

# Parish News

**St Mary's Church, Saffron Walden**

**St John, Little Walden and St James, Swards End**

**Part of Saffron Walden & Villages Team Ministry**



**June 2024**

**FREE**

## Judith Hasler made a Lay Canon of Chelmsford Cathedral



*Photograph: Chelmsford Diocese*

Judith Hasler of Swards End was installed as one of a number of Lay Canons of Chelmsford Cathedral on 28th April 2024. The role includes contributing to the life of the Cathedral and promoting its mission and service in the Diocese. It was offered to Judith by Bishop Guli in recognition of her long and distinguished service to the life of the Diocese as well as of her ministry in the local Saffron Walden and Villages Team.

Judith said, "I feel honoured that my lay ministry has been recognised by this appointment and I look forward to serving the life of the Cathedral and the Diocese in this new role." The Rev'd Jeremy Trew, Saffron Walden's Rector and Area Dean comments, "Judith possesses both a sharp mind and a caring heart. Together these give her considerable skills that are both a blessing to the local church and, I am sure, to the Cathedral." Our former Rector, the Rev'd David Tomlinson, with whom Judith worked for many years, and who travelled from Birmingham with his wife the Venerable Jenny Tomlinson to be at the service, said, "I was delighted to see Judith receive this recognition of her wide-ranging service to her parish, Team, and the Diocese. I am sure that she'll make a positive contribution to the Cathedral's life as one of its Canons."

Clifford Want

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## PARISH NEWS - EDITORIAL DEADLINE

The deadline for contributions for each issue is the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the previous month. Hence, the deadline for the **July** issue is **Sunday 2nd June**.

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

[www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org/parishnews](http://www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org/parishnews)

*Cover photograph by Gilly Hayes*

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## The Rector's Letter

**From The Rev'd Jeremy Trew**  
Jeremy writes...

This is a "Vicar's letter" that is going to be a bit "marmite"; you may either love it or hate it. I certainly hope that you have an opinion on it of some sort.

The issue is this: Should the Church of England recognise and celebrate same-sex relationships? Or, more importantly: Does God bless committed same-sex relationships? That has been at the heart of the Living in Love and Faith (LLF) project worked on and debated within the Church of England since 2017. Last November, Prayers of Love and Faith (PLF) were authorised for use. These allow for the recognition and celebration of committed relationships in a Church service, regardless of gender.

Here we ran the LLF discussion course four times across the Team. We are a broad range of churches with a wide range of opinions and discussion was healthy. I think a church that can discuss and disagree, yet whose members still remain committed to one another, is one of great strength. It is easy to simply retreat into ghettos of self-affirmation when our beliefs are challenged, but it requires real faith to allow God to speak to us through the experiences and beliefs of others. Good, faithful and loving discussion and study have sometimes caused me to shift my belief. Other times, my existing beliefs have been reinforced. Both are healthy. However, I am certain that when I eventually get to heaven, I will both be surprised by some of the other people who are also there and discover that some of my cherished beliefs were quite different from the ones God holds. Thankfully, God does not require so much that I pass a theology exam, but that I love my neighbour, etc.

Disagreement can make us uncomfortable and anxious. It is much more comfortable when we all agree on something. Ella and I disagree on parts of LLF/PLF. However, we still see each other as sister and brother in Christ and are committed to serving God's Church together. This desire is encapsulated in the five Pastoral Principles published alongside LLF. As an expression of this we will be hosting a service at St Mary's, Saffron Walden on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> June at 6.30pm. As well as worshipping together we will each share briefly our thoughts on three issues that have come out of the LLF process for each of



us: “How I read the Bible”; “What I think the Bible says about marriage”; and “What should we do in the light of both of these?” You would be very welcome to take part in this service.

The Churches of our Team are open to host Prayers of Love and Faith. Such services will be led by those clergy who are willing to do so. I am one of them. It is my hope that the Church of England will continue to work on this matter and, in time, allow an even more equal celebration of love.

Yours,  
Jeremy

## Prayers for June

*provided by the Prayer Team*

At the end of May we celebrated Trinity Sunday; the Celtic church had many traditional prayers which asked for ourselves and those we love to be encircled by the love and protection of God, the Three-in-one.

The compassing of God be on thee,  
The compassing of the God of life.

The compassing of Christ be on thee,  
The compassing of the Christ of love.

The compassing of Spirit be on thee,  
The compassing of the Spirit of grace.

