

# *across* **ROYSTON**

**July 2025**



The magazine of the Church of St. John the Baptist, Royston Parish  
Church, part of the worldwide Anglican Communion

**A big welcome to our new Curate Revd. Jaime Roberts, here  
with the Vicar of Royston The Revd. Dr. Steven Sivyer**



## Patronal Festival Service June 22nd 2025

During the morning of the Sunday of our Patronal Festival, we had a festival service which was led by the former Bishop of Edmonton, the Right Reverend Rob Wickham, who is now the Chief Executive of the Church Urban Fund. During this service, Sandra, Bradley, William and Vimur were confirmed and Rita and Samuel received Holy Communion for the first time. As well as leading an engaging service, Bishop Rob gave us the following statistics about our parish:

Child Poverty - 8%

Pensioner Poverty - 7%

Working-age Poverty - 6%

Life expectancy for males - 82 years

Life expectancy for females - 86 years

Those with no qualifications - 13.6%

Those in social housing - 11.9%

Those with lone parenthood - 4.8%

Those living on their own - 28.8%

Those who are elderly - 19.6%

At our patronal festival, just as St John the Baptist was that voice crying in the wilderness, these statistics should shape our cry and service to the community of Royston. If you have ideas on how we, as a church community, can serve the wider community, then please speak to Steven.

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## Celebrating Creation: St Mary's Year 4 Wildlife Count on the Parish Church of St. John the Baptist grounds

The environment is one of God's most generous gifts to us all — a blessing we share with every living creature and with one another. As people of faith, we are called to care for God's creation, remembering that we are not separate from it, nor from each other. The choices we make have real consequences: loss of biodiversity, climate change, and pollution are just a few of the challenges facing our planet.



But there is good news: every small, thoughtful action can make a positive difference.

On June 10th, Year 4 pupils from St Mary's School in Royston visited the green spaces around our Parish Church as part of a



nationwide initiative — **Churches Count on Nature**, part of **Love Your Burial Ground Week**, organised by *Caring for God's Acre*.



Their task was to conduct a wildlife survey, recording the plants, insects, and animals they discovered, and contributing their findings to a national database that helps monitor and protect biodiversity in churchyards and burial grounds across the UK.

The children delighted in being outdoors, learning the names of trees, flowers, and insects. A particularly special moment was a surprise encounter with an owl and its handlers, just passing through the churchyard —



a reminder of the wonder that nature brings when we pause to observe it.

This visit was arranged by our **Sustainable Living Committee** as part of our church's ongoing commitment to safeguarding God's creation, represented by Lee Dingwall. These small steps are part of a much larger journey — and everyone is invited to join in.

The wildlife survey is still open to all. Whether you spot a butterfly, hear a birdsong, or notice a new flower blooming — you can add your sightings to the national count. It's easy to get involved, and your records will help scientists and conservationists support local wildlife in the best ways possible.

To learn more and to submit your sightings, visit:



**Caring For God's Acre – the conservation charity for burial grounds across the UK**

**[Love your Burial Ground Week & Churches Count on Nature – FAQs – Caring For God's Acre – the conservation charity for burial grounds across the UK](#)**

Together, let's cherish and protect the gift we've been given.

Lee Dingwall

## Minister's Musings

Over the last few years, I have been going out with a birdwatching group. Usually, it's about seeing the birds, but there are times when it's very helpful to use our ears to listen to their songs and calls. I have learned to stop and listen—really listen attentively. By doing this, you begin to distinguish between different birds and can identify them without even seeing them.

However, I have needed the help of experienced and patient bird-watchers who can tell me which bird or birds I'm hearing. They have been very patient with me! I can now identify a number of birds from their songs, but I still have a lot more to learn. I need to continue to stop and listen.

This makes me think of our Christian walk. We sometimes say, *"I can't hear God speaking to me,"* but frustratingly, we know people who do hear God speak to them. How have they learned to do this while we cannot? Surely God does not speak only to some people and not to others.

Maybe it's just like trying to hear birds—we need to stop and listen—really listen attentively.

Wise Christians taught me early on in my Christian life that it was good to have time with God each day, preferably at the beginning of the day before the busyness takes over. They called it a *quiet time*—a time when you could sit peacefully with your Bible to read and pray. Sometimes it's difficult to fit in, and we have to be creative. It may only be a short time, but it is important for our spiritual growth.

John Wesley, the famous preacher and founder of Methodism, tells how, as children, they knew when their mother was having time with God—she would pull her apron over her head!

