

# Parish News

St Mary the Virgin, Saffron Walden

St John, Little Walden and St James, Swards End

Part of Saffron Walden & Villages Team Ministry

October 2020

FREE

## The Day I Met Inspector Montalbano



I wonder if you watch the fictional Inspector Montalbano, Saturday nights BBC4, but no series at present. He is a detective based in the south of Sicily. I was first attracted by the opening titles, where a plane (or drone) flies over the area, Ragusa, Punta Secca, Modica and Scicli in particular. Kathleen Huey and I booked a package holiday staying in Scicli (pronounced Sheekley) which is home to the fictional Police Station.

Our hotel was conveniently placed in the centre of town and we enjoyed spotting the locations we had seen on TV. We used the local bus and train and hired a car for a few days to explore further afield. One morning our hotel host told us there was a film crew in town so we walked round to the 'Police Station' The main street was cordoned off with lots of screens and cameras. We managed to peep through the screens to the steps, where all the action was taking place. A real 'baddie' in a blue shirt was being dragged up the steps into the Police Station. We decided we would recognise the episode when it eventually reached the British TV screens!



*Continued on inside back cover...*

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## PARISH NEWS - EDITORIAL DEADLINE

The deadline for contributions for each issue is the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month. Hence, the deadline for the **November** issue is **Sunday 4th Oct.**

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Photograph by Andy Colebrooke

## During the lockdown...

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## St Mary's Church Website:

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## Pastoral Letter

From The Rev'd Alex Jeewan

Dear friends

If we can agree on anything, then surely it must be that this has been a year of new challenges, the like of which we have never experienced before. Things have not returned to any sense of normality and the future is still rather uncertain. This has affected, of course, both the Church and wider society as a whole.

I would definitely say the biggest personal new challenge that has come to me and my family is my eldest son leaving home for university. This is the first time I have experienced a child leaving home and it has left me with mixed emotions. A mixture of excitement for my son, anxiety that he will be happy and sadness that he is not living with us.

I am reminded of the parable of the prodigal son. In the story, a father has two sons. The younger son asks for inheritance from his father, who freely grants his son's request. This son, however, is wasteful and extravagant, squandering his fortune and eventually becoming destitute. As a consequence, he now must return home empty-handed and intend to beg his father to accept him back as a servant. To the son's surprise, he is not scorned by his father but is welcomed back with celebration and a welcoming party. Envious, the older son refuses to participate in the festivities. The father tells the older son: 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life...'

Possibly, having two sons provides me with a sense of empathy, although I am not suggesting for a moment that either of my sons will squander their inheritance or be jealous of the other! However, I am reminded of God's unrelenting love for each and every one of us.

God loves us like any good parent does and has also demonstrated what sort of parents we should be. God allows us, his children, to make decisions for ourselves, to go our own way and He does not coerce us to love him. Whatever way we choose, he always welcomes us back with loving arms. Another important lesson, however, is learnt from the elder brother.



This brother thinks that he needs to earn the father's love. He has worked hard all his life and has stood by his father, yet his younger brother treats his father badly, takes him for granted and yet is welcomed with open arms.

The same Father who loves the younger son, despite his flaws and sought him out when he was lost, also seeks us out. Just as He left the party long ago to meet his older son, He still leaves the banquet table, the dancing and the partying, and meets US, where we are, with that same, gentle invitation, 'Come to the feast.'

So, finally, as new challenges come forth, we must remember that we are all worthy of God's love and no one is exempt. So in our darkest days we are always welcomed, loved and all called to join in the celebration of being part of the fellowship of God, bought by the precious blood of our saviour Jesus Christ.

With love,

Alex.

## From the Registers

### *Weddings*

*We congratulate and send our best wishes and prayers to: -*

1 August Katie Hasler and Charlie Horten-Middleton (Sewards End)



### *Funerals*

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

2 July John Read 22 July Ronald Kitson

7 July John Ellingham 28 July Keith Start

10 July Christine Wood 29 July Beryl Love

14 July Marjorie Sharman 30 July Ruth Willett

22 July Rosina Wilson

7 August Betty Barker 25 August Elizabeth Jones

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



## Let's grasp the scale of the Challenge

532 **billion** tonnes of ice were lost from Greenland in 2019 – the most since records began. It is an incomprehensibly huge figure. That equates to about a million tonnes per minute; enough to fill seven Olympic-sized swimming pools *per second*. Mind boggling!