The compassing of the Three be on thee,  
The compassing of the Three preserve thee,  
The compassing of the Three preserve thee.

*Carmina Gadelica*

## The New Editor of Parish News

It is with great pleasure that I can announce John Pickthorn will be the new editor of Parish News. John will take over the reins this September, in preparation for the October 2024 issue.

I am pleased to know that the magazine will be in good hands and I look forward to seeing how it develops in the future.

Andy Colebrooke

## Opportunity and Hope denied



*Photograph by Pasi Mäenpää from Pixabay*

We have all seen, either first hand while on holiday, or in the media, the appalling tonnage of plastic waste building up in our oceans and in countries where it has been shamelessly dumped.

In 2019, the WWF found that each of us could be ingesting the equivalent of a credit card of plastic every week containing toxic chemicals, including PFAS, which are also known as ‘forever chemicals’ because they break down very slowly and are becoming linked to some serious health issues.

However, during April, I was hopeful that a Global Plastic Reduction Treaty might place restrictions on the production of plastic, reducing it by 40% over 15 years to protect human health and our environment.

The global plastic reduction target would be legally binding, like the Paris agreement to limit global temperature rise to 1.5C.

Global plastic production has soared from 2m tonnes in 1950 to a massive 348m tonnes in 2017 and is expected to double by 2040. Can you remember life in the 50’s, 60’s and early 70’s before single use plastics existed? Now they are ubiquitous!

We like to think that when we painstakingly rinse and sort our plastics that we are ‘doing our bit’ for the environment. Sadly, in the UK, we recycle less than half of our plastic waste. A survey by the charity Recoup suggests that only 7% of plastic film, which accounts for 70% of our plastic waste, is recycled. The majority of our waste is exported to be ‘recycled’ or incinerated abroad. Turkey is one of the biggest destinations for the UK’s plastic waste and the

amount being exported to lower income countries such as Vietnam and Malaysia is increasing.

In 2021, the environmental group Greenpeace found that exported plastic waste was being illegally dumped and burned in Turkey. In 2020, it found that the burning of exported plastic in Malaysia was polluting soil and water with chemicals known to damage the nervous system and other organs including the brain.

Added to this, about 11m tonnes of plastic leaches into our oceans each year, causing terrible problems to wildlife and by 2040 the scale of this marine plastic waste pollution is likely to triple.

So who are the top polluters in the UK?

- Coca-Cola the list being responsible for 17%.
- McDonalds comes in second, responsible for 11%.
- PepsiCo comes a close third

Together, these biggest polluting brands were responsible for 37% of all branded pollution collected during the audit. \*

Given all that pollution, the prospect of an international treaty to cut plastic at source raised my spirits. It was pioneered by two countries of the global south, Rwanda and Peru.

However, just as in COP 28 where 2,456 fossil fuel lobbyists undermined the final outcome, something similar seems to have happened here, resulting in no final agreement to reduce the £610 billion plastic production industry. It would appear that key countries of the global north capitulated to pressure from lobbyists, so although the proposal was supported by 29 countries including Australia, Denmark, Portugal and the Netherlands, the UK and US were not among them.

Once again, the future of humanity, our health and our complex ecosystems, are being put at risk by vested interests. They simply don't include the needs of God's creation and fellow humanity in their calculations of profit.

Against these odds, will anything we do as individuals make any difference? Probably not. Should we still do it? ABSOLUTELY!

Edward Gildea, Eco Team Leader

\*Data from the Dirty Dozen Report by Surfers Against Sewage 2023

Primary Sources:

Clare Carlile, Ethical Consumer

Friday 15th March 2024

Sandra Laville, The Guardian 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2024

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## **‘Glorious the song when God’s the theme’: Johannes S Bach**



‘Surprised by Joy’ is the title C S Lewis gave to his spiritual autobiography. To him, joy meant not just the name of the woman he eventually married, but also an awareness of God’s glory and goodness. It was something that, like Wordsworth, he experienced in childhood, and later in his thirties when his faith was relit. That experience of joy Jesus shared with His disciples at the Last Supper: it is a word that permeates chapters 16 and 17 of St John’s Gospel.

And it is a word that lies at the heart of the music of J S Bach. Whenever he set Freude, the German word for joy, his music rises to a new level of movement and excitement. The joy is there, not just as a word set to music, but as the heart and life of all his compositions. He composed almost a thousand works with many for church worship: two Passions, three oratorios, six motets, a Magnificat, a great mass setting, nearly 200 church cantatas, 143 chorale preludes for organ, and dozens of other works – and that is just the music we have, for much has been lost.

