

Parish News

St Mary's Church, Saffron Walden

St John, Little Walden and St James, Sewards End

Part of Saffron Walden & Villages Team Ministry

December 2021

January 2022



FREE



Bell ringing success

The North Western District of the Essex Association of Change Ringers organises an annual bellringing competition to contest the Stan Clark Memorial Cup. On Saturday 9th October a team of ringers from St Mary's entered this competition, coming first of the eight teams that entered.

Why are ringers competing, and what does a team need to do to win? In good ringing you'd expect to hear the bells maintaining a steady rhythm; each bell sounding, or "striking", just when it should, never too quickly, never too slowly. In contrast with a 'conventional' musical instrument, where the response to touch might be almost immediate, your bell does not sound as the rope is pulled. Rather, there's a delay, so getting the timing right is an art that takes some practice. Striking competitions are a test of this accuracy and are often an annual fixture in ringing organisations. The delay in sounding is the time it takes the bell to rotate and the clapper to swing across and hit the opposite side. Hanging bells such that they can turn through a full circle in this way is largely the preserve of Anglican churches - which is why ringing, as you hear it in our church, is such an English 'thing'.

The test piece on this occasion was five minutes of call changes. This is a style of ringing where the order of the bells is changed by a "conductor", swapping pairs of bells around, starting and ending with a descending scale, or "rounds" as we know it. It's a style with which our rector may well be familiar, being something of a speciality amongst the ringers of Devon and Cornwall. Teams collect faults for inaccuracies in striking or for minor transgressions of the rules. Our piece had just 18 faults, ahead of Willingale (25) and Henham (40). It was a performance of which I think we could justifiably be proud. In the words of the timekeeper, it was "a nice bit of ringing". Perhaps my maternal grandparents, looking on from their lofty place - themselves ringers - could be happy at me keeping up a family tradition. Of course it's nice to win, but even the preparation for these events is a good exercise to help ringers concentrate on their striking; to raise their game, as it were.

The trophy will stay with us for a year until it is contested once again. If you're interested in getting involved, or even just want to see what it's all about, talk to one of us, or perhaps arrange to pop up before a service one Sunday morning to observe us in action. Maybe you, reader, will be the one holding the cup in the photograph if and when it returns to Saffron Walden after a future competition.

Simon Potter

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PARISH NEWS - EDITORIAL DEADLINE

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

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The Rector's Letter

From The Rev'd Jeremy Trew

Jeremy writes...

Christmas arrives at the end of this month – you didn't need me to tell you that! If you have children then it has probably been arriving since late September, and even if you don't you couldn't escape the presence of cards and decorations in the shops during the Autumn.



Preparing for Christmas can be both harrowing and demanding. There's so much to do, so many lists to check. And then it's Christmas Eve, and half of it is not done. A final gargantuan effort!... and then you can flop onto the sofa to watch the last half of the "Sound of Music" and try and work out just how many you've got for lunch the next day.

Christmas requires precisely 10% more preparation than we are able to give to it. But it's worth it, because it is just about the only occasion in the year when we are likely to meet up with so many of our family and friends and take time to spend more than just a few minutes with them. It might seem stressful at times, but normally we conclude it has all been worth it. Preparing for Christmas is worth it. That's why we have the season of Advent just prior. It is the time when we hear the stories that provide the background to why God bothered to take the not inconsiderable risk of sending his Son into a world that could be brutal and dangerous. Preparation is always an important time, because it allows us to make sense of the celebration that follows.

I once read good advice on how to survive Christmas, and I pass it on to you as something I have found helpful: Don't overdo the housework – low lighting and candles can hide a multitude of sins (and dust). Get out for some fresh air, even five minutes – it clears your head, reduces tension, and leads to fewer arguments. And remember, if you're the one doing all the entertaining this Christmas, you deserve a break too – get someone else to do the washing-up and relax by spending ten minutes guessing what possessed Auntie Beryl to buy you that ghastly jumper.

Finally, before I close, three ancient laws that are still on the statute books: It is illegal not to go to church at Christmas; It is illegal to drive or ride to church on Christmas Day; It is illegal to have more than three courses for your Christmas dinner. Go on... break the last two, I won't tell! But please, try and keep the first. Have a very special Christmas.

Yours

Jeremy

Hope into Action • NEWS!

Hope into Action is a Christian charity that enables churches to house the homeless. We knew when we started thinking about bringing 'Hope into Action' to Saffron Walden that it was not going to be a speedy process. This quite suited the H.i.A team who said that taking it slower meant that some of the possible problems might be sorted before we launched. The good news is that The Salvation Army are very positive and supportive about their Saffron Walden Corps (church) taking the lead, as quite a few other Corps are looking to take on H.i.A houses. It is very exciting news that the project can now go forward with practical action and a new home will be provided for someone because The Salvation Army have agreed to sign the H.i.A Service Level Agreement!

