



Dedham
PARISH MAGAZINE

March 2021

DEDHAM PARISH MAGAZINE

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1876

DEDHAM PARISH CHURCH

dedham-and-ardleigh-parishes.org.uk

Antony Wilson *Vicar*

☎ 323 919

Merv McKinney *Assistant Minister*

☎ 323 919

PARISH OFFICE

Claire Arculus *Parish Administrator*

☎ 322 136

Charlotte Parker *A/Parish Administrator
& Safeguarding*

Assembly Rooms ✉ stmaryda@gmail.com

High Street, Tuesday 9-11am

Dedham CO7 6HJ Thursday 11-1pm

CHURCH WARDENS

Vee Druitt ☎ 322 000

Peter Wilson ☎ 323 179

MUSIC

Antony Watson *Director of Music*

☎ 322 425

DEDHAM PARISH MAGAZINE

Editor: Charlotte Parker

✉ dedhameditor@gmail.com

Advertising: Sara Marshall

✉ dedham.advertising@gmail.com

If you would like a lift to church
contact Ann Shaw ☎ 322 192
or Ruth Higginson ☎ 322 598

Dedham and Ardleigh



HELPLINE

during the Coronavirus pandemic
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Please leave a message with your name, phone number
and what you would like help with and someone will get back
to you the same day. For example you may like help to get shopping,
or a prescription, or just to have a friendly chat with someone!

MAGAZINE CONTENT

2. Content
3. Services & events
- 4-5 Viewpoint
5. Lilies for Remembrance
5. Mission Bake Sales
6. Walk for Lent
7. Colchester Food Bank

Features:

8. Gratitude Journal
8. Walk & Talk
9. Craft during COVID
- 10-18 A Venetian Connection
19. Dedham Players

Organisations & Features

- 20-21 Medical matters
- 22-23 Gardening notes
- 24-25 Dedham Parish Council

26. Kingsleigh Residential
- 27-48 ADVERTISING

Can we help?

Sometimes things in life can just get too
much to cope with on your own...

Psalm 34:18: The Lord is close to the
broken-hearted and saves those who are
crushed in spirit. If you would like some
support or know of any one who would,
please contact: Ann Shaw ☎ 322 192

or Christine Mingay ☎ 230 723

If you have been bereaved or know of
anyone who has, please contact

Vee Druit ☎ 322 000

or Ruth Higginson ☎ 322 598

First Steps:

Want to get back involved with church
but don't know where to start?

Contact Liz and John Reed ☎ 323 770



Follow us on facebook Dedham and Ardleigh parishes

Services & Events MARCH 2021

Sunday, 7th March

8am	Holy Communion	Live Stream
9.30am	Rise N Shine	Via Zoom
5pm	Compline	Live Stream

Sunday, 14th March

8am	Holy Communion	Live Stream
9.30am	Holy Communion	Live Stream

Sunday, 21st March

8am	Holy Communion	Live Stream
9.30am	Matins	Live Stream
3pm	Sunday@3	via Zoom

Sunday, 28th March

8am	Holy Communion	Live Stream
9.30am	Morning Praise	Live Stream
5pm	Revive@5	via Zoom

**Service will be live streamed via our website*



<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC78SZfH5QRXMPy7DgfwYslg>

**Morning and Evening Prayer online Monday to Friday at 9am and 5pm
Weekly Midweek Services**

Wednesday Prayer - come and join us for prayer for our benefice and the wider community every Wednesday at 12 noon via zoom.

Men's Breakfast bring your own buttie! Saturday, 13th March, 9am via zoom.

Walk & Talk – this will resume on Thursday, 11th March at 10am.
Meet outside the Dedham Church.

Ardleigh Friendship Group – details of the date this will resume will be communicated in due course.

From the Register:

Burials: Peter John Gibbins, 10th February 2021

Interment of Ashes: Freddy Firmin, 26th November 2020

Ann Sylvia Regan, 16th February 2021



The unwanted gift of weakness?

We're in the season of Lent. The word "Lent" comes from the Old English word "lengten," which simply means "spring" — when the days lengthen and new life springs forth. It is a time in which we anticipate the victory of the light and life of Christ over the darkness of sin and death. It is, to borrow a phrase from C.S. Lewis, a season of a kind of *"happiness and wonder that makes you serious."*

Worship in the church during Lent is modelled on Jesus' journey in the desert where by fasting and praying he embraced weakness as a way of preparing for his life's work.

Can weakness actually be a gift to us? Not according to many of today's leaders.

