

Parish News

St Mary the Virgin, Saffron Walden

St John, Little Walden and St James, Swards End

Part of Saffron Walden & Villages Team Ministry

May 2021

FREE

Welcome to Bishop Guli

Rt Rev'd Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani completed her ministry as Suffragan Bishop of Loughborough on Easter Day to begin her ministry as Diocesan Bishop of Chelmsford on 19 April; she and her family will be moving to Margaretting in the summer. She is married to Lee, also a priest, and they have three children.

Bishop Guli was born in Iran where her father was Bishop in Iran. When she was 14 her family were exiled on account of the Iranian Revolution and settled in Hampshire. Guli studied Music at

Nottingham University and Theology at Bristol University, before ordination training at the South East Institute of Theological Education. Whilst at Bristol Guli also researched for a Ph.D., her thesis title being: 'Religious feminism in an age of empire: CMS women missionaries in Iran, 1869-1934'.

Bishop Guli has worked across the whole Diocese of Leicester, overseeing work to enable people of diverse cultural backgrounds and heritage to fully participate in leadership and ministry roles within churches, and developing Intercultural Worshipping Communities. Along with the Bishops of Bradford and Durham, Bishop Guli led a service to launch the first bilingual Persian language version of the Church of England's Common Worship Holy Communion liturgy. Hundreds of Iranians from churches around England attended the launch at Wakefield Cathedral in March 2019.

Bishop Guli has been the Chair of Trustees of Launde Abbey, the beautiful Christian Retreat House, that some of us are familiar with, in the Leicestershire countryside. Bishop Guli is now a contributor to BBC Radio 4's Thought for the Day and has given Lent Talks on Radio 4.

Speaking about her appointment, Bishop Guli said: 'It is a great privilege to be appointed as the next Bishop of Chelmsford. I know there are many challenges ahead both in the church and wider society, not least as a result of the pandemic. However, I am hopeful about the future. As Christian communities, I believe our task is to be faithful; to share the good news of Jesus Christ and to continue serving the world; to work well together and in partnership with others. In doing this, we'll discover the extent of God's love.'



Andy Colebrooke (with help from The Diocese of Leicester Website)

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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 **June** issue is **Sunday 2nd May**.

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www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org/parishnews

Front Cover: May in the Cotswolds

Photograph taken by Hilary Davey

During the lockdown...

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The Rector's Letter

From The Rev'd Jeremy Trew

Jeremy writes...

I'm writing this at the beginning of Holy Week, my desk littered with jottings and ideas for services and reflections for the week. This is the middle of the greatest of Christian festivals and one of the busiest times of year for clergy. Yes, we really are expected to work more than one day of the week. The cheek of it!

Looking out of my study window I can see the welcome sight of the garden springing to life and hear the distant wail of a lawnmower calling its faithful to that regular summer ritual of holding back the tide of nature. It will be good not to have any major festivals for a few months and instead turn my attention to other tasks, even the garden.

It would be good, if that were the case, but it is not. During this month we mark the Ascension, the time when the risen Jesus ascended to the Father. Ascension is actually a hugely important event in the shape of the Christian story: Jesus is born at Christmas, dies and rises at Easter, and ascends at Ascension (obvious when you think about it). For Christians its significance is that the story can now continue with a new chapter. Pentecost, and the birth of the Church, becomes possible. In these events the task that Jesus took upon himself in his teaching and serving is transferred to a new body of people, the Church, who are ordained by God to carry on that task until Jesus returns again.

The work of Jesus is, at least in theory, the work the Church tries to do today. Okay, sometimes we get it wrong, even disastrously so. More often we think that Sunday is the task of the Church, when actually it is our day off, the time when we gather together to be refreshed in our faith so that we can continue in God's work the rest of the week. The Roman Catholics recognise this in their eucharistic liturgy, ending with; "The Mass has ended. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord." The word "Mass" from 'missio' means mission and indicates that the Mass celebrated is not just the past hour together in their church building, but the accumulation of the entire past week, finally sanctified in this shared ritual and celebration. They go from here to enjoy their day of rest and return to the mission the following morning. Ultimately, the true meaning of this Christian faith is conveyed, not in our ceremonies and sermons, but in our daily living every day. That's a demanding task but one, as Ascension and Pentecost remind us, we do not struggle with alone.