Hope into Action will deal with the bureaucracy including finding suitable occupiers, preparing contracts with them and dealing with the legal matters. There will be opportunities for friendship and prayerful support but practical matters too. The project will rely on the support of all the churches in the town, not least in financial support for the project. We are being lead, but it is important not to get ahead of God's leading.

While The Salvation Army will sign the agreement, this is truly churches working together, all of us will be needed and hopefully the burden of volunteering will be shared equally. This is not a one way process; it is important to form relationships and a chance for us to broaden our knowledge and learn from the residents too.

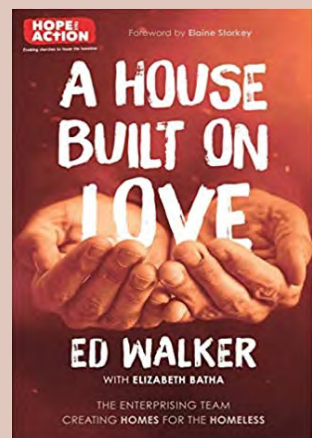
The core group will continue meeting, praying and discerning the way in friendship and fellowship so that we work as a united group. We are the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12), learning from each other by the differences we bring, in our spirituality, faith and experience; bonded in peace through the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:3) God using our differences to enhance the work we are being called to carry out.

If you would like to learn about Hope into Action have a look at their website or read 'A House Built on Love' by Ed. Walker, the founder of the charity.

<https://www.hopeintoaction.org.uk/>

If you are interested in becoming more involved please let us know through the editor.

David Oelman



A Toilet for Christmas

Fresh from singing 'Enough is Enough' (with thanks to Oli King for teaching us so well!) many minds in the congregation must have pondered once again how sad it is to see Christmas so commercialised and wondered what they could do about it.

Politicians have completed their negotiations at COP 26, and maybe provided some reassurance that their actions will limit global warming to the critical 1.5 degrees. So let us see if we can now play our part in 'treading more lightly on the planet'.

Over my toilet at home hangs a picture of the [toilet it is twinned](#) with in Zambia. A present from my daughters, I couldn't be more proud of it! Apart from bringing the benefits of sanitation to schools and villages, proper toilets contribute enormously to the safety of girls and women.

My [bins are also twinned](#) in support of a rubbish collection and recycling enterprise in Pakistan. Another low carbon present which makes a small but significant difference somewhere else.

You can buy goats, beehives, piglets, blankets, period kits, water, school bags and uniforms at [Action Aid](#). Meanwhile, buying [Traidcraft](#) presents, while shipping will be involved, your purchases will support small cottage industries and craftspeople using local materials and little energy other than their own.

One of the lessons of our Covid world was to realise how dependent we are on complex supply chains and 'just in time' logistics. What an opportunity then to support local shops and businesses, local stall holders and craftspeople to buy produce without air or shipping miles attached, and enjoy the pleasure of a smile over the counter when you make that purchase!

It is always worth checking out the environmental impact of the things we buy. It takes 1,800 gallons of water to make a pair of jeans. More if they are pre-washed, and their life is massively reduced if they are stressed with tears and slashes at the knees and thighs. Fashion can come at a terrible price!



So an alternative to the 'stuff' of Christmas is to buy experiences. Having children and grandchildren is a wonderful blessing, not least because it gives you the chance to go to pantomimes and enjoy family events such as Santa train rides or gardens lit at night. Christmas provides us with a wonderful excuse to support the musical and theatrical creativity of the town. The gift of shared pleasures and true enrichment!

The biggest gift of all to give to your family, however, is the gift of an inhabitable planet. With luck I have a decade or so of life left, but the thought of my legacy already haunts me. I know it will not be a good one. Extreme weather events will increase every year until we reach carbon zero in 2050, if indeed we manage to achieve that! And that will not be the end. It will be the beginning: the beginning of the race our grandchildren will have to run to remove all our CO₂ pollution from the atmosphere and slowly, slowly, over many decades, start to cool the oceans and reduce the rates of flooding, drought and wildfires. Reducing the enormity of the task they will face may be the greatest gift of all.

Edward Gildea, Eco Team Leader



Services that are particularly suitable for children this Christmas at St Mary's Church, Saffron Walden

Christingle Sunday 12th December at 4 pm

In this traditional service children receive the Christingle (orange, candle and ribbon) and form a circle round the church while the candles are lit and Away in a Manger is sung.

There is a retiring collection for the work of the Children's Society.

Tree services, Christmas Eve at 4pm (for younger children) and 6pm.

Services of traditional carols during which the Tree is lit. We are sorry that EACH (East Anglian Children's Hospices) is not able to receive Christmas parcels this year. We welcome the Mayor who will personally receive your offerings which will be shared between EACH and the Mayor's charities.

We encourage younger children to dress up as characters in the Christmas story.



