

Part 1 introduction

- lights up; **Martyn and Gwyneth** in position
- **Barry** to front
- **Barry** intro:

“ A very warm welcome to you all to St Mary’s. The village, and this church have been here since Saxon times – changing from age to age as people and their needs have changed. Change is still with us! We’ve just finished the first major internal refurbishment since the late 19th century – right on schedule for the Millennium! How fitting then that tonight’s event – which celebrates the life of the church and the village over 1000 years – is the first in our rearranged building. You should be able to see better, hear better, and enjoy your refreshments in greater comfort! We hope you enjoy the evening. If you do, and want to applaud, please wait until the end of the final hymn.”

FADE LIGHTS; PLAINSONG COMPLINE HYMN “BEFORE THE ENDING OF THE DAY”; FRONT LIGHTS UP; CHOIR STAYS AT BACK

- **Martyn**: “Lets take ourselves back 1000 years. We are in this very same place, this same “church on the hill”. But it’s smaller – half as long, and with no side aisles. Its made of wood rather than stone. No seats. The floor is beaten earth; what little light there is comes from smoky oil lamps. We stand around at the end of the working day, summoned by the church bell. Some of us still carry our tools, while others come with their horse or dog. We watch, and listen to, the priest celebrating the mass in Latin. We don’t catch many of the words. We don’t participate, but we know how important our attendance is in sustaining our daily lives. Our faith protects us from danger. It ensures our health and good harvests. We are moved by the solemnity, reverence and mystery of the occasion. Our understanding may be limited, but our faith is absolute.”
- **Gwyneth**: “Now come forward a couple of hundred years. The church is a bit bigger, and built of stone. It is still dark, and we still have to stand through the services. A large Priory has been added onto our church, and some of our services are led by the Abbot and the monks who live there. Music plays a part in our services now – though we don’t join in. We still don’t understand the Latin, but we love the beauty and simplicity of St Mary’s own song.
- enter **choir** – singing a plainsong...*a Magnificat ;Latin; as processional*

Part 2

- **Martyn:** “No one knows how long there’s been a village here. There was certainly a settlement in Saxon times, and the name Hatfield comes from the Saxon for a clearing in a forest There are a number of Hatfields around here! Our Hatfield fell under the protection of the Godwin family from the tenth century. They probably had the first small wooden church built on this spot. The name “Regis” was attached to Hatfield – making Hatfield Regis - as a reminder that in law whoever might live in a manor, the land ultimately belonged to the King. The Godwin family’s main claim to fame was that its head – Harold Godwinsson – succeeded Edward the Confessor as King. His reign lasted a mere ten months before he was slain in the Battle of Hastings in 1066.
- **Gwyneth:** “William the Conqueror had his own ideas about who should own what. He rewarded his knights for helping in his victory at Hastings by giving them land and large estates. Many of them became very wealthy from tithes and rents – paid by the people who lived on these estates. Hatfield Regis was given to a Norman nobleman Alberic de Vere – along with 14 more manors and lordships! Alberic didn’t settle here though – a chivalrous knight, he boldly set sail with the first crusaders for the Holy Land, to free Jerusalem from the grip of the infidels. The crusaders’ long journeys were lightened by the songs of travelling minstrels. They were called troubadours, and they sang of bravery, knighthood and courtly love”
- **Choir – Dowland piece**