Reading the Bible is really important part of our Christian lives that helps us to listen to and hear God speak to us. Many people treasure it all their lives and one such person in our congregation was John Coates, who sadly went to be with the Lord last month. He always treasured the Bible and was the local organiser of the Bible Society's annual event for many years. Right up to the end of his life, he was reading his Bible—a gentle man of faith who loved the Word of God.

It is during our times of Bible reading and prayer that God is able to speak to us may be through a verse or a particular sentence that stands out and makes you sit up and take notice.

There is a Bible reading technique called *Lectio Divina*, which is a way of reflecting on a Bible passage by reading it slowly at least a couple of times. Then we stop and listen and consider what God might be saying to us through this passage.

Reading our Bibles is just one way in which God can speak to us and as we learn to know his voice we will hear it in many ways. We just have to stop and listen.



## FOCUS ON MISSION: July 2025—GenR8

GenR8 is a Cambridge-based Christian charity established in 2001, working with schools and churches in the Cambridgeshire and North Hertfordshire

region. It supports learning about the Christian faith in schools through a variety of different programmes including presenting assemblies and prayer spaces. It also supports churches in their work with children, and works in partnership with them and their local schools.



There are now several teams working in Cambridgeshire and North Hertfordshire, with further affiliate teams in Norfolk and Suffolk.

Its objectives are :

- To present the Christian faith to primary school age children in partnership with local churches and Christian volunteers.
- To work in partnership with local schools to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- To communicate Christian values and themes with integrity and sensitivity.
- To present a positive image of the Christian faith and the Bible.
- To equip, inspire and enthuse children's leaders, local Christian volunteers and churches in their work with children and schools.

GenR8 wants to bring quality, creative and dynamic input into schools and churches so that:

- Every generation has the opportunity to make an informed choice about the Christian message and not write Christianity off without looking at it.
- Children see that there is a relevance to Christianity, that it can make a difference to their lives.
- Children get a positive image of the Christian faith.
- Children who are already Christian feel supported in their faith.
- Children can come into and develop their friendship with God, and understand and experience that following Jesus is anything but dull and boring!



At present it employs a full-time director and a number of part-time staff, though at the heart of the work is a dedicated team of volunteers. Over 75 volunteers are involved, all of whom are committed Christians from different denominations in the local community and who have experience of working with children in schools or church settings.

School assembly presentations are the core of the work and in a typical term over 30,000 children are reached in over 150 schools.

GenR8 is a Local Mission Partner of Scripture Union.

**As a church, St. John the Baptist is committed to giving 10% of our regular income to charities and missions. GenR8 is one of those we regularly support.**

# HOME START NEEDS YOU!!

Royston, Buntingford &  
South Cambridgeshire



At the heart of Royston, Buntingford & South Cambridgeshire lies a small but mighty charity that's quietly transforming lives: Home Start RBSC. For 42 years, we've been a trusted source of support for families with young children who are struggling to cope. Whether due to mental health challenges, financial hardship, disability, isolation, or just the everyday pressures of parenthood, our trained volunteers offer a friendly, non-judgemental hand to help families through tough times.

*We know that childhood can't wait – and that early help makes a lifelong difference.*

From in-home support to running weekly family group sessions and organising fun, confidence-boosting outings, we're all about giving local children the best start in life. But we can't do it alone. As demand for our services grows, we're reaching out to the community we proudly serve to ask for your help.

## Here's how you can get involved:

- ♥ Volunteer with us – We need compassionate individuals to support our family group sessions or help at fundraising events throughout the year.
- ♥ Become a regular donor – Monthly giving, however small, helps us plan ahead and ensure no family is left behind.
- ♥ Make us your Charity of the Year – Companies can have a big impact while boosting staff engagement and social value.
- ♥ Sponsor a family day out – We're seeking support to fund our annual summer trip to Standalone Farm – a cherished highlight for many of the families we help.
- ♥ Join our fundraising team – Have great ideas and a knack for events? Become a Team Leader and help organise our community fundraisers.
- ♥ Donate quality goods – We're always on the lookout for prizes for our raffles, which raise vital funds.

Whatever your skills, time or resources – you can be part of something meaningful right on your doorstep.

**For more info visit [www.hsrb.org.uk](http://www.hsrb.org.uk) or email [admin@hsrb.org.uk](mailto:admin@hsrb.org.uk)**

## CHRISTIAN OF THE MONTH—July 2025

### Thomas Becket

*Commemorated by the Church of England on July 7th. and December 29th.*

The Augustinian Priory which was the forerunner of our parish church here in Royston was founded in the 12th. Century. A Papal Bull (official document issued by the pope) dated 1184 shows it as dedicated both to **St. John the Baptist** and to **St. Thomas of Canterbury** (Thomas Becket), who had been assassinated a few years earlier in 1170.



