



Walpole Old Chapel - March 2022



In this edition – Simon Weeks

This edition of the newsletter comes to you full of optimism. Spring is here and we are looking forward to a full and exciting programme of events and activities at the Chapel this year, starting with our first public opening on Easter Saturday – a bit earlier than usual.

Our first event will be a bit unusual too – not a concert, but an exhibition and consultation day on 30th April. We now have fully developed plans for the repair and conservation work, almost ready to submit to East Suffolk Council for Listed Buildings Consent. All we need first is your comments on the proposals. So, please come along and let us know what you think.

We have been beavering away over the winter, writing our first ever business plan. This is now finished, and a summary will also be on display on 30th April. If this is your sort of thing, we'd welcome your comments on it too.

We are thrilled to have recently heard that the repair and conservation project has been awarded a grant from Historic England. This is towards the project development work required in order to gain Listed Buildings Consent. However, the grant only covers 50% of the £60,000 cost, so fundraising goes on

And we are also excited that The Charity Commission has recognised 'The Friends of Walpole Old Chapel' as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. We hope this will help us to manage more of our affairs locally – such as claiming gift aid, and applying for grants. It should also help ensure the organisational continuity we'll need to keep on caring for the Chapel and developing its activities into the future.

Finally, as covid restrictions have been relaxed, The Discovery Project has been able to start making real progress. The project volunteers will be getting relevant research training this month from staff of 'The Hold' in Ipswich (Suffolk Records Office), and we are looking forward to a summer of 'researching the history of the Chapel and its communities as fully as possible'.

1649 – Simon Weeks

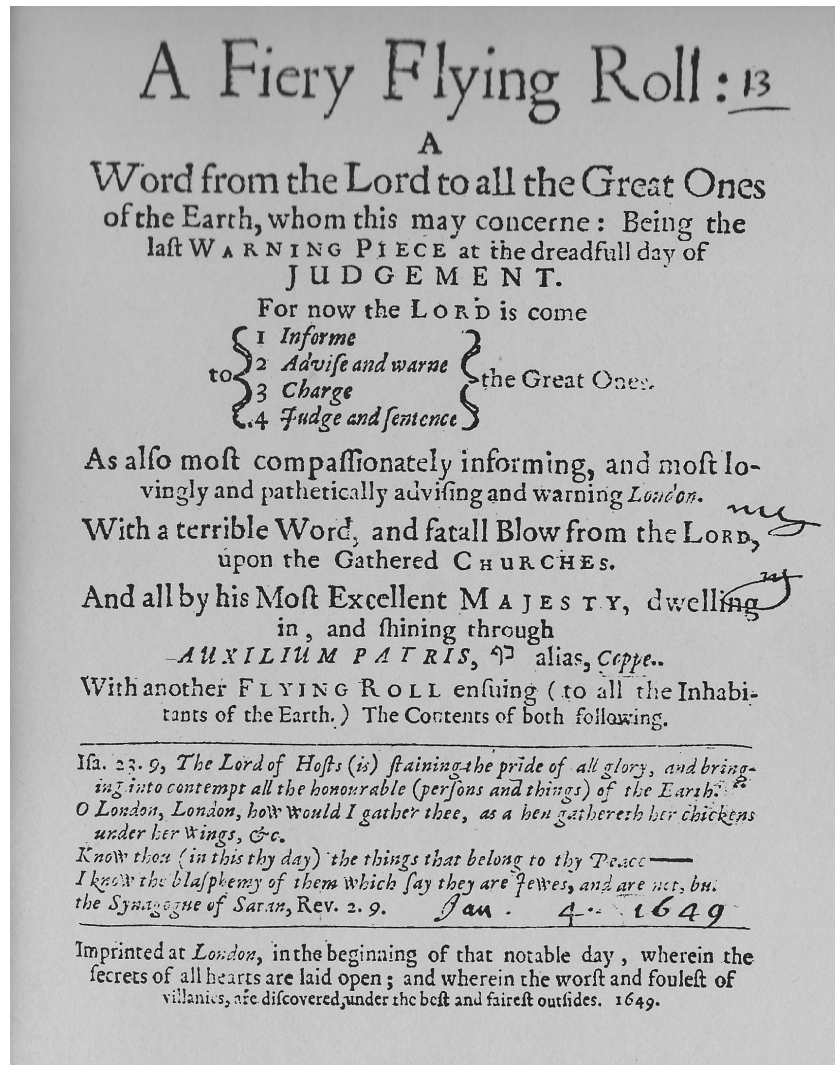
Readers interested in the early history of the Chapel and its people will know it was in 1649 that “ye saints in and about Coukley” asked William Bridge's church in Yarmouth for “ye right hand of fellowship in this their great undertaking.” This is the first written reference we're aware of for an 'Independent' congregation locally. And, of course, it was in 1649 that Charles I was executed.