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Church launches consultation on plans to get to net zero carbon in just nine years

The Church of England is consulting dioceses, cathedrals, national institutions, parishes, schools, and other interested parties on a proposed route map to achieve net zero carbon by 2030.

The draft route map suggests how all parts of the Church of England can make changes together, in order to achieve the ambitious target set by General Synod in 2020: to be net zero carbon 20 years ahead of the Government's targets.

It includes recommendations for building maintenance, heating and the availability of specialist advice for each, setting alongside how the central Church and dioceses can offer support.

The draft net zero carbon route map was written by a sub-committee of the Church of England's Environmental Working Group, chaired by the Bishop of Selby, Dr John Thomson. He said:

"God's creation is in crisis, and there is an urgent call to address this at every level of our global community. Synod has set an ambitious target. We recognise this will be challenging, however many adaptations can also be made simply and quickly, such as switching to a green energy provider, filling gaps in windows, and changing lightbulbs, all of which can help to reduce energy costs.

I encourage individuals and communities to engage with these consultation proposals and to think at every level what can be done to be part of the change. We need to safeguard and care for all of God's creation."

The Government has committed to a target of net zero carbon by 2050, with an interim target of a 78 per cent reduction, set in April 2021. Anyone can respond to the consultation online before the closing date of 5pm 28 February. <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/environment-and-climate-change/net-zero-consultation>

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Stalls in Church

It has been agreed that a limited number of stalls can be available for you to purchase your Christmas presents or a treat for yourself at the Church on 5 Sundays commencing 28th Nov. There will be two or three stalls each week, suitably spaced and they will be available for the 8am and the 10am services. Items will range from cakes to candles, from crackers to Christmas sweet treats, from handbags to handicrafts, and some great jigsaws. The Grapevine will tell you each week what delights will be available the following week and that day so please do come along with your shopping list as so much work has been done over the last 18 months and we need to show our appreciation. Perhaps bring a friend along to Church, they may find something they would like to purchase.

It's not a Christmas Fair but it is the best we can do under the current circumstances, please support us.

Pamela



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.

For more information please check website

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Bells Ring Out a Climate Warning

At 6 pm BST on Saturday 30th October 2021, church bells in cathedrals and churches in the UK from Devon to the Shetland Islands and in the USA and Canada rang for half an hour as a warning, marking the eve of COP26, the international conference in Glasgow to address climate change. Although church bells are traditionally associated with worship and celebrations, they have also been used historically to warn of invasions and, more locally, of fire, floods and shipwrecks.



Edward Gildea, who is a Christian Aid Climate Campaign Organiser and heads St Mary's Eco Group, had the idea of getting the church and cathedral bells of the UK to ring out on the eve of COP26 and his campaign was endorsed by the Rt Rev'd Graham Usher, Bishop of Norwich and lead bishop on the environment and by the Association of English Cathedrals. The initiative was reported in the local press and in BBC News broadcasts.

Edward said, "The bells will ring a 'Code Red for Humanity' warning and a plea for Climate Justice, one of the main demands of Christian Aid to the conference. The warning now couldn't be more urgent. "Our planet has given us warning after warning, through floods, wildfires, droughts, heat domes and hurricanes, that we have profoundly affected the balance of the planet and are making it increasingly hostile to mankind. An Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report has stated unequivocally that the extreme weather events are the consequence of man-made climate change. The UN Secretary General has signalled the 'Code Red for Humanity'. There can no longer be any doubt that humanity is now in mortal danger... and on a global scale. The warning now couldn't be more urgent!"

Our Rector, Rev'd Jeremy Trew, who worked in environmental engineering before being ordained, said, "I believe that this is a time of real national crisis and so we will be ringing our bells to remind people of Saffron Walden of the threat we face. As Christians, we are deeply concerned with the millions around the world who are being profoundly affected: especially the poor who have contributed the least to the problem. The nations of the Global South are already suffering the severest effects of drought, crop failures, hurricanes and cyclones, but the poor will also be the first in this country to suffer from rising food prices, heat exhaustion or the inability to insure their homes and businesses against floods."

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From the Registers

Baptisms

10th October Louis Charlie Macarthy-Meader
Edward Alexander Catlin

31st October Matilda Annie Murphy

Funerals

8th October Joyce Perrin

14th October Neil Hagget

18th October Betty Wolflea

28th October Queenie Lee

29th October Michael Lee



Prayer for the month *provided by the Prayer Team*

O God our Father, who by the bright shining of a star, led the wise men to Bethlehem, guide us by the light of your Spirit, that we too may come into the presence of Jesus and offer our gifts and our worship to him, our Saviour and our Lord. Amen.

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MOTHERS' UNION MEETING REPORT 14.10.21

LOVE IN A SHOEBOX

On 14th October, Mothers' Union members welcomed Brenda and Laurie Horden from 'Samaritans Purse' to give a presentation on the Shoebox Appeal. Brenda is the Area Co-ordinator and Laurie is involved in the logistic team. He illustrated Brenda's talk with slides.

