

Parish News

St Mary's Church, Saffron Walden

St John, Little Walden and St James, Sewards End

Part of Saffron Walden & Villages Team Ministry



February 2022

FREE

A New Curate for Saffron Walden and Villages Team ministry

Ella Harris to be the new assistant curate for the Team.

Ella is currently completing ordination training at Ridley Hall, Cambridge and expects to be ordained deacon in September 2022, but prior to that to be licensed to the Team next summer as a lay worker, as is the usual custom in the Chelmsford Diocese.



Toby and Ella

Originally from Widdington in Essex, Ella now lives in Cambridge with her husband Toby who is completing his Engineering Masters in Cambridge. Ella says: -

“We know and love Saffron Walden and the surrounding area well, both having gone to primary school here. We’re so glad to be returning to such a vibrant town, and I’m excited to get to know you and all the beautiful churches that you worship in.

I’ve worshipped and ministered in a range of churches, from multi-parish rural benefices, city-centre student churches, to fresh-expressions on housing estates, who met in school halls.

My first degree was in archaeology and anthropology and I have a deep interest in the diversity of human cultures, be that ancient or modern. I’m a keen musician, playing cello and orchestral percussion, and I’m never happier than when I’m in the countryside and around nature.

We’re really looking forward to moving to the area in June, and living and serving alongside you all.”

The Rector, Rev’d Jeremy Trew, who leads the Team, said: -

“Ella has an interest in rural ministry and so will focus her work on the Cam Village Churches (including Great Chesterford, Littlebury, Littlebury Green and Wendens Ambo) and on St Mary’s, Saffron Walden. Rev’d Alex Jeewan and I will be joint training Incumbents and will support Ella in her time with us. A curacy is a training post, and so the focus will be on helping Ella experience a wide range of situations that will enable her further to develop her skills. I am confident that our churches and communities will gain a great deal from Ella’s time with us.”

Clifford Want

Contents for February 2022

RECTOR'S LETTER 4

NOTICEBOARD

From the registers	14
Calendar	18
QuinQua Quiz	27
Fellowship of Prayer for Health & Healing	28
Repairs to the Chancel Roof – Update	36

REPORTS

MU 16 Days Activism 2021	16
A Visit to China	17
MU Advent Meditation Service 2021	20
MU Christmas Party 2021	20
St Mary's Music News	26

FEATURES

A New Curate for Saffron Walden	2
What did you do about Climate Change	6
Street Names Quiz	9
Archive Group: February 1927	11
Prayer of the Month	14
Gelio	21
You in the Pew	22
'Becoming' by Michelle Obama	25
Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes	29
The Love of Wisdom of Natural Things	31
Piero de la Francesca's Baptism of Christ	35

PARISH NEWS - EDITORIAL DEADLINE

The deadline for contributions for each issue is the 1st Sunday of the previous month. Hence, the deadline for the **March** issue is **Sunday 6th February**.

Copy to Parish Administrator:

Dawn Saxon
 email: office@stmaryssaffronwalden.org
 01799 506024

Editor: Andy Colebrooke
 01799 732970

Advertising:
 Email: office@stmaryssaffronwalden.org

PARISH NEWS IS A FREE PUBLICATION and can also be viewed (**in full colour**) online at our parish website:

www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org/parishnews

Cover Photo: Swan on Swan Meadow Pond
 by Lesley Green

TEAM RECTOR:

The Rev'd Jeremy Trew; 01799 500947
 Email: rector@stmaryssaffronwalden.org

CHURCHWARDENS:

Denis Tindley; 01799 524436 (Saffron Walden)
 Gill Caswell; 01799 520485 (Saffron Walden)
 Michael Dean; 01799 523388 (Sewards End)
 Lynne Ketteridge; 01799 523898 (Sewards End)
 Helen and Dave Nash: 01799 524265 (Little Walden)



St Mary's Church Website:

www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org

© 2022

All parts of this publication are subject to copyright.

The Rector's Letter

From The Rev'd Jeremy Trew

Jeremy writes...

Bishop Guli is asking church communities across the Diocese to observe a Quiet Lent. She is asking that we reduce meetings and groups to a minimum, whilst maintaining our regular worship, so that we can use the time to pray and reflect. The object of this is that we may listen to what God is saying to the Church of England in this Diocese.



Why? Well, it is a good practice to try and listen to God at any time, and something that I would encourage any Church community to do for at least a certain period each year as it seeks the way ahead. This year it is all the more vital. The Church, including the Church of England, is emerging from Covid in a very different shape from when we entered, and there are real and challenging uncertainties on the road ahead. Any attempt to simply return to "the way things were" will meet with frustration and failure. But, our God is a god of pilgrimage, and will lead us forward if we will allow God to. Faithful prayer is what will lead us onto this path. Bishop Guli has said that she will produce some resources to aid us in our prayer and reflection, and these will be distributed once they have been received. From the little time I have spent with her I felt her to be prayerful and a good listener, but also having the resolve needed by a leader, and she won my trust.

In the run up to Lent, that is in February, we will be running a short course called "Living in Love and Faith." This is a resource put together by the Church of England in response to the debate about gender identity and sexuality, and draws on the views and experiences of Christians from all sorts of viewpoints, some mutually exclusive. It recognises the difficulties faced by those of differing convictions, but understands that the once oft used strategy of "don't ask, don't tell" is both dishonest and damaging; ultimately unChristian. It encourages us to engage with people of difference, recognising that they are fellow Christians, created by God and in the image of God, and to wrestle with what that means; just as Jacob wrestled with the angel at the Jabbok River (Genesis 32:24). Jacob was changed for the better by that experience, and the hope is that we will be too. Of course, these five sessions are not simply about sexuality and gender, but about how we live with diversity and difference in God's Church: Do we, as some Christians do, retreat to an echo chamber where we only hear those views that sooth our own particular prejudices? Or do we try, sometimes failing, to live out our

faith in the challenging world where God has placed us and called us to be? You might have guessed that I believe the latter is more honest to our vocation as Christians.