Warmest wishes

Jeremy



Prayer for the month of May

provided by the Prayer Team

Spirit of God, who speaks to spirits created in your own likeness,
Penetrate into the depths of our spirits,
Into the storehouse of memories remembered and forgotten,
Into the depths of being, the very springs of personality,
And cleanse and forgive, making us whole and holy,
That we may be yours,
And live in the new being of Christ our Lord.
Amen

George Appleton



From the editor...

Although the pandemic has severely restricted many of our Church activities, PARISH NEWS continues to need news items and interesting articles from local sources.

Whilst we are fortunate to have material available from the excellent website 'Parish Pump', what is most prized is material from within our parishes. Your editor will be pleased to receive copy on any topic of general interest to our readers. These can be sent at any time and will be considered for inclusion in future editions. Many thanks in anticipation!



Please note:

1. The opinions expressed in the articles in this magazine are those of the authors.
2. The Editor reserves the right to edit, or exclude, any article submitted. Please be aware when submitting articles 400 words fits comfortably onto a page and that any article over 800 words will need to be edited to ensure readability.
3. Illustrations and photographs are the property of the copyright holders and should not be reused without permission.
4. The Parish News cannot accept responsibility for the goods or services advertised in this magazine - advertisements are accepted in good faith.

Meditations on the birth of a Grandson



Photograph by Mylene2401 for Pixabay

A few weeks ago, I raised a solitary glass of champagne to toast the birth of my fourth grandson. What an amazingly blessed man I am! But within seconds I was choking back tears to think of the appalling legacy I will be leaving him.

Even if we manage to reach global carbon zero by 2050, and hold warming to just 1.5 degrees, the planet will be far less hospitable than the one I inherited. Bush and permafrost fires will still be raging, hurricanes will be more frequent, floods commonplace, prolonged droughts will impact food production and sea level rise will be destabilising vast cities.

It will only be *after* we reach carbon zero that we will start to remove the trillions of tonnes of CO₂ from the atmosphere (we dumped 37 billion tonnes last year alone) and centuries later, the ice sheets might start to reform and the glaciers to recover, delivering their steady meltwater to billions of farmers. Carbon zero is just the starting block for the race our children must run!

Even as we prepare to host COP 26, Rishi Sunak didn't even mention the climate or ecological crises in his budget. While President Biden has earmarked \$2 trillion to finally address climate change, the chancellor prided himself on his £27 billion roadbuilding programme: 'the biggest ever investment in new roads' putting the £3-4bn to support the prime minister's 10-point climate plan totally in the shade.

The government is now only reluctantly reviewing the proposed coal mine in Cumbria, instead of stimulating sustainable jobs there in, for example, Cross

Laminated Timber manufacture for a new, green building industry. Or investing in clean hydrogen or electric arc manufacture of green steel, like Germany, to create new jobs in that forlorn industry. So many exciting possibilities are being ignored!

So what can anyone do that will actually put pressure on a government to take sufficient and imaginative action? The School Strike has been brilliant. It had unarguable logic: What is the point of me educating myself for a planet that will be uninhabitable? It is essentially a protest of self-harm. Historically such



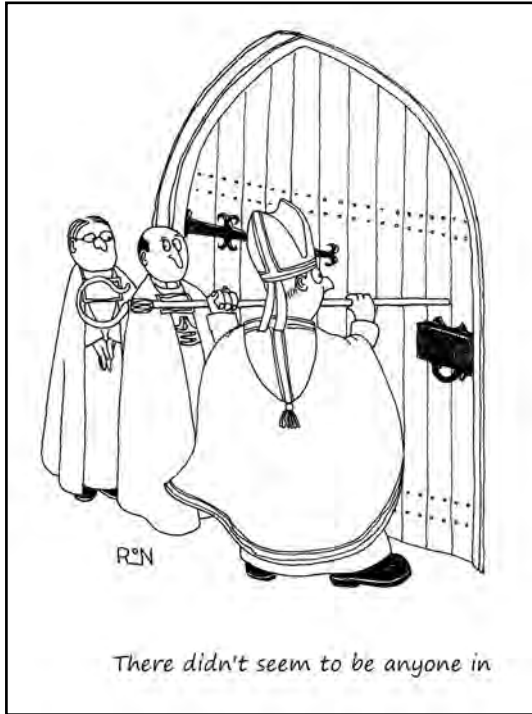
Photograph by Callum Shaw on Unsplash

actions have been very effective: the Suffragettes' and IRA hunger strikes, throwing yourself under the king's horse, the self-immolation of Mohammed Bouazizi which launched the Arab Spring...