When Bach moved to Leipzig in 1723, he had the task as choirmaster of composing cantatas for each Sunday of the year for five years, as well as looking after the choir, teaching, and tending his own family. And all with a reduced salary and social status, dreary living conditions, and a choir that was ill-fed and badly housed. The miracle is that he produced work of such beauty and wonder and grace. There is a logic and a technical precision behind his music, but also a living pulse. One moment he can reach into the depths of the soul as it faces the realities of sin, death and judgment. The next, it is ecstasy and joy at the birth and resurrection of Christ.

The Rev’d Michael Burgess  
Parish Pump

*Illustration: OpenClipart-Vectors from Pixabay*

## Radwinter Road Cemetery, Saffron Walden, CB11 3HU

Are you looking for a final resting place for a loved one? The Cemetery at Radwinter Road is an oasis in the town which is open 24/7 and there is tranquillity within.

Further information on burials is available from The Cemetery Officer at Saffron Walden Town Council, Saffron Walden, CB10 1HR Telephone: 01799 516501 or email [enquiries@saffronwalden.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@saffronwalden.gov.uk)

Our local Cemetery is a peaceful space which offers a natural environment for all types of wildlife and as a result is an important nature conservation resource in the town. Daily maintenance and gardening are carried out which ensures the space is both clean and tidy, where residents and visitors can visit for peace and reflection.

The Cemetery is divided into different areas; Lawn cemetery, Traditional area, Garden of Remembrance, scattered ashes, and areas for children and young people. There is also a separate section for War graves which is cared for by The Commonwealth War Graves Commission. A small well-appointed Chapel is available to hire.

<https://saffronwalden.gov.uk/services/cemetery/>



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## Extracts from the PCC Meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024

The Rector gave thanks for the Coffee concerts, and for Jimmy's meal, which were well attended. All the parishes in the Team had agreed to the use of the prayers for the blessing of same-sex relationships within existing services, except that one church did not reach a consensus.

**Communications:** A new editor for Parish News had been proposed but would need some support with desktop publishing. The PCC agreed to cover any shortfall in the income of the Parish News until the end of the 2025.

**Finance:** 2023 year-end accounts were approved, showing a deficit on the general fund of £17,536, higher than formerly estimated to include the concept design of the lighting project. There had been 40 responses to the stewardship letter, with total increases of £16,000 p.a. including gift aid. The Energy Contracts (Church and Parish Rooms gas and electricity) have been fixed for 3 years until the end of April 2024 at very low rates, currently around £8,000 p.a. The Finance Committee has now agreed to use British Gas for all 4 contracts (Electricity being 100% renewable) at around £14,000 p.a. The 2024 budget was based on prices as at November, so our energy costs for 2024 could be £1,500 to £2,000 lower than budget.

It was felt it was not appropriate to have a further gift day for general funds, but that a gift day could be reserved for the lighting project.

**Children and Youth:** Wiggle Church is going well, averaging 12 children, which is more than attended JC club, with people from the Tinies service and from schools and their siblings. Key stage 2 children were supported with wordsearches and craft activities.

The Jimmy's meal raised over £3000 and Matt thanked all those who supported it.

**Music:** Although choir numbers were high, attendance was unstable. In June a recruitment drive for Juniors will be held, with a social activity in July. Kate Beare has taken over the Joyful Noise group. A November meeting relating to the Organ Project had led to writing a statement of needs: the next step will be a listening exercise: a 15 person focus group for this is being drawn up. A question was asked about whether the choir felt sufficiently part of the church and it was explained although they are often tired from their rehearsal and do not stay for coffee, they are engaged with the sermon and worship and support each other and others pastorally. Oli commented that prayer for the choir and music was always welcome.

**Lighting Project:** With the approval of the concept design by the PCC in January 2024, the church started a period of consultation. DAC visited on 5<sup>th</sup> February and were very impressed by the design and approach to the project.

Statutory Consultees and Amenity Societies were consulted and were supportive or did not wish to comment. As part of the Faculty process, the matter will need to go back to DAC and the Consultees, when we have a detailed design, but for now there are no red flags which would result in changes to the concept design. Public consultations were planned and communication of details of the project were in hand. The group will report feedback at the June PCC. A £2,250 grant for the concept design had been received from the Diocese.