This group will meet on five successive Wednesdays, from 2.30pm, in the Parish Rooms at St Mary's, starting on 2nd February. Each session will last a maximum of an hour and a half, and I encourage you to come to as many as you can. I will aim to run an evening course in May. This is for members of Churches from the Saffron Walden and Villages Team only.

Finally, if any of this makes you a bit nervous, I encourage you to remember the words of Jesus in John 14:6; "I am the way, the truth and the life." Our journey is not alone, but Christ is with us, a faithful companion and far better map reader than you or I. Let us ask him to help us find God's way and to follow.

Yours

Jeremy



Christmas Fair Stalls



An amazing amount of **£1272.20** was raised at the stalls in Church in the run up to Christmas.

A **HUGE** Thank You to all the Stallholders, their Helpers and all of YOU for your support.

Hopefully next year we will be able to hold our regular Fair at the end of November.

Best wishes for a Happy and above all Healthy 2022.

Pamela Mugliston

What did you do about Climate Change?

We are probably all familiar with the First World War recruitment poster of the little girl asking her father, ‘What did you do in the Great War, Daddy?’ and the look of shame and guilt on the face of the father who has clearly not yet enlisted.



(Photograph: Public Domain)

So what would be the expression on *your* face if your daughter, son, grandson or granddaughter were to ask you, ‘What did *you* do to limit global warming?’ Would you be able to reply with a clear conscience and a comprehensive list of the actions you took?

Just before Christmas I went with two of my grandsons to the Audley End Santa Railway. It was a magical experience, but it was heart-breaking to see so many families arriving in large petrol and diesel SUVs. Taking your children to see Santa is an act of love. How can that possibly be reconciled with driving an SUV? They accounted for 544 megatonnes of CO2 emissions between 2010-2018, far

ahead of the emissions of heavy industry, HGVs, aviation and shipping. Indeed, SUVs were second only to power generation as emitters of greenhouse gases.

How is it that people aren't making the connection between their choices and their children's future on this small and fragile planet?

COP 26 is now several months behind us and no one is cheering with much enthusiasm. Commentators talked about 'keeping 1.5 degrees alive,' but it is very much on life support, with no nurses in sight. We are currently heading for 4.4 degrees of warming by the end of the century. If we include the promises of reductions by member states, we still reach 3.6 degrees. Both outcomes will be utterly catastrophic for human life. (See the UN Emissions Gap Report <https://www.unep.org/resources/emissions-gap-report-2021>)

On the plus side, there was, for the very first time in 26 years, an explicit reference to 'phasing down unabated coal power and phasing out of inefficient fossil fuel subsidies.' Apart from wondering how it is that it has taken world leaders a quarter of a century to name the elephant in the room, this statement leaves the doors of self-destruction wide open: 'down' could be merely fractional, and no one has defined what an 'inefficient' subsidy is. Presumably we are free to continue with 'efficient' fossil fuel subsidies!

There was agreement on methane, but it made no mention of the massive amounts of methane emitted by our meat and dairy industries. Its focus was on inefficient practices of the oil industry that should never have been allowed in the first place.

One thing had changed though: Politicians were under more pressure than ever before from the public, from activists, from civil society, the Church, aboriginal groups and the nations of the Global South. It is clear that there is no more long grass into which the ball can be kicked.

But democracy is clearly failing us, and I will explore the reasons for that next time....

Edward Gildea, Eco Team Leader

Smile Lines

As any member of a church committee will tell you, after all is said and done, there's a lot more said than done.

I used to eat a lot of natural foods until I learned that most people die of natural causes.

Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach him how to fish, and he will sit in a boat and drink lager all day.



The Grange Care Home

The Grange Care Home provides the highest standards of family-led residential and dementia care. Our home is luxurious and beautifully furnished, whilst retaining a warm family atmosphere that makes The Grange feel extra special.

To find out more about life at The Grange Care Home contact Priya Virdee on **01799 243 005** or priya.virdee@countrycourtcare.com



01799 243 005



Fallow Drive, off Bury Water Lane,
Newport, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB11 3RP



www.countrycourtcare.com



The Grange Care Home

We are recruiting

What do our colleagues love most about their jobs? Our residents of course! Join us, and be that person who really makes a difference.

- Care Assistant Days and Nights £10.00 ph, 33 and 44 hours per week

See all our current vacancies at The Grange Care Home www.countrycourtcare.com/careers or pop in and speak to our Home Manager.



01799 243 005



Fallow Drive, off Bury Water Lane,
Newport, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB11 3RP



www.countrycourtcare.com



STREET NAMES QUIZ

Solve the clues to find street names in Saffron Walden, not all clues cover the street/road/close suffix.

1. Buddies in a petrol crisis.
2. Afraid men (anag).
3. Shortform maternal Susan, muddled.
4. Does this also have a fanfare for us all?
5. Sanyo wax (anag)
6. A place for "average" old weights.
7. Nimrod in short metre.
8. Incline to prospect of better weather (2 acceptable answers).

Christine Lawrence

(erstwhile Swards Ender and St Mary's choir member, now living in York)

Answers

1. Friends Walk
2. Farmadine
3. Museum Street
4. Common Hill
5. Saxon Way
6. Middleton Place
7. Hunters Yard
8. Springhill Road, Summerhill Road



Rothwell's
Carpet & Stone Floor Cleaning

**Carpet Cleaning &
Stone Floor, Upholstery, Rugs**
A few points that make us stand out,

Rothwell's has been in business since 1993
We're an honest local family firm.
Our large truck mounted machines mean
more cleaning & drying power
for the best results possible.
Members of both the NCCA and TACCA.
We will move the furniture.
100% satisfaction or it's FREE.
*Call Oliver and Max Campbell
for expert help today.*

01223 832 928
www.Rothwells.biz

Paddy McKeown


WALDEN
Sweeps

◆ Services offered include:
◆ Chimney and Flue Sweeping
◆ Wood Burning Stoves
◆ Open Fires
◆ Aga/Rayburn
◆ Bird Nest Removal
◆ CCTV Examinations

t: 01799 599981
m: 07956 099788
e: paddy@waldensweeps.myzen.co.uk

WWW.WALDENCHIMNEYSWEEPS.CO.UK

R FISHER & SON
Est. 1959

**Chimney
Sweep**

All aspects of chimney work
Master member N.A.C.S.
HETAS regd.

www.chimneys.demon.co.uk

01763 838360

Come and visit our brand new showroom to discover an
extensive collection of quality flooring, beds and furniture.