Thomas was born in 1118, the son of a wealthy London merchant, and studied law in London and Paris. In 1141 he entered the service of Theobald, the Archbishop of Canterbury, who sent him abroad to study canon law and carry out diplomatic missions. In 1154 Thomas was ordained deacon, and appointed archdeacon of Canterbury. He now served the archbishop in his dealings with the royal court, and endeared himself to King Henry II.

Henry appointed Thomas his Chancellor in 1155. On intimate terms with the king, Thomas became the second most powerful man in England, the perfect courtier with a lavish and luxurious lifestyle, serving the king faithfully for seven years as a statesman, diplomat and soldier.

All that changed in 1162 when, despite Thomas's protests, Henry appointed him Archbishop of Canterbury upon the death of Theobald. Thomas resigned his chancellorship, was ordained a priest and consecrated archbishop, and deliberately changed to an austere lifestyle, throwing himself conscientiously into his new duties and giving money away profusely to the poor.

This greatly irritated Henry, and a split developed between the two former friends as Thomas began to support the interests of the Church over those of the crown.

The issue which brought matters to a head was whether clerics accused of crimes should be tried in royal courts, or in ecclesiastical courts with appeal to Rome. Neither of the strong-willed pair would back down, and Becket was forced to flee to France, where he remained for six years.

Eventually in 1170, after intervention by King Louis VII of France, and the Pope, a fragile peace was negotiated and Becket returned to England, to the popular acclamation of the people of his diocese.

Henry and Thomas were soon arguing again, this time about some bishops whom Thomas had disciplined for infringing his rights as archbishop, at the king's instigation. Henry flew into a passionate rage, uttering reckless words, quoted as : "Who will rid me of the turbulent priest?"



Although probably unintentional, this was interpreted as a desire for Thomas's death. Four knights, seeking to please their sovereign, hurried to Canterbury and, finding Thomas in his cathedral, murdered him on the spot. He is said to have died nobly, commending his spirit into the hands of God. His last words, reported by an eye-witness, were : "I die for the name of Jesus and in defence of the Church"

The whole of Europe was aghast at the news, Thomas was spontaneously declared a martyr, becoming a symbol of the freedom and authority of the church. Within ten years over 700 miracles had been reported at his tomb. In 1173 Pope Alexander III formally made him a saint, whilst in 1174 Henry II performed public penance for his death. Eighty ancient English churches were dedicated to him. Royston's Roman Catholic Church is dedicated to St. Thomas of Canterbury and the English Martyrs.

Thomas's relics in his shrine at Canterbury became one of the most popular centre of pilgrimage in Europe for the next 400 years, until the Reformation under Henry VIII (who reviled Becket). A famous route is "The Pilgrim's Way" from London or Winchester to Canterbury, along which Chaucer's pilgrims tell their *Canterbury Tales* on their way to Becket's shrine.



# Royston Parish Church

## Carbon Literacy for Congregations

Carbon Literacy  
Project



Join us for a 6-week course on Carbon Literacy®:  
learning about climate change, carbon footprints and  
how we can all do our bit to reduce them.

**DATES AND TIME:** Mondays 7.30-9.30pm at Royston  
Parish Church on September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>, October 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>,  
20<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>

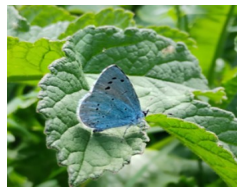
**COST:** £15 to include all course materials, refreshments and  
application for a certificate

**RESERVE THE DATES IN YOUR DIARY** and watch out for  
details of how to book your place. **N.B.** If you cannot make  
all of the dates, the course materials can be made available  
for weeks that you miss.

## **BIG BUTTERFLY COUNT 2025**

This year's Big Butterfly Count is taking place from 18th July to 10th August.

I have participated in this event for the last few years, and noticed a decline in last year's numbers. If 2024 had been a count on slugs and snails I could have logged hundreds, due to the wet weather, but the quantity and variety of butterflies that I observed was definitely down on previous years.

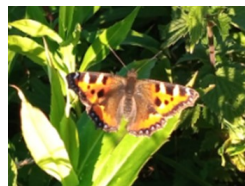


Holly Blue

The results of the 2024 survey showed the worst summer in the Count's history for Common Blue, Holly Blue, Green veined White, Small White, Small Tortoiseshell, Painted Lady, and Scotch Argus. 81% of species showed declines in number compared with 2023, with around 1/3 fewer butterflies seen overall.