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It had been a time of massive civil and religious turmoil, with a proliferation radical groups and individuals. Relatively well known amongst these were 'The Levellers' and 'The Diggers'. Perhaps less well known today were '[The Ranters](#)' – a leaderless and less structured group of religious and political radicals. And it was in January 1649 that one of the most influential Ranter texts was published – *A Fiery Flying Roll*, by Abiezer Coppe.



This remarkable pamphlet mixes religious and political radicalism in equal measure. It was considered so inflammatory that, in February 1649, Parliament passed a resolution that it should be "... sought out and burned by the Public Hangman." We don't know whether or not there were any Ranters in or around Halesworth but, in May 1650, two Ranter women were hauled up before their congregational church in Norwich for disciplinary procedures. One of the women, Elizabeth Thurston, had "absented her selfe from her family two daies together, refusing to let her husband [know] where she hath beene" while she travelled to Great Yarmouth by boat to a 'house of evill report'. The other woman, Elizabeth Townsend, had been caught with a group reading *A fiery flying roll*.



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Events this year - Lin le Versha

Walpole Old Chapel is the perfect place to enjoy live music on a summer afternoon or evening and we have created an exciting programme for you. Our concert series opens on 1st May and spans the summer until mid-September, followed by our popular candlelit Christmas carol service in December.

Listen to music of the Renaissance or from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, played on period instruments and immerse yourself in the poetry and prose of the times. If your taste is for twentieth century and contemporary composers, you will find them here too. Looking for a taste of Suffolk inspired music or poetry? Then come to the foot-tapping folk concert, the contemporary guitar duo or readings by the Suffolk Poetry Society.

Our summer season closes with the Heritage weekend, including the popular Ride & Stride around the churches of Suffolk.

Find out about all our events and book tickets through our website:

<https://walpoleoldchapel.org/programme/>

**Sunday 1st May 3.00pm - Julie Theaker (Soprano)
& Paul Theaker (Guitar)**



Sunday 8th May 3.00pm - Harpsichord Recital

Sunday 15th May 3.00pm - The Dollard Collectief

Sunday 29th May 3.00pm - Miyabi Duo





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Sunday 12th June 3.00pm – Suffolk Poetry Society

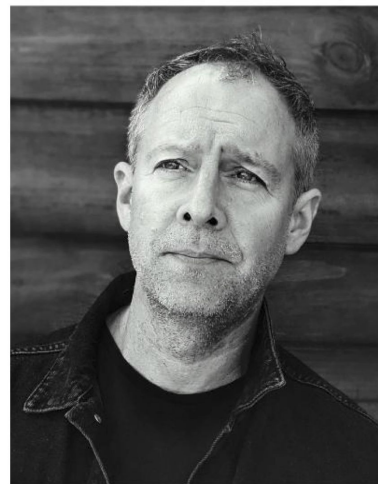
Sunday 10th July 3.00pm– Hexachordia



Saturday 16th July 7.00pm – The John Ward Trio



**Saturday 30th July 7.00pm – Classical Chill –
Noel Vine &
Andrew Quartermain**



Sunday 7th August 3.00pm–The Lovekyn Duo

Saturday 20th. August 7.00pm – Whistlebow

Sunday 4th. September 3.00pm– Follia

Sunday 11th September – Heritage Weekend

Saturday 17th December – Candlelit Carol Service led by Rev'd Bill Mahood

www.walpoleoldchapel.org

www.hct.org.uk

www.visitchurches.org.uk



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Walpole Old Chapel Discovery Project update - Miriam Stead

