

Parish News



St Mary's Church, Saffron Walden

St John, Little Walden and St James, Swards End

Part of Saffron Walden & Villages Team Ministry

August-September 2022

FREE

This is the Only Moment: Poems from a Journey

Paula Griffiths

By the time you read August's edition of Parish News, copies of this booklet of poems should be available, at a cost of £5.

The poems reflect the period of my life since Roger and I moved to the Saffron Walden area in 1999 after years in London, where we were both born, and our delight in the new space and beauty around us. Many of the poems are rooted in the natural world around Saffron Walden: others reflect events which affected all our lives, beginning with 9/11 and the Iraq War of 2003 and the beginnings of a greater awareness of climate change; yet others reflect events in my previous career dealing with cathedral and church buildings - including the commuting experience! All are part of a personal journey, which led to ordination and joining the Saffron Walden and Villages Team Ministry.



Since I retired last summer I have pulled the collection together and would like to share them with others. Some were previously included in the Wimbish Parish Magazine, where I worshipped before beginning ordination training, but they have not otherwise been published before. Thanks to E & E Plumridge Ltd, of Linton, who have printed them. I hope you too may enjoy them.

All sale proceeds will support the churches of the Saffron Walden and Villages Team Ministry.

Copies of *This is the Only Moment: Poems from a Journey* can be obtained from Harts Bookshop or the Tourist Information Office, St Mary's Parish Office, or direct from paula.greatford@btinternet.com. I would be glad to make multiple copies available to any churches in the Team for sale within the church itself, to the congregation, or at any fundraising events.

Paula

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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 **October** issue is **Sunday 4th September**.

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St Mary's Church Website:

www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org

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The Rector's Letter

From The Rev'd Jeremy Trew

Jeremy writes...

I don't know what your experiences were, but at my school careers advice was rather useless. The best bit of advice I ever received was at a family get-together for my father's side of the family. Everyone there was either a teacher or a chartered accountant (remember – no-one chooses their family). Their advice was; "Jeremy, whatever you do in life don't become a teacher or an accountant." It seemed like good advice and I took it.



August must be a blessed relief for teachers. At long last they've come to the end of a long academic year, and they have earned every minute of the break they're enjoying. Though, it is a relative break, as time off from children does not mean time off from preparation, paperwork and the like. Also, for many, it is not the profession they joined: Children now face examinations almost from starting school to satisfy the neurosis of a control society; That very same society also demands that schools take up many of the basic educational tasks that were once the responsibility of society itself and especially the parents.

The culture of the Bible, and particularly the Old Testament, viewed children as one of God's greatest blessings, an unmerited gift whose existence blessed the whole of society in turn. With such a belief hovering in the background it is not surprising that the nurture and care of those children was seen as a shared responsibility, and not just the task of parents, or preferably qualified professionals. This is part of the reason that I value Church and other faith schools. Their existence demonstrates that the nurture of children is more than merely a devolved responsibility, but is fundamental to the human task, just as faith is fundamental to human meaning.

Maybe we can learn from this: To look at the tasks that others do and recognise that our welfare is in part dependent on their labour, and theirs on ours; And, to accept that this gives us a mutual responsibility one-for-the-other. Maybe then we will not be so ready to offload our responsibilities on other people, but will be more willing to face the needs of our society collaboratively.

So; thank you to all in our community who, in one way or another, help nurture our children. May you have a refreshing break. Thank you also to all

who, through their work and volunteering, bless our Church family in ways great and small. Your service is appreciated.

Best wishes

Jeremy



Friends of the Parish Church Cathedral Trip to Bury St Edmunds

The Friends visited Bury St Edmunds Cathedral on Wednesday 22nd June. Our trip commenced with an official tour of the Cathedral and we were lucky enough to have informative and interesting guides.

We had lunch together at the Cathedral, in the Edmund Room, which added to the social aspect of the day. We were joined by the Venerable Duncan Green and his wife Janet: it was good to see them both looking well.

The afternoon was free to wander and as it was market day the town was bustling and busy. The tour day coincided with the Flower Festival which was a truly amazing display. We had the delights of the Abbey Gardens and Ruins to explore as well as the varied architecture of the town centre and of course the shops.

We were again blessed with sunshine adding to the enjoyment of the day. We look forward to our trip to Lincoln in September: see the St Mary's website for further details.

Pamela Mugliston, Secretary of the The Friends

Paying the Price



Image by blende12 from Pixabay

Let's be in no doubt about it. Humanity is beginning to pay the price for our negligence about the Climate Crisis, and that price is only going to increase. India and Pakistan have been suffering from exceptionally high temperatures since March this year. The hot season arrived unusually early, affecting north-western India and Pakistan, setting a record as the hottest March since records began 122 years ago. It has also been combined with a drought, with rainfall being only a quarter to a third of normal.