Try out this quiz - *who said this?*

- above all this will require strong, determined and committed leadership*
- the ability to get the job done, that is what leadership means to me, strong and stable leadership to guide Britain through the years ahead*

*c. you'll never take back our country through weakness, you have to show strength and you have to be strong. It's never going to be the end of us, never. Let them get out, let the weak ones get out. This is a time for strength
(answers at the bottom of the page)*

And yet, *and* yet some of the most influential leaders in history have embraced weakness in their lives and moreover have advocated it as a way of life. Think about Nelson Mandela – 27 years experiencing weakness in prison prepared him for the most significant role in South Africa's recent history. Mahatma Gandhi said 'In a gentle way you can shake the world'

St. Paul who was instrumental in the spread of Christianity throughout the Roman Empire in the First Century was a very gifted preacher and leader but he reflects in his letter to the Corinthian church that he had a significant weakness, one that in his opinion had been given to him, like an unwanted gift, in order to make Him trust in God and not in his own (considerable) abilities. He wrestled with God to take this weakness away but felt God say 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is

made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong – 2 Corinthians chapter 2 verse 9.

surround yourself with people who you can draw strength from. Weakness might finally cause us to question what is real success in life? People may admire you for your strengths but they draw close to you through your weaknesses.

For when I am weak, then I am strong

So could weakness actually be a gift, albeit in some ways unwanted? Weakness lead us to pause and look in the mirror, it can help us to grow in humility. Weakness also leads us to rely on others – Reni Eddo-Lodge has said –

Take care
Reverend Antony

- a. David Cameron,
- b. Theresa May,
- c. Donald Trump

Lilies for Remembrance at Easter

Despite being in lockdown, the church is still open and we will again be arranging lilies for Easter Sunday.

If you would like to buy a lily in memory of a loved one, please put your money in a plain envelope marked '**Easter Lilies**' with your name and contact number and place it in the church money box by the entrance of the church

OR deliver it to the Parish Office mailbox near the entrance to the Assembly rooms

The cost is £3 per stem, and the deadline for ordering is **Monday 29th March**

At the time of writing, it is not known whether services will take place in the church or will still be online. Even if you do not regularly attend church services, why not take a few minutes to enjoy its peace and beauty this Easter? Many thanks

Helen Sims (321286 07899 061840)



Mission Bake Sales

- Saturday 15th May, with Horticultural plant sale
- Saturday 26th June, Saturday 31st July
- August Bank Holiday Monday Sale
- Saturday 25th September
- Saturday 30th October

Walk the length of the British Isles this Lent!

Last May we climbed up Everest raising money for Tearfund, this Lent your challenge is to join in a Virtual walk around the British Isles.

The distance is 7723 miles, *spread over the 40 days of Lent, that's 193 miles a day*

Each week we send the Church Chimes out to 360 addresses – so if each person did just 361 1/2 mile each day we could meet our target!

Our challenge is to raise money as you walk for the **Korban Project** (we will give you details as you sign up)

Colchester Korban Project is a Christian charity providing supported housing for 16-25 year olds who have found themselves in crisis.

We offer young people a home, support and guidance as they prepare themselves for independence.

<https://www.korban.org.uk>



James chapter 2 What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

If you would like to get involved please email stmaryda@gmail.com



Colchester Foodbank



Many of you will have seen the Food bank signs in the porches in Dedham and Ardleigh churches above boxes and bags of food. These are the food collection points for the Colchester Food Bank. This foodbank is the busiest in Essex and the second busiest in the East of England.

Sadly, but unsurprisingly, this last year has seen the demand for its help rise exponentially as people find themselves in very challenging circumstances due to the ongoing pandemic. Following a request for help from Reverend Antony Wilson, I, along with Lisa Berridge and Jacqui Moore now take your donated food from the collection points to the foodbank on a fortnightly basis. I have to say that the generosity of the donations continues to surprise us as we regularly fill our cars up with bags and boxes of food. This is no exaggeration - at times there are bags in the footwells as well as on seats and the boot is full to bursting. The average weight of donations is around 75kg (or 11 stone 11lbs in old money) per trip!

Once at the food bank, the food is weighed and sorted into categories after

it is checked to ensure it is within its sell by date. A bag of food will be made up depending on a client's needs and is to last for three days. Typically, that bag will contain breakfast cereals, soup, pasta, rice, pasta sauce, tinned meat, beans and fruit, tea or coffee, biscuits, sugar, toiletries and cleaning products (but not bleach). All donations are gratefully received but there are certain items which are always in high demand: larger size nappies, toiletries and tinned meat and fish.