It would seem that such actions are going to be all that are left to those of us who want to protest. The proposed Police, Crime and Sentencing Bill will allow police to simply claim any protest is a 'public nuisance' or 'too noisy' or 'hindering people from getting on with their daily lives' before arresting people and making them liable to a 10 year prison sentence. That leaves precious little scope for protests that will secure news coverage! Did our precious democracy and freedoms evolve without any disruption to people's lives?

Still, for the sake of my grandsons, it's a risk I'll have to take.

Edward Gildea
Eco Team Leader



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Archive Group findings...



May 1890

Dear Readers,
Snippets of interest that come from the Churches
within our Deanery

Great and Little Chesterford.

A fire broke out in a cottage the property of Mrs Wakefield, tenanted by T Andrew's, on Wednesday April 2nd, but thanks to the timely help of a number of willing hands, the outbreak was confined to the cottage, which was partially destroyed, whilst no damage was done to any adjacent property. The cause of the fire was probably a flake of burning soot, which fell upon the thatch from a neighbouring chimney.

A meeting of the Horticultural Society was held on Wednesday April 2nd, at the Crown and Thistle, and the Show will probably be held in July, when it is to be hoped better weather than last year will favour the gathering, which is very pleasant in good weather and affords amusement to old and young alike.

Debden.

The Easter Festival.

We were gratified to notice the large attendance of labouring men at these Services. The masters in several instances - would that the godly practice were general!- giving their men a holiday on Good Friday. Easter Eve was devoted to the decoration of the Church, and on Easter Day a veritable transformation scene was the result - beauty and brightness reigning supreme. Debden Church lends itself to decoration.

Littlebury

The fund for providing a new Warming Apparatus for the church grows apace. The following are the subscriptions already promised (a list of 13 sources of donation amounting to) £149.12s.5½d.

Canon Chris Bishop. Archivist

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The Gospel and Technology (Part 1)

Technology can be a 'marmite' experience – you either love it or hate it. It is great when you succeed with something new but when the printer will not cooperate or the Internet connection fails, well, it is not so great. Although its origins are from Greek words – either *techne* (meaning art or craft) and *-ology* (study of) or perhaps *tekhнологia* (systematic treatment) – 'technology' isn't a word found in the bible. However, for hundreds of years, technology has been a blessing to the spread of the gospel and supporting the church. Today, Zoom has become our everyday experience. It has been a blessing to many during the months of lockdown, yet not long ago the concept was still science fiction.

The world's first printing press was invented by Johannes Gutenberg and in 1455 he produced the first printed copy of the bible. He developed his printing press from a wine press, but his key technologies were movable type, a mechanised inking process and an oil-based ink. He printed 180 copies but only 20 complete copies have survived, two of which are in the British Museum.



A metallurgist by trade and a serial inventor by inclination, Gutenberg was born in Mainz c.1398. As so often happens today, the development took much longer than expected and he fell out with his investors. We know all this because some records of the court case, which he lost, have survived.

Some 65 years later, Martin Luther published his 95 theses, attacking the sale of indulgences. Although he had sent them to his Archbishop, they were leaked, translated into German and thousands of copies were printed as pamphlets and distributed widely, triggering the Reformation. Each thesis was just one or two sentences - bullet points in modern parlance. His brevity made it a very manageable job for the printer. Without Gutenberg's invention, Luther's theses might have disappeared without trace. There had been pockets of opposition to the sale of indulgences for at least 250 years but this time the Catholic Church was unable to contain the protests. Within 10 years of Luther's death, the Reformation and the Protestant faith was enshrined in the Peace of Augsburg 1555.

Next month I will look at some more recent applications of technology with an emphasis on overseas missions.

Ian Sutherland



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Gardening Notes

[At the time of writing] we're still unable to get out, but the pleasure we all get from gardening continues, albeit confined to your own. Fortunately, our fortnightly gardener* is still coming and so pruning, winter digging, and general maintenance continue. Our curved and arched trellis, about twelve feet long, has been refurbished, supporting posts replaced and all now wearing a dark green coat: makes a nice feature especially when later clothed with climbing beans on one side, clematis on the other.