B&R
CARPETS & FURNITURE

Tuesday to Saturday 9 - 5
8 Station Street
Saffron Walden
Essex CB11 3HE
01799 522328
www.bandrcarpets.com





Muniments Room

Archive Group

A monthly record of
pieces of interest
from our past
Parish Magazines

February 1927

My dear Parishioners,

By direction of the Bishop of the Diocese, what has come to be known as the 'World Call,' will be presented to all the parishes of the Deanery of Saffron Walden, on Sunday, February 6th.

While the "call" comes from every continent, it will on this particular Sunday be limited to that of Africa only and it will be voiced in Walden Church by two neighbouring clergy who have each had missionary experience in the dark continent - the Vicar of Chesterford in the diocese of Capetown and the Rector of Little Sampford in that of Zululand, where indeed for six years he was Archdeacon.

I only hope there may be excellent congregations and that in our own parish and in the whole neighbourhood the cause of the Church overseas may be better understood and more sympathetically regarded than before.

+++++

Next in importance is the approaching appearance of the new Prayer Book. Probably we are all so attached to the old one that we dread even the thought of change. Let me remind you that the first English Prayer Book was published in 1549. It was revised in 1552, again revised 1559, revised a third time in 1604 and a fourth time in 1661, since which date there has been no alteration except in the Table of Lessons. It is therefore more than two and a half centuries since

the last revision, and in that time there have been many changes both in the English language and in English life, which need to be reflected in the nation's common prayer. The new book will in all probability completely satisfy none of us, yet it will be our duty as loyal churchmen to accept it cheerfully when given to us, to remember that twenty years have been spent in its preparation, and to give the Bishops in these critical days when the book is passing through its final stages the support of our earnest prayers.

Yours very sincerely,
L. Hughes

Canon Chris Bishop. Archivist



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
www.hearinghelpessex.org.uk
Call **01245 496347**
Email: **info@hearinghelpessex.org.uk**



SAFFRON

Launderers & Dry Cleaners

We specialise in the following areas:

Dry Cleaning

Personal Domestic Laundry

Linen Rental

Wedding Dress Cleaning

Occasional Table Linen Hire

Repairs & Alterations.

13-17 Gold Street
Saffron Walden
Tel: 01799 522588

9 Snowley Parade
Bishop's Stortford
Tel: 01279 652128

15 The Traverse
Bury St Edmunds
Tel: 01284 724077

www.saffronlaundry.com



From the Registers

Baptisms

Funerals

4th November Daphne Walker
Christopher Bullock

8th November Irene Appleby
Patricia Goddard

11th November Carol Jelf

19th November Freda Archer

20th November Waisake Finau

24th November Sam West



Prayer for the month *provided by the Prayer Team*

A Blessing for our ongoing and still uncertain Journey and Pilgrimage

Blessed be God of the rivers and our lives
Blessed be God of the ideas and our thoughts
Blessed be God of the wind and our motives
Bless these steps I have taken
You have walked in my shoes.



from Celtic Daily Prayer



NICK SHUTES PAINTING AND DECORATING LTD

High quality interior and
exterior redecoration

All woodwork repairs and
replacements including
fascias, soffits and cladding

**01799 542385 or
07885 778213**
www.nickshutesdecorating.co.uk



Kristina Coleman
ARCM

Piano Lessons

Close to Saffron Walden
Town Centre

Children (7+) and Adults

All levels from beginners to
Grade VIII Royal Schools of
Music

Telephone:
01799 526977



Email:
colemansafwalden@aol.com

Ross Nursing Services Ltd.

We are a Clavering based, family owned and run care company that has been running for 20 years. We maintain the highest level of care and support for all our clients by continually monitoring standards and ensuring that all individual needs are met.



We value clients' dignity, independence, privacy, choice and rights

What you can expect from us:

- Well trained, well presented carers who undertake continuous training.
- Carers with DBS checks and good references.
- A close working relationship with local GPs, District Nurses and other Health and Social Care professionals.
- We continually monitor our services using Quality Assurance surveys.
- We can deliver all aspects of personal care, palliative care, specialist respiratory care and other specialist care needs. We also accompany clients on hospital visits or visits to the GP and we do respite sitting services, client shopping and basic household tasks.

For further information please contact Ros Darton on **01799 551046**

MU 16 Days Activism 2021

The Mothers' Union Global Day of Action against Gender-Based Violence and Abuse took place on Saturday 27th November. It is part of a United Nations international campaign lasting 16 days and is used by individuals and organisations around the world to call for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls.

The members of St Mary's Mothers' Union held a vigil of prayer and reflection to pray for the victims of violence and abuse in the United Kingdom and worldwide. The wind howled and the rain lashed against the church outside but it didn't deter us from going ahead.

A table was set against the altar rail in the north chapel of St Mary's Church, covered with a blue Mothers' Union cloth, a bowl of blue coloured water to signify prayer across the seas and 16 small battery-operated candles signifying the light of the world that overcomes darkness. The Pascal candle was placed alongside.



We began the vigil at 12.45 and observed the 3 minutes silence at 1.03 pm. Together we followed the Mothers' Union prayer diary, which covered the 16 days of the campaign. A different member read aloud an entry in the prayer diary for each of the 16 days. Then they lit one of the candles, followed by a short period of silence and a prayer, written and said by the leader. Occasionally, we were asked to consider a question in some of the sections, which we did. When the vigil ended at 3pm, all 16 candles had been lit.