Brenda's subject was her visit to Moldova to witness the distribution of the boxes and to be with the children on the day they opened them. Moldova is part of Romania and is among one of the poorest places in Europe, and it is also extremely cold with freezing weather in winter. There are very few opportunities for young people, who have qualified on leaving school, to pursue careers, and many leave to work further afield.

The shoeboxes which are donated locally are sent to a regional distribution centre and checked. Anything that would not be permitted when going through customs is removed, but mainly great care is taken to keep the boxes intact. Gifts for children are divided into three age groups between 2 and 14 and also for boy or girl.

Brenda told us that 40,000 shoeboxes were collected locally in her area, in 2019 and the Moldova team were invited to take them there personally. Laurie showed slides of happy children of all ages, boys and girls with their parents gathered together, opening their boxes, to the countdown of ten. Brenda said the only thing we could not share was their sheer excitement.

Sergei, an orphaned boy they met from a poor family, received a shoebox. He couldn't understand why someone from overseas who didn't know him, had given him a present! Someone loved him! We will never know who will receive the box we lovingly pack.

Samaritan's Purse is a Christian organisation and the local Pastor reported that from the shoebox scheme, a thriving church has grown locally, providing religious services, health facilities and social activities for the community.

There are leaflets in the church explaining 'How to Pack a Shoebox' and printed boxes ready to assemble and pack. The boxes are sent all over the world to bring hope and joy to children who have very poor or difficult circumstances.

Why not send one this year?

Brenda Sheath and Helen Eyles



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.

Hymns for the road

If you MUST speed on the road during this Christmas season, at least sing these hymns loudly as you go:

- at 45 mph.... 'God Will Take Care of Me'
- at 55 mph.... 'Guide me, O Thou Great Jehovah'
- at 65 mph.... 'Nearer My God to Thee'
- at 75 mph.... 'Nearer Still Nearer'
- at 85 mph.... 'This World is Not My Home'
- at 95 mph.... 'Lord, I'm Coming Home'
- at 100 mph.... 'Precious Memories'

Calendar for Dec 2021 - Jan 2022

This calendar is provisional and subject to change due to Covid restrictions. See The Grapevine or the church website for the latest information particularly for streaming of services in January.

St Mary's, Saffron Walden

All services now take place in church unless shown otherwise. One service in church each Sunday is also streamed on YouTube [Y]: details on the church website.

Thursday 2 December

1pm Service with Prayers for Wholeness and Healing

Sunday 5 December

8am BCP Holy Communion

10am Holy Communion [Y]

6.30pm H2H Youth-led Service for All

Sunday 12 December

8am BCP Holy Communion

10am Holy Communion [Y]

4pm Christingle Service

Sunday 19 December

8am BCP Holy Communion [Y]

10am Family Service

6.30pm Christmas Carol Service [Y]

Friday 24 December: Christmas Eve

4pm Lighting of the Christmas Tree

6pm Lighting of the Christmas Tree

11.30 Midnight Holy Communion

Saturday 25 December: Christmas Day

10am Holy Communion [Y]

Sunday 26 December: St Stephen

10am Holy Communion

Sunday 2 January

8am BCP Holy Communion

10am Holy Communion [Y]

6.30pm H2H Youth-led Service for All

Thursday 6 January: Epiphany

1pm Service with Prayers for Wholeness and Healing

Sunday 9 January

8am BCP Holy Communion

10am Holy Communion [Y]

4pm Choral Evensong



Sunday 16 January

8am BCP Holy Communion [Y?]

10am Family Service

4 pm Holy Communion with Prayers for Wholeness and Healing

Sunday 23 January

8am BCP Holy Communion [Y?]

10am Holy Communion [Y]

6.30pm Epiphany Carol Service [Y]

Sunday 30 January

8am BCP Holy Communion

10am Holy Communion [Y]

4pm Taizé Service

Regular weekday services at St Mary's

Tuesdays

5pm Evening Prayer - by Zoom during the winter, see weekly bulletin for login details