**St John's:** Now that the Village Hall has come to an end of its life, it has been proposed that the church building should be used for wider community purposes, which requires a major refurbishment project to upgrade the heating, lighting and service facilities, replace chairs and possibly install solar panels. The St John's committee sought the PCC's advice before embarking on such a project and they were assured that such projects fall within the PCC's remit and that the PCC did indicate a strong willingness to support the process.

**St James'** The church had been awarded grants for equipment for the Youth Club which is well attended and popular with kids and their parents alike, and includes some members from Radwinter.

**Other business:** Gillian Brace was appointed as a server. The **vacant clergy posts** at Cam Villages, and house for duty posts at Debden and Wimbish and at Ashdon and Hadstock were to be advertised soon.

Extracted for Parish News from the PCC minutes by Clifford Want

## Team News

God sometimes moves in mysterious ways, and there are some positive moves coming up in our churches locally. The recruitment process for our clergy vacancies in the Team is going well and we hope to be interviewing in early June. Meanwhile, Ella is taking the lead in the Cam Villages through an extended placement. This will allow her to experience leading parishes and grow in her ministry. She will remain a curate during this time, and a valued member of the team. This post will now be advertised in January 2025, when Ella will be eligible to apply. Gary Fleming, who has helped out during our vacancies, has now been appointed as Vicar of the Clavering Benefice. Please also pray for James Webster, soon to be licensed as Vicar of the Icknield Way Parish. We will also be saying goodbye to Nick Adley whose ministry as an army chaplain is now taking him to Germany. And, finally we celebrate with Judith Hasler who was licensed as a Lay Canon of Chelmsford Cathedral recently. Please hold each of these people and parishes they serve in your prayers.

Jeremy Trew



## FRIENDS OF THE PARISH CHURCH

The Friends of the Parish Church is a very active group and has been so for over 90 years. We are able to help financially with minor and major projects at St Mary's. They range from the new Advent candle which we have just purchased to a substantial sum to help the proposed Lighting Project.

Almost 40% of our members have active and varied roles in the Church. We have a bookstand with an assortment of items on sale and next to that a dedicated noticeboard which will keep you up to date on our many activities. We are also on the Church website under "Groups" so do take a look. If you would like to learn more pick up a leaflet from the bookstand this also includes an application form to **join us**. Just hand it to any of the Friends Council members or pop in the Parish Office letterbox. If you feel that you would like to leave us a legacy there are forms available on the bookstand for this too.

Chairman: Denis Tindley, Secretary: Pamela Mugliston, Treasurer: Sandra Marsh

**MEMBERS BRING & SHARE LUNCH:** An opportunity for all our members to get together socially, especially new members, so please come along and say hello and enjoy some lunch and a drink with us after the 10.30am service on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> June. There is a list on the Friends noticeboard so please sign up and let us know what you will be bringing to share, this will enable us to organise the catering. A glass of wine or a soft drink will be available, on a donation basis. **We look forward to seeing you.**

**FUND RAISER:** We are still looking for ideas for a Fund Raiser at some point during the year. Would you like to take part? Please let Pamela know on [pjmteddybear@btinternet.com](mailto:pjmteddybear@btinternet.com)

**THE FRIENDS CATHEDRAL TRIPS:** We are off to St Albans Cathedral on 30<sup>th</sup> August where we will have a morning tour then back on the coach and head to Ware where we will lunch in a hostelry on the river. After lunch we walk through their garden and onto a boat for a 2 hour trip with commentary. Bring your binoculars as we go through areas well known for it's large varieties of birds. Should be a good day out. Watch this space for plans for 2025.

**MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS:** Polite reminder that membership fees were due at the end of March, except for those set up to run from other months of the year. Your fees are a vital contribution to both The Friends and consequently St Mary's so we much appreciate your continued loyalty.

**See page 18 for the Friends visit to Rochester Cathedral.**

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**For further information please contact Ros Darton or Rita Williams on 01799 551046**

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

## Gelio's Anthology of Obscure Proverbs



We all make mistakes ... so what about these proverbs from Spain and here in England?

**'He is always right who suspects that he makes mistakes.'**

And

**'Error is always in a hurry.'**

# The Calendar

*This calendar is provisional. See The Grapevine or the church website for the latest information.*

## St Mary's, Saffron Walden

One service in church each Sunday is streamed on YouTube [Y]: details on the church website. Coffee is served after the Sunday 10.30am services.