It's been quite warm and sunny recently; I sit in the conservatory as I write, looking out at the bulb display - daffodils, hyacinths, and this morning the first appearance of some short tulips. In the greenhouse I started some broad beans, and they are almost ready to go out; in heated trays are tomatoes, courgettes, and cucumbers with climbing beans, runner and French, in small pots: all are covered until they start to show, then uncovered, you don't want them to get leggy.

We've a second, smaller archway, and this is showing signs of advancing senility, sagging and leaning now pronounced: refurbishment is clearly called for, preferably before collapse: I'll have to have a word with Ashley*!

Charles White



Know your Saffron Walden

1. Which shop has this feature above it?



2. In which street will you find this sign?



Answers on page 28

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The Holy Spirit can change our lives.

Pentecost

The celebration of Pentecost this month could be described as a birthday party for the Church, as we remember the gift of the Holy Spirit to the first disciples (Acts 2:1-13). What are we celebrating?

God's Promise:

The disciples obeyed Jesus' instructions as they gathered in the Upper Room: *'Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised'* (1:4). They met expectantly in prayer for God's promised gift. Just as we look forward to birthday presents, how eager are we to receive more of the Spirit in our lives?

God's Power:

'All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit' (2:4). The disciples needed the power of the Spirit to be different: not fearfully gathered behind locked doors, but energised to make Christ known. The Spirit can transform our lives into the likeness of Jesus and give gifts to equip our witness. Although the disciples' experience of this power was overwhelming, it was essentially an encounter with God's love. For us, this can be equally emotional or quiet, but *all* are included, and nobody is excluded from this experience.

God's Purpose:

The disciples *'began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.'* (2:4). The Spirit empowered their witness, so that everyone heard them speaking in their own *'native language'* (lit: *dialect*, 2:8). We all have a story to tell of God's activity in our lives and it's the Spirit who translates our words and actions into a language that those around can understand! At Pentecost, 3,000 people were added to the church in one day! What do we expect of the Spirit in our day?

'Let the Church return to Pentecost, and Pentecost will return to her. The Spirit of God cannot take possession of believers beyond their capacity of receiving Him' (Andrew Murray).

The Rev'd Canon Paul Hardingham (Parish Pump)

Calendar for May 2021

This calendar is provisional and subject to change with government restrictions, see The Grapevine, the church website or weekly bulletin from the Parish Office for the latest information and login details and for services streamed from village churches.

St Mary's, Saffron Walden

Most services, except family services, are broadcast on YouTube [Y] and some on Zoom [Z] - details from the website. Restricted pre-booked congregations can currently be accommodated in church [C] for some services under compliance with current restrictions. The church is currently open for private prayer 2pm - 4pm on Sundays and Wednesdays

Sunday 2 May

8am BCP Holy Communion [C] [Y]

6.30pm H2H - our youth led service - all welcome [C]

Thursday 6 May

1pm Service of Prayer for Wholeness and Healing [C]

Sunday 9 May

10am Holy Communion [C] [Y] [Z]

Thursday 13 May **Ascension Day**

2pm MU Deanery [C]

7.30pm Choral Eucharist [C]

Sunday 16 May

10am Family Service [C]

Sunday 23 May **Pentecost**

10am Holy Communion [C] [Y] [Z]

Sunday 30 May **Trinity Sunday**

10am Holy Communion [C] [Y] [Z]



Regular streamed weekday services -

See weekly bulletin for sign in details.

Tuesdays

5pm Evening Prayer [Z]

Wednesdays

9.30am Holy Communion [Z]

St James', Swards End

Sunday 9 May

9.30am Holy Communion [C]

Sunday 23 May **Pentecost**

9.30am Morning Praise [C]



St John's, Little Walden

Sunday 9 May

11.15am Family Service [C]

Sunday 23 May **Pentecost**

11:15am Holy Communion [C]



From the Registers

Funerals

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

4 March	Gwendoline Pearce
9 March	Beryl Searle
10 March	Mary Mileson
12 March	Angela Wilby Valerie Lester
16 March	Gerald Agnew
23 March	Florence 'Mary' Smallwood
24 March	David Simms
25 March	Joan Cowley
26 March	Arthur Rivett Elizabeth Cowie
30 March	Gwendoline Percival

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"May they rest in peace"*



Paddy McKeown



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Reflections on a shared Lenten Journey - a place of uncertainty?