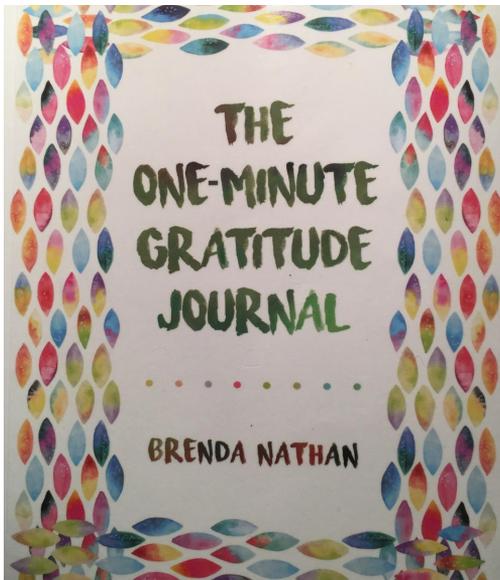
The big news for the foodbank is that it has now moved from Moorside to a much larger space in the Tollgate centre where the old Office Supplies shop used to be. That will give them much needed extra room to see and sort out food for clients in a safe socially distanced way and to respond to the growing number of people who have found themselves in difficult times.

While we can all hope for a time when the foodbank is no longer required, at the moment it is a lifeline for many Colchester residents and if you would like to donate, please drop off your donations in the church porches in Dedham or Ardleigh or the local collection points in supermarkets. You can also contact the food bank directly to volunteer and donate. Their website, if you want to know more is:

<https://colchester.foodbank.org.uk/>

Carolyn Robertson

My Gratitude Journal



At New Year in 2017 Antony preached on New Year's Resolutions and suggested that one could at the end of every day write down 3 things from that day for which one was grateful.

That struck me as doable and useful so I began in a brand new, empty diary. It was not arduous and was an excellent way of settling oneself before sleep into a cheerful and grateful frame of mind. It became obvious how many small things turn out well, how a beautiful sunset, or a surprising phone call, a scrumptious meal, or a new plan when written down establish themselves in your mind as blessings.

I never write down upsets, infuriations, worries or disasters. It is often the case that after a few days they sort themselves out and in the diary I record how well it turned out after all. So it

reduces stress and builds confidence in the gracious workings of God.

At New Year in 2018 my husband Marko fell over and fractured his leg in 4 places. We were on holiday in the West Indies and he went to a primitive hospital where he couldn't be treated. Eventually he was, by a miracle, flown to Florida but died 3 weeks later. Throughout that ordeal I was able to keep up my diary writing down the better moments, and saw as ever the gracious workings of God. Most days there was something rather wonderful that happened and it is all recorded.

This is year 5 of my Gratitude Journals and they have been a godsend to me.

Elizabeth Nickerson



WALK & TALK

Resuming on
Thursday 11th March
at 10am
Meet outside
Dedham Church

Craft during COVID



What a difference a year makes. Early in 2019 I responded to a post on Dedham Vale Voice from people wanting to learn some new crafts which led to the formation of a group of us who met at The Sun in Dedham initially with 5 members but by February 2020 had become group of 14 ranging from beginners to expert crafters, all learning from and inspiring each other. We celebrated our first anniversary and were ready to make plans for the coming year when Covid 19 stopped our face-to-face meetings and put all future plans on hold. After an initial attempt at meeting online, we realized that due to other family commitments and inevitable demands on limited broadband capacity. This was not a way forward. It was important for us all to keep the group running for the future and we continued to keep in touch, sharing our craft successes and supporting each other with supplies, equipment and advice. We only managed to meet a few times, in groups of six when allowed, but this did not stop our achievements both individually and as a group. I have been able to share some ideas from other local groups and probably our biggest success came from Ellen and

Alison joining me in making Face Coverings to raise funds for Dedham Therapy Farm – which are still available from Birchwood Farm Shop for the foreseeable future.

Combined with other individual activities such as the making of Poppy Face Coverings to support the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal, Face Coverings & Crafts donated to a local virtual Macmillan Coffee morning fundraiser and support for a number of other activities, over £2,000 has been donated to several fundraising initiatives.

Members' individual achievements have been immense, from those who had never sewn learning how to make their own Face Coverings to those who have pushed themselves beyond their comfort zone and produced fabulous handmade items that they may have previously considered to be outside their knowledge and skills.

My idea was to have a group where we all supported each other and learnt new skills from each other. If there is one positive outcome from the last year I believe that we have exceeded this objective. As soon as it's practical to return to a venue in the village, the group will continue and hopefully expand our membership and skills.

I have also had requests to set up some groups and classes in other locations so whether your interest is knitting, sewing, crochet, felting, card making, Christmas decorations, patchwork, quilting, embroidery, upcycling, or any other craft, we will continue into the future.