### Saturday 1 June

6pm Evening Concert - Jonathan Scott, concert organist

### Sunday 2 June

8am BCP Holy Communion  
 9.15am Wiggle Church in Parish Rooms  
 10.30am Holy Communion [Y]  
 6.30pm H2H: Youth-led Service for all in Parish Rooms

### Wednesday 5 June

1.10pm Lunchtime Concert - The Mitchison Ensemble

### Thursday 6 June

10am Silent Prayer in North Chapel

### Sunday 9 June

8am BCP Holy Communion  
 10.30am Second Sunday Holy Communion [Y]  
 6.30pm Choral Evensong - *Murrill in E*

### Wednesday 12 June

1.10pm Lunchtime Concert - Joanna Lam *piano*

### Sunday 16 June

8am BCP Holy Communion  
 10.30am Holy Communion [Y]  
 4pm Living Stones location: tba

### Wednesday 19 June

1.10pm Lunchtime Concert - Krassimira Jeliazkova *violin*; Elizabeth Mucha *piano*

### Thursday 20 June

2pm Mothers' Union Wave of Prayer: Overseas

### Sunday 23 June

8am **BCP** Holy Communion [Y]  
 10.30am Family Service  
 2-5 pm "Fete de la Musique" - *organ*  
 6.30pm Taizé Service

### Wednesday 26 June

1.10pm Lunchtime Concert - James Cairns *flute*

### Saturday 29 June

3 pm "A Musical Entertainment" *Oliver King and Martin Huggett*





### **Sunday 30 June**

8am BCP Holy Communion  
10.30am Team Communion Service [Y]  
6.30pm Living in Love and Faith Service

## **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 (with Prayers for Wholeness and Healing on the 1st Wednesday of the month)

## **St James', Swards End**

### **Sunday 2 June**

10.30am Holy Communion

### **Sunday 16 June**

10.30am Morning Praise



## **St John's, Little Walden**

### **Sunday 9 June**

10.30am Family Service

### **Sunday 23 June**

10.30am Holy Communion



## The Friends visit Rochester Cathedral



The Friends recently visited Rochester Cathedral on one of the sunny days in April. We had a tour of the Cathedral in the morning accompanied by three guides. Rochester is the second oldest Cathedral in the country, and there has been a place of worship on the site since 604. The original looked more like a barn by our modern standards. However it is now a magnificent building.

We were greeted with the sight of the amazing fresco painted in 2004 by the Russian artist Sergey Fyodorov to mark the 1400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Cathedral.

Rochester has a fantastic organ with beautifully decorated pipes, amazing windows from different times as the Cathedral has grown and the most intricate altar cloth, which apparently took 20 years to complete: a real work of love.

We lunched together at Ye Arrows right next to the Cathedral and then had the afternoon to explore Rochester which included the Castle, just across the road, which has a Keep that is the best preserved and finest example of Norman architecture in the country. Many buildings in the town centre date back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, so well worth investigating.

Pamela Mugliston

**YOU**inthe**PEW** interviewed by Chris Bishop

Richard and Paula Winter.



Richard was born and bred in Northumberland and Paula in the Wirral. We met running parallel courses in Sweden for Swedish teenagers in 1962. Richard was then articled as an accountant to his father in Newcastle, while Paula went to London and trained as a nurse at St. Thomas's. We married in January 1968 and moved to London for Richard's job for 2 1/2 years before moving back to the Tyne Valley. Our three children were all born up there before we moved south again, as the firm wanted Richard to be a partner in London Office rather than Newcastle. We wanted a nice place to live north of London, so we moved into Duckett's Farm down a bye way in Debden Green. After 42 happy years there, we decided the moment had come to move into town as old age beckoned.

We were lucky enough to find our present house in Saffron Walden immediately, just walking distance from St Mary's. We both come from Church going families and had been active members of Debden Church while we were there, and so our transition to a large town church was made easy by the warm welcome we received. We have joined all sorts of clubs and societies (what a busy place Saffron Walden is), including the Friends of St Mary's. The twice yearly trips to Cathedrals are especially enjoyable as they give more time for getting to know fellow members.

We love Saffron Walden. Our wonderful twice weekly markets (particularly the Saturday one) are all hugely enjoyable and we love seeing the dogs all enjoying a social time as well!

As for the mottos for which you have asked, the motto on Richard's family coat of arms is "Esse quam videri" which his father always roughly translated as "you're not such a fool as you look"! The motto on Paula's family coat of arms is "Firmitas et sanitas" "strength and health". As old age creeps on, both become more doubtful!

