coiled springs and levers. This wasn't good enough to win the prize, so Harrison built two further clocks of similar size but radically different design, the last of which he worked on for a staggering 19 years. However, he just couldn't get it quite right so he turned his attention to watches, radically redesigning the way they were made. So, the fourth clock in the exhibition is of completely different appearance from the others; built when Harrison was in his 60s, it's a brilliant timepiece only 5 inches in diameter, looking like a very large pocket watch of today. But the Board administering the prize would not award it to Harrison until many copies of the clock were made and tested. It took the intervention of King George III before Parliament finally gave Harrison the bulk of his prize money. He was by then 80 years old and had only three more years to live.

It is not an exaggeration to say that John Harrison's clocks changed the world for ever. Next time you use a sat nav remember John Harrison. It was he who had the idea of using time to find out where you are: the same idea is used in satellite navigation systems. Harrison is a hero of mine, not only because of his engineering genius, his craftsmanship, and his fight with establishment prejudice, but also

because of his perseverance and his preparedness to let go of one good idea in order to find better ways to solve a problem. His story is a shining example of the human spirit's ability to persevere through many setbacks over a whole lifetime.

St. Paul writes 'we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.' (Romans 5.3,4) Where do you look for inspiration to persevere against the odds or to 'think out of the box'?

Andy Colebrooke



78th Sale of Stamps

The next sale, in aid of church Maintenance and Music Funds, will be on Saturday 21st March. As usual, thousands of individual stamps on sale in the Council Chamber, at the back of the Town Hall, from 9.30 until noon. A warm welcome (and a cup of coffee) - even to those who are not dedicated stamp collectors!

David Hoy

Church Heating

As many of us are aware, the heating in the church has not been running normally, or not at all, so far this year. On Monday 6th January, a sub-contractor of British Gas fitted a new electricity meter and, in doing so, made an error which caused considerable damage to equipment in the church that is controlled by



electronics. Most of this is in the boiler room and 2 of our 3, relatively new, gas-fired boilers, both heating pumps and a couple of other units were seriously damaged. The roof alarm was also not working for a short period of time. The overall cost of the damage is in the region of £20,000 plus VAT. By the end of w/c 2nd February, all will have been repaired and we'll be back to normal. Now, we just need to recover our costs from the sub-contractor or British Gas.

Steve Hasler: 2nd February 2020



Paddy McKeown

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From the Registers

There were no baptisms or weddings to report for January.

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

3rd January	Vera Williams
7th January	Jane Cook
9th January	Brenda Dixon
	Hazel Weightman
13th January	Danny Coppins
14th January	Sydney Boyton
22nd January	Karen Boreham
23rd January	Anthony Auger
29th January	Margaret Lee

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



Prayer Evenings during the Interregnum



The Prayer Team have already put on three evenings to pray for the church, for those carrying the burden of the interregnum, involved in writing the profile and selecting a new Rector and Area Dean. We have been really encouraged by those evenings so have booked three other evenings for prayer in the Parish Rooms! This is a hidden but, I believe, an underpinning part of the process so if you would like to join us do come and be part of the on-going prayer. They are led by different people each time, offering us a variety of ways of praying, take place in the Parish Rooms and last half an hour; so please come and join us. The dates are below and we look forward to seeing you there

- Thursday 19th March from 7.30 pm to 8.00 pm
- Monday 27th April from 8.00 pm - 8.30 pm
- Wednesday 20th May from 7.30 pm - 8.00 pm

PLEASE NOTE THAT APRIL 27TH IS AT A LATER TIME

For further information please contact suewalker619@btinternet.com

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St Mary's Book Club: I Capture the Castle

Do you keep a diary? Did you during your adolescence? And if you did, do you ever re-read it now? I only ask because the subject of teenage diaries loomed large at the meeting of the Book Club on 10th January. Almost everyone enjoyed the chosen book (*I Capture the Castle*, by Dodie Smith) and contrasted it favourably with the previous selection of Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*, which most members found unattractive, verbose and depressing. Dodie Smith, who had won earlier renown as a playwright, (and was later, of course, to win even greater fame and riches as the author of *101 Dalmatians*), was unhappily living in California during the Second World War. Nostalgic for East Anglia (she had been living in Finchingfield), she resolved to write a love story from the point of view of a 17-year-old girl about a family living in genteel poverty in a tumbledown folly (the castle of the title). As she was now nearly 50, she relied heavily on her own diaries to recapture the innocence, the naivety and the quirky observations of an intelligent teenager.