Just a year ago it was predicted that land that is currently home to 300 million people will flood at least once a year by 2050 unless carbon emissions are cut significantly and although this figure was a revision of the previous estimate of 80 million, it looks as though it will have to be revised upwards yet again.

Mankind has set something in motion over the last 200 years which seems unstoppable, but stop it we must! I imagine that when such vast populations lose their homes, livelihoods and lands, societies will become extremely unstable, politics polarized, migration will accelerate and conflicts for resources will become intense.

Meanwhile the crisis is accelerating. Temperatures in the Arctic are rising at double the rate of lower latitudes and the 2019 loss of Greenland ice was double the previous annual average of 255 billion tonnes. Almost that amount was lost in July 2019 alone.

It is scientific data like this that often brings me to the point of despair. Greta Thunberg criticized world leaders for failing to achieve any progress during the two years since she started her school strike. But things *have* started to change. A UDC working party zoom meeting I attended in August discussed the issues of the climate and biodiversity crises in terms that would have been unthinkable two years ago. The BBC is now covering the issue without feeling that they have to wheel out a climate change denier for the sake of 'balance' and even Google has stopped funding organizations that deny or work to block action on the climate crisis.

Most of all, each and every one of us is directly experiencing the effects of extreme weather events, even in our most benign and temperate location on the planet. The trouble is that we keep getting distracted by issues that seem more immediate and acute: whether by Brexit or the coronavirus, which has set the COP 26 Climate conference in Glasgow back a year.

It would help if we started to see the interconnectedness of all these things.

*Continued on page 13...*





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*Continued from page 7...*

At a UN summit on biodiversity, scheduled to be held in New York in September, scientists are to warn world leaders that increasing numbers of deadly new pandemics will afflict the planet if levels of deforestation and biodiversity loss continue at their current catastrophic rates.

There is apparently now clear evidence of strong links between environmental destruction and the increased emergence of deadly new diseases such as Covid-19. Rampant deforestation, uncontrolled expansion of farming and the building of mines in remote regions are creating a 'perfect storm' for the spillover of diseases from wildlife to people.

Our behaviours are creating these problems, so it must equally lie in our power to put things right.

Edward Gildea, Eco Team leader

Gelio



Due to the fall in Sunday collections during this difficult time, today's Sermon has been sponsored by Cartwright's Conservatories,  
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## Gardening Notes

### August

I can't believe it's the end of July already; we're just into our major cropping time - tomatoes, cucumbers, courgettes, lettuce and beetroot; my early potatoes - Rocket - are up and bagged, main crop - Cara - following at this month's end; runner and climbing french beans are ready and first picking done. Although it sounds a lot the amount of individual planting is kept small - my climbing beans, for instance, are about an 8 ft run for each and therefore easily manageable, especially as I use an existing extended archway, the other side of which is sweet peas and always looks good.



We have a purple hazel tree in the middle of a fairly large circular bed and this year it's been magnificent; it was well pruned several years ago and the benefit really shows in the shape and height as well as it providing a good spot for shade loving plants; some heucheras, daphne bushes with, in Autumn and Spring, cyclamen and various bulbs.

Grass cutting chores continue, fortunately dealt with by Ashley, our visiting help!

### September

I am writing at the beginning of September; bright sunshine today and I've just been outside, picking tomatoes in the greenhouse - they're nearly finished - and outdoor varieties now doing very well. One of those is a yellow variety called 'Golden Sunrise' which I grow from seed, and they are delicious: I shall certainly repeat them, noting that germination was only about 40%.

Doesn't the garden look good in September, flowering and fruiting at a peak: even the potatoes look good with their purple and white flower atop the dark green of the haulms. The pots and baskets are this year laden with geraniums, to be followed with some short stemmed tulips: they will take us through to next Spring, and in the meantime think of what to follow.

The hedges and bushes have this year grown very strongly, so now I've to think of their cutting. The back hedges are thick and dense, about 11 feet tall and 150 feet long and so will need a team of two with ladders; the front hedge we keep down to about 6 feet. We have it all cut twice in the year and this is normally sufficient to keep it in good order.

Enjoy your garden!