We ended with the Mothers' Union prayer and the Mary Sumner prayer. The following day Brenda led the intercessions at the 10am communion service based on Gender-Based Violence and Abuse to raise awareness.

Brenda Sheath, Branch Leader

A VISIT TO CHINA

On 11th November 2021 Mothers' Union members welcomed Reverend Jeremy Trew to speak about his visit to China in 2015. It was his appreciation for and interest in the Bible Society that led him to make the visit.

China follows the cult of Chairman Mao and the state. It is a country of contrasts, with well-to-do people as well as great poverty. What looks prosperous can deceive. For example, a shop front can look prosperous but have no staff. Basic amenities can be lacking for the masses but good hotel services are provided for tourists. The state can buy property at will and Jeremy was surprised to see high rise buildings placed in farming lands.

The Communist state came into being in 1921 and Chairman Mao led the party to victory in 1949, but during the cultural revolution in the 1960's many leaders were eliminated.

What Bibles were available were passed from person to person, until they became extremely worn. Many Bibles are printed in China today because they are able to produce the necessary, high quality, thin paper. Because they are available to the workers who produce them, Christianity has become a faith to many. The Christian church is tolerated because it is not seen as a threat, but officially no one has any idea how many Christians there are.

During his 2-week visit, Jeremy travelled thousands of miles including into the Himalayas at a level of 16,000 feet, using various forms of transport. There he met Chinese Christians and visited their churches and found that their services were full. There are many different languages and dialects but ways are being found to translate them. They live a very simple life but offer very generous hospitality. He observed that Christians in China are careful to obey the law. They don't want to cause trouble to a government whose aim is to maintain peace and stability at all costs.

Sheila Girgis gave the vote of thanks on behalf of members for a very interesting and enlightening account of Christianity in China. It is a very powerful nation but we don't know much about it.

Brenda Sheath

Helen Eyles

Calendar for February 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 3 February

1pm Service with Prayers for Wholeness and Healing

Sunday 6 February

8am BCP Holy Communion
10am Holy Communion [Y]
6.30pm H2H Youth-led Service for All



Sunday 13 February

8am BCP Holy Communion
10am Holy Communion [Y]
4pm Choral Evensong

Sunday 20 February

8am BCP Holy Communion [Y]
10am Family Service
4pm Holy Communion with Prayers for Wholeness and Healing

Sunday 27 February

8am BCP Holy Communion
10am Holy Communion [Y]
4pm Evensong

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

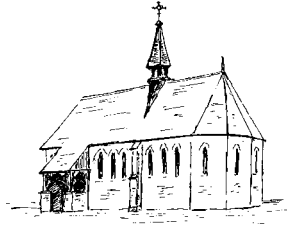
St James', Swards End

Sunday 13 February

9.30am Holy Communion

Sunday 27 February

9.30am Morning Praise



St John's, Little Walden

Sunday 13 February

11.15am Family Service

Sunday 27 February

11.15am Holy Communion



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.



MOTHERS' UNION ADVENT MEDITATION SERVICE 2021

On 9th December Mothers' Union members travelled to St Nicholas Church, Berden for our annual Advent Service of Meditation. It turned out to be a chapter of accidents!

One of our members arrived with a flat tyre. Another was forced into the side of a narrow lane by a huge lorry and became stuck fast on a muddy bank. Her passenger was transferred to another member but the service had to go ahead, so she was left alone in a remote country lane.

Unknown to us all, a passing motorist stopped and insisted on staying with her whilst she called the AA. It was a cold and wet day so she sat in his car with the heating on to keep warm. About an hour later another motorist in a van stopped to see if he could help.

Amazingly he had towing equipment on board and between them, the two men towed and steered her off the bank, back onto the road. Then the AA man arrived who did safety checks on the car and inspected underneath for any damage. All was well, so he escorted her back to the Newport Road.

Thanks to the kindness of complete strangers, she was safe and sound. This must be a 21st century 'Good Samaritan' story. They did not pass by on the other side.

Meanwhile, Green Flag came to the rescue of the member with the flat tyre and her passengers were kindly transported home by other members. She was then able to drive home safely on a temporary tyre.

The Advent Service went ahead. The Theme was 'Light in the Darkness' with traditional Advent hymns. The readings were from Matthew 24 when Jesus spoke about the second coming, from Luke 1 when the Angel Gabriel visited Zechariah and Luke 1 when the Angel Gabriel visited the Virgin Mary. Each reading was followed by 5 minutes silent reflection

The lights were dimmed during the Meditation and three Advent candles were lit. We reflected on God's bountiful grace, mercy, forgiveness, compassion and love. The light was restored at the end. We thank Reverend Margaret for her thoughtful service, for the hospitality from Berden members and the organist.

MOTHERS' UNION CHRISTMAS PARTY 2021

On the morning of 16th December 2021, the newspapers were full of gloom and doom about the rapid spread of Omicron. It was a case of 'if you can keep your head when all around you are losing theirs and blaming it on you'. Could our party go ahead? The Manager at Custerson Court was contacted, his reply was

'Most Certainly!' Would anyone come? It was decided to wait and see!