Wednesdays

8am Morning Prayer

9.30am Holy Communion



St James', Sewards End

Sunday 12 December

9.30am Holy Communion

Saturday 18 December

5pm Carol Service

Friday 24 December: Christmas Eve

11.30 Midnight Holy Communion

Saturday 25 December: Christmas Day

9.30am Holy Communion

Sunday 9 January

9.30am Holy Communion

Sunday 23 January

9.30am Morning Praise

St John's, Little Walden

Sunday 12 December

11.15am Family Service

Saturday 18 December

5pm Carol Service

Saturday 25 December: Christmas Day

11.15am Holy Communion

Sunday 9 January

11.15am Family Service

Sunday 23 January

11.15am Holy Communion

Repairs to the Chancel Roof – Dismantling the Old Roof

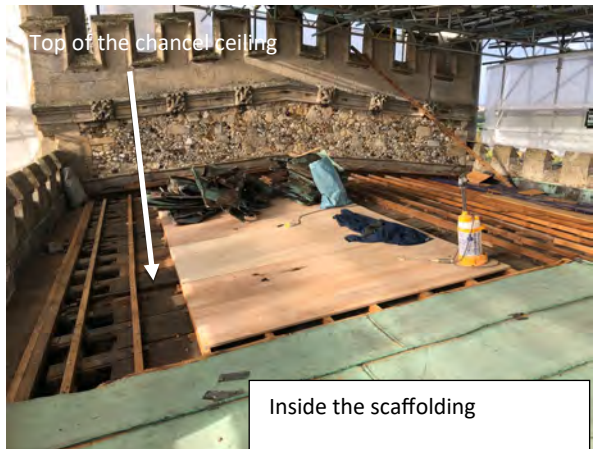
I reported last month that the work had started slowly while a structural engineer investigated how to take the scaffolding load on the side aisles of the church. Once he had finished his deliberations, the scaffolding went up really fast and when it is sunny and not windy, it's like a little greenhouse up there, and that's a quote from one of the workmen! We have also arranged for the scaffolding to be alarmed by extending our roof alarm to protect all of the church roof metal against theft, which is a greater risk with the scaffolding in place.

Throughout October much of the old roof structure has been removed. The copper has all gone and sold as scrap and was worth more than we had allowed for so that will help a little with the cost. The copper was laid on felt which, because it was put down in the 1950s, had to be tested for asbestos.

Thankfully, it didn't contain any. The felt was laid on chipboard all of which has now been removed, as planned. Unusually, the ceiling timbers and panels are about 2 inches below the chipboard. Normally there is another layer of boarding below the first and it quickly became clear that we needed to protect everything in the chancel from dust from above, including the church organ. Thank you to those choir members who commented on the dust which was swiftly dealt with.

The good news is that there is very little decayed timber to replace. The roof and ceiling structure is made up of large medieval structural wooden beams, all of which are in good condition, and a number of metal plates and a metal beam, some from the 1950s and some from the 1800s, which knit the structure together and strengthen it. We found the damage on the old copper roof in good time it would seem, thanks to Oli King noticing the small amount of damp around one of the upper chancel windows in January.

The next task is to rebuild the roof timbers. The old chipboard is being replaced by plywood boarding above which there will be layer of roof insulation which will have a second layer of plywood on top of it. The boarding in the above photograph is some of the new, lower layer of plywood. The lead will be



laid on top of this second layer of plywood. The new lead roof will be considerably heavier than the old copper one and the structural engineer has had a good look at the roof structure to confirm that it is strong enough for the lead. There was not a lot of doubt about this because we knew that the roof was lead before 1959 and we've now found further evidence of this with the remains of the lead, where it had been cut off, still mortared into the joints in the walls below the level of the copper which we've just removed.

Then comes the laying of the lead. This will take 2 to 3 weeks and will be noisy! The lead has to be hammered into position using soft headed hammers and during the working day the hammering will be fairly constant. More about that in the next Parish News!

If you have any questions about the works, please do not hesitate to ask me or the churchwardens. We will keep you updated as the work progresses.

Steve Hasler



YOUinthe**PEW** interviewed by Chris Bishop

John Pickthorn

Why did you come to live in Saffron Walden and what brought you to St Mary's?

When Sarah and I got married in 2012, we were both working in London. However, it seemed wrong to have a London wedding as most of my family live in East Anglia, (my roots are in Woodbridge in Suffolk) and Sarah's late father had been living in Saffron Walden. We had attended a number of services in St Mary's, loved the church and were delighted when we were told that we could get married there. Unfortunately, we chose the hottest day of the summer, but at least it was cool in St Mary's! We bought Sarah's father's house and have loved living here ever since.



Describe how you became involved with the Church. For some years, commitments elsewhere made regular involvement difficult, but as we both wound down our careers, we realised that St Mary's, like all churches, needs people to step forward to avoid the burdens all falling on a diminishing number of shoulders. Three or four years ago, David Tomlinson suggested that, as we like attending the 8.00am BCP Holy Communion services, Sarah might be an appropriate sub-deacon there, and I put my name forward to sit on the PCC. This complements some of the work I do with the Friends of Essex Churches Trust.

Apart from being a member of the congregation, what else do you enjoy in Saffron Walden? We are both moderate tennis players, and make use of the local tennis club. Audley End has been a real blessing during the pandemic, and we have enjoyed frequent walks around the grounds. You always see or learn something new, as well as the benefits of fresh air and exercise. Sarah belongs to a loose group calling themselves 'Rubbish Friends' and can sometimes be found picking up road-side litter.