Several cities across India had high temperatures over 42.8 °C (109 °F), reaching 45 °C in some cities and while in Pakistan the city of Nawabshah recorded an unimaginably high temperature of 121 °F. Birds were seen falling from the sky in Gujarat.

The rich have the option of retreating to air-conditioned homes and offices, but for the poor there is little escape. Imagine, then, being a peasant or labourer who has to work in such temperatures.

"It's become impossible to work after 10 o'clock in the morning," said Sunil Das, a rickshaw puller in Noida on the outskirts of Delhi. "I head back home after 10 and resume in the evening when the heat has subsided a bit," Das said. "It has reduced my earnings but what alternative do I have?"

Imagine, too, the consequences of your well or water hole going dry in such heat and drought... Human life ceases to be sustainable.

'But that is India. Thousands of miles away.' There will be some that

consciously or unconsciously diminish the enormity of the event in such ways. *'Things like that often happen in India or Africa. They must be used to it.'* *'They've brought it on themselves with their coal mines.'*

It is true that India is resorting to coal to generate the energy needed to empower an economy that will lead people out of poverty. But over 95% of the gases in our atmosphere that are causing these heatwaves are the product of 200 years of the fossil fuel powered economies of the developed world. It is our legacy.

We will come across arguments and blame games that are, at their heart, racist at worst or demonstrate a lurking post-imperial mindset. They are certainly not Christian.

And despite the thousands of miles, we will feel the impact here ourselves, because of the impact on harvests. The heatwave is increasing local prices in India and reducing supply, having occurred during the final weeks of the wheat growing season, killing the plants shortly before harvest.

We have become acutely aware of how dependent we are on Ukraine and Russia for wheat, fertilizer and sunflower oil. Together they account for 25% of the world's wheat exports, an amazing 80% of sunflower oil exports and 15% of global fertilizer. Our food supply chains have never looked so vulnerable. Reductions in harvests anywhere else in the world will have even greater impacts on the affordability of food.

So that bad news is compounded by another record-breaking heat wave which hit parts of the US in June, with some states hitting triple digit Fahrenheit temperatures. More than 100 million Americans were issued with heat and 'excessive heat' warnings while in Kansas at least 2,000 cattle died due to the heat and humidity. More than 100 high temperature records are expected to be broken during July, mainly across the southern and eastern regions of the US. UN secretary general António Guterres has warned that humanity is facing a "perfect storm" and that the crises are widening inequality between the north and south. "Inequalities are still growing inside countries, but they are now growing in a morally unacceptable way between north and south and this is creating a divide which can be very dangerous from the point of view of peace and security."

Meanwhile at home, our own Climate Change Committee, led by former Conservative environment secretary, Lord Deben, voiced fears that ministers may renege on the legally binding commitment to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, noting "major policy failures" and "scant evidence of delivery". Now more than ever we need to pray and exert whatever influence we have.

Edward Gildea, Eco Team Leader



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Church Commissioners' research identifies historic links to transatlantic chattel slavery

The Church Commissioners for England has learned from research it commissioned that Queen Anne's Bounty, a predecessor fund of the Church Commissioners' £10.1 billion endowment, had links with transatlantic chattel slavery. The Church Commissioners has said it is "deeply sorry for its predecessor fund's links with transatlantic chattel slavery".

In the 18th century, Queen Anne's Bounty invested significant amounts of its funds in the South Sea Company, a company that traded in enslaved people. It also received numerous benefactions, many of which are likely to have come from individuals linked to, or who profited from, transatlantic chattel slavery or the plantation economy.

The Church Commissioners in 2019 decided to conduct research into the source of its endowment fund to gain an improved understanding of its history. It worked with forensic accountants to review early ledgers and other original source documents from Queen Anne's Bounty. That research is now complete, and a final report of the findings will be published later this year.

The Church Commissioners are forming a group to consider the research and how to respond to these findings. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, who is also Chair of the Church Commissioners, said: "I am deeply sorry for the links with transatlantic chattel slavery that the Church Commissioners has identified. This abominable trade took men, women and children created in God's image and stripped them of their dignity and freedom. The fact that some within the Church actively supported and profited from it is a source of shame. This is a moment for lament, repentance and restorative action."

Parish Pump

(Photograph by British Library on Unsplash)

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Muniments Room

Archive Group

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

August & September 1953

Fighting Communism

The most important part of the Church was the parish and the laity had to remember that responsibility for evangelism did not rest on the clergy only. Christians had to know what they believed in and the reasons for it.

“Communism is spreading because the Communists, though in a very small minority in this country, know what they stand for and are prepared to argue for it. We Christians must know what we stand for and argue for it”.

Lipstick.