How would you describe the way in which you came to faith? As a sudden conversion type experience, or as a slower process of exploration and discovery? And how do you think and speak of your faith – as belief in a loving God, or as a personal relationship with Jesus? These were some of the issues that were raised by our Lent study this year, which took as its focus a book entitled ‘Living His Story’ on the topic of evangelism, written by Hannah Steele.

I had invited church members to join me on what I called an ‘accompanied journey’, discussing our responses to the book via Zoom. Twenty-eight of us engaged with the book, one alone, and the others in three different groups. In addition, an ecumenical group of nine in Ashdon has used and discussed weekly the associated small booklet of reflections produced under the banner ‘Live Lent’ and entitled ‘God’s Story, Our Story’. Others of you may have used this booklet on your own.



I am not quite sure what I expected at the outset, although the opportunity to share our faith through group discussions has been for me a lifelong spring of spiritual development. This Lent was no exception. I chose the book for practical reasons: because it was the one recommended for Lent, and came with accompanying videos and study questions. It was generally found to be easy to read, with plenty of lively examples from the author’s experience. In the videos, invited speakers commented on the seven chapters in turn. They were an eminent company: our two archbishops, one bishop and four prominent public evangelists. Although we enjoyed the speakers, we found that most had experiences that were a long way from our own. Archbishop Stephen Cottrell was the exception, seeming to relate to our situation much better than the others.

In each of the groups, different as they were, everyone was willing to contribute and share of their own experience, which was great. What I had not expected was that reading the book would prove for me to be disturbing. I was of course well aware that our broad Church of England is home to a wide range of theological views. But coming face to face with those that differ from your own can be unsettling. And it was that which made the journey a somewhat uncomfortable one for me and for some others – although our discussions all focussed on the positives and on points of common ground.

Continued on page 21...

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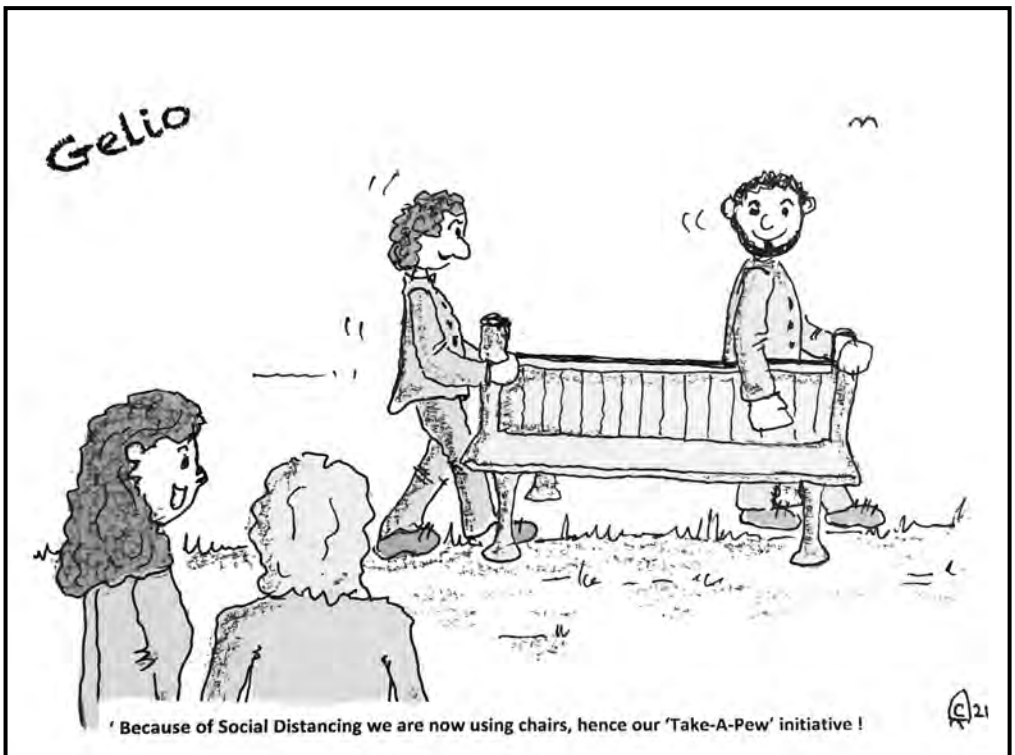
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Funeral Plans



Evangelism is, as the author herself explores, a topic about which many have very mixed feelings – sometimes as a result of damaging past encounters. It was useful to acknowledge and explore this together. The underlying issue was that the book reflected one particular strand of churchmanship, with which we could not all identify. One member suggested that a key question was ‘What is our message?’ It was clear that we would have answered this question not only with differences of emphasis, but perhaps even in ways that others would not find acceptable.