Charles White



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## St Mary's Music News

Back to school, back to the office, shops and cafes, but best of all, back to the choir! Zoom practices began again at the beginning of September with a lengthy programme of music, some familiar and some new. An outdoor rehearsal is planned for the adult choir at the end of September, suitably distanced and weather permitting. The Junior Choir will be the first group to start indoor practices in mid-September, and it is hoped that they will be leading the singing in Family Services. It will be strange for all of us to see other choristers in real life, and to remember that they are three dimensional entities with legs and feet!

Of course the choir has not been idle over the summer. On 26 July Jeremy Allen's new anthem *Song of Hope*, based on words written in her diary by the teenage Anne Frank while she was in hiding in Amsterdam during World War II, was given its world premiere as a recording in the online services as reflective music. The first verse was performed largely by the Junior Choir, with the full choir joining in as the music developed.

At the end of term rehearsal we celebrated Oli King's 10 years as Director of Music at St Mary's with a surprise gift delivery, including a Royal College of Organists Fellowship hood. Oli has not only strengthened the Junior Choir, but has also established the missing link between the Juniors and adults with the very successful introduction of the new role of Choral Scholars. This year may have been his greatest challenge yet, after the initial audition of course. We are all very grateful for the hard work and ingenuity he has put in to keeping the musical life of the church going during the pandemic.

In mid-August Patrick Li and Oli masterminded a Plainsong Workshop, as a precursor to a moving online service of *Compline* which many of the choir and congregation attended. Further plainsong works are scheduled for the autumn.

Meanwhile, the choir has made a recording of Stanford's *Magnificat* in G, which is due to be played during St Mary's Patronal Festival and other services on Sunday 13 September. Once again, enormous thanks are due to Peter De Vile who undertook the difficult task of meshing all the individual recordings into one harmonious whole.

The new academic year marks some departures. Sophie Ollerenshaw, James Marsh and Elliott Randall are all moving on. Sophie and James have been members of the choir since they were junior trebles, rising to become senior Choral Scholars, and frequent soloists in services. As their swan song, they will

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be 2 of the 4 choristers at the Patronal Festival. Elliott, our first Organ Scholar of recent times, has somehow crammed 4 or 5 years of learning into just 2, under the generally benevolent guidance of Oli and Jeremy. All 3 scholars will leave significant gaps to be filled, not only in terms of musical and social contributions, but also in acting as role models for today's Juniors. We hope that they will, like many before them, return from time to time to enhance the musical life of the church.



Elliott Randall

Sophie Ollerenshaw

James Marsh

Finally, at this time of uncertainty and change, here are the words from Anne Frank's Diary which Jeremy set to music in Song of Hope:

Think of all the beauty still left around you, and be happy.  
Where there's hope there's life.  
It fills us with fresh courage  
And makes us strong again.

How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.

Otilie Lefever

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## All in the month of October

### It was:

40 years ago, on **3<sup>rd</sup> October 1980** that the Housing Act came into effect in Britain, giving more than five million council tenants the right to buy their homes.

70 years ago, on **7<sup>th</sup> October 1950** that Mother Teresa founded what would become the Missionaries of Charity, in Kolkata, India.

100 years ago, on **7<sup>th</sup> October 1920** that Oxford University allowed women to become full members and study for full degrees for the first time, and the first 100 women were admitted.

30 years ago, on **8<sup>th</sup> October 1990** that East and West Germany reunited as the Federal Republic of Germany.

80 years ago, on **9<sup>th</sup> October 1940** that during the Blitz, a German bomb destroyed the high altar of St Paul's Cathedral in London.

40 years ago, on **10<sup>th</sup> October 1980** that Margaret Thatcher gave a memorable and defiant speech defending her policies to combat inflation and economic recession. She told the Conservative Party conference in Brighton: 'The lady's not for turning!'

175 years ago, on **12<sup>th</sup> October 1845** that the Quaker Elizabeth Fry, died. This prison reformer and philanthropist was depicted on the British £5 note between 2001 and 2016.

20 years ago, on **17<sup>th</sup> October 2000** that the Hatfield rail crash took place. Four people were killed when a high-speed passenger train derailed because of a cracked rail.