Part 3

- **Gwyneth:** “Of course, the crusading knights also took with them large numbers of serfs and peasants from their estates. They went whether they wanted to or not – and from their point of view, the whole enterprise was anything but romantic! The First Crusade was a chaotic affair – but succeeded in its goal of freeing the Holy city. When Alberic got home, he related a vision he had had, while camped outside the walls of Antioch in the Holy Land during its 8 month siege. He tells that a bright five pointed star moved across the sky and settled right above his standard. He saw this as a holy calling and he became a monk in a monastery he founded at Earls Colne
- **Martyn:** Alberic’s son was also called Alberic. Like his father, he was deeply religious – and very wealthy. He ordered – and paid for – the building of a large Priory here in Hatfield Regis for the Benedictine monks. They were often called the Black Friars because of the black habits they wore. The Priory was added to the east end of the village church, and the two buildings shared a huge central tower. Our Priory was a daughter Priory of the Benedictine monastery of St Melanius in Rennes, in France. It took its orders from there. The Priory was a huge establishment – it was as long again as the present church; and there were domestic quarters running from the north wall of the present church way out beyond the boundary with the Park. These areas are now designated as of special archaeological interest, and cannot be disturbed.”
- **Gwyneth:** “The life of a Benedictine monk was a hard one. With your programmes you see some of St Benedict’s Rules, and a typical daily timetable, with 7 services of prayer and worship beginning at four o’clock each morning. Some young men relished monastery disciplines...
 - **M.** reads part 1 of Benedictine letter (overleaf)
- **Martyn:** but it didn’t suit everybody
 - **G.** reads part 2 of Benedictine letter (overleaf)
- **choir – Adieu, Adieu**

BENEDICTINE LETTER

1. **(Martyn)** Our food is scanty, our garments rough; our drink is from the stream and our sleep often upon our book. Under our tired limbs there is but a hard mat. When sleep is sweetest we must rise at a bell's bidding...Self-will has no scope; there is no moment for idleness or dissipation...Everywhere peace, everywhere serenity, and a marvellous freedom from the tumult of the world. Such unity and concord is there among the brethren that each thing seems to belong to all, and all to each...To put all in brief, no perfection expressed in the words of the gospel or of the apostles, or in the writings of the Fathers, or in the sayings of the monks of old, is lacking to our order and our way of life. But it didn't suit everybody!
2. **(Gwyneth)** Everything here and in my nature are opposed to each other. I cannot endure the daily tasks. The sight of it all revolts me. I am tormented and crushed down by the length of the vigils. I often succumb to the manual labour. The food cleaves to my mouth, more bitter than wormwood. The rough clothing cuts through my skin and flesh down to my very bones. More than this, my will is always hankering after other things. It longs for the delights of the world and sighs unceasingly for its loves and affections and pleasures.

* choir Adieu, Adieu

Part 4

- **Martyn:** “Well, the de Vere family went from strength to strength. They gained the title of Earls of Oxford, and held many of the highest posts in the land – including Lord Chamberlain. Robert de Vere, Earl of Oxford and Lord Chamberlain continued to support the Priory here particularly generously . It’s his effigy you can see lying in the choir. He is dressed as a crusading knight with sword and shield and armour. Robert was a key figure among the group of powerful noblemen who in 1215 got together and forced King John to sign a written guarantee of the rights of English people – the Magna Carta. It included clauses such as
 - people are only to be punished when they have broken the written law of the land;
 - apart from regular taxes, the king cannot demand addition payment from his nobles other than with their consent;
 - the church must be free to choose its own officials.
- **Gwyneth:** “There is always a BUT. John broke his word. The nobles who had set themselves against him – including Robert –had their estates confiscated. King John then promptly died, and Henry111 was crowned – and Robert was given his estates back. The de Vere’s generosity was called on again soon after. Only a little while after King Henry 111 had paid Robert a visit at his castle at Hedingham, the Hatfield Regis Priory caught fire and was largely demolished – 100 years of labour seemed to have come to naught.... King Henry came to the rescue. He owned the great forests of Hatfield, Epping and Writtle. He donated 10 great oak trees from Hatfield Forest, and a further 10 from Writtle to help rebuild the Priory. It was a big undertaking – the workmen were on site for many months”.
- **choir – Builders**