If you would like any further information, please contact [Angela Avery-Hickmott](mailto:Angela.Avery-Hickmott@dedhamvalerosemary.org)

07798 841744

A Venetian Connection

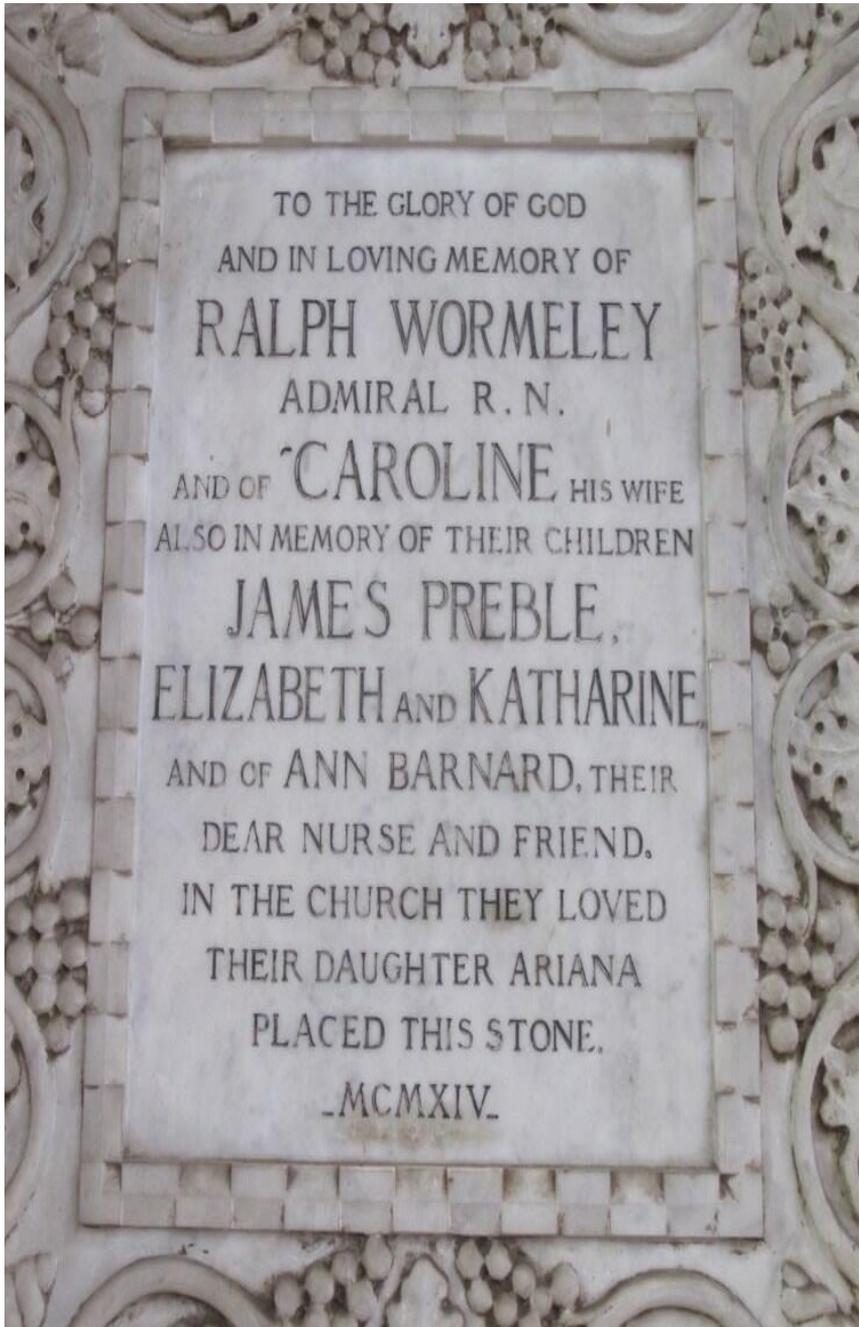
The story begins with an American resident of Dedham, Ralph Wormeley (1785-1852), son of James Wormeley, a committed loyalist who served in the British Army during the American War of Independence. Ralph was born in Virginia but his mother died when he was nine and his father brought him to England where he grew up. He became a naturalised British subject and in 1799 entered on a career in the Royal Navy.

By 1810 he had risen to Commander and he eventually attained the rank of Admiral but in spite of his excellent record on active service at sea and impeccable family connections he failed to see active service after 1814. This is thought to have been because he held *“liberal beliefs, premature in one of his class and station,... espousing unpopular courses favouring the unfortunate”*. A cultivated man, he was *“at home in three worlds; America, England, and France and knew the best in all three.”* On leave in 1820, he went back to the USA and immediately on arrival met and fell in love with Caroline Preble (1799-1872), who like himself came of an old-established Boston family. They were married in October and the following spring returned to England. Their four children were born between 1822 and 1833. Tragically their son James Preble (1826-51), a promising engineer, died young. Their daughters Elizabeth (1822-1904) and Katherine (1830-1908) both became successful writers and Ariana (1833-1922) had literary aspirations too.