15 years ago, from **18<sup>th</sup> October** that Hurricane Wilma, the most intense Atlantic hurricane ever recorded, caused massive damage worth \$29 billion across the Caribbean, Central America and the eastern USA. 63 people were killed.

500 years ago, on **21<sup>st</sup> October 1520** that Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan's Spanish expedition to the East Indies discovered the Strait of Magellan at the southern tip of Chile.

90 years ago, on **22<sup>nd</sup> October 1930** that the BBC Symphony Orchestra gave its first concert.

# Calendar for October 2020

*The arrangements for streaming services and using Zoom are tentative, so please see The Grapevine or website for the latest information*

## St Mary's, Saffron Walden

Compliance with physical (social) distancing caps the number we can safely have at any one service in St Mary's at 50 (couples and families count as one). In order to be sure of a place, please book online or by contacting the Parish Office and Dawn will reserve your seats. Please leave a message stating the service you wish to book for together with your name, telephone number and postcode by noon on the preceding Friday. You can still just turn up on the day without booking, but if we have reached our maximum numbers, you will not be able to enter the church.

Alternatively, you can watch streamed Sunday services by logging into Youtube via the website: [www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org](http://www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org) or join midweek Zoom services from your phone or computer.

*Sunday 4 October (Trinity 17)*

8am Holy Communion (1662) [streamed]

*Sunday 11 October (Trinity 18)*

10am Holy Communion [streamed and also on Zoom]

*Sunday 18 October (Trinity 19)*

10am Family Service [not streamed]

*Sunday 25 October (Trinity 11)*

10am Holy Communion [streamed and also on Zoom]

## St James', Swards End

*Sunday 11 October (Trinity 18)*

9.30am Harvest

*Sunday 25 October (Trinity 20)*

9.30am Holy Communion

## St John's, Little Walden

*Sunday 11 October (Trinity 18)*

11.15am Harvest

*Sunday 25 October (Trinity 20)*

11.15am Holy Communion

### Additional Zoomed only services

See weekly email for sign in details

#### Sunday 4th October

10am Holy Communion

#### Tuesdays

5pm Zoom Evening Prayer

#### Wednesdays

9.30am Zoom Holy Communion

## A Challenge to Chelmsford Diocese Mothers' Union on Mary Sumner Day – 9<sup>th</sup> August 2020

*Jesus put before them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make their nests in its branches.'*  
Matthew 13: 31 – 32

The last few months, during the pandemic, have shown us the devastating and often deadly, effects of a microscopic virus, a small organism which has disrupted and disturbed our lives. After what we have all gone through, it may be difficult to think of the old saying: 'good things come in small packages' but looking at the reading from St Matthew's Gospel, we hear of how Jesus said that the Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed - a small seed which grows into a huge bush.

Thinking of how a large plant can grow from a small seed reminds us of the beginnings of Mothers' Union - Mary Sumner was one person – a small seed; nearly one hundred and fifty years ago and from Mary's idea, grew the huge international organization that is MU today.

Similarly, our faith and the Kingdom of God may start small, but God makes it grow and invites us to work with him for his Kingdom. What a privilege that is ..... but it's too easy to say 'I don't have enough faith so God can't use me'. He doesn't ask us to have great faith, he doesn't ask us to do more than we're able but, if we allow him to use the faith we do have, to work through us for the sake of his Kingdom, what great things can be achieved.



Judith Meaden, President of Chelmsford Diocese Mothers' Union

*Continued on page 20...*

In this difficult time when we can't meet together; I ask that each of us pray about how we can reach out further into our communities with God's love, and see the Kingdom grow in the name of Mothers' Union. We can only do this if we are prepared, ourselves, to have a vision for that growth. The Kingdom of God may start small, but with God's blessing it will grow and make a difference and we are invited to be part of that future growth.

2021 is election year in preparation for the new Triennium in 2022 and here in the diocese, we will need a new Diocesan President, Vice Presidents, Deanery Chairmen and Branch Leaders and I ask each and every one of you to think and ask yourself - as a member of Mothers' Union: What value do I put on my relationship with God and on his Kingdom? Where does my relationship with God come in my order of priorities? Do I value God's Kingdom? What is God asking me to do for the sake of his Kingdom in his work through Mothers' Union? Christ gave all for each one of us and, as I ask myself, I ask you to ask yourself too - Is there anything I wouldn't do for him in the name of Mothers' Union?