None of us likes to find lipstick marking the cup we are going to use in a café, but it is even more disturbing to notice it when we are about to receive the chalice at Holy Communion. For this reason it is usual not to wear lipstick when you are going to make your communion. If older women would set the example in this matter, the younger ones, who are perhaps not so expert in applying it, would find it easier not to put it on till after the service. The Parish Room has a cloakroom, which you can use before you go home if you wish.

Houses, Homes and Food

The Council for the Preservation of Rural England tells us that we cannot afford to go on losing 50,000 acres of agricultural land a year. It is estimated that in the next twenty years an area as big as Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire will be required for new building. The towns spread in all directions and houses are built on good farming land. Our own town is a typical example: creeping tentacles reach out along Little Walden Road, Sheds Lane, Ashdon Road, Radwinter Road, Thaxted Road, Landscape View, and Newport Road, as the town clutches like a greedy monster at the rich land around to provide spacious homes and pleasant gardens for its inhabitants. How long is this process going to last before hunger strikes back at the towns? In a Third World War would these islands be starved into submission? When will food become so expensive that the townsman will be unable to buy it?

Canon Chris Bishop. Archivist



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From the Registers

Baptisms

12th June Dorothy Valerie Hide
Ruairi Ivan James O'Kane
Maeve Agnes Mary O'Kane

19th June Molly Katherine Rust

26th June Micky Archie Ron Pledger (at St James' Swards End)

Funerals

9th June Geoffrey Etherington

23rd June Angus Armstrong

27th June Josephine Wrixon

Prayer for the month *provided by the Prayer Team*

Dear Lord Jesus, you,
who makes all things new,
bring peace to our hearts,
to our communities
and to your world.

Bring joy to our lives,
to those who struggle
and to your people throughout the world.

And bring healing to our minds and bodies,
to those who are suffering
and to your broken world.

We pray in your name Lord Jesus,
who makes all things new,
Amen.



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The Mothers' Union Wave of Prayer Report 2022

The meeting took place on 16th June at 2pm in the North Chapel, where members and visitors were welcomed, and in particular Mrs Janet Bentley, who is a MU Diocesan Vice President and also a Diocesan Trustee.

The Mothers' Union Wave of Prayer is a daily act of intercession, creating a continual wave of prayer worldwide. In Chelmsford Diocese we are linked with 5 overseas diocese and appear in the MU prayer calendar on 18th - 20th June.

Our link Dioceses are the Military Episcopate in Kenya, Rejaf in South Sudan, Doko and Owo in East and South-East Nigeria, Jamaica and the Cayman Islands in the West Indies, and at this meeting we celebrate the connection we have with them.

Guidelines for a service appear in the MU Roundabout magazine, which we followed. Nine members came forward to read one at a time. As they did so, they made waves in a large glass bowl of blue coloured water to symbolise the Wave of Prayer. Each member lit a battery-operated candle in front of the bowl to represent each Diocese. Readings, Bible quotes and prayers were offered as we remembered each Diocese.

Prayers were also offered for the witness and work of the Mothers' Union worldwide, Myanmar where there is great suffering due to the Military seizing power and the forthcoming Lambeth Conference 2022.

A very poignant email was read from Bishop Edward Tombe in Rejaf South Sudan. He asked for our prayers for peace and said that South Sudan had never really experienced total peace, that rape of women and girls was still common. Also, their country's financial situation was in difficulty and that travel and transport out of town for Mothers' Union meetings was fraught with problems and difficulties. There are no cars available, even for the Bishop!

We are praying for overseas members with very different circumstances and problems from our own but we are united in faith and prayer and in our concern for Christian family life. Our service gave us a very different perspective to consider and to pray for.

Brenda Sheath

Calendar for Aug-Sept 2022

This calendar is provisional. See The Grapevine or the church website for the latest information, particularly for streaming of services.

St Mary's, Saffron Walden

One service in church each Sunday is streamed on YouTube [Y]: details on the church website.

Thursday 4 August

- 10am Silent Prayer in the North Chapel
- 1pm Service with Prayers for Wholeness and Healing

Sunday 7 August

- 8am BCP Holy Communion
- 10am First Sunday Communion [Y]

Sunday 14 August

- 8am BCP Holy Communion
- 10am Holy Communion [Y]
- 6.30pm Evening Prayer

Sunday 21 August

- 8am BCP Holy Communion [Y]
- 10am Family Service
- 6.30pm Evening Communion with Prayers for Wholeness and Healing

Sunday 28 August

- 8am BCP Holy Communion
- 10am Holy Communion [Y]
- 6.30pm Evening Prayer

Thursday 1 September

- 10am Silent Prayer in the North Chapel
- 1pm Service with Prayers for Wholeness and Healing