Admiral Ralph Wormeley

For the rest of their lives Ralph and Caroline divided their time between the USA and England, where they lived in London, near Ipswich and for a few years at Dedham. With his liberal views, Ralph Wormeley was greatly concerned with the plight of the rural poor in Suffolk. As a convivial neighbour and Steward of the Balls at the Assembly Rooms in Dedham in the 1830s he played an active part in the life of the village and the local community. A surviving account by his eldest daughter describes the family's life at Great House, which was not the present house but its predecessor which burned down in 1936 (see *Dedham Parish Magazine, May 2017*).



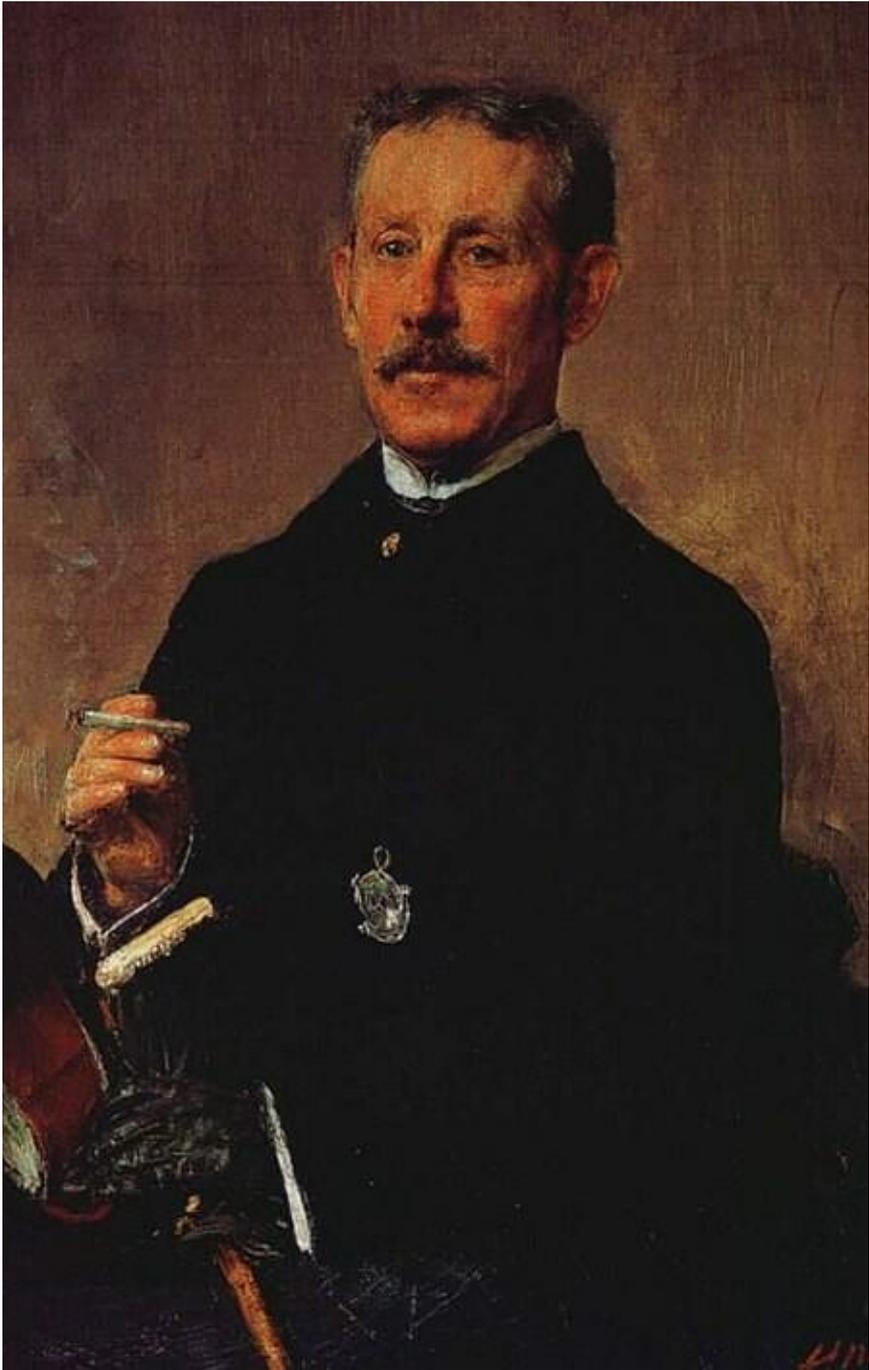
The memorial to Admiral Wormeley R.N. and his family in Dedham Church, 1914

Later on they travelled in Europe and spent a year in Paris before sailing for America for the last time in 1848. Ralph and Caroline's grave is in the Island Cemetery at Newport, Rhode Island but a memorial to them and three of their children can be seen on the west wall of our church to the left of the tower arch. It was erected by their youngest and by then only surviving child Ariana in 1914 when, as we shall see, she had renewed her connection with Dedham.