Judith Meaden

President of Chelmsford Diocese Mothers' Union



### **Mary Sumner's Personal Prayer**

All this day, O Lord, let me touch as many  
lives as possible for thee;  
and every life I touch, do thou by thy spirit  
quicken,  
whether through the word I speak, the  
prayer I breathe, or the life I live.  
Amen



**British Summer time ends  
on Sunday 25th October**

Clocks go back one hour.

The image features a decorative border of small, identical clock icons surrounding the central text. The central text is in red and black, and the main illustration shows two analog clocks. The left clock has the hour hand at 10 and the minute hand at 2, representing 10:10. A large, bold arrow points from this clock to the right clock, which has the hour hand at 9 and the minute hand at 2, representing 9:10. This visualizes the 'clocks go back one hour' message.

*Paddy McKeown*



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Looks like the sexton went to Spain after all, and is still in quarantine.



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## **YOU**inthe(**PEW**) Choir Stall

interviewed by Chris Bishop

### **Noel Starr**

*During the lockdown as Noel was not 'near by' I sent him suggested questions and the following is his 'at distance interview' for this edition of the Parish News. Chris*



I was born in Abergavenny, South Wales and grew up nearby, in Brynmawr, a hill town on the eastern flanks of the Brecon Beacons and that time in the County of Brecon. I was confirmed into the Church in Wales, our diocese was Swansea & Brecon, and we looked north to Brecon & Mid-wales rather than south 'down the valleys'. My heart is still in Wales and we go back when we can, but our roots are very much now in Saffron Walden. Our three children grew up and went to school here and our son Daniel returned here after working for ten years in the USA.

In 1972 the job I had in Yorkshire disappeared and I was made redundant. We came to Saffron Walden in May that year when I found new work. I came to St Mary's on my first Sunday. St Mary's was the Parish Church and the church has always been a central part of my life. On that Sunday I was introduced to the then Curate, a certain John Sibson!

In 48 years there have been many events we remember, but probably the most outstanding and enjoyable was the wedding of our daughter Sarah to her long time sweetheart, Andrew. The ceremony took place, of course, in St Mary's. Bride and Groom then walked from the Church to our house, through the Market Place, followed by all the families and guests. All in the market cheered. We had 150 people to a sheep roast in the garden and at the end of the afternoon we had a 'bridal special' on the Audley End Railway.

Other things that come to mind include 'Saffron Walden goes on to off-peak sewage'! In 1972, when we were looking for our house, this was the

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headline in the local paper. There was a need to expand the infrastructure to cope with expansion of the town beyond 8000 people. An acrimonious debate took place in the town about the need to expand into part of Audley Park and a temporary solution was a storage tank, emptied at night, close by new houses.

A major upheaval in the church was a disagreement between the then Choirmaster and the Rector. I was Sub-deacon on the Sunday it all came to a head. The all-male choir was disbanded, much to the annoyance of many non-church-goers in the town. Subsequently after the appointment of Andrew Malcolm as the New Director of Music, the choir was reformed as a mixed choir and has gone from strength to strength under his leadership, followed by our current director, Oli King. I was a founder member of the 'new' choir and singing in it is one of my joys.

All three of our children became servers at St Mary's, following Confirmation. Originally the Guild was all male. Immediately after her Confirmation service, daughter Sarah went up to the Rector and said 'My brother became a server when confirmed. Can I now become a server?' The result was that girls and ladies were invited to join the Guild of Servers. One of that first group, the late Revd. Joy Russel-Smith went on to become ordained as a result of the innocent question.

When asked about a family coat of arms, I am at a loss to think of a design, but my motto would be 'I serve'. I was brought up in a family where the church was always a central part of our life and being active in the Church and serving the community around it has always seemed normal. The idea of 'service' is a practical expression of our faith.

Noel Starr

## Smile Lines

An oxymoron walks into a pub, and the silence is deafening.

A simile walks into a pub, as parched as a desert.

A hyphenated word and a non-hyphenated word walk into a pub and the landlord nearly chokes on the irony.



## **Hearing Help Essex** **NHS Hearing Aid Support Service**

Due to Covid-19 we cannot resume our Hearing Help Sessions at our community venues just yet, but the good news is we're able to offer appointments at our new Resource Centre on Moulsham Street in central Chelmsford, and also offer a door-step service for those who are Housebound, shielding, or have reduced mobility.