Following the results of the Big Butterfly Count 2024, Butterfly Conservation have declared a butterfly emergency, and say "We need your help more than ever before. By taking part in Butterfly Conservation's Big Butterfly Count - a UK wide survey, you can help assess the health of our environment simply by counting butterflies".

Participation involves finding a spot outside, this could be your garden, a park, or other area that may have plants which are food sources for butterflies. Watch for 15 minutes, and record the species of butterfly that you observe during that time.



Small tortoiseshell

There are charts available online to help you identify the species that you see. Go to <https://bigbutterflycount.butterflyconservation.org> to download a chart showing common species of UK butterfly, and for more information about taking part. There's also a free app that you can download, which will help with identification, and you can directly log your observations in the app.

I'm hopeful that butterfly numbers this year will be higher than last year due to the better weather. I've already seen a good number of Marbled Whites when out for a walk on the Heath at the end of June. Butterflies are beautiful, and I'm trying to spot as many of them as I can. I encourage you to participate in this event.

Ruth Savage

## Heath Watch with Holly (the little dog)

*Welcome to the Fortieth in a series of dog walking diaries, documenting the flora and fauna on the beautiful heath as the seasons change.*



**June 2025**

It was very windy at the start of June and, as all dog owners know, dogs hate the wind. Unlike us, they rely on their sense of smell as much as vision and hearing and so feel disorientated when their familiar scents are disrupted.



One day, we stood for a while Holly took a rest, she likes an occasional rest, and I looked at the ground and saw a beetle scurrying into the long grass, this one looked unusual but I couldn't identify it; when I got home and tried to find it on the internet I learnt that there are over 4000 species of beetles in the UK.

I saw a dark blue butterfly, not the chalk hill blue that the heath is known for, but the species bearing the unfortunate name of the common blue which makes it sound rather ordinary but it was a rich shade of blue and caught the early morning sun. Clover was widespread on the heath and was in flower for part of June, there are two varieties on the white and red clover although I would say that the flowers are a shade of pink-purple rather than red, there was more of the pink flowers this year than I have noticed previously. Soon the weather changed and we had a lot of rain, followed by warm sunny weather which made everything grow quickly, the blackberry bushes were full of flowers and wild flowers coloured the heath.

One sunny day I stood for some time and listened to the larks soaring high in the sky and singing such a beautiful melody, there are also meadow pipits on the heath it is often difficult to differentiate between these two species by sight alone but you can tell a lark by its beautiful

song. I also watched a pied wagtail, these birds walk rather than hop and prefer mown grass like the golf greens.

Towards the end of the month we had the full moon, in June this is called the strawberry moon as it traditionally coincides with the strawberry harvest.

One thing I don't think I've mentioned before are the heath's tumuli, these small mounds are burial sites dating back to the Bronze age, these were excavated in the nineteenth century when in addition to human bones, they were found to contain urns pots and bars of copper.

Locally it is said that these tumuli would have been made by the Ickneild Way, Britains oldest pathway dating I believe from as far back as 4000BC.

I have mentioned before that I find it hard to identify many of the countries little brown birds which are all so similar. This month I managed to identify a whitethroat with a limited view as it busied itself in some bushes, using an app called "Merlin" which I recommend. There seems to be a good number of Mistle Thrushes on the heath this year, another bird with a fine song and on sunny days plenty of Yellow Brimstone butterflies.



The Royston in Blue fun run took place on the last Sunday of June, I heard that around 600 took part in the run which was raising money for The Teenage Cancer charity, I hope they did well.

Towards the end of then month it was very hot and dry and the heath took on its brownish hue. Summer is here, but no cuckoo yet.

More next time.....



# Sunday Services for July 2025

## Services to be held in Royston Parish Church

|          |          |   |
|----------|----------|---|
| 6th July | 9 am     | Said Communion Service  |
|          | 10.30 am | Sung Communion Service<br>with Choir, Children's Church<br>followed by refreshments |
|          | 3.30 pm  | Tea Time Praise!  |
| 13th     | 9 am     | Said Communion Service  |
|          | 10.30 am | Sung Communion Service<br>with Choir, Children's Church<br>followed by refreshments |
|          | 3.30 pm  | Pet Service   |
| 20th     | 9 am     | Said Communion Service  |
|          | 10.30 am | Sung Communion Service<br>with Choir, Children's Church<br>followed by refreshments |
|          | 12.30 pm | Baptism Service   |
| 27th     | 9 am     | BCP Holy Communion Service  |
|          | 10.30 am | Sung Communion Service<br>with Choir, Children's Church<br>followed by refreshments |