As I write this the sun is shining and daffodils are starting to bloom so I really hope that spring is on its way. It was also sunny last Saturday when I came over to the Chapel to take some photographs for a talk I am giving this Saturday. It all looked splendid and it was the first time I had been able to see the graveyard properly after its winter trim - impressive gravestones!

The team has not been idle over the winter. Three strands of research are beginning or underway: rural unrest, genealogy and oral history. We have arranged two training sessions for volunteers. On 9th March we are going to visit the Suffolk Archives at The Hold in Ipswich for an induction on how to use their resources and facilities. The staff will be getting out some of the WOC documents for us to see. On 15th March Mandy Rawlins of the Suffolk Archives will be coming to Halesworth to train volunteers in oral history techniques. I know that this group can't wait to begin and have already drafted out interview questions, which they can discuss with Mandy. We have also arranged visits to the Chapel and Halesworth & District Museum by two of the county's most prestigious historical organisations.

On 25th May we will host the Suffolk Institute for Archaeology & History. Founded in 1848 this is Suffolk's largest and oldest archaeological and historical society. For a century and a half it has played an important role in encouraging and publishing research on our county's past.

On 18th June our visitors will be the Suffolk Local History Council. This is the umbrella organisation for groups and individuals with an interest in Suffolk's past. The SLHC administers the Recorders Scheme, a network of people across Suffolk who observe and collect material about their parish's life, past and present and make sure it is preserved for the future.

On Saturday 5th March the SLHC is holding its Societies' Day at Elmswell where we will have an exhibition about the Discovery Project and I will give a short talk about the Chapel and our work. All these activities will help raise the profile of the wonderful Chapel and hopefully encourage more visits. If you would like to help out hosting these visitors do let us know.

If you are interested in helping with the research or perhaps in other ways such as publicity, making videos, vlogging or have some information or memories you would like to share, please do get in touch with me, Miriam Stead at discovery@walpoleoldchapel.org or 07902 411760



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New Charity – Simon Weeks

The Charity Commission registered our new Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) on 23rd February. This legally recognised body will take the place of the current voluntary group which has been running the chapel on a day to day basis since 1995. The CIO is called 'The Friends of Walpole Old Chapel' and it has two charitable 'objects', which are:

1. To secure, for the benefit of the local community and the public generally, the preservation, repair, maintenance, and development of Walpole Old Chapel, together with its contents, burial ground and curtilage.
2. To advance the education of the public in the historical and cultural significance of Walpole Old Chapel.

In order to provide continuity, the initial trustees of the CIO are the four current committee members of the voluntary group. However, the CIO's constitution allows for up to nine trustees. It is also a 'membership' CIO. So, we will soon be looking to recruit both trustees and members to the new charity.

The current voluntary group voted in November 2021 to transfer its assets to the new CIO, when that was registered. So, all the donations people have made will continue to be 'ring-fenced' for Walpole Old Chapel, and applied in support of one or other of the charitable objects set out above.

Published details about the new CIO can be found [here](#).



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The Chapel Yard - Simon Weeks

For various reasons the Chapel yard had its autumn cut in late winter. The delay doesn't seem to have had any adverse effect, as it is now looking very neat and ready for the coming season.



Contact information

Simon Weeks, Secretary: 01986 784348 or info@walpoleoldchapel.org

To become a Friend of the Chapel: friends@walpoleoldchapel.org

To donate on line: <http://easydonate.org/HCTE2>

To contact the Discovery Project team: discovery@walpoleoldchapel.org