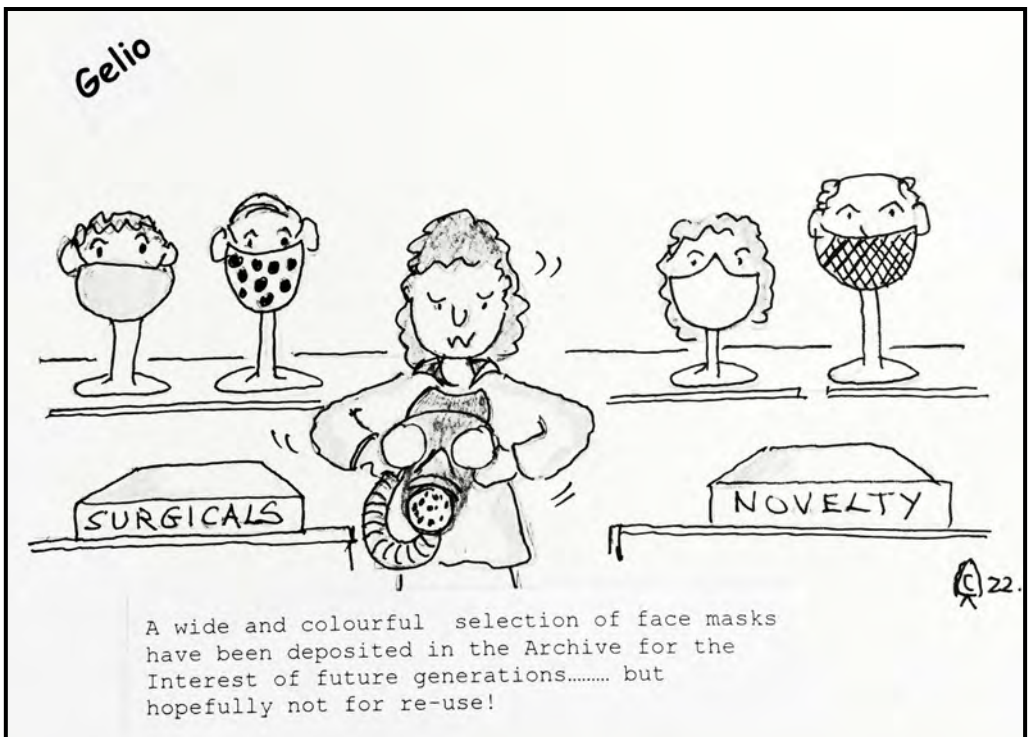
At 6.30 we were met and welcomed by a member who lives there and escorted into their large, warm, comfortable lounge complete with sparkling Christmas tree. The table was laid ready to receive any offers of food. One by one 16 members arrived, including a keyboard. Delicious offerings of food came with them.

At 7.30 our guest entertainer arrived dressed as Father Christmas on his way to Helsinki! We were entertained with songs and funny stories which made us all laugh. Our small MU choir sang 4 beautiful unusual carols and finally members requested and heartedly sang the more traditional ones.

The reading was from Isaiah 9 'Unto us a child is born' and prayer was offered for members who were unable to come, for Joan Towers in hospital and those who are unwell. This was followed by thanksgiving for being able to meet together in faith and friendship to celebrate the birth of our Saviour.

The whole evening was an absolute joy and we thanked all those who had made it possible.

Brenda Sheath



YOUinthe**PEW** interviewed by Chris Bishop

Brenda Sheath

Roots

Brenda was born in Enfield, grew up and went to school in North London. In 1960 she commenced nursing training at the Royal Free, a London Teaching Hospital and qualified in 1963. Working in an environment of 'life and death,' she committed herself to faith early in her training and was prepared for confirmation by a Church Army Sister, who assisted the hospital Chaplain and they both attended her confirmation service.



In 1989 her husband David's work moved to North Wiltshire, where they lived in Great Somerford, a small village near Malmesbury. Their 2 children had just graduated from university and decided not to move with them, but instead shared a flat together in Hertfordshire. 25 happy years later they decided it was time to return within easy reach of them both and settled for a retirement apartment in Saffron Walden.

St Mary's

Brenda had always been involved in the life of a church, so she naturally decided to attend the local church of St Mary's. She found it vibrant, dynamic and beyond her experience in terms of the numbers that attend and the range activities available. In Wiltshire she served as a Churchwarden for 6 years in a small country church, quite a contrast to St Mary's!

Saffron Walden

What Brenda loves about Saffron Walden is that it is a small historical market town surrounded by beautiful countryside and charming villages, with Audley End on their doorstep, easy access to Cambridge and the excellent Addenbrookes Hospital to look after their health. But best of all, it is 30 minutes' drive to see their son and his family and fifty minutes' drive to see their daughter. Brenda also mentions that her great passion is gardening. She loves plants, finds it therapeutic and still has a small area to cultivate.

Moving Event

Brenda says, here in Saffron Walden her overriding occupation has been as a member and Branch Leader of the Mothers' Union, which she first joined in

Hertfordshire when she had 2 small children. For Brenda, the service of commissioning as branch leader held a great significance, as she committed herself to its service. There was no MU in Wiltshire where she lived, so as soon as she set foot in St Mary's church and saw the banner on display, she was determined to join again. MU is concerned for the Christian values of family life, nationally and worldwide, reaching out to help members in 84 countries with very different problems from our own but united together in faith. For Brenda the faith and friendship of members strengthens and supports her own.

Coat of Arms

If Brenda had a coat of arms, the Motto would be 'PERSERVA' translated from the Latin that reads 'persevere' or keep going even in the difficult or disheartening times. That is when faith and trust is put to the test and it works!

www.SAFFRON WALDEN MOTORS.co.uk
CAR SALES - SERVICING & REPAIRS - M.O.T. TEST CENTRE

QUALITY LOW MILEAGE CAR SALES

Fully inspected - Serviced - 12 month M.O.T - Cleaned & Valeted

*** £10.00 off M.O.T. tests for the life you own the vehicle ***

TOWN CENTRE M.O.T TEST CENTRE

Book a while-you-wait appointment or leave your car with us

**SERVICING
REPAIRS
MOTS**

**DIAGNOSTICS
WHEEL ALIGNMENT
AIR CONDITIONING
TYRES - EXHAUSTS - BATTERIES**

Family owned business Est. 1938
66 HIGH STREET - SAFFRON WALDEN

Tel: 01799 523597
info@saffronwaldenmotors.co.uk

Please mention Parish News when responding to an advertisement.