Only one of our group admitted to re-reading her teenage diaries, (although others acknowledged that they had kept and subsequently destroyed theirs), so perhaps she was the only one who could judge whether Cassandra Mortmain is a convincing portrayal, and whether the diaries that she kept strike the right note of authenticity. *I Capture the Castle* has been unfairly categorised as a romantic novel for younger women, but it is clear from the helpful foreword that it deserves a much broader readership. Critics as diverse as Isherwood and Vaughan Williams wrote in complimentary terms to the author after publication, and I kept reminding myself of the old cliché that a book shouldn't be judged by its cover. It also has one of the best opening lines in 20th Century literature ('I write this sitting in the kitchen sink.').

During our discussions, the questions revolved around whether the other characters were believable and how amusing we found the various situations that 'Cassandra' describes. For myself, the writer's block suffered by James Mortmain was only too credible, and I certainly laughed out loud more than once at the farcical anecdotes that are particularly well written. As for the book's characters, I'm not sure how convincing they were meant to be, and I found an almost cartoonish dimension to the two half-American brothers and their mother at Godsend Castle. Knowing that the author was writing unhappily in California about a way of life in Suffolk that had ceased to exist made one feel that it was only ever intended as a fantasy. However, there was more than enough to discuss, and it was clever of the

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author to allow us all to imagine what would have happened after October, when Cassandra presumably discontinued her diaries and embarked on adult life.

At the conclusion of the well-attended discussion, our attention was drawn to the recent Austrian award of a Gold Cross to our host, Robin O'Neill, who has promised to wear it to our next meeting, where we will discuss Tara Westover's memoir *Educated*.

John Pickthorn

A Visit to Rwanda

On 9th January 2020 Mothers' Union Members welcomed Annie Wilson and Margaret Banks to speak on their recent visit to Rwanda. In 1994 there was civil war in the country and thousands of Tutsis were killed by the Hutus in an appalling act of genocide. Today there is a Genocide Memorial in the capital Kigali for remembrance and reflection. It is also a museum. The Government is stable and the capital Kigali is described as the cleanest city in Africa. Annie and Margaret shared their reminiscences with us in turn. On this last visit they were requested to bring water purifiers. Some were suitable for domestic use and others were destined for the local river, for general use.

They told us there were Mothers' Union members in Rwanda, but only in the big towns. They kindly brought along beautiful, hand-crafted, baskets and bags as an example of their work. Their impression of Rwanda was of a very green country and said it was described as the Land of a thousand hills. Margaret ended by reading a very moving prayer for the people of Rwanda and we sang our final hymn 'There is a green hill far away'.



*Rwanda's green hills
Image by David Mark for Pixabay*

MU MARCH DIARY

On 6th March the MU Choir will lead the singing at the Women's World Day of Prayer, to be held at St Mary's Church in the Parish Rooms.

On 12th March our Speaker will be Rev John Saxon speaking on Lent and/or Kenya.

On 26th March by kind invitation of Sheilah Girgis-Hannah, the MU Prayer group will be held at her home at 10.30am.

Brenda Sheath



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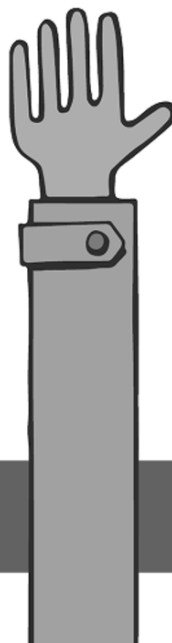
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Website: www.volunteeruttlesford.org.uk

Or come and see us at:

Uttlesford District Council Offices

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

Gandhi

YOU in the PEW interviewed by Chris Bishop**Helen O'Neill**

Helen was born into farming life in Takeley, Essex and Robin comes from Chelmsford, so after getting married in 1958 and then leading a life overseas they were very happy to move back to Essex and Saffron Walden after retirement in 1992.

After their wedding Helen and Robin started their travels with Robin's work in the Foreign Office taking them to Turkey where their first child was born, and then to Senegal where their second child was born. Their third child was born in Wimbledon.

With breaks coming back to London, the other places Robin's work took them to were Gibraltar where he was Assistant Governor, and then as Ambassador to Austria and Belgium.