In one of his reflections for Holy Week, our Rector Jeremy suggested that we might go to a place where our faith is unsettled, to a place of uncertainty, and see what God might be saying to us in that place. For me, this journey turned out – unexpectedly - to be such a place, and I think that reflecting upon it will continue for some time. That place of uncertainty is perhaps on our doorstep, within our own church fellowship. If we could do it in love – and preferably in person rather than via Zoom - with respect for our differences, such exploration might help all of us to grow in faith.

Caroline Currer





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St Mary's Music News

The choir was delighted to welcome a new chorister for the first part of our weekly practice on 12 March. Jeremy Trew admitted to having enjoyed life as a treble a 'few' years ago, and joined in enthusiastically with the warm ups for both the Junior and the Adult rehearsals, but understandably is unable to commit to singing full time with either group.

During Lent live music has been provided in services by Oli King and Jeremy Allen on the organ, and by soloists and small family groups singing together. This included four of the services in Holy Week. The choir has also contributed to a livestreamed service of Compline on Maundy Thursday, led once again by Marisa Baltrock.

There have been two full choir recordings. For Palm Sunday the motet was Noel Rawsthorne's 'Hosanna to the Son of David', based on Matthew 21:9. For Easter Day we sang the well known hymn 'This Joyful Eastertide'. Perhaps less well-known is that the music is based on a 17th century Dutch song, arranged by Charles Wood with text by George Woodward.

Instead of the usual Good Friday Devotional Offering the choir put together a series of Daily Reflections of Words and Music for each day from Palm Sunday to Easter Day. (Each day has its individual link from the church website: www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org/easter. The series features daily readings from 'Sounding the Seasons: 70 Sonnets for the Christian Year' by local-ish poet, singer-songwriter, Anglican priest and academic, Malcolm Guite, and a range of organ music played while a devotional painting is displayed on screen.

After a year of virtual meetings and cancelled real life events, it is good to report that consideration is now being given to offering a new organ scholarship in September. More prosaically, the SMMA accounts have been reviewed after a very quiet year financially, and the virtual AGM will take place at 7.30 pm on Friday 30 April. A Zoom link will be posted on the website shortly.

Two members of the Committee have stepped down this year. Karen Goddard joined the Committee four years ago, and has kept the Minutes and organised meetings as Secretary to the Association for the past three years. She will be a very hard act to follow, as I am about to find out. Gill Gibson is leaving the Committee after twelve years, but has kindly agreed to retain the role of Wardrobe Mistress, which is particularly demanding when members of the

Continued on page 25...

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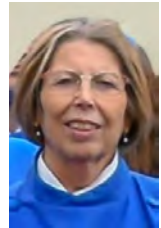
Junior Choir keep growing. No doubt every one of them will need new robes after a year of lockdown.

Although the rules on choirs singing in places of worship have been slightly relaxed under the latest Government guidelines of 26 March, and indeed from Palm Sunday congregations have been allowed to sing in churchyards albeit not inside churches, it is not yet known what further guidelines will be issued. The adult choir are therefore looking forward to receiving their singing masks once the juniors have received theirs. After a full year of rehearsing on Zoom and making smartphone recordings, we are all hoping for more opportunity to make music together in church very soon.

Otilie Lefever.

Tribute to Hilary Parry-Jones

We were all saddened to hear of the unexpected death of one of our loyal and much-valued choir members, Hilary Parry-Jones, on 13 March. Hilary was quietly spoken and not one to seek the limelight but, having got to know her better as a result of singing together and enjoying the occasional coffee in Angela Reed's (in the good old days), I came to appreciate her warm personality and great sense of humour. After Susan Smith relinquished the role of choir librarian, Hilary and Margaret Jacobs took on the job together and they both did a brilliant job keeping all the music in order. Hilary was always keen to join the regular choir social gatherings and it is ironic and poignant that she died exactly a year to the day after the last gathering we were able to enjoy together on 13 March 2020, to celebrate a few choir members' birthdays, just before the first lockdown.