Part 5

- **Gwyneth:** “Still, within a short time the Priory was back in business. . . . Now you would have thought that a monastic house of God would be a calm, peaceful sort of place, loved and valued by all. In reality the Priory existed in a state of constant friction, both with its mother abbey in France, and with the obstinate and quarrelsome villagers of Hatfield Regis.”
- **Martyn:** “After endless rows about appointments and promotions, the Priory finally split from its French abbey, and went its own way. It got bigger and bigger, and richer and richer – partly through money given and left to it, but also from the high rents it gained from all the estates it owned in the locality. It doesn’t take much to imagine the irritation of the villagers as they saw the monks living in a grand Priory while their own church (the other end of the same building) fell into disrepair. Insensitive public relations by the Prior didn’t help. People used to enjoy the annual feast he gave for his estate workers – and the tasty side of beef roasted for the occasion. They took a different view however one year, when they found out that, thinking the villagers would not know the difference, he passed off as beef a young horse which had died the previous day.”
- **Gwyneth:** “Things came to a head over money. The villagers – many of them poor – collected money to repair and restore their church. The Prior laid claim to the money collected, on the grounds that all receipts from the Priory estates were rightfully his to dispose of as he wished. In the event **HE** was disposed of. The villagers attacked the Priory, threw the Prior and monks out into the street and did a lot of damage. They refused to let them back in. The quarrel went as far as the King – who ruled against the Prior, and ordered that the Priory church should be separated from the village church by a new wall on the west end of the central tower – that wall you see behind the altar today.”
- **Martyn:** “The 1300 and 1400’s were hectic times. The village grew. A prison was built in Cage End, and stocks were set up to deal with petty criminals. Free of the Prior’s interference, the village church was extended with a longer nave and a new West tower. There was now room for over 500 communicants. By contrast, the Priory began slowly to decline. When Henry 8 came to the throne in 1509 there were only four monks and a Prior left – the hardship of their lives softened somewhat by the 30 servants who looked after them! Rather than wait for Henry to close the Priory forcibly, they handed it over voluntarily, and went home, probably with the music Henry himself composed ringing in their ears!
- **Choir – Pass time with Goode Companye**

Part 6

- **Gwyneth:** “Really, that was the end for the Priory. The nicely appointed living quarters were sold off to a family called Barrington, which later acquired the manor and estates too. In fact they remained Lords of the Manor here until their family line died out in 1836. The materials of the Priory church were sold piecemeal for building, and many houses in the village have some Priory stone built into them. Poor old Robert de Vere found himself chucked into a corner of the churchyard, used as a scratching post by flea ridden dogs, and a sharpening stone by farm labourers and soldiers. That may account for the striking absence of a face on his effigy in the choir today!”
- **Martyn:** “Village life however went on. We had our share of miscreants – in the stocks, in the cage and – in some well-documented cases – transported to the colonies. We had priests who distinguished themselves by their service, and others who got into trouble with church authorities because of the services they offered. One poor soul kept getting into hot water because he gave communion to villagers who refused to kneel to receive it! As kings and governments changed, so did the kinds of worship required. In many parts of the country – and especially in East Anglia – there was a deep seated fear that popery might reappear. Some people found they could not practice the simple religion and life style they believed in, here in England. Our village records show whole families emigrating to the new world in search of a newer, purer life. It is not surprising therefore that this area showed strong support for the Cromwell government, and for the unadorned and unceremonial forms of worship which went with it. The austere, direct forms of worship beloved of the Puritans contrasted sharply with the rich and complex music of the high church.”
- **Choir – Psalm 149 - contrasting plain Puritan music with richly textured high church music of the restoration period - processional**

Part 7

- **Martyn:** While life was tough for the Puritans who sailed away with the Pilgrim Fathers, this area of the old country prospered. It was the excellent quality of the wool produced here, and the high price it commanded, that brought prosperity. Wool from East Anglia was in demand across the whole of Europe. Many merchants, exporters and wool producers became rich, and their houses in places such as Lavenham and Thaxted speak of their wealthy lifestyles. Hatfield Regis too prospered, producing large quantities of top quality wool for export from East Anglian ports. But for the labouring classes there was still poverty and hardship. Their faith in the church, and their seldom questioned acceptance of their lowly status helped them through.
- **Choir** *“All poor men and humble” maybe sung from vestry or porch side of church*

