



News from the Pews at St Mary' Church November 2021

What a busy year it turned out to be in the end!

The Champing season started on the 12th April with our first guest staying for four nights. It was really cold in April but he came well prepared with a high tog sleeping bag, but did admit it was cold. Champing was for single households only, due to Covid regulations, and all safety measures were in place with minimum contact and Covid cleaning daily. This was to keep our guests safe and also me!

We had a visit from [thisismytheatre](https://www.thisismytheatre.com/) in August to perform **The Secret Garden**, and as always the audience really enjoyed live theatre in church.

We had an organ recital on the 11th September given by Benedict Todd. This was arranged by Keith and Keith Turner, and was well attended.

August and September turned out to be extremely busy with the Champing side of church life, which was made even busier due to media interest. I was asked to take part in two interviews for national papers, The Sunday Observer and The Sunday Times. This led to an interview for local radio and paper. And then a Russian film crew came!! This went out to 150million people in Russia and Eastern Europe.

Champing bookings went through the roof, not only here but in all the other 13 Champing churches working this season. Champing is now closed for this year, but we had over 120 guests staying in church and all have had a wonderful stay.

There has been lots of activity in the churchyard as my volunteers help me to tidy. The aim is to find all the graves which have been lost to nature and also to make it a safer place to walk around. So far we have found well over 40 graves, previously lost to nature.

We had a group of 16 scouts, beavers and parents working alongside us last month who did an amazing job and worked extremely hard. Thank you to Mike the scout leader for thinking of us. The scouts were earning their community badge as part of a 'World Challenge' event.

So, if you are in the churchyard and you see us all working please come and talk to us. We will be more than happy to show you the newly found stones.



For those worried about the wildlife we are addressing that as well. Bird boxes, hedgehog houses, woodpiles and wild flowers are all in place, and of course we will leave some brambles too but not over the gravestones.

And now to let you know about Christmas, which is slightly different this year due to caution regarding the uncertainty with Covid. This year we will not be inviting organisations to exhibit their trees. This will give more space for visitors to help keep you safe. There will be church trees and a memory tree for messages for loved ones and these messages will be kept on the altar for the whole year. I do hope that you will help me to decorate it with your own personal messages. As always donations are very welcome.

Dates for your diary.

The Snow Queen 11th December, 1pm

Live theatre in church.

Tickets on sale now from www.thisismytheatre.com or tel 07732253311
£15.00 general admission Friends and under 16's £12.00
(to apply discounts add CCTfriend at checkout.)

Carol Concert 11th December, 4pm

Come early to get your seat.

Party Day 12th December, 1.30-5pm

With special appearance and by public demand **Stansted Mountfitchet U3A Strummers**, taking to the stage at 3pm with a festive collection of songs and carols to get our feet tapping as we sing and dance along!! With mulled wine, mince pies, raffles and a very warm welcome to each and everyone of you!

I do hope you will all be able to join us here at St Mary's church this December. I look forward to welcoming you all. For those that cannot join us in December, may I take this opportunity to wish you a very happy Christmas and peaceful New Year, and hope to see you in 2022.

With best wishes,

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