Ariana Wormeley (1833-1922) was born at Great House and although she had only lived here as a baby she evidently thought of the village with affection. In America from the age of fifteen she lived with her family in Boston and in 1853 married Daniel Curtis (1825-1908) in Newport, Rhode Island. Daniel had been an outstanding student at Harvard, a classical scholar interested in natural history, music and singing, a voracious reader, a skilled draughtsman and a brilliant wit. In his youth he wrote poetry and Ariana who shared his literary interests published three plays in 1868, the most popular one concerned with women's rights. At first they lived in a fashionable house on Beacon Hill in Boston, then moved out to the affluent suburban village of Chestnut Hill where their two sons Ralph (1854-1922) and Osborne (1858-1918) were brought up. Both parents were concerned by the decline of public morals in Boston life and an odd incident occurred on a streetcar in 1869. During an altercation with another passenger over his offensive behaviour Daniel twisted the man's nose and was sentenced to two

months in jail for assault. In 1877 the couple abandoned America and moved to Europe. For four years they took rented apartments in Rome and Florence, where they made many friends and became knowledgeable about the art and architecture but complained about the numbers of tourists! In 1881 they settled in Venice, moving into the fifteenth-century Palazzo Barbaro, one of the finest palaces on the Grand Canal, also acquiring a garden on the island of Guidecca where they could escape the midday heat and take pleasure in growing colourful flowers among shady vines. They kept "*a cozy little place*" in Rome for the winter months when Venice was too cold and paid visits to England to see Ariana's relations and their son Osborne who had joined the British Army.

Having restored Palazzo Barbaro to its past glory and filled it with superb furnishings and pictures, the Curtises began to welcome a constant stream of visitors. These included old American friends such as the leading art collector Isabella Stewart Gardner and her husband Jack, new Venetian acquaintances, such as Sir Henry Layard, discoverer of Nineveh, and his wife Enid, and cultured tourists passing through the city. Ariana loved to invite writers such as the poet Robert Browning and American novelists Edith Wharton and Henry James. James found listening to Daniel's interminable anecdotes rather trying but responded to his hosts' generous hospitality and the charm of the magnificent Palazzo.



Daniel Curtis by Antonio Mancini, 1880s



Ariana Wormeley Curtis by John Singer Sargent, 1882

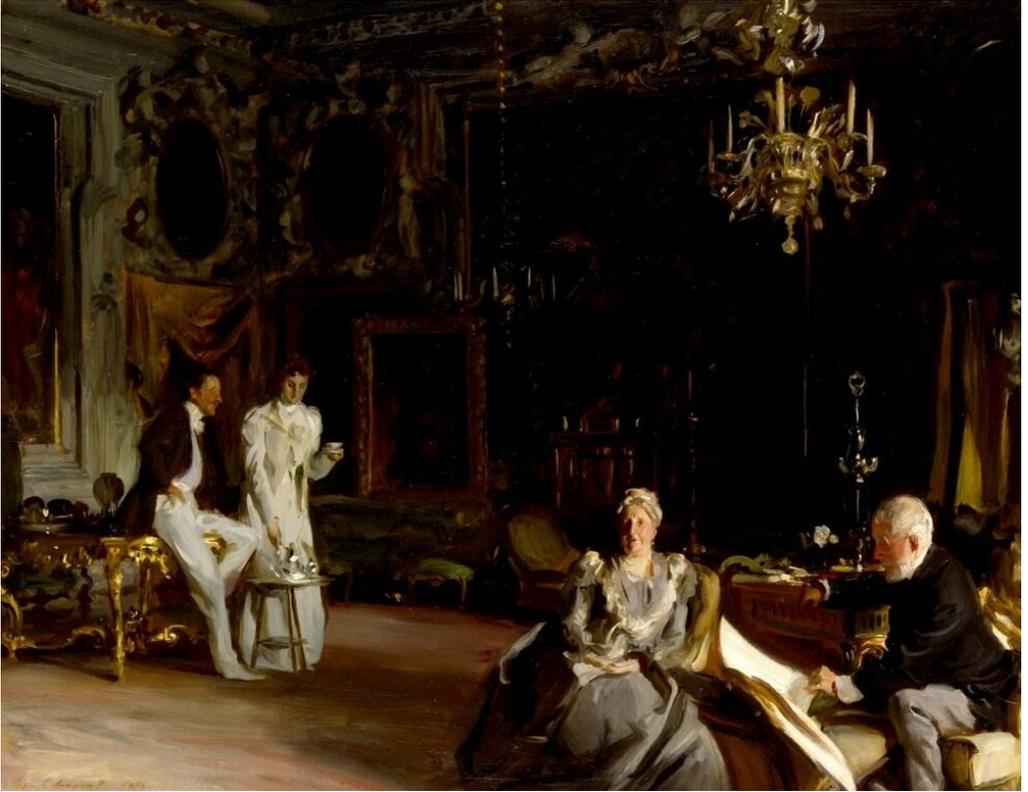
He wrote *The Wings of the Dove* here (it features in the book as Palazzo Leporelli) and was so enchanted with the library that he asked for his bed to be moved, so that he could sleep beneath its ornate stucco ceiling. Artists who visited the Palazzo included the French Impressionist Claude Monet, who painted during his visit and the Americans James McNeill Whistler, introduced by the Curtises' painter son Ralph, and John Singer Sargent, who was a distant relation. His sensitive portrait of Ariana, which he gave her as a thank you present for his first visit in 1882 is now in the Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas. Sargent and Ralph met while they were both pupils in the *atelier* of Carolus-Duran (1837-1917) in