Hilary will be greatly missed, by us all in the choir and by the wider community, especially her family - her daughter Julia and her son Stephen, his wife and her two young grandsons - all of whom she loved spending time with. At choir practice on the last two Fridays before Holy Week, we sang two motets whilst holding Hilary in our thoughts and prayers - Brahms 'How Lovely Are Thy Dwellings' and a chorale from Bach's St Matthew Passion 'O Sacred Head Surrounded'.

Caroline Goulder



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YOUinthe**PEW** interviewed by Chris Bishop**Alison Trew****Where are your roots ?**

I think of myself as a Northerner but actually, I've lived all over the place. I was born in Nottinghamshire. We moved to the other side of the River Trent when I was 11 and I grew up in Gainsborough, Lincolnshire. I went to university in Birmingham, then Leeds (where I met Jeremy). I then moved to Newcastle (and Jeremy to Nottingham). Eventually Jeremy persuaded me to join him in Nottingham and we got married there before moving back to Leeds and later a parish near Harrogate. I would have happily stayed in Yorkshire – but no, Jeremy was offered a job in Devon! We lived there for almost 14 years (the longest I've been anywhere).

**Please tell us about your work**

Originally, I was a research scientist (biochemist) but after a break for family, I trained to be a primary teacher and taught in primary schools in Devon for 9 years. I now work for the Primary Science Teaching Trust, an educational charity that supports primary teachers to develop science in their schools. I write online resources for teachers and provide support in schools. Nowadays, everything I do is online, but I hope to get back into schools soon.

What hobbies or interests do you have?

I love gardening, especially growing fruit and vegetables. I play the clarinet and enjoy playing with other people in wind bands. To keep fit, I do Pilates and walking.

What do you look forward to/hope for, during your time here in Essex?

I hope to join a band and play some music. I intend to plant some fruit bushes, fruit trees, and develop a vegetable plot in the garden. I'm really looking forward

to exploring the countryside of the East of England, going for some long walks with Jeremy and finding a good pub or teashop at the end of it. And I'm looking forward to meeting some people locally.

What would you choose as your family motto ?

You're Trewly Original – be happy with who you are. 😊

Julian of Norwich, a voice from a distant cell

Many years ago, studying English literature at university, I was intrigued to be introduced to the work of Julian of Norwich. She was writing at the end of the 14th century, when our modern English language was slowly emerging from its origins in Anglo-Saxon and Middle English.

Our lecturer was mainly concerned with her importance in the history of the language (she was the first woman, and the first significant writer, to write in English). But I was more intrigued by the ideas she was expressing. She was an anchoress – someone who had committed herself to a life of solitude, giving herself to prayer and fasting. St Julian's, Norwich was the church where she had her 'cell'.

Her masterpiece, *Revelations of Divine Love*, reveals a mystic of such depth and insight that today up and down Britain there are hundreds, possibly thousands, of 'Julian Groups' who meet regularly to study her writings and try to put them into practise.

She is honoured this month in the Lutheran and Anglican Churches (8th May), but although she is held in high regard by many Roman Catholics, her own Church has never felt able to recognise her as a 'saint'. This is probably because she spoke of God as embracing both male and female qualities. *Revelations* is an account of the visions she received in her tiny room, which thousands of pilgrims visit every year.

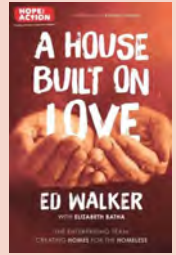
Her most famous saying, quoted by T S Eliot in one of his poems, is 'All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well.' These words have brought comfort and strength to many a soul in distress.

Canon David Winter (Parish Pump)

HOPE Into ACTION

Enabling churches to house the homeless

Ed Walker's book 'A House Built on Love' is about the setting up of the charity 'Hope in Action' (HIA), whose unique purpose is to enable churches to house the homeless. HIA now operates across the country providing 87 homes for a wide range of 'homeless' people, giving direct support to those whom others have often given up on - people in recovery from addiction, people sleeping rough, men, women and children fleeing domestic violence, people coming out of rehab, refugees and those suffering mental health issues. Recently, an ecumenical group of local Christians has been praying about the possibility of setting up such a house, with HIA support, here in Saffron Walden.