What lessons do you think the Church can take from the 'lockdown'? I think that closing the churches was very regrettable as it was a time when people, not just active Christians, needed the solace that church has always brought. We saw this a bit when we opened St Mary's, on a very limited basis, for Private Prayer. Zoom services and streamed services were a wonderful replacement,

and we owe a huge debt to Paula and the others who made it so welcoming after a steep learning curve for us all. Our retired clergy maintained continuity at a difficult, even frightening, time. And your own regular musical collaborations never failed to cheer us up – many thanks.

If you had a family coat-of-arms, what motto would you like to have on it?

Strangely, I do have a coat-of-arms. My third name is Juxon, from a forebear who, as Bishop of London, accompanied Charles I on the scaffold. Family legend has it that the King handed Juxon a bible and his Garter, with instructions that they be passed to the then Prince of Wales, and his last word before kneeling down was "Remember!" Slightly pretentiously, this was turned into latin, and my crest says "memor esto". Juxon became Archbishop of Canterbury when that Prince of Wales returned in 1660 as Charles II.

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Christmas throughout the Christian world

For nearly four weeks leading up to Christmas, Christians recognise a period called Advent. It means 'coming'. It is a time of spiritual preparation. 'Coming' refers to Jesus' first coming as a baby, but it also looks forward to a day when Jesus is expected to return in triumph at his 'second coming' to establish perfect justice and a new order of peace.

Originally Christians marked Advent as a time when they refrained from excessive eating and drinking. Then Christmas Day reintroduced them to the joys of feasting. Christmas celebrations lasted for twelve days, with gifts exchanged as a climax at Epiphany (6 January). Today, however, Advent is more likely to be associated with accelerating festivity, with the days following Christmas something of an anti-climax until 'twelfth night', on which decorations are removed. Many Christians worldwide are trying to revive the spirit of Advent by setting aside time to pray and address global poverty.

Christmas Day is celebrated as the anniversary of Jesus' birth, although the actual date is not known. Most Christians celebrate it on 25th December. However, the Orthodox Church (the ancient churches in Eastern Europe and parts of Asia) follows a different calendar and celebrates on 7th January. Christians make a point of taking communion on Christmas Day. Many make it the first thing they do as the clock strikes midnight.

On 6th January the Christmas festival continues with a celebration of Epiphany, which means 'the appearance'. Christians remember the visit of wise men (magi) to Jesus, bringing gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. The Christmas tradition of exchanging gifts originally honoured these men, who were the first non-Jews (Gentiles) to worship Jesus. It forms a reminder that in Jesus God was giving Himself for the benefit of the entire world.

Orthodox Christians use this day to recall the baptism of Jesus as a grown man. The significance of Jesus being baptised was that He identified Himself with human beings in all their need. They mark the day by praying for God's blessing on rivers, wells and water sources.

Christmas has never been just an escapist festival for Christians. Those who treat it seriously recognise that not all the world is able to face the days with frivolity or joy. The day after Christmas, Boxing Day, was historically marked as the feast of St Stephen. He was the first man to be put to death rather than give up his belief that Jesus was God. And two days later a day remembering the Massacre of the Innocents recalls Herod's attempt to destroy Jesus by killing all male babies in Bethlehem. Although not so widely marked as Christmas Day, it gives Christians the opportunity to pray for children in today's world who suffer as a result of the actions of adults.

Source: Parish Pump



St Mary's Music News

Choral Evensong, that calm spiritual traditional musical service as the light of the day fades. It's always a joy to take part in and to listen to. In October the choir sang the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis to a fine setting by Herbert Brewer, one time organist of Gloucester Cathedral. Psalm 22 included an apt verse for our times being, 'be not far from me; for trouble is near'. The Preces and Responses set by Richard Ayleward have stood the test of almost four centuries and the anthem was Turn Back O Man, a poem by Clifford Bax set to music in a rather esoteric style by Gustav Holst. The service ended with Jeremy Allen playing a voluntary on Psalm 124 by Peter Maxwell Davies. Every second Sunday in most months, come and join us for Choral Evensong. Steve Cass.



*Walking to evensong,
photo by Caroline Goulder*

There have been 2 successful recruitment events for younger musicians. Early in October the Junior Choir taster evening included current members leading rounds and describing the Voice for Life ribbon training scheme, dressing willing volunteers in red robes, whilst Oli led an energetic session singing and learning repertoire for upcoming services. As a result, we have welcomed two new singers, bringing our numbers up to fifteen. We would still welcome two or three more youngsters to join our happy band!
Bron Ferland

On 15th October we had the first of our post-lockdown sessions of Joyful Noise, which are now running regularly on Fridays at 4pm (until 4:45) in the Parish Rooms. The children had fun getting to know each other and playing some musical games, before learning their first song. The custard creams also went down rather well! We have space for more members and would love to welcome any children aged 5-8 (in school years 1-3) who'd like to come and make music with new friends. For more information, please contact joyfulnoise.saffronwalden@gmail.com.
Lizzie Bennett

Magazines prepare their summer editions in the winter, and do their Christmas photoshoots in mid-summer. The publishing requirements of the Parish Magazine do not involve quite such a disconnect, but the submission date for this article is just 2 days after Bonfire Night, before all the important Church musical events in November through to January. So I have to assume and trust that the Remembrance Service, the Advent and Christmas Carol Services, Choral Evensong and the Tree Services for children will be taking place as anticipated in 2021 and appreciated more than ever because of their absence in real life last year.