Helen trained as a teacher and was able to fulfil that skill with part time work in Gibraltar, Austria and Belgium. Apart from having to do a lot of 'hosting' work perhaps some of her happiest memories come from time spent in West Africa where she caught the gardening bug.

Since moving back to Essex and Saffron Walden, life has been busy for Helen for she became a Governor at St Mary's school and ran St Mary's Pre-school for 3 years. In 2000 she studied and was awarded an Open University degree (BSc) in Geology and Science. She also served as a panel member for Statuary Appeals for Admission to Schools which covered the whole of Essex. She now assesses dogs for the charity 'Pets as Therapy'.

With regards to her association with St Mary's perhaps what has been amongst the most positive memories was a Prayer Week that happened some 10 years ago, and the Prayer Chain for Health and Healing. Then of course the regular Book Club meetings that she and Robin host in their home.

Finally we talked about what could sum up her thinking and outlook on life, and we condensed it to :

'Prayers are answered, but in the most unexpected ways.'



Archive Group *findings...*

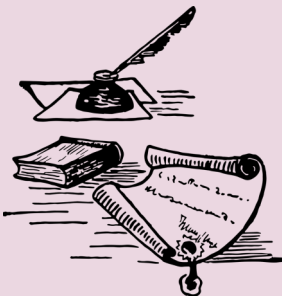
March 1940

My Dear Parishioners,

In some of the reception areas of the Parish Church has become a homely and familiar building to many evacuated children to whom corporate worship is a new experience, for 60% of the boys and girls between fourteen and eighteen are found to have no attachment of any kind to the Christian community. Christianity must dwindle unless the facts upon which it is founded are taught, and such teaching made the centre of our educational system.....I can recall the terrific and ultimately successful fight made by the church in Birmingham to secure in the secularised schools...a modicum of Christian teaching. It is the bitter fruit of the anti-Church campaign of those days which we are to-day gathering, days now mercifully ended, but it has now needed a Great War and the barbarian policies of Russia and Germany to open our eyes and justify the Church's attitude in the past. Meanwhile we should all take the opportunity given us by the presence in our midst of evacuated children to teach them the practice of prayer and public worship and to send them back at last to their homes with some knowledge of Him Whom truly to know is everlasting life.

Yours sincerely

L. Hughes
Vicar.



From the Archive Group

As we still do not have a proper depository for church archive material, could I please ask you to inform us if you do have such materials, so that when a 'store room' is finally located and fitted out we will be able to place your material safely with other important documents.

Canon Chris Bishop.



The Grange Care Home

The Grange Care Home in the picturesque village of Newport close to Saffron Walden will provide affordable luxury care with a warm family feel. As a family-run company, our care is the kind we'd want all of our loved ones to receive. Set in the grounds of Debden Grange retirement village the care home will specialise in residential care, short-term respite care and specialist dementia care for up to forty people. To find out more call our friendly team today.



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Stations of the Cross

In many churches Christians walk and pray the journey that Jesus took from Pilate's judgement to Calvary. Here I have produced the 14 **Stations of the Cross** for private devotion and prayer time.

(Response. **Lord of our journey help us as we travel**)

† **Jesus faces Pilate.** We pray for all the innocent who have to face prejudice and injustice. **R.**

† **Jesus is made to carry the cross.** How seriously do we take our faith and the responsibilities we take on as a disciple ? **R.**

† **Jesus falls for the first time on his journey.** We all fall short of what our Lord expects, but he knows we are only human. Try again ? **R.**

† **Jesus meets his mother.** How often have we been given strength and love when we most needed it ? **R.**

† **Simon helps Jesus carry the cross.** We give thanks for all individuals and organisations that help carry the load for others. **R.**

† **Veronica wipes Jesus' face.** We give thanks for all who nurse and care and soothe and heal. **R.**

† **Jesus falls for the second time.** We pray for all who are addicted to things they find it hard to give up. **R.**

† **Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem.** We remember all who feel helpless and unable to change what they know is wrong. **R.**

† **Jesus falls for the third time.** We pray for all who are on the verge of giving up, who can't take any more from life. **R.**

† **Jesus is stripped.** We think of people who have had their dignity taken away from them and are made to feel worthless. **R.**

† **Jesus is nailed to the cross.** We think and pray for all who are in pain, and especially the pain that is inflicted by others. **R.**

† **Jesus dies on the cross.** We remember those we know who have died during the past year. We give thanks for what they have given to us. **R.**

† **Jesus is taken down from the cross.** We pray for all who support the bereaved. **R.**

† **Jesus is laid in the tomb.** Lord help us to reflect upon our lives and what we hopefully achieve in your name. We are only mortal and yet our faith leads us to where we are now in following the journey you took through the streets of Jerusalem, knowing that that journey did not end there but was transformed by the resurrection of Easter Day.