Sunday 4 September

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

Thursday 8 September

- 2pm Mothers' Union Holy Communion



Sunday 11 September

8am BCP Holy Communion
10am Holy Communion [Y]
6.30pm Choral Evensong

Sunday 18 September

8am BCP Holy Communion [Y]
10am Family Service - Harvest Thanksgiving
6.30pm Evening Communion with Prayers for Wholeness and Healing

Sunday 25 September

8am BCP Holy Communion
10am Holy Communion [Y]
6.30pm Evening Prayer

Regular weekday services at St Mary's

Tuesdays

5pm Evening Prayer by Zoom, see weekly bulletin for login details

Wednesdays

8am Morning Prayer
9.30am Holy Communion

St James', Swards End

Sunday 14 August

9.30am Holy Communion

Sunday 28 August

9.30am Morning Praise

Sunday 11 September

9.30am Holy Communion

Sunday 25 September

9.30am Morning Praise



St John's, Little Walden

Sunday 14 August

11.15am Family Service

Sunday 28 August

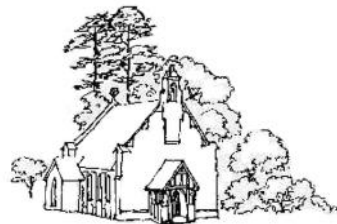
11.15am Holy Communion

Sunday 11 September

11.15am Family Service

Sunday 25 September

11.15am Holy Communion





From one of the Daughters

A Village Summer; Early 1940's

Our summer really started with the harvest. Before the days of combine harvesters, my father would bring out our binding machine. The binder would be drawn by his tractor. He put on canvases, along with string to tie the bundles of corn after they were cut by the binder's blades.

As the binder was fitted on the left side of the tractor the first job would see my father having to walk around the sides of his fields, cutting a strip with a scythe. This saved that corn being flattened by the tractor as it passed. Mr Chapman (though we knew him as Mr Pink!) would gather by hand and tie the bundles of corn by twisting two pieces of corn together.

When the binder started Mr Pink or occasionally my sister would have to sit on a high seat and watch that each bundle of cut corn was tied and shot out onto the field. If it wasn't working correctly, they would bang loudly with a stick to alert my father, who would then stop, investigate and correct the problem!

Our Uncle Sid and his family would come for a week by train from Ipswich to help with the harvest. It was quite an occasion for us all! He would help in the fields, moving bundles out of the way of the passing tractor and binder. For a while my sister and I would follow the machine around but would give up when our ankles got too scratched by the corn stubble. Our cousins from Ipswich would sometimes join us but being a bit 'towny' often stayed in the orchard picking greengages and playing with the dogs.

Five or six bundles would be stood into stooks to allow the heads to ripen in the sun. They had to stand three Sundays. The stooks from three fields, totalling five or six acres, were then gathered by hand cart and tractor and trailer. They were brought all together into one huge stack.

The stack was thatched by Stanley Osborne who normally worked at Lagden's Farm at Pounce Hall using the long straw from the stooks. When he'd finished none of the heads of corn could be seen. It took him over a day's work to complete the thatch, working evenings or on a Sunday.

We had to wait for the visit of the threshing machine from Mr Portway's farm in Radwinter, in our case into the autumn. Not many farms had their own so had to wait their turn. The thatch would keep the harvest dry until the machine could winnow, flail and separate the grain from the straw and chaff.

In wartime, no one left the village for holidays by the sea. The children mostly stayed in the village, playing in the fields and meadows and going for

Sewards End

walks. We knew everyone in the village then, both young and old. At home we would arrange concerts using an old trailer as a stage: neighbours might come and watch.

Sometimes we would walk into Walden, buses being very infrequent with petrol on ration. A treat would be when our mother would take us for tea and cake at The Copper Kettle in King Street. It was a favourite haunt of village folk and locals. The slices of cake were so nice – icing was not normally seen at home!

Whilst in town we might accompany mum and her ration book to either Walker's, Home and Colonial, International or sometimes Cro's stores. I remember that in Walker's big square tins would be lined up in front of the counter. The assistant would come round and bag up our choice of biscuit to be weighed!

We were never bored during summer but happy and content, even with sweets on ration!

Kathlyn Lester

YOUinthe**PEW** interviewed by Chris Bishop

Margaret Jacobs

Margaret was brought up in Southeast London. Her family attended St Paul's Church, Forest Hill, every week. It was a small congregation with members from varied backgrounds in an area undergoing considerable social change. Her father was a churchwarden for many years and her mother ran the Mothers' Union. Both her parents were particularly interested in theology and the Ecumenical Movement and one of her most formative experiences was attending the annual summer conference of the Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius, which brought together both Anglican and Orthodox Christians. Whole families were welcomed at the Conference each year and she met many interesting and eminent people, particularly from Eastern Europe, and made lifelong friendships.