We are following Covid-19 guidance and are able to adhere to 2m social distancing. If you would like to book an appointment, or be added to our contact list so we can let you know when your nearest session will resume, please contact us on the details below.

If you have an urgent issue with your hearing aid, or need batteries, please contact your Audiology Department direct who will be able to help you.

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*Please mention Parish News when responding to an advertisement.*

## Prayer for the month of October

*provided by the Prayer Team*

During the last months many of us have taken an extra interest in our gardens, perhaps discovering afresh - or maybe for the first time - the joy and pleasure (and sheer hard work!) this can bring. So this prayer by Richard Foster seems an apt reminder of Jesus' words: "I am the true vine and my Father is the gardener" (John 15:1).

And then below the much older, much loved words of Julian of Norwich, reminding us that, no matter how much the 'earth' of our lives is disturbed, God holds us in his loving arms.

Spirit of the living God, be the Gardener of my soul.  
For so long I have been waiting, silent and still -  
experiencing a winter of the soul.

But now:

Clear away the dead growth of the past,  
Break up the clods of custom and routine,  
Stir in the compost of vision and challenge,  
Bury deep in my soul the implanted Word,  
Cultivate, water and tend my heart,  
Until new life buds and opens and flowers.  
Amen.

Richard Foster (adjusted)

But all shall be well,  
and all shall be well,  
and all manner of things shall be well.

Julian of Norwich



*Clifford Want continues his series on Hymn writers*

## Matthias Claudius

### *We plough the fields and scatter*



*We plough the fields and scatter* was written by Matthias Claudius (15 August 1740 – 21 January 1815), a poet and journalist, but was never intended as a hymn.

Claudius was born at Reinfeld in Holstein, son of a Lutheran pastor. He entered Jena University in 1759 as a student of theology, but with ill health, and finding little attraction in the Rationalism of Jena, he turned to law and languages.

In 1768, after a short time as private secretary to a Danish count, he joined the Hamburg News Agency. Moving to Wandsbeck, near Hamburg, in 1771 he undertook the editing of the literary portion of the *Wandsbecker Bote*, and contributed a number of poems to the *Göttingen Musen-Almanach*. He was a member of a circle of contributors that fought against the prevailing rationalist and Classical spirit and sought to preserve a natural and Christian atmosphere in literature.

In 1776 he was appointed a Commissioner of Agriculture and Manufactures of Hesse-Darmstadt, and in 1777 editor of the official Hesse-Darmstadt newspaper, which he conducted in the same spirit as the *Wandsbeck Bote*. During a severe illness in 1777 he realised the spiritual emptiness of the life at Darmstadt; and renouncing position and income, he returned to Wandsbeck to re-edit the *Bote*, which he conducted in a distinctively Christian spirit. In 1788 he received a sinecure from the Crown Prince of Denmark as auditor of the Schleswig-Holstein Bank at Altona.

In many of his essays and poems there was a vein of extravagant humour or even burlesque, while others were full of quiet meditation and solemn sentiment. While much of his poetry was distinctively Christian in its spirit, and many of his pieces might rank as popular sacred songs, he wrote no hymns designed for use in Church. Three pieces have, however, passed into hymn-books, all of which have been translated into English. *We plough the fields and scatter* occurs in a sketch entitled, *Paul Erdmann's Fest*. The neighbours are represented as coming to Paul's house and there singing this "Peasants' Song". The partial translation in common use was a

free rendering by Jane Montgomery Campbell, published in 1861.

He was forced by war to flee Wandsbeck in 1813, and was unable to return till May, 1814. The next year he moved to the house of his eldest daughter in Hamburg, and died there on 21 January 1815.

Clifford Want



## Is religion bad for us?

I was once the rector of Mistley with Manningtree on the south bank of the Stour, near Harwich. The church there has a wall plaque which records a grizzly event that took place on 15th June 1555. On that day a Christian man with strong protestant convictions, Thomas Osmond, was publicly burned in Manningtree marketplace. This happened during the short but turbulent reign of Queen Mary, daughter of Henry VIII. Mary had strong Catholic convictions and attempted to reverse the

protestant reformation in England and return the Church to Rome. Poor Thomas Osmond was burned for his non-attendance at mass at Easter. He was burned by fellow Englishmen who also had strong convictions and who also called themselves Christians. During this period of our history Catholics burned Protestants and Protestants burned Catholics in a power struggle to control what people believed and how they behaved, with no thought of tolerance for other views.