## The Hundred Parishes Society



*Editor: The Hundred Parishes Society aims to increase awareness, enjoyment and care of the Hundred Parishes (450 square miles of northwest Essex, northeast Hertfordshire and southern Cambridgeshire). It is not a church-orientated organisation - "Parishes" referring to administrative parishes. The Society is interested in all things historical and local.*

The Hundred Parishes includes much of the extensive barley-growing area of the Hertfordshire and Essex borders. The malting of barley in preparation for its use in the brewing industry was a significant activity in several of our larger villages and market towns, especially along the River Stort, from the 18th to the 20th centuries.

Evidence is still to be found in the form of place names indicating the location of former maltings, such as *Malting(s) Lane* in Much Hadham and Chrishall; and in the names of buildings that were once maltings or associated with one nearby. Thus there are a number of *Malting(s) Cottage(s)*, as in Linton, Bartlow, Much Hadham, Aspenden and Ugley; and *Old Maltings* as at Manuden, Arkesden and Great Chesterford. In Little Hallingbury there is *Malting Farm* and *The Old Brick Malting*.

As well as conversion to private houses, surviving maltings have been renovated and converted to a variety of uses. Great Dunmow's is now a museum and community resource. In Wethersfield the maltings is now the village hall and shop, while the station maltings in Newport and those in Central Arcade in Saffron Walden are commercial premises. Multi-storey maltings in Sheering have been converted into apartments and in Stanstead Abbots to a business centre.

The classic form of a malting reflects the various processes which took place within the building. Grain was hauled in through the *lucam* or hoist housing at one end of the building where it was then steeped in water to start the germination process. The grain was laid out on *germination floors* before

growth was halted at a particular stage by applying heat in the *kiln* at the other end of the building. The process of initiating and then halting germination is known as *malting*.



Great Dunmow Maltings



Manuden Old Maltings



Newport Station Maltings



Stanstead Abbots Maltings

Ken McDonald, Secretary

## Wonders of the Living World

What are the best metaphors we could use to describe biological things? You might be used to hearing phrases like ‘your genetic blueprint’ or ‘survival of the fittest’, but are they helpful or even accurate? Some of these words fail to capture the wonder and joy of understanding something new about the nature of living organisms.

I learned that one researcher was using the phrase ‘The Snuggle for Existence’ as a way to convey the idea, familiar to biologists, that cooperation is at the heart of the living world. For example, every cell more complex than a bacterium contains minute energy factories, each one containing their own piece of DNA – which makes them a sort of miniature cell, hidden away inside the larger host cell. These ‘mitochondria’, as biologists call them, turn raw materials from the host into chemical energy. In this way, everyone benefits: the mitochondria now have a safe a place to live, and the host receives the energy it needs. There are many more examples of organisms working together to produce something that is more than the sum of its parts, where often the individual parts could not survive on their own.

‘The Map of Life’ is a way of describing the regularities we see in biological processes. Eyes, legs and wings have emerged in the living world again and again, and why not? If the properties of light and gravity remain constant, we should expect living things to find the same solutions to seeing or getting around. When we look at these organisms’ family trees, we see they share a common ancestor that had no eyes, or no wings. These structures have developed completely independently, or you could say that the paths of the living world have converged on the same solution. That’s not to say they had a conscious goal, but that the world has certain properties, and those properties have channelled biological processes in certain directions.

None of these stories give us definite evidence for God. Science simply provides data, which can often be interpreted in several different ways. Perhaps the world just happens to be full of mathematical regularities, maybe there’s an overarching physical law we don’t yet understand, or perhaps there are multiple universes and ours happens to be the one in which life has arisen. But I believe that the observations scientists make about the living world are compatible with the existence of the God described by Christian faith.

Dr Ruth M Bancewicz, The Faraday Institute in Cambridge.

## St Mary's Music News

At Choral Evensong on 14 April, James and William were formally commissioned as Choral Scholars. Congratulations to them both. At the next Choral Evensong on 12 May the choir will (or will have, by the time you read this newsletter) reprise Kerry Andrew's haunting *Lux aeterna*, and then on 30 May they are supporting Choral Eucharist for Corpus Christi.

The AGM on 21 April was attended by 24 members of the SMMA. The draft Minutes will be available on the St Mary's website in due course. Meanwhile, we were pleased to hear that the Association's finances are sound, boosted by generous donations, by the 3 extremely successful concert series (spring, summer and autumn), and by Anna Lapwood's very popular organ concert. These funds are used to pay for a range of activities and benefits including the Junior Choir's trips, new music and new equipment. Steve Cass, Peter De Vile and Philip Sunderland were all elected to the Committee for a further term.

