

ST MARY THE VIRGIN RIVERHEAD WITH DUNTON GREEN

Annual Music Report 2020

At the time of writing this report, there are no services, no choir, no organ, and of course no music. But as a congregation we will find ways of worshipping together, and maybe by the time this report is read at a postponed APCM, everything will be back to “normal,” let’s hope so.

We said goodbye to Martin Booth in March 2019, and so all through the past year’s interregnum we have been running things ourselves musically, and the music has continued like a well-oiled machine, thanks mainly to our two excellent organists Nick Castell and Daniel Eaton, and our loyal choir.

The Music team was joined this year by Emma Van Setten, a young organist from Walthamstow Hall School, who we sponsored for a year. She faced up to the challenge of playing for a service once a month, mainly for the Family Eucharist. It was quite a steep learning curve for her, but it gave her valuable experience in playing for services. She also joined with the choir on occasions, and filled in for services when other organists were not available, as well as playing her violin with the Music Group, so she definitely earned her sponsorship money. We wish her all the best for the future.

Emma and her friends gave us a little concert in the summer, and this was preceded by a concert from some of the String players of Walthamstow Hall, in June. We are very fortunate to have these young musicians performing for us, mainly thanks to our connection with Nick, their Head of Music at Walthamstow Hall. Long may it continue!

The choir has sung at a few weddings this year, notably the Wedding of the Year, Geoff and Julia Holland’s, when we were joined by singers from St Luke’s choir. There have been a few other occasions when we have combined with St Luke’s and also Kippington, now that we are a Team Ministry, and we look forward to further collaborations in the future. Several of the choir also took part in the Advent Carol service at The Drive Methodist Church. Singing in these combined events is always enjoyable, and we often get some good ideas for new music to sing, back in our own churches.

Christmas brought its usual share of carol singing – firstly in the warmth of the village hall at the turning on of the Riverhead lights, a smart move considering the weather was particularly wet. The choir sang carols round the piano for the Christmas Tree Festival, and also joined with Sunday Club and the Music Group for the Nativity play. We didn’t manage to fit in our normal carol singing at the Bullfinch, but instead we joined with the Faithworks team, to sing all around the Ryewood estate in Dunton Green, which was a little cold, but most enjoyable.

The Music Group has sadly dwindled a bit, due to older players leaving for university, but I am very grateful to those who are able to play each month. It would be great to have some more instrumentalists from our young people – I will always try to arrange music to suit any standard, please let me know if your child would like to give it a try.

At all times we follow safeguarding procedures and guidelines given by the Diocese and always have due regard to these safeguarding guidelines. Both organists and myself as Music Coordinator have up to date DBS checks.

Finally, I would like to thank our excellent organists Nick and Dan, for all that they do for us, and also our loyal choir, and the music group. New singers are of course very welcome in the choir. Currently we’re all feeling the lack of a weekly sing, and look forward to the time when we can resume!

Janet Sharp