PEASGOOD & SKEATES



INDEPENDENT FAMILY
FUNERAL DIRECTORS & MONUMENTAL MASONS

Serving the Community since 1847

SHIRE HILL

66B HIGH ST

SAFFRON WALDEN

SAFFRON WALDEN

01799 523314

01799 513513

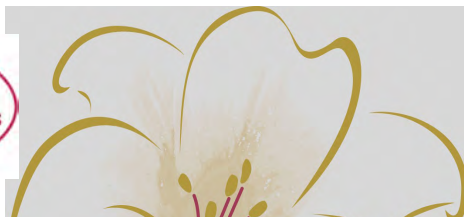
*A caring and professional service from
a local business, day or night*

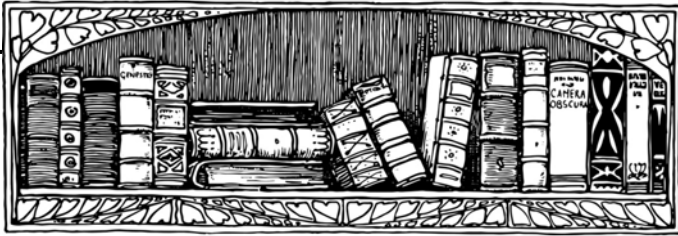
All types of funeral ~ Lady and Gentleman Funeral Directors

Also in Duxford, Sawston, Haverhill and Cambridge

www.peasgoodandskeates.co.uk

enquiries@peasgoodandskeates.co.uk





Book Review: 'Becoming' by Michelle Obama

It had been a very long time since we'd been able to meet so we enjoyed making a list together of the books we'd read separately during lockdown and which we'd wished we'd had the chance to share with each other. Aware that lockdown had been challenging for many people, we chose to restart with a known light read, albeit serious book, about family, education and US politics, Michelle Obama's 'Becoming'.

Michelle said, "When they go low, we go high". This book gives insight into how much hard work, love and support from friends and family it can take to try to live that out. Divided into three parts covering her early life (Becoming Me), her relationship with Barack and their marriage (Becoming Us) and then the White House (Becoming More), this statement has been Obama's ethos her whole life and not just from the point she was plunged into the spotlight. There is a particular emphasis on the love, help and support of her mother and brother. Some of us were more interested in learning about her early life – driven to succeed even as a child learning the piano, and others in the behind the scenes look at the presidency. I found the section on Michelle as First Lady least interesting; it is quite a carefully written, whistlestop overview.

Clearly amazingly bright and determined she comes across as hugely approachable with her natural preference to serve her community expressing itself in a more personal than political way. She turns her back on a high-powered legal career for public service work, mentoring schemes, building local community engagement for Chicago hospitals/universities rather than political office, and group members commented on the sacrifice it seems to have been to her to support a husband committed to public life. Time and again when she comes up against a difficult situation her strategy is to deal with it by inviting children into the mix because "kids make everything better" or more simply to give someone a hug. I'm not surprised she hugged the Queen and I'm not surprised the Queen hugged her back. A very relatable and inspirational woman.

Lisa Brook, The Book Group



St Mary's Music News

A lot has happened in the life of the SMMA since the previous Newsletter was written in the first week of November. It was a great pleasure that all the music took place with both choir and congregation, and indeed brass instrumentation, in contrast to the scaled back lockdown events of 2020.

The Remembrance Service on 14 November was very well attended. The choir sang the motets 'Peace White Dove' by Dolinski, and 'Anthem for the Fallen' by Irving. Emma from the Brass Group provided the signature trumpet accompaniment. It was followed in the evening by Compline with specially appropriate words and music.

Last year all carol services were undertaken by (very) socially distanced members of the choir spread through the whole nave, and without a physically present congregation. This year the Advent Carol Service on 28 November returned almost to pre-Covid normality, with the congregation in darkness punctuated by candlelight for almost the whole of the service till the light dawned in the final hymn. Special mentions are due for organ scholar Yechen for his stirring performance of Howells' 'Collegium Regale Magnificat', and for choral scholar George's tenor solo in Gibbons' 'This is the Record of John'.

The Service of Nine Lessons and Carols on 19 December was the first occasion on which the full Junior and Senior choirs have combined since March 2020. Some of the newest members became so excited during rehearsals that Oli was obliged to channel Joyce Grenfell (apologies to younger readers)! Eleanor Game's ethereal solo in the first verse of 'Once In Royal David's City' began the well-loved, well-remembered service. In contrast, the choir sang 2 new (to us) carols, 'A Maiden Most Gentle' by Mary Richardson and 'O Holy Night', arranged by Rutter. The congregation, though masked, sang with enthusiasm, especially during the arrangement of 'While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks', to the tune of 'On Ilkley Moor Bar T'at'. I am indebted to the compiler of the service sheet for the information that in the eighteenth century local musicians, placed in the West Gallery, often accompanied hymns to traditional folk tunes. Although the brass contingent was a little smaller than planned, 2 doughty trumpet players joined in many descants and a stirring rendition of Johnson's 'Trumpet Tune' at the end of the service.

On Christmas Eve there were 2 services for Lighting the Christmas Tree, with some senior choir members supporting the younger singers.

The SMMA is delighted to report that Joyful Noise, the group for our youngest musicians, successfully re-started in the autumn, with sessions covering an eclectic mix of songs on the themes of fireworks and light, the Gunpowder Plot, Diwali, Remembrance Day, Advent and Christmas. There are some budding soloists in the group, and new members (school years 1 - 3) are always welcome, as they are in the Junior Choir (age 7½ - 13). Please contact choirsmw@gmail.com for more information.

The Epiphany Service is planned for Sunday 23 January.

Otilie Lefever

QuinquaQuiz 2022

Dear everyone who is interested.

In 2020 we had a Quiz to raise funds for the Bishop's Lent Appeal. We raised over £300. In 2021 due to Covid we had a **virtual Quiz** on **Saturday February 27th** and raised over £100 for the Appeal.