While in 2020 we produced online services ranging from Compline to Carols, the musical experience for everyone is greatly enhanced by being present together. Let us hope that those who wish to can worship in person in St Mary's during Advent, Christmas and Epiphany and further into 2022.

Many thanks to Caroline Goulder for the lovely photo, and to members of the SMMA committee who contributed reports on the principal musical events of October.

Ottillie Lefever

There follows three Choir reports on recent memorial services ...

9 October Memorial Service for Mary Knight 5th Jan 1930 - 5th March 2020

Because of Covid arrangements, we had all waited a long time to bid Mary Knight goodbye. She was, for her colleagues in the choir, a special woman who, in spite of her advanced age, was fun and articulate and full of knowledge. In her youth she had gained an exhibition to the university of Oxford. Her school was delighted and every pupil got a day's holiday. Mary completed her degree in French and German and became an interpreter for the vast Shell organisation. After marriage she moved to Essex and, two children later, she changed direction to become a teacher of languages at the Saffron Walden County High school. Her popularity there, her involvement in the library, the museum, in Bridge End Gardens and in the area, was shown by the 102 people who came to her service.

Mary had been in St Mary's church choir for many years and only retired relatively recently. Judith Hasler presided over the service. Andrew Malcolm, our choirmaster while she was a choir member, conducted the music, with Oli King on the organ. Mary was a very organised person who had planned her service completely, including the entry and exit music 'Nimrod' from Elgar's Enigma variations and Bach's 'prelude in B Minor'. Between the hymns the choir sang

Mozart's 'Ave Verum' and an arrangement by Andrew Malcolm of 'God be in my Head'. The service finished with the 'Nunc Dimittis' by Walmisley. Many of Mary's family contributed to the service. Her children Amanda Carpenter and Peter Knight gave their reflections and tributes, as did her grandchildren Sarah Louise Miller and Zoe Carpenter. R Vaughn Williams 'Silent Moon' was beautifully sung by Beatrice Carpenter.

Mary has left us with many memories and pieces of wisdom but her main legacy was to children and to gardening with the launch of her Mary Knight Foundation for Budding Gardeners in conjunction with Friends of Bridge End Gardens. If you wish to donate and claim gift aid please do so via Friends of Bridge End Gardens or via cheque payable to Mary Knight Gardening Fund c/o Amanda Carpenter, Sycamore Cottage, Church Common, Snape, Suffolk IP17 1QL.

Finally, words from Noel Starr summed up Mary's character (ever encouraging): 'She was with a school party in France organised by his wife Judith. She was edging her way towards a French monument along a 6 inch ledge, by holding on to a rope and, hearing her pupils express alarm, was heard to say "Of course you can do it!"

Mo Pullen

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Memorial Service for Tim Hardingham

On Saturday 30th October the choir was privileged to sing at the memorial service for the Rev'd Tim Hardingham. The church was full of people who had come from near and far and we listened to tributes from friends, colleagues, and family, reminding us of the very lovely man we all remember and miss. The choir led the singing of two hymns and sang Fauré's 'Cantique de Jean Racine'. It was very special to support Tim's widow, Nell who has been for many years a fellow choir member and friend.

Bron Ferland

(Tim's memorial service was live streamed and has, so far, had 409 views)

All Souls Service

On the 31st of October we were allowed to gather for the Service of Remembering and Thanksgiving after many months of very restricted access to funeral gatherings, so it was a very moving and particularly significant occasion. Many people who have lost loved ones attended and nearly a hundred names were called out to honour the memory of the deceased. Judith Hasler, Lay Funeral Minister took the service and Rev'd Jeremy Trew, rector of St Mary's Church, gave a moving sermon for all present and people watching online. Oli, our Choir Master played the Organ Voluntary "Elegy" by G.T.Thalben-Ball at the beginning of the service and conducted the service. The new Michael Swindlehurst Organ Scholar Yechan Yun showed how talented he is at such a young age, and played for the two hymns: "Abide with me" and "Guide Me O Thou Great Redeemer" as well as the Motet chosen for the occasion: "Lord, let me know mine end" by Maurice Greene (1696-1755), all sung by St Mary's choir, with Steve Rapkin, organist and member of the United Reformed Church joining the bass line for the service. Yechan also skilfully played the Organ Voluntary "Adagio in E Major" by Frank Bridge (1879-1941) at the end of the service. Psalm 23 was read by a member of staff from Peasgood and Skeates, who gave support to the service.