After she was offered a job as a careers adviser in Bishop's Stortford, Margaret came to live in Saffron Walden and St Mary's was the obvious church to attend. She was welcomed by the congregation and was quickly recruited as a Christian Aid collector. She soon found herself organising the annual Christian Aid house-to-house collection for the whole town on behalf of Churches



Together in Saffron Walden and started monthly Christian Aid lunches held at the Quaker Meeting House. Given her ecumenical background, she enjoyed developing relationships with the different churches in the town to show how they can work together to show God's love.

Soon after moving to Saffron Walden, Margaret met her husband, Gordon. They were married at St Mary's in a wonderful ceremony supported by many members of the congregation. This meant a lot to her and showed what a friendly community it is. Since then, both her children and one grandchild have been baptised in St Mary's.

Margaret was delighted when the church choir was reconstituted as a mixed choir in 1986 and she joined from the start. This has been a total joy for her ever since. She is now one of the choir music librarians making sure that everyone has copies of all the music to be sung at every service and that it is all put back in the right place!

Apart from singing, one of Margaret's other lifelong interests has been Girlguiding and she has been a leader with 7th Saffron Walden (St Mary's) Brownies and Guides for many years. She thoroughly enjoys being with the girls and thinks that this role is part of the church's outreach to the community.

Margaret loves living in Saffron Walden, there are so many different activities going on in the town. She thinks that this is best shown at the Carnival Parade when a vast array of different organisations and community groups decorate floats and parade through the town. She was blown away at seeing her first Parade and has taken part in almost all of them ever since, representing different groups over the years.

She can trace her family back to the 15th century on her father's side and her motto would be – "Love your neighbour as yourself and do a good turn every day."

God at the movies: Paolini's Still Life

Those who are called upon to conduct funerals may very occasionally find themselves at a graveside or crematorium with only an undertaker present. Sad though such times are, in my experience they are always conducted with solemnity and with respect for the dead. Uberto Pasolini, director of *The Full Monty*, takes a thoughtful look at this subject in his 2013 film, *Still Life*, starring Eddie Marsan (*The Thief, his Wife and the Canoe*). Marsan plays John May, a serious and compassionate man, who works for a London borough and is charged with tracking down any remaining relatives of those who die alone in the area. May, himself a lonely man, has done this job with the upmost thoroughness for many years, becoming quite a shrewd detective in finding

estranged relatives or previous work colleagues, who either should be informed or may wish to attend the funeral. For May this is a painstaking process that can take many weeks of investigation; indeed, the mortuary attendant complains that he is running out of space to store bodies and 'come the summer they will be sharing bunks'! We see that May is meticulous in everything he does, whether it's his forensic investigations, his ultra-tidy desk, or his fastidious table-laying for his meagre dinners.

May is quite used to finding relatives who just don't want to know, leaving him the job of dealing with all arrangements. Being the man he is, May attends as the only mourner at the cemetery or crematorium, showing his own respect for a life now passed. Such regard leads him where possible to write a eulogy, based on any



information he has gleaned from the deceased's home, which he then passes to the minister to read. The picture we get is of a quiet man from another age, out of step with today's world and with precious few connections to its values. This makes his job seem very expensive to his manager, who can't understand why May spends so much time on those whom no one remembers. A drive for efficiency savings results in the imminent amalgamation of offices, meaning that John May will be let go. His current case will be his last, so he now needs to work quickly if the deceased is to be shown the respect and dignity, which he believes every human being should be shown. His quest leads him to the north of England where he finds for himself a genuine connection and a sense of hope for the future.

This is no blockbuster - there are no car chases, no explosions or CGI effects to wow an audience and therefore it may have slipped under the radar of many film lovers, although it won Pasolini best director at the Venice Film Festival in 2013. This is a poignant film, with a most moving ending, which speaks of loss, compassion and unresolved partings. It has left me with much food for thought. Are funerals simply for the living, or are they for the dead as well? How important is it that someone remembers the dead, even scoundrels? How our society remembers those for whom no one cares says a lot about us and our values. One thing is for sure: God remembers the dead.

Andy Colebrooke

Still Life is currently available on Amazon to rent or buy.

Photograph: Patrick Quinn on Unsplash



St Mary's Music News

Special musical activities in June started with a rousing Festal Evensong. While "rousing" is not usually a word associated with the calm, meditative nature of this most reflective of services, this was an exception, including Stamford's *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis* in A, and Gerald Finzi's explosive *God is Gone Up*.

The SMMA's very successful and enjoyable lunchtime concert programme ran throughout June and July, featuring a wide variety of instruments and performers. It was a particular pleasure to welcome back our first Michael Swindlehurst organ scholar, Elliot Randall, for the performance on 6 July.