Part 8

- **Gwyneth:** “Again the wheel of fate turned. Across the North Sea and the English Channel – and especially in the Low Countries – wool producers gradually cut into our export market. Prices and profit margins fell, and by the late 1700’s even the home market was affected. The government did all it could to encourage people to wear and use wool, rather than the alternative materials which were becoming available. Regulations were passed to ensure that death itself contributed to the wool trade. Every burial had to be accompanied by a legal certificate stating on oath that the body had been dressed in wool, and the coffin lined in wool. Our church burial records testify in many instances “buried in wool”. There were very heavy fines for breaking the law – unless you were wealthy! Given the money, you could buy a permit freeing you from the legal requirements, and permitting burials in the traditional linen. The price was high and few could afford it. It was many years before this law was repealed – well after it had ceased to be applied.
- **Martyn:** “Yet despite the alternate periods of calm and turmoil of the life of the church, the village, and the wider world, Christian worship continued uninterrupted here as it had for the previous 700 years.”
- **Congregation hymn:** Through all the Changing Scenes of Life” – words in programme. Choir back at front for this – maybe processing during the hymn from wherever they sang the previous piece.

Part 9

- **Martyn:** “The prosperous 1700’s brought lots of improvements to this church. In particular our carved oak altar rail was installed, and the vicar’s vestry built. The carved settle in St John’s Chapel, and the pew carvings of the four evangelists were by one of Grinling Gibbons’ pupils. One of our priests – a Rev. Stirling – donated his library of fine books to the church, providing us with a parish library unequalled in Essex other than at the Cathedral.”
- **Gwyneth:** “We have had a church clock from medieval days – indeed we still have parts of the original clock awaiting the creation of our museum area. Before that we had a double sundial, which can still be seen above the south porch where you come into the church. Our present clock is a superb example of Victorian precision engineering. It kept remarkably accurate time, striking every quarter hour with the Westminster chimes. It was electrified in the mid 1900’s, and restored to full working order just in time to strike in the Millennium at the beginning of this year”
- **Martyn:** “ An imposing building like this needed a better peal of bells than the 6 from the old central tower. In 1782 they were melted down, and a new 8 bell peal installed in the West Tower. The heaviest bell weights just under a ton. Our village ringers – many new to bell-ringing – rang in the Millennium at midnight on 31st December 1999.”
- **Choir:** The Bells of St Mary’s

Part 10

- **Gwyneth:** “There had been an annual Fair in the village since medieval times. It was an occasion for old friends from far and near to meet up, for tradesmen to sell their wares, for labouring men to find piecework, and for everyone to have a jolly good time. There was also a regular market held in Cage End from at least the 13th century. The Fair ran into the buffers of Victorian rectitude in 1872. It had become an excuse for rowdyism and drunkenness – not the kind of thing one could allow ones wife and servants to witness! The Fair had to go! The tradition of a Spring Fair however continues with the annual Flower Festival – running for 36 years without a break during the Spring Bank Holiday. Stories abound about the Festival. For instance, the Festival in 1979 was threatened by rain and storms from the start. On the Sunday evening there was a violent storm with thunder, lightening, rain and wind. The congregation was assembled in the church for Songs of Praise, the organist doing his best to outdo the thunder. The Doctor’s teen age son was up in the tower having gone to haul down St George’s flag from its pole. As he was coming down the spiral stone steps, lightening struck the church and he was thrown downwards – the blast damaging his eardrum. Inside the church those who remembered the wartime blitz instinctively went down on the floor. The lights went out and the organ faded away. Rains of stone grit fell from every crevice in the place, covering the organ and each flower arrangement in a layer of medieval dust. There is a precedent – during the Fair in 1795, we’re told, four inch hailstones fell on the village devastating the harvest.
- **Martyn:** “Like the Fair, the Festival too brings thousands of visitors to the village to enjoy displays in the church, to join the Road Race, to browse among the stalls, and to enjoy rural entertainments”
- **Choir – To the maypole haste away**

Part 11

- **Gwyneth:** “Our Victorian ancestors made a big impact on the church as it is now. They had the body of the church fully furnished with the box pews you are sitting in – giving a seating capacity of some 300. They decorated the carved panelling around and behind the altar, and applied cement facings to the walls both internally and externally – making the flint and mortar structure look like breeze blocks! In the early days music in the church was unaccompanied singing. It’s not clear when the first church band was set up – generally they were an 18th century improvement!