We were all invited to light a candle for a loved one and the choir sang a Taizé song "Oh God hear my prayer" while the sand tray got filled by people lighting a little tea light representing a loved one no longer seen but well remembered. The Order of Service read on the front "For those who sleep in Christ, Life has changed, not ended" and the service beautifully evoked that soothing thought.

Francoise Mouchet-Davis



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Archive Group *findings...*

I am now getting back to normal with a monthly record of pieces of interest from our own past Parish Magazines.

I am starting 2022 with January 1927



January 1927

My dear Parishioners.

Our Magazine having worn its old garments threadbare has cast its slough and appears in a new and more elegant dress which I hope will find favour in the sight of its readers. For this transformation we have to thank the son of a former churchwarden whose kind generosity has made the change possible and to whom sincerest thanks are due.

I have also to acknowledge most gratefully the very liberal and widespread response to the legion of appeals I broadcasted last month. From one source or another almost all our financial needs will have been supplied by the time these lines leave the printer's hands. One hundred new hassocks are on their way as I write, the electric light in the Parish Room has been not only installed but paid for, also it has been made possible to work the lantern by electricity instead of by the oxygen cylinder; the various games required by the Senior Guild for its more Junior members have also been purchased including ping-pong and bagatelle tables - hopes are even entertained that ere long the crowning masterpiece of billiards may be added. As the Guild has now over 150 members on its books, this desirable consummation ought not to be very far distant.

My only disappointment has been there have been no volunteers for the Girls' Sunday School staff. Perhaps some readers of this letter who have been prevented from one cause or another from helping in any of the above directions, will consider very seriously whether they ought not to come forward for this important branch of service.

L. Hughes

Canon Chris Bishop. Archivist

Paddy McKeown



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As we enter the New Year here is Thomas Hardy's poem written at the turn of the century on New Year's Eve 1899.

The Darkling Thrush

I leant upon a coppice gate
 When Frost was spectre-grey,
 And Winter's dregs made desolate
 The weakening eye of day.
 The tangled bine-stems scored the sky
 Like strings of broken lyres,
 And all mankind that haunted nigh
 Had sought their household fires.

The land's sharp features seemed to be
 The Century's corpse outleant,
 His crypt the cloudy canopy,
 The wind his death-lament.
 The ancient pulse of germ and birth
 Was shrunken hard and dry,
 And every spirit upon earth
 Seemed fervourless as I.

At once a voice arose among
 The bleak twigs overhead
 In a full-hearted evensong
 Of joy illimited;
 An aged thrush, frail, gaunt and small,
 In blast-beruffled plume,
 Had chosen thus to fling his soul
 Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carolings
 Of such ecstatic sound
 Was written on terrestrial things
 Afar or nigh around,
 That I could think there trembled through
 His happy good-night air
 Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew
 And I was unaware.

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The hidden years

When St Paul wrote about the birth and humanity of Jesus to the Philippians, he described it as an emptying and a humbling. Jesus humbled Himself, he wrote, 'and became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.' In obedience and love Jesus followed the will of His Father through His ministry from baptism to the cross and Easter beyond.

But what about that period called 'the hidden years', after the Holy Family's return from Egypt? The Gospels tell us of only one event in that period leading up to adulthood: the pilgrimage to Jerusalem when Jesus was 12. For the rest of those 30 years, He lived with Mary and Joseph 'growing in wisdom and in divine and human favour.'

Just as He followed His heavenly Father's will in His ministry, so in these growing years He followed the guidance and teaching of Mary and Joseph.

The above painting highlights one moment in those years of growth: 'St Joseph the Carpenter' by Georges de la Tour. 'Highlights' is the right word, because this painting captures the strong contrast of light and darkness. Georges de la Tour lived from 1593 to 1652 in Lorraine. He was part of a Franciscan-led revival in that area, and this work from the 1640s captures St Joseph and the Christ-Child with Franciscan tenderness and insight.

We can see the tools of Joseph's trade on the ground. He leans over them, hard at work on a piece of wood. Jesus is sitting by his side, his face lit by the candle, which lights up the carpenter's shop. As well as contrasting light and dark, there is the contrast of young and old, and the thought that the child learning from the old man is also the one who can teach us. De la Tour was particularly fascinated by light and shadows cast by a candle or a lantern. Here the artist shows the candlelight illuminating the face of the child Jesus who will grow up to be the Light of the world.

As this New Year begins, we can think back to the light from the Bethlehem manger we celebrated at Christmas. We can look ahead to the light shining from the adult Jesus through His teaching and healing. Here in these hidden years, we can celebrate the light of wisdom and divine favour, as Luke calls them, shining on the face of the child Jesus. We pray for that light to guide us through this New Year. When the way ahead may look dark and uncertain, let us pray that God's light will make clear the path ahead.

The Rev'd Michael Burgess (Parish Pump)



The Louvre, Paris



Parish News
wishes its readers a
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