The St Mary's organ is, as is increasingly obvious in services, nearing the end of its present life, despite the constant skilled attention of Peter De Vile. The SMMA, with the PCC, is exploring how best to proceed, and to this end a Listening Exercise was undertaken on 26 April. This involved the choir singing the same 3 verses of "Rejoice the Lord is King" from various parts of the church, while the organ, or recordings of the organ, were also played from different locations. A panel of listeners, drawn from the congregation and the choir, completed questionnaires about what they heard from their pews. The results of this exercise are being compiled into a report which will inform an update to the Statement of Needs.

June will be a very busy month musically, and not only with regular Choral Evensong on 9 June. More secular events start at 6pm on 1 June with a concert by international organist Jonathan Scott who has an impressive 70 million views on his Scott Brother Duo YouTube channel. This will be followed on Saturday 15 June by an opportunity to Come and Sing Dido & Aeneas at the United Reformed Church. Details will be announced shortly on the St Mary's website. Then of course St Mary's musicians will be participating at a range of venues in Saffron Walden's Fete de la Musique on Saturday 23 June, including with a selection of organ music in church, and finally Oli King and Martin Huggett will be providing A Musical Entertainment at 3pm on Saturday 29 June.

Meanwhile, the popular lunchtime concerts at St Mary's begin on 5 June with the Mitchison Ensemble, followed on 12 June by Joanna Lam on piano,

then on 19 June a violin and piano concert by Krassimira Jeliakova and Elizabeth Mucha, and on 26 June a performance by flautist James Cairns. The schedule continues into July. All these concerts start at 1.10pm, and last around 40 minutes. Refreshments are available from, 12.30pm.

And finally, something completely different. Our congratulations go to soprano Lizzie Bennett who represented Great Britain at the inaugural international equestrian para-vaulting championships in Saumur at Easter, and came first in her class.

Otilie Lefever



Shirley caught the flower ladies  
red-handed, dealing trugs



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## Archive Group

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

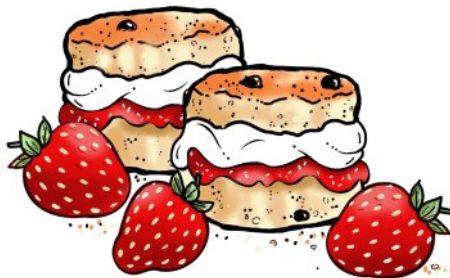
**Compiled by our Archivist Canon Chris Bishop**

### June 1933

My dear Parishioners,

You will all, I am sure, share my satisfaction, that the suggestion made in last month's magazine is now an accomplished fact. At a well attended meeting on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, in the Parish Room, a resolution to form a Society to be known as "Friends of Saffron Walden Church" was carried unanimously and enthusiastically. A council and chairman was appointed forthwith and met at once to grapple with the preliminaries of the scheme and has been at work continuously since. An explanatory leaflet, with a form of application for membership attached to it, will shortly be issued and it is hoped that all those who have not already sent in their names to the stewards will do so as soon as possible. The minimum annual subscription is only one shilling and up to the time of going to press the number enrolled is ninety – a very small proportion of the total we hope to enlist and the sum received or promised is £11 17s 6d. Miss A H Fisher has kindly given a handsome card to be hung up presently in church, inviting sympathisers to register themselves in a book to be provided for the purpose. I can only wish God-speed to an effort which has begun so auspiciously and tender sincerest thanks to those who have launched it, with so far such success.

L. Hughes



## Six Inches of Soil



Watching a 96-minute documentary about soil is not everyone's idea of a Saturday night out. But Hazel and I did: we went to Saffron Screen and watched *Six Inches of Soil* (2024). It's an inspiring look at three young British farmers championing a different way of farming, standing against our current industrial food system, which is causing so much damage. Made by a small film company with lots of volunteers working for nothing, it is an informative, shocking, and challenging look at the state of our land.

We are reminded that just six inches of soil feeds eight billion people today. Soil is our most precious resource which needs looking after. Healthy soil provides all the essential nutrients needed for life, but sadly, modern agriculture is degrading it. Farming is the single biggest cause of biodiversity collapse and the second biggest cause of climate change (because soil can store phenomenal amounts of carbon).