Paris and they became firm friends, often going on painting trips together. In 1897 Ralph married Lisa de Wolfe Colt, widow of a friend and heiress to the Colt firearms fortune and they had three children, Sylvia, Margery and Ralph Wormeley.

They divided their time between Cap Ferrat on the French Riviera and Paris, as well as visits to Palazzo Barbaro. In 1899 Sargent painted them with Ariana and Daniel in the salon of the palace. He intended this picture to be a gift but Ariana declined it as she thought it made her look too old and she disliked the informal way her son was shown. Sargent later presented it to the Royal Academy as his Diploma Work.



Palazzo Barbaro, Venice



*“An Interior in Venice” by John Singer Sargent, 1899.
On the left are Ralph Curtis and his wife Lisa, on the right his parents Ariana and Daniel*

As Daniel and Ariana grew older they must have begun to think about a final resting place for their mortal remains. Burials in Venice can be only short-term because the cemetery Island of San Michele has very limited space. For a permanent solution Ariana thought of Dedham, her own place of birth and the church where she had been christened. She must have made an arrangement with the Vicar, Canon F. G. Given-Wilson because only a week after Daniel died in London on 2 July 1908 his ashes were buried in a grave on the south side of the church. The following year a stained glass window depicting Faith, Hope and

Charity was installed at the west end of the south aisle. Below the figures an inscription reads *“In faith and love this window is dedicated to the dear memory of Daniel Sargent Curtis by Ariana his wife. Love is of God.”* The window is one of the very few designed by the painter Wilfred de Glehn, a close friend and protégé of Sargent, who had quite recently introduced him to the Curtises.

This was the beginning of Ariana’s re-established connection with our village and her friendship with Canon Given-Wilson.

He went to stay at Palazzo Barbaro in October 1911 and again in May 1921; she paid a return visit to Dedham the same year. When she died in Venice aged 88 on 10 February 1922 he wrote in the Parish magazine that “she took the keenest interest in all our doings and quite looked on herself as one of our parishioners. She never ceased to speak of the great delight it gave her that her visit last August happened to coincide with the unveiling of the War Memorial.”

Her ashes were buried with Daniel’s in the same grave and a memorial tablet to them both was attached to the wall above it. Beside it there is a matching tablet commemorating their younger son Osborne (d. 1918) whose ashes were also buried here. Their elder son Ralph died in the South of France on 4 February 1922, predeceasing his mother by six days. Ariana’s descendants have continued to live at Palazzo Barbaro.

© Lucy Archer

I am very grateful to Richard Ormond, John Singer Sargent’s great-nephew and leading authority on his work, for much helpful information and to Patricia Curtis Viganò, Ariana’s great-great-granddaughter for a memorable visit to Palazzo Barbaro in 2011.

Next time: Dedham in the 1830s when the Wormeleys lived here



The window in memory of Daniel Curtis in Dedham Church, designed by Wilfred de Glehn, 1909



The grave of Daniel and Ariana Curtis on the south side of Dedham Church. On the wall above are tablets in memory of them and their younger son Osborne.



Tell us something about your local community... If you would like to write an article please contact the Editor, dedhameditor@gmail.com

Jabs for Joy After COVID liberation

“Something familiar, Something peculiar,
Something for everyone,
A comedy tonight!
Something appealing, Something appalling,
Something for everyone,
A play by Dedham Players!”