This year we hope we will be able to get back to normal and will therefore have our Quiz on **Saturday February 26th starting at 7.30 pm** in the Parish Rooms.

As usual there will be teams of 6 with each player paying £5 to join. If you would like to take part, all you have to do is give me your names by **Monday February 21st**.

Upon your registration I will send you a copy of the rules for the evening.

I very much look forward to hearing from you.

Canon Chris Bishop

Contact via Parish Office:

office@stmaryssaffronwalden.org or 01799 506024

Fellowship of Prayer for Health and Healing at St Mary's

This is a reminder that there is a prayer chain at St Mary's where requests for prayer can be circulated in confidence to members of the small group of the Healing Fellowship. They will then pray regularly to support those who are sick or in any kind of trouble.

There is a leaflet at the back of the Church about the Healing Ministry at St Mary's, which gives details of other opportunities to receive prayer for healing and gives all the relevant contact details.

If you would like to ask for prayer for yourself or for someone else, please contact me with a name – it can be just a Christian name – there is no need to give more explanation than you wish to and any details will remain confidential.

Kathryn Fiddock

Contact via Parish Office: office@stmaryssaffronwalden.org or 01799 506024

Bentens

Chartered Certified Accountants Registered Auditors

Friendly, well established local firm dealing with all your audit, accountancy and taxation matters.

For a short free consultation (without obligation) please contact

Abbey House 51 High Street Saffron Walden

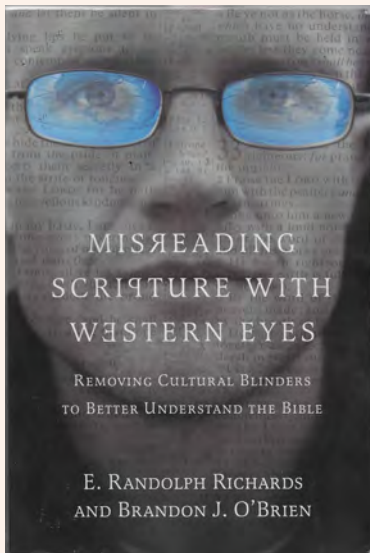
Telephone : (01799) 523053

info@bentens.co.uk

www.bentens.co.uk

Please mention Parish News when responding to an advertisement.

Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes



by Randolph Richards and Brandon O'Brien.
Published by IVP Books. Available from Eden Books £14.87.

In a recent sermon at St Mary's, our esteemed editor used the line: "A text without a context is a pretext" which could have been the subtitle of this book.

The world in which the New Testament writers lived was obviously so different from the western world of 21st century, that the context (and therefore the meaning) can easily be overlooked. Even when the context in the bible appears to be clear, there may be cultural norms which the 1st century writer has left unstated, simply because it would be so obvious to his contemporary audience. As

the title claims, our understanding of Scripture is heavily influenced by our own culture and experiences.

The authors describe an experiment in USA where 200 students were placed in pairs. One read aloud the story of the prodigal son, closed his bible and asked his partner to retell the parable as accurately as possible. Only 6% mentioned the famine. When the experiment was repeated in St Petersburg, the result was 84%. For the Americans, a famine was a remote experience and treated it as an unnecessary plot device. For the Russians, the memory of the 900 day siege and famine when 670,000 died during World War II, was still very real and raw.

Both authors are American; Richards an academic who spent 8 years teaching in Indonesia, O'Brien, an editor and writer based in New York. Neither author gives their fellow-citizens an easy ride. When O'Brien and his wife adopted two Afro-American children, they discovered the depth of racial prejudice in the USA (their words). He uses their experience to point to discrimination throughout the bible from Moses' wife (a Cushite, probably a black African) who was resented by Moses' siblings, to Paul, almost bellowing to the Colossians that "Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, Barbarian, Scythian or slave but Christ is all and is in all". O'Brien explains that Colossae would have been a melting pot of Romans, Jews, various local tribes each carrying their own prejudices.

While he also touches on discrimination, based on our accent and our

home town "*Can any good thing come out from Nazareth?*", he fails to address discrimination against women, although O'Brien ends by wondering if the story of Boaz and Ruth (a Moabite) would be read differently if it was "Boaz the Israeli" and "Ruth the Palestinian"?

The most problematic issue addressed by Richards and O'Brien is individualism and collectivism. It's a huge issue, enough for Richards to co-write a follow up book "*Misreading scripture through individualistic eyes*". Western societies are individualistic. Independent thinking is encouraged. Even in team sports, we applaud and honour the individuals who score the most goals or the most runs. No one remembers the winners of a relay event.

Most other societies are collectivist, including the Middle East, where the most important entity is the community. The whole of the bible is set in a collectivist society, whereas we (usually) know only an individualistic society. In the nativity story, O'Brien suggests that Joseph and Mary were part of a large extended family group travelling together to Bethlehem. It was just so obvious in a collectivist society that it was unnecessary for Matthew to mention it.

With a collectivist society comes honour and shame, huge factors in Middle Eastern society, sometimes a matter of life and death. Bill Musk, most recently the Bishop of Tunis, spent many years ministering in the Middle East. In his book "*Touching the Soul of Islam*" he examines the parable of the prodigal son from a Middle Eastern perspective - it is all about honour and shame, disloyalty and the breakdown of commitment to kith and kin. The actions of the father in welcoming the prodigal back into the family would have been quite shocking to those listening.

The writers could have taken the approach that the bible was written at a very different time for a totally different society and has limited relevance to 21C western society. But they haven't. It is to their credit that they explain the context of a number of biblical episodes, which would otherwise be lost on us. The book is rich with anecdotes and while this is helpful it is also frustrating. Some in-depth analysis would have provided some balance. Nonetheless, it is very readable and will leave many readers wanting to know more.

Ian Sutherland

Chocolate

When I look at chocolate, I hear two voices in my head. The first one says, 'You need to eat the chocolate.' The second one says, 'You heard. Eat the chocolate.'