Too much ploughing, and in particular ploughing too deeply, seriously damages soil structure. Heavy farm machinery easily compacts soil, forcing the air out of it, preventing rainwater from percolating through, which can lead to unnecessary flooding. Compacted soil is like concrete: no worms, bacteria or the other vital invertebrates can survive in it. Too much spraying of pesticides and herbicides wrecks the ecological balance which for so long has kept soil healthy. The film estimates that if we carry on as we are, we have no more than forty more harvests before our soil becomes unproductive – and then what happens?

To sustain our farming industry the film argues we need it to be 'regenerative'. That is, we need farming techniques working in harmony with nature, not against it. The principles are these: minimise disturbing the

soil, maintain living root systems, protect the soil surface, increase the variety of crops grown, and take better care of livestock on the land. At least, that is what I got out of the film, but I am no farming expert, so I recommend you see the film for yourselves. Perhaps it would have been helpful to hear the opinions of others who have yet to be convinced.

I was impressed by these young people as they worked at making their businesses successful. The playing field is not level for small farmers, as just nine retailers have 94.5% of all food sales in Britain. They control the market; they control what farmers are paid; they're not interested in working with small producers. At least one of these young people needed a second job just to survive. The Government needs to do something about the supermarkets' stranglehold on food production.

*Six Inches of Soil* challenges me to take more interest in where my food comes from and how it is produced. I need to be prepared to pay a little more for my food (because fortunately I can), so that I support local growers better. The benefit to me will be in the taste! And I will continue to support those petitioning Parliament to make farming fairer for all producers.

Andy Colebrooke

For more about the film go to [sixinchesofsoil.org](http://sixinchesofsoil.org)

*Photograph by Jan Kopřiva on Unsplash*

## Smile Lines ...

### Technical Trouble

The vicar was experiencing problems with the sound system. Instead of starting the service as usual with "The Lord be with you", he said: "There's something wrong with this microphone." Not hearing this, the congregation responded: "And also with you."

### Advice to young clergy on preaching

Consider the postage stamp. Its usefulness consists in its ability to stick to one thing until it gets there.

## The Brancacci Chapel

If you have been lucky enough to go to Florence recently, you probably experienced huge queues of tourists around the Duomo, the Uffizi Gallery and the Accademia. But it is still possible to have a masterpiece all to yourself! Just go over the Arno, negotiate a few side streets to the Santa Maria del Carmine church, where you will find the Brancacci Chapel. It is a wonderful introduction to the Early Renaissance.

At the heart of the Renaissance is Humanism: artists finding inspiration in what they were discovering about the classical worlds of Greece and Rome. It encompassed architecture, literature, politics and science as well as art, essentially seeing 'man as the measure of all things', as in da Vinci's famous Vitruvian Man.

But there is a tension here: a tension between the human and the divine. Modern humanism is closely aligned with atheism, as Prof Richard Dawkins so clearly articulated in his book 'The God Delusion'. But here we have a series of frescos by painter Masaccio, in which humanism and Christian faith live harmoniously together. The figures are painted in perspective with a new anatomical accuracy and deep sensitivity, capturing their individual and varied humanity. We really feel the grief and trauma of Adam and Eve being expelled from the garden of Eden and the gratitude of a mother receiving alms as she carries her baby, who looks as if he is being potty trained!

The detail here is taken from a series of panels depicting the life of St Peter, in which his passing shadow miraculously cures the sick and crippled (see Acts 5.12-16).

What struck me was the impassivity of St Peter. He has a halo, a faint, flattened form above his strongly modelled, three dimensional features and his eyes stare blankly forwards. He is not the centre of attention. To his right are the poor and sick. One is standing, his hands clasped in prayer, an old man is kneeling, arms across his chest, the light dramatically capturing his form. This is not an idealised character from ancient Greece, but a deeply sensitive study of what it is to be human as old age and sickness take their toll.

Most poignantly for me is the nearest man, crouching with his withered legs folded beneath him as he leans on makeshift supports for his elbows. It is not easy to spot his legs at first. He looks up, not daring to hope for a cure, but it is he on whom St Peter's shadow is falling. It is breath-taking.



Saint Peter Healing the Sick with His Shadow, by Italian artist Tommaso Cassai Masaccio (1425-26)

*Photograph: Public Domain via Wikimedia Commons*

Here we have faith coupled with Humanism. It is not the classical humanism of idealised figures: powerful men and beautiful women. For me it is the humanism of the New Testament, in which the lame and crippled are cured; the poor and the sick are elevated and those who suffer are redeemed.

Edward Gildea



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