The final concert before the summer break is *Organ Plus* at 3pm on Sunday 24 July, with Director of Music Oli King on the organ, Kate Llewellyn on trumpet and Guy Llewellyn on French horn. Admission is free, but there is a retiring collection. For this and other future musical events, including the Patronal Festival and Choral Evensong on Sunday 11 September go to www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org/Articles/634177/Music_at_St.aspx

The end of the academic year is always a time for a change of singers in the Junior Choir and Choral Scholar groups. We say goodbye and thank you to Isobel who is leaving the Juniors for pastures new. Meanwhile, a very successful recruitment event took place for the Junior Choir on 1 July. 9 potential newcomers joined 14 of the current young choristers for a lively evening. After warm-up exercises, Choral Scholar Eden gave a talk on his experience as a Junior, and the current Juniors then demonstrated a short practice, which included songs as varied as a round and an anthem in Latin. The visitors were then split into breakout groups where they tried on choir robes, did a Church quiz, and visited the organ loft where they were allowed to play the organ. Speaking as a relatively new member of the Senior Choir, I am very jealous of this last opportunity, which is not offered to us! The current Juniors then led unplanned discussions on the origin of the term "nave", and more obscurely on the Reformation. Most impressive, especially as nearly everyone involved is still at, or has only recently left, primary school. Obviously after all this hard work refreshment was needed, which SMMA Chairman Hannah provided in the form of homemade traybakes and biscuits. The evening was rounded off with a game of Splat, following which the exhausted adults went on to Senior choir practice. Many thanks to Oli, Peter, Alison, Kate, Ellie, Helen, Eden and Eleanor.

3 of our Choral Scholars are moving on, but we hope to welcome them

back from time to time. George has been awarded a Vice Chancellor's music scholarship at Durham University. His duties will include not only participating fully in the musical life of the university, but also visiting schools to inspire pupils with a love of music. Helena has just performed an amazing set of songs at the High School's Hampers and Champers event for leavers. Eleanor is off to a month of music school, then to Israel during her gap year to join in the Church's Ministry among Jewish People. We wish them all the very best of luck for the future.

Finally, the SMMA is looking forward to enjoying a Mermaids and Pirates supper at the end of July, complete with good fellowship, good food, and lots of sea shanties, before we all return refreshed in September.

Otilie Lefever

St Mary's Book Group

We all have a stereotypical idea of a Church of England parson in our mind's-eye. The Book Group met on 17th June to discuss *A Field Guide to the English Clergy*, a 2018 book by Rev'd Fergus Butler-Gallie whose subtitle ("A Compendium of Diverse Eccentrics, Pirates, Prelates and Adventurers; all Anglican, some even practising") is a better description of its contents. I hope Butler-Gallie, a young curate, had fun compiling it, as it was certainly fun to read, but anyone expecting a balanced portrait of vicars they have known is in for a shock. A majority of the clergymen (all men; most of the women who have been ordained in the Church of England are still alive, and Butler-Gallie fears a libel case) lived at a time when the intellectual qualifications for ordination were not rigorous, and the church became something of a dumping ground for sons of the aristocracy who were not in line to inherit and who didn't fancy a military or naval commission.

For 300 years following the Reformation there was no impediment to eccentricity among the clergy – they had enough money, lots of free time, a reasonable education and a social position in the community, giving some priests the opportunity to overindulge their whims and foibles. Vicars have done much to improve English life; think of the fathers of Jane Austen or the Brontë sisters, Gilbert White, the Naturalist, and David Sheppard, the Test cricketer. Others were somewhat quirker.

Thus, we find Frederick Hervey (1730-1803) the agnostic son of the Earl of Bristol who was made Bishop of Cloyne. A devotee of the game of leapfrog, he would arrange his curates around the palace lawn to indulge his passion. When in 1768 he was promoted to Bishop of Derry, he abruptly stopped his game, exclaiming "Gentlemen, I've outjumped you all, leaping from Cloyne to Derry". Or Rev'd. Frederick Densham (1870-1953), a vicar on Bodmin Moor, who wrote

in his parish attendance register “Sunday – no wind, no rain, no fog, no congregation”. Scarcely surprising, as he’d devoted a lot of time to devising elaborate locks on the door to keep them out. He had an eight-foot barbed wire fence around his vicarage, in which he kept a dozen Alsations. Butler-Gallie has found 50 oddballs, ranging from nutty academics and bon viveurs to prodigal sons and downright rogues.

Our previous book had been *Fathomless Riches*, an autobiography of Richard Coles, describing his ‘journey’ from pop star excesses to a parish priest (he has recently retired). It was interesting to consider how the vocation of priesthood has changed over the years, and also how these colourful clerics often seem to have inspired a surprisingly devoted following.

Eight of us assembled on the hottest evening of the year so far. Our generous host, whose significant birthday fell on this date, kept us suitably, and appropriately, refreshed. Our next book, Thomas Savage’s *The Power of the Dog*, will be a much more challenging story.