Lord of our journey, help us as we travel. Amen.

(Canon Chris Bishop)

Sunday March 15th - Visit of Lynne Treneary (St Mary's CMS link partner)

Lynne is coming to spend a day with us on SUNDAY MARCH 15th. She will be interviewed in the Morning Service which will be followed by a presentation and pot luck lunch at 12 o'clock and finally she is going to be with *Aftershock* later on in the day/evening. Those who have been reading her Link Letters and updates or came to her last lunch presentation will know that she has a great ability to inspire and challenge as well as broaden our faith. If you haven't been following her in the newsletters do come and find out whom we support and I believe you will be glad you came! For further information contact Sue Walker at suewalker619@btinternet.com



Friends of Saffron Walden Parish Church

A Date for your Diary

Following a successful trip to Peterborough Cathedral last year the Friends are arranging a trip to **Lincoln Cathedral on Monday 8th June.** Further details and forms will be available on the Friends Bookstand in due course.

Pamela Mugliston, Secretary of the Friends



Talking Donkey: a woodcut from the Cologne Bible of 1478

The RSPCA was the first national animal welfare society in the world and was founded in 1824 by an Anglican priest, the Revd Arthur Broome. He asked the question, 'Can the infliction of cruelty on any being which the Almighty has endued with feelings of pain and pleasure consist with genuine and true benevolence?'

In the bible story of Balaam and his donkey (Numbers 22), Balaam has not heeded God's will, and as he journeys, an angel bars his way. Balaam cannot see the angel, but his donkey can. Three times the animal turns away. Three times he is beaten by his owner, and eventually the donkey asks, 'Why are you beating me when I have served you faithfully?' Balaam's eyes are opened: he sees the angel and his heart repents.

This story is captured in a vivid woodcut from the Cologne Bible of 1478. It was a translation into Low German and enhanced by colourful illustrations. We can



see Balaam on his donkey in the countryside. He has raised his hand to strike, unaware that the donkey has seen the angel of God. As we look and ponder this story, we can remember that cruelty and abuse mark out life today with children, vulnerable adults, and all creatures great and small. The donkey calls us to think of how we treat creation around us.

Donkeys can be stubborn, but they are also signs of humility, patience and hard work. It might be Dapple with Sancho Panza in the story of Don Quixote, or Tim Moore travelling the camino with his donkey in 'Spanish Steps.' And in the Gospels, we recall the donkey in the Christmas story and the donkey that bore Jesus into Jerusalem on the first Palm Sunday. We celebrate that day next month: the humble donkey sharing in the triumph of that entry, just as he shares with all animals in the wonder of creation. G K Chesterton's poem reminds us that the donkey may be starved, scourged and derided, but he had that special hour of glory. 'There was a shout about my ears and palms before my feet.'

The Revd Michael Burgess, Parish Pump



*Aftershock dressed to serve dinner and entertain their guests.
Photograph: Martin Hugall*

Youth Group Dinner and Soirée

Aftershock raise over £3,900 for charity for homeless

On 11th January, Aftershock welcomed 68 guests, including Councillor Arthur Coote, Mayor of Saffron Walden, to enjoy a sumptuous 3-course meal and entertainment in the Parish Rooms. The evening was hosted by two young comperes who introduced the guests to entertainment by the young people showcasing their talents which included musical renditions on the piano, cello and clarinet, ending with a comical sketch. Matt Williamson enthused, 'Aftershock has many talented young people and it's great to have the opportunity to use their gifts to serve others and raise money for a great cause'.

This was the sixth year that Aftershock had arranged such an event, the purpose of which is to raise money for Jimmy's Night Shelter in Cambridge. Barry Griffiths, from Jimmy's said, 'At Jimmy's we are really blessed by support from Aftershock. It is a genuine pleasure to meet and chat with all of the people who attend and we are astounded by the generosity over the years, culminating in such an amazing amount raised this year. Thank you so much to all who gave and all who have participated and organised the event. Your donations allow us to develop our service and continue to support those who need our services. Thank you all.'

More information about Jimmy's Night Shelter is available at
www.jimmyscambridge.org.uk

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