Group member David Oelman writes: -

Saffron Walden is a nice place to live, and we often hear that there are no homeless people here, but the pandemic has brought some things into focus more sharply. We have all had to change plans and activities because of coronavirus. There is always someone who needs help, and it is so easy and so quick to lose your job, whilst boredom and loneliness can drive anyone to extremes. Just because we don't see it, doesn't mean that it doesn't exist and just because it happens elsewhere doesn't mean that we cannot help.



We may make donations for the homeless at Christmas, but help is needed throughout the year and seasons. When I was working in London, we had to clear shrubbery beside a motorway where rough sleepers used it for shelter but there was a body that had lain there for at least two years, who knew, who cared? The causes of homelessness are varied but it's well known that accommodation is not the total answer, the lack of social relationships and support or belonging is also part of the problem. Hope into Action addresses these issues by providing the basic necessities as well as good transition services in order to aid the re-integration of people back into society. The

transformation of someone's life is not a quick fix. Hope into Action is a registered charity whose unique purpose is to enable churches to house the homeless and provide them with a readymade community and friendship.

The charity's vision is for every church to lovingly provide the homeless with a home. The tragedy of homelessness is in every community and we believe that our church community in Saffron Walden can do something about it. Each home provided is a story of people prompted to share resources or time with those who have less; to mobilise, unite and unleash Christian prayer, investments, donations and relationships to fight the injustice of homelessness.

It's easy to provide a building or donate money and although that is a start it doesn't solve the problem: a recovery programme and computer or literacy classes help and give direction, but churches have the opportunity to add the missing ingredient, a readymade community of people able to help over a longer period. Our faith is our support and inspiration, but we never manipulate or force our faith onto anyone, we believe in a



transforming relationship. The aim is to give tenants a group of people who will support them practically and socially, to give them a purpose and allow them to make their contribution to society in return, even if that is voluntary work. If people have a safe home and the security of positive relationships then they will find the confidence, motivation and hope for change.

I wonder if there an opportunity here for a partnership of churches in Saffron Walden to be part of this national vision. Can we unite together, realizing the wealth we have to share with the marginalized - the wealth of community and friendship, of safe haven and especially the far reaching and accepting LOVE of God. If you want to know more or read the book do please contact me.

Sue Walker

suewalker619@btinternet.com or 01799 523007

(Also see the Hope Into Action website: <https://hopeintoaction.org.uk>)

Current seed group members: David Oelman, Doris Stacey, Katrina Thurlow, Hilary Walker, Andy and Hazel Colebrooke, Judith and Mike Felgate, Penelope Cummins, Graeme and Sue Walker

All photographs curtesy of Hope into Action

God in the Arts - I wish you a joyful May

The annual May morning ceremony of the choir greeting the sun from Magdalen College Tower in Oxford, goes back many centuries. Here Michael Burgess looks at Holman Hunt's painting of the scene.

When Holman Hunt visited Magdalen College, Oxford in 1851 he so enjoyed the Christmas festivities that he decided to honour the college life in one of his paintings. That decision took many years to reach the canvas: his painting of 'May Morning on Magdalen Tower' is one of his last complete works in 1890.

We can easily identify the choristers gathered to greet the rising sun in music and song. Amid the clouds and blue sky above, the birds are flying and the floor where the choir stand is bedecked with flowers. It is a glorious celebration of the fruitfulness of May and the summer: God's creation bringing so many gifts. The



president of the college is the man with the dark beard at the right of the painting, and Dr Bloxam, the reviver of this ancient ceremony, is beside him.

But there is an unusual character there also, at the side of the painting – a Parsee, an ancient worshipper of the sun from Persia, perhaps representing not just those who look to the light of the sun, but are also searching for the light of truth. The young chorister in the middle looking out at us holds a lily, the symbol of Mary, the mother of God's Son.

All creation is gathered to greet the dawn and the rising sun of May – the birds above and people below, young and old, Christian and non-Christian - all united to proclaim the goodness and renewal promised by the sun.

Holman Hunt said that he wanted to represent 'the spirit of a beautiful, primitive and in a large sense eternal service.' Here is a vivid reminder that the faith we profess opens our eyes to God's goodness and glory symbolised in the rising sun, and that He welcomes everyone to share in those gifts.

The Rev'd Michael Burgess (Parish Pump, abridged)

[The painting hangs in the Lady Lever Art Gallery in Liverpool.]

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The Rev'd Jeremy Trew