* **Choir – gallery band piece**

- **Martyn:** “Unsurprisingly, the band was disbanded!! But we still have some of the 19th century home-made band instruments which had been played week in, week out here. A new organ was built to bring the musical life of the church up to scratch. While some extra bits have been added, the organ playing today is essentially the one installed some 100 years ago. Victorian enthusiasm for improving buildings and facilities was accompanied by a strong sense of moral, social and religious propriety. Within the church this was a great period for hymn writing – with a new revivalist vigour replacing the quieter, more reflective music of the early 1800’s”

- **Choir; revivalist Victorian hymn**

Marching on in the light of God

Part 12

- **Gwyneth:** “The life of the church and the village received a huge boost when, in 1891, Dr Francis Galpin was appointed as parish priest. He came as a renowned historian and musicologist. He organised excavations to record the development of the Priory and the church, and put on display his vast collection of antique musical instruments. He founded a learned society for the study of ancient instruments -The Galpin Society. It still exists and publishes its regular scholarly journal. Canon Galpin set about improving the musical life of the village with a typically Victorian enthusiasm. He called his musical friends from far and wide to play and sing at his “Paraffin Concerts” –to raise the money needed to keep the church heated. He wrote, and published, a work called *Ye Olde Englyshe Passtymes*”. This was a pageant of pastoral songs, country games and traditional sports – with full staging and costume directions. It was performed by the school children (aged 6 to 14) of Hatfield Broad Oak School in 1893. We revived the pageant, exactly according to Canon Galpin’s score, in 1993, to celebrate the centenary of its composition. It was performed by St Mary’s school children in the churchyard. Parents and friends came along to watch and listen, and also in the audience were members of the Galpin Society and some of the Canon’s family.
- **Martyn:** It is not clear from the records available whether the level of cultural appreciation of the villagers was raised as Canon Galpin hoped. He himself certainly thought so, writing

“It is not uncommon to hear a theme of Haydn’s or a strain of Mendelssohn’s whistled by some village lad as he wends his way to work...”

hmmmm!!

What is clear however is that a strong – all male – choir was established, and that some of the great masterpieces of the Victorian choral repertoire – such as Stanford’s fine Magnificat – or Song of Mary – were sung here

- **Choir –Stanford Magnificat**

Part 13

- **Gwyneth:** “Our wonderful East Window was installed in 1843 by the Master of Trinity College – original patrons of the church. On one side it shows the wise and foolish virgins, and on the other the story of Man’s accountability at the Last Judgement.
- **Martyn:** “ In 1988, surveyors found that the stonework of all our windows was very badly eroded. Water leaked through, and the glass was held in place only precariously. Even worse, the structure of the building was at risk, since the windows bear part of the weight of the rest of the building. The stone needed replacing. A huge village effort raised the quarter of a million pounds required to buy the stone from its original seam, and to have it carved and set in place. We celebrated the achievement of this work in a service of dedication led by the Bishop in 1994. A choral anthem was specially commissioned for that occasion. Our theme then was ”Light” – the light of the world entering the church and its people.
- **Choir:** Prayer for Light anthem

Part 14

- **Martyn:** For over 1000 years people in this community have worshipped the same Christ in this very same place. Its walls are infused with their prayers, their praises and their supplications. St Mary's has been through immense changes, yet the very continuity of worship here testifies to the indestructibility of the gospel message. We finish this evening's journey in time by celebrating that message again, another setting of the words of Mary's own song "Tell out my Soul."
- **Congregation hymn Tell out my Soul – on programme**

Closing thanks / applause Barry

Barry: "Please sit for a moment. .. thanks to Christine and the choir for a splendid evening – fun and with a serious core.. Tuneful Accord is a subgroup of a much bigger choir and it offers its Through Changing Scenes at no charge as a charity event for the host churches... It is a generous gift of time and talent which we deeply appreciate. Some "home grown" people have also helped get the show off the ground, and thanks are also due to for playing our idiosyncratic organ so confidently, to Brian Pugh for lighting and audio help. His book also provides much of the historical information on which the text is based – we still have a few copies left! Thanks too to Mary and Crispin White for printing programmes and tickets, to Gwyneth and Janet – together with all their helpers - for managing tonight's refreshments.....Speaking of which, do enjoy your refreshments, and thank you all for coming to St Mary's tonight."