John Pickthorn

The Church’s Ministry among Jewish People (CMJ)

Eleanor Game’s decision to spend her gap year volunteering in Jerusalem with CMJ caused a few members of the congregation to ask questions about CMJ and what it does.

CMJ is one of the oldest Christian mission organisations having been established in 1809 by Christians who saw in the scriptures the continuing importance to God of Israel and the Jewish people. I am the Vice-Chair of CMJ here in the UK and in the past I was also Vice-Chair of CMJ in Israel. I hope to explain a little about the ministry in this article.

The Christians who established CMJ recognised that Jesus (Yeshua in Hebrew) is the Jewish Messiah who fulfilled all the prophecies in the Hebrew Bible (The Old Testament). He would be born of a virgin, in Bethlehem, that He would come first as the suffering servant, be rejected by His own people, die for our sins, rise again and eventually return to Jerusalem as the ruling and reigning Messiah. They also recognised that the Hebrew scriptures foretold the regathering of the Jewish people to their land, Israel. As Christians we have seen that most of these prophecies have been fulfilled and we await the time in the future when Jesus returns on the Mount of Olives, in Jerusalem in the same way as He ascended to heaven.

Romans 9 – 11 are fundamental scriptures for Christians to understand the importance of the Jewish people to God and to see how we as Christians

are grafted in to Abraham's Jewish family and to the promises made to him and other early Jewish leaders. These New Testament chapters also remind us that the Covenants (even the New Covenant on which our Christian faith is based) were made between God and the Jewish people.

St Paul makes clear that he is (not 'was') a Jew and his greatest desire is to bring his Jewish brothers and sisters to recognise Jesus to be the Jewish Messiah. CMJ wants to do the same – we are not advocating 'converting' Jewish people to Christianity, rather showing them that by accepting Jesus as Messiah they will be completed Jews. They will, however, remain Jews. Paul refers to making the Jewish people jealous for their Messiah.

We then are worshiping the Jewish Messiah! In Church there is sometimes a confusion as to who Jesus is. We sometimes refer to Him as 'Messiah' and sometimes (more often) as 'Christ'. They are the same word – Messiah is derived from the Hebrew, Christ from the Greek.

We should remember that Jesus said that He had come to the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel. All the earliest followers of Jesus were Jewish. Until the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15) non-Jews had to convert to Judaism before they could become followers of Jesus. In the early days Followers of the Way (Christianity) was a sect of Judaism. Sadly, quite quickly, for a variety of political and religious reasons, the division between Judaism and Christianity became more profound and deep-rooted.

Today things are changing again. Jewish people who have accepted Jesus as Messiah are more numerous than at any time since the times of Jesus. They call themselves Messianic Jews. Some meet together in Messianic Jewish Fellowships, others attend local Churches, some do both. There are over 40 such Messianic Jewish Assemblies in Israel alone. The reaction of non-Messianic Jews is mixed. Some are accepting, others are (very) opposed. However, even amongst those people who are opposed there is an increasing acceptance that Jesus was an important first century Jewish man.

CMJ's role is to bring the good news that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah to Jewish people, to encourage those Jewish people who have already accepted Jesus as Messiah and to educate the Church about God's continued love for his beloved chosen people.

In Jerusalem, CMJ owns and operates Christ Church, the oldest Protestant Church in the Middle East. It runs a Guest House and a Heritage Centre and the Anglican International School. These are all Christian centres but the teams running them comprise local Messianic Jews and Christian Arabs, as well as people from the international Christian community – reflecting the one new man concept of Ephesians 3 vv 14 - 18!

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Oberammergau 2022



In June this year Lesley and I joined a group from The Arts Society for a trip to Munich and Oberammergau. We were away for five days and one day was spent in Oberammergau attending the Passion Play, delayed for two years by the Covid pandemic. In the other four days we visited 4 museums, 3 palaces, 2 castles, an art gallery, a church and BMW World! An inspirational but exhausting schedule. The people of Oberammergau pledged to act out the Passion Play every 10 years when in 1632 the plague reached into the town. From that day forward, not a single person perished, even though a great number of them still showed signs of the plague.

The small Bavarian town is known also for its woodcarvers and woodcarvings. We wandered through several of the shops admiring the skilled carvings and many nativity scenes.

The large Passion Play Theatre seats 4,000 and it was full for our performance. The stage is vast and open air, although there is a retractable roof if it rains. The Play is unique and opens with a choir of 70 and a first class orchestra setting the scene. Then follows the first action and the first living tableau. Music follows interspersed with the action and tableaux. Hundreds of the villagers are involved, women even appearing on stage with babies in arms. Palm Sunday is, of course, played out with a live donkey but there are also real horses, goats, sheep and even camels taking part.