Perhaps that is an extreme example but it does beg an important question: is religion a bad thing? The atheist Richard Dawkins and his supporters say that it is, arguing that we would be better off without it. He wears a T-shirt with the logo: 'RELIGION – together we can find the cure.' But do we want a cure? Do all the world's religions, in themselves, lead to conflict, hatred, and violence?

It cannot be denied that wars and atrocities have taken place in the name of religion, with Christendom having its fair share of blood on it's hands.

*Continued on page 31...*



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But can religion per se be the root cause of such suffering? Or does religion in fact offer us something highly beneficial for forming and safeguarding healthy societies, and combatting intolerance?

It certainly cannot be blamed for all the ills of the twentieth century. Nazism is a secular ideology, as is Communism. Neither Hitler nor Stalin nor Pol Pot were religious types, but their regimes led to terrible oppression resulting in huge loss of life.

Today we may most readily connect violence with fundamentalist Islam. On the surface terror groups like ISIS and Boko Haram justify their violence by reference to the Qur'an. However, the philosopher Keith Ward likens Jihadist Islam as akin to a form of Marxism: 'Jihadists take no notice of Muslim tradition or of Qur'anic statements about the compassion and mercy of God. ...Then by a Marxist inversion of Islam, they conclude the goal of history lies in a pure Islamic society and is to be attained by violence and terror. That, for most Muslims, is a completely unacceptable step.'

Perhaps it's not religion that causes intolerance, but rather it's intolerance that hides behind religious language in order to achieve its goals. The true root of violence is to be found in the human heart, where greed, malice and hatred can lurk. Rather than being the root of our problems, religion may actually be seen as part of the solution. For it can awaken the human conscience to see what is good, right, fair and loving. It can give us a basis on which to deduce such values, as well as the motivation to try to live by them. Of course, having said all this, it should also be said that many, many non-religious people live good lives that bless society.

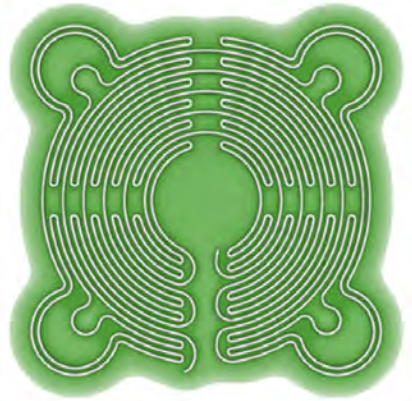
Is peace on earth a viable possibility? As a Christian I would say 'no, not on our own', precisely because of the condition of the human heart. At the core of the Christian faith is the cross of Christ, where Jesus refused to grab power and manipulate others. Instead he soaked up all the anger and evil that was heaped upon him in order to break the cycle of violence. Only with God's help can we learn to walk this way of peace and love our enemies.

Back in Manningtree there is a small, but not insignificant, sign of hope. Thomas Osmond's plaque was erected centuries after the event, I think, to make a statement about the protestant views of those who organized it. However, at the invitation of our bishops, the building is now shared with a Roman Catholic congregation (although sadly as yet, not services). I often wondered what the two congregations made of that plaque, as beneath it, they worshipped the same God.

Andy Colebrooke

## Can you help The Transition Project?

The Transition Project had its origins in December 2009 with some members of St Mary's supporting one another to find work at a time when work was hard to find. From their own experiences, the founders recognised that a good CV was vital if they were to get an interview and that all important job offer. It was quickly realised that as well as helping themselves this would be an important service to anyone else facing the same problem. Thus, The Transition Project was born. Run entirely by volunteers and supported by the PCC we have had over 1500 client visits.



No two clients are alike and their backgrounds range from those offering practical skills or experience but minimal qualifications to those with advanced technology and senior management experience.

The Transition Team are called upon to help with a very wide range of requests from those looking for jobs. These requests include help with job identification and search, CV preparation, Application Letter review, Department for Work and Pensions registration and email address generation or recovery. Some clients have specific requirements such as part time working or returning to work after raising a family. All appreciate support and encouragement. Clients may arrive with a near perfect CV, others have nothing written and have never needed a CV before.