The Love of Wisdom of Natural Things

Some time ago a scientist (Tom McLeish) was invited to speak at the Dewsbury Women's Institute. He spoke about his research on polymers, hoping that the women of this Yorkshire mill town would connect with his desire to develop new fibres.

One person in particular, a woman called Betty who had worked in a mill since the age of 15, listened as if her life depended on it, and peppered him with questions afterwards. She had always been interested in how things work, but until that day had not found anyone to answer her questions. Whenever she had asked about the processes that they were using in the mill, she was just told to get on with her job.

From the outside, science can seem a closed specialty, hemmed in by intimidating jargon. When McLeish described science as 'the love of wisdom of natural things', however, he realised he was opening a door. He was moved to see that Betty was not the only person who shed a tear when her questions were finally taken seriously, confirming that her enquiring mind was indeed probing in the right direction – only fifty years too late.

Hearing about people like Betty reminds me that science is a very natural activity for anyone to be involved in. McLeish is convinced that there is a future in 'science therapy'. In his book *Faith and Wisdom in Science*, where this story appears, he asks the question "If a reintroduction to the activity of representing both inner and outer worlds in paint, music and drama can help to heal minds, what hope might there be for a participation in a gentle and contemplative science in restoring a broken or misunderstood relationship with the physical world?"

This story inspired me to run a number of hands-on science activities with adult audiences in churches. I have extracted DNA from strawberries with a midweek group for older people, organised hands-on exhibits to liven up lecture or discussion events, and even had groups extracting DNA from their own cheek cells.

Every time I lead activities like these, I find that grown-ups are grateful for the opportunity to have a go at science themselves. I love helping church-based groups, in particular, to reconnect with science and celebrate what they find. Science is not just for children and professionals – it is for everyone to enjoy and explore the world God made.

Dr Ruth M Bancewicz
The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion, Cambridge
(Source: Parish Pump)



Kitchens



Unit 39, Shirehill Industrial Estate, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB11 3AQ



Telephone: 01799 513782

E-mail: sales@rightpricekitchens.co.uk

www.rightpricekitchens.co.uk

Opening hours: Monday - Friday 8:30am - 5:00pm

Saturday by appointment only (8:30am - 12:00pm)



Helen's electric chasuble was the envy of everyone

JOB HUNTING?

Need help with CV writing, job search & applications?

We offer a **FREE**, confidential virtual service to anyone seeking work.



Call us any day, 10am - 4pm on 07901 173763 to speak to an experienced volunteer or email swtransitionproject@gmail.com

www.transitionproject.co.uk



OG Conversions

Bespoke loft specialists...

Free quote and survey!

- Design and build service.
- Velux, dormer, hip to gable and L shape.
- 10 year structural guarantee.
- North Hertfordshire, Essex and South Cambridgeshire

WWW.OGCONVERSIONS.CO.UK

07985 225 052



PB Building Services & Property Maintenance

PB Building Services offers a variety of building works including:

Extensions
Garages
Pitched and flat roofing
Facias and soffits
Porches
Decorating
Fencing
Plastering and rendering

With an extensive array of assignments completed in Suffolk and Essex; PB Building Services will display the experience and flexibility required for the project.

**To discuss your requirements
please contact Paul Butcher
07989 568 144**



Piero de la Francesca's Baptism of Christ



I have been familiar with Piero de la Francesca's painting of the baptism of Christ for half a century, but on my last visit to the National Gallery saw it again with totally fresh eyes.

It is an exquisite painting, poised in an eternal moment of time, the water pouring onto Jesus' head as a fine, motionless thread and the dove hovering with no movement of its wings. The landscape, that can still be sensed in the Umbrian hills, is reflected in glassily still water, as if foretelling of a world that will

soon be turned upside down. The man preparing for his own baptism after Jesus, is pulling off his shirt in the sort of unselfconscious manner that Degas was to capture centuries later in his pastels of women bathing.



This time, however, I focussed on the angels and was immediately perplexed by the expression on the face of the middle angel: worried, fearful, nervous. Why wasn't she feeling happy or joyful at Christ's baptism? The angel to the right holds her hand reassuringly but also seems too nervous to look at the scene. Why would she not want to witness it? The angel to the left does look at Christ, but with grim stoicism rather than joy or celebration. She holds out her right hand as if to say, 'Stay calm. Don't panic. Have faith. This is all part of God's plan.'

So why are they so worried? I looked at Christ. He is wearing a simple loincloth. Just as he does in the crucifixion. He doesn't have his arms outspread, but the dove above him very much has. The tree that plays such a dominant part in the composition, as always symbolises both the tree of Eden and the tree of the crucifixion. And Christ's expression, his face flushed with a rush of blood, shows that he is all too aware of the significance of the moment.

This is the point of no return. This is the point at which his death on the cross becomes inevitable. The angels know. No wonder they struggle to summon up the courage to look. No wonder Christ is feeling the weight of the moment. That tiny drop of water will eventually and unavoidably become his blood.

Piero's painting is not just about his baptism. It is about his crucifixion.

Edward Gildea

(the fully painting is available at www.nationalgallery.org.uk)

Repairs to the Chancel Roof – A Quick Update



Roof boarding ready for the lead

By the end of November, the chancel roof was fully boarded and we were prepared for the start of the noisy work to lay the new lead when we discovered additional repairs that needed to be addressed. On detailed investigation we found that the gutter and an outlet on the south side of the roof which runs through the stonework of the roof parapet and into the rainwater hopper and down-pipe below were not watertight. The outlet is a 2-foot-long pipe constructed from copper and this copper pipe has split.



Rainwater hopper with existing copper outlet

Following rapid approval of the additional work and cost to repair and replace all 4 outlets from the chancel roof in lead, more carpentry, stonemasonry and scaffolding work were completed before Christmas. At last, the laying of the new lead started on Wednesday 5th January. This is projected to take until late January and, all being well, the scaffolding should have been removed by mid to late February.

Steve Hasler