Although the play really finishes with the Crucifixion, we see Jesus taken down and put on His mother's knee, the finding of the empty tomb and thanksgiving and praise with the realisation of resurrection.

Here is the programme of the play:

Part I

Prelude: The Vow

Living Image: The Loss of Paradise

Act I: Jesus enters Jerusalem

Living Image: The Humiliation of the Israelites

Act II: Jesus in Bethany

Living Image: The Golden Calf

Act III: The Cleansing of the Temple

Living Image: Israel and the Red Sea Crossing

Act IV: The Priests and the Scribes

Living Image: The Call of Moses

Act V: The Last Supper and the Arrest of Jesus

(End of Part I – approximately 3-hour break)

Part II

Living Image: The Prophet Daniel in the Lion's Den

Act VI: Jesus before the High Council

Living Image: The Trial of Job

Act VII: The Denial of Peter

Living Image: Cain and Abel

Act VIII: The End of Judas

Living Image: Moses before Pharaoh

Act IX: Jesus before Pilate and Herod

Living Image: Joseph Interprets the Dream of Pharaoh

Act X: The Condemnation of Jesus

Living Image: The Sacrifice of Abraham

Act XI: The Way of the Cross

Living Image: Moses lifts up the Bronze Serpent

Act XII: The Crucifixion and Death of Jesus

Kathleen was at the Play in 1990 and stayed one night in the village. There were morning and afternoon performances then but now it takes place in the afternoon and evening. She was very cold in 1990 and so we took lots of clothes, not needed because temperatures this year were in the 30s!

A visit to Oberammergau for their Passion Play is an unforgettable experience. All the actors and musicians are amateurs taken from the village and the standard of performance was outstanding. The hanging of Judas and the Crucifixion were incredibly realistic. We were not allowed to take photographs of the action, which made the performance even more special.

Lesley Green and Kathleen Huey

(Photograph: Lesley Green)

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The Marriage at Cana Mattia Preti

Many of you will be familiar with Veronese's vast depiction of the marriage at Cana which has pride of place facing the Mona Lisa in the Louvre. In the National Gallery in London there is a far less well-known version by Mattia Preti, a Baroque painter, which intrigues me.

The dominant structural line of the painting is the edge of the table end, running almost horizontally. This line was my clue. Tables had immense social significance: high tables and low tables; sitting above the salt or below it – these denoted your place in the hierarchy. But in this painting the real action, indeed the miracle itself, happens below the level of the table, below the notice of the guests. It takes place in the bottom right-hand corner, where a servant, his wrinkled brow caught in a shaft of light, is pouring the miraculous wine.

Next to him, is another servant, by far the most clearly and colourfully delineated figure in the painting. His back is towards us, soiled and bony, with signs of the occasional beating perhaps, while his sinewy arm and hand, strong with toil, grasps the pitcher. His bald head glistens, the rim of his ear pokes towards us, while his nose and wrinkled brow catch the light in a way that Caravaggio would be proud of!

Above the table the guests mingle, chatter and gesticulate, unaware of the turning point of history taking place beneath the tabletop. Mary and Jesus are depicted stone-like in a cold, grey light, their features set deep in shadow. Mary stoically accepting the path her son must now tread; Jesus showing no emotion, except perhaps resignation, as if his hand, sharply delineated below the table, is being motivated by a greater power.

The dominant gesture in the painting, however, is that of the groom, dressed in bright red, who leans down below the tabletop to have his glass filled by a small, black servant: the person of least social status in the painting, if not a slave.

What does this all add up to? I read this painting as the depiction of Jesus' political philosophy. Here we see the social order turned on its head. 'The last will be first, and the first last'. Here are the meek, inheriting the earth; the lowly being exalted. There is wonderful humility in the groom's gesture that his bride doesn't seem to wholly approve. Surely the servants should come to you and top up your glass without your stir? The meek, the humble, the poor take precedence.

One detail breaks this pattern: high in the centre of the painting, set against the night sky, is a carafe of the new wine catching the light as it is raised: a foretaste of wine being raised at the communion.



Meanwhile, in the bottom left corner, in opposition to the miracle, is a dog with a bone. He glares at us fiercely and directly with his green eyes. There is no way he is going to give up that bone, clenched in his sharp teeth. But he is not just a dog. He is human nature: jealous, self-interested and possessive. The opposite of everything that Jesus stands for. The individuals and companies with vested interests that they are not going to give up, the rich who refuse to share their wealth, the powerful who won't concede defeat; the Donald Trumps who won't accept an election result. What a dog!

Edward Gildea *(Photograph by the author)*

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'Although it is not technically a castle, The Rev'd and Mrs Ackroyd's twins, Ellie and Sam, win the Bodworth-on-sea's sandcastle competition this year.' (clap, clap, clap)