Fortunately, none of Team members have to know all the answers, but by working together (and the help of Google) we have been able to help many clients find the job they are seeking.

Team members are not able to help with formal financial, medical or legal queries, but we have good cooperation with other organisations such as the Citizens Advice Bureau and Uttlesford Frontline which provide formal advice in these areas.

The 2009 unemployment problem was caused by the Financial Crash. The current Covid crisis is predicted to cause even greater unemployment problems and there are fears that the existing Transition team could become overwhelmed. In the past we have been able to assist some clients by email and phone. However, we are now necessarily moving into the somewhat unknown and untried method of remote working from home instead of face to face contact in the Parish Room for all our clients.

Since the start of the Transition Project many of our Founder members have



found work, moved away or died. This was not a problem until March as the client load had also reduced due to the high employment in the area. We now need extra helpers who can spare say two or three hours a week to help us provide the support that clients will need. Ideally you will have some experience of interviewing people together with basic computing skills to help with preparing CVs etc. We expect that anyone joining us will work alongside existing team members to get used to the way of working. Please contact me if you would like to explore what is entailed. Working with the team has also proved that this can be a valuable addition to your own experience and CV if you are currently seeking work.

Should you know of anyone that would like help with job searching, CV writing etc please encourage them to contact us. We are planning to restart formally on Tuesday 6 October but an email to [swtransitionproject@gmail.com](mailto:swtransitionproject@gmail.com) will be answered. Also a phone call to 0790 117 3763 on a Tuesday 10.00 – 16.00 (ideally 10.00-12.00) will be followed up.

Gerald Gardner



## Archive Group *findings...*

October 1940



My Dear Parishioners

The last few weeks have even marked by the brilliant achievements of our airmen both in attack and defence and by the almost equally heroic endurance of the civil population in London especially in the face of repeated raids resulting in the ruin of many homes and businesses, yet failing completely to cow the spirit of the sufferers or weaken their resolution to bear anything rather than Nazi Domination. The Day of National Prayer, on September 8<sup>th</sup>, bore speedy fruit for it was followed a week later by the destruction of 178 German aircraft and the appointed Collect in the Prayer Book for use 'in time of War and Tumults' and its fervent petition 'confound their devices' has also been richly answered. I know of no supplication better adapted to the present emergency or more clearly and briefly expressive of our needs, hopes and desires.

.....

It is difficult to make any definite statement as to the plans for the coming Winter. You will see what we propose to do, Mr Hitler permitting, in another column. One thing however is certain, viz that on October 6<sup>th</sup> we must revert to 3 pm evensong both here and at Swards End. I know well how distasteful this hour is to the great majority but the only alternative is to black out the Parish Church at a price altogether prohibitive, so much of it being simply glass.

Yours sincerely,  
I. Hughes

*Continued from inside front cover...*



The actors took a break and we saw Mimi (Cesari Bocci) and took his photo. He saw us, waved and came over to the barrier to meet us. He speaks a little English so we asked him for a photo and autograph, to which he readily agreed.



We turned round and almost bumped into Fazio (Peppino Mazzotta) and so had the same conversation with him, gaining photos and autograph. We saw the 'Main Man' in the distance, chatting away on his phone, but we didn't get a chance to speak to him. We felt like teenage groupies but had had an enjoyable morning!

About a week later, on the last day of our holiday, we had to wait around all day for an evening flight. We had planned to visit a gallery, but the staff told us the film crew was back in town. We hot-footed it back to the 'Police Station' and watched what we could. There were even more screens up so we walked round the streets to approach from a different direction. Luck was with us, Salvo Montalbano (Luca Zingaretti) was walking straight towards us!

A security man saying 'No photo, no photo' was ahead of him and a lady with four shirts on hangers brought up the rear. I walked straight past the security guy with my hand outstretched towards Luca, he smiled at me and grasped my hand. I asked permission to have photos with him and he was more than happy to oblige. Gradually other fans arrived and we made way. I had had a handshake, a little cuddle and a photo with a non-English speaking Italian film star, so returned home a happy bunny!

Lesley A Green



**St Mary's Church, Saffron Walden Website:**  
<https://www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org>