Or so the intro to ‘A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum’ by Stephen Sondheim, chimes, and this was the refrain around the virtual dining room table where the Dedham Players committee meet to discuss the plays it would like to open with when lockdown permits.

Should it be a comedy? Should it be a tragedy? Or something else? The questions have been uppermost in the committee’s minds for many months. The problem is, when can a performance be held? There is no doubt we want to avoid the risk of infection and with that in mind the DP committee are still pondering the future production.

When lockdown 1.0 descended Dedham Players were in the throes of preparing a comedy sketch review to kick off celebrations for its 50th anniversary. Rehearsals had started, set had been designed and the wardrobe store had been ransacked to identify costumes for the cast. All that was placed on hold. There were high hopes that a production would be possible in late 2020 or early 2021 but even that was not possible, as we all now know.

Even though the future of live theatre performances are uncertain, rest assured

that the Dedham Players are prepared for action once restrictions are lifted, no matter when that is.

In the meantime Dedham Players continue to discuss plans, read scripts, outline set designs and consider seating plans and ticketing which will undoubtedly be a challenge, making sure that our audiences are safe and comfortable to attend.

Inevitably, the committee reminisce about previous productions. The actors, the sets, box office and deadlines to get the stage and set built within days of curtain up! Those days spent painting the set with Dedham Players members, splashing paint over each other rather than the ‘flats’ and scenery. Sawing wood to various lengths and struggling to remember how we built the stage and put the lighting in place....those were the days!

But, those days will come again and DP will be ready. We invite you to come and help us put on a show which will not only, belatedly celebrate DP’s 50th anniversary, but liberation from the pandemic and lockdown!

Kelvin Hastings-Smith
Dedham Players



*Constructing the stage and set at
The Assembly Rooms - those were the days!*

Constable Country Medical Practice

Coronavirus Vaccination Programme

The practice is working closely with Hadleigh and Bildeston Practices and in early January both East Bergholt and Hadleigh sites were approved as vaccination 'Hubs'. This was a great achievement as only 12 other practices were approved across Suffolk.

The delivery of the Covid vaccination programme has been a complex undertaking. In January we took delivery of 1170 doses of the Pfizer vaccine one week and 2,340 the following week. Hadleigh took delivery of the same quantities. We were given a week's notice and the vaccine needed to be administered within 3 days following delivery. This was a huge undertaking and consumed much of our resources, though we also had help from the CCG and other health professionals. We managed to book every appointment.

The vaccination days were a real team effort. We are so grateful to our PPG and the many volunteers who helped; often in cold and wet conditions. We tried to keep queues to a minimum and generally the clinics ran smoothly and everyone was in good spirits – especially in the observation tent!

Thank you to everyone who helped us. We were overwhelmed when we sent out a call for volunteers and I'm sorry you have not all had the opportunity to

get involved, though there is plenty of time as yet! Thank you also for the biscuits and chocolate which kept the team going, and thank you for the many cards and kind comments on social media.

Through January, we managed to vaccinate well over 90% of all patients over the age of 70, and our housebound and vulnerable patients. We also vaccinated patients from Bildeston, Hadleigh and Holbrook & Shotley practices. Going forward, we still have a lot of vaccinating to do; administering the first dose to patients under the age of 70 and then the second dose. Unfortunately, we have no control over delivery schedules. We are informed of deliveries just the week before they are made, and only then can we contact patients to book an appointment.

Please only contact the practice regarding the vaccination if you have a genuine concern that you may have been missed. We have a rigorous process of calling patients and need to strictly follow government guidelines regarding the order in which we vaccinate, but we will contact every eligible patient in due course.

In addition to calling patients, we will be using a text message booking system. Please refer to our website, www.constablecountrymedicalpractice.co.uk and facebook page for the latest information on the vaccination programme.

While all this is going on we are also providing regular doctor and nurse clinic appointments so if anyone has any medical query apart from the vaccination, please contact us.

Thank you again for your support and consideration whilst we continue with the vaccination programme.

Pete Keeble
Practice Manager

stour valley U3A

learn, laugh, live

Many of our interest groups such as, art lovers, reading, chess, bridge, languages, philosophy and writers' groups meet using "Zoom", the video conferencing platform. The camera, art workshops and ukulele groups are soon to follow suit. Monthly meetings and lectures are also being held using "Zoom".

Plans for 2021 include garden visits, the National U3A Day on 2nd June and our annual Summer social.

If you have finished working full-time or in the near future and would like to pursue new interests, please visit our website for information and contact details:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/stourvalley/>

New members are always welcome

Dedham and Ardleigh



HELPLINE

during the Coronavirus pandemic
01206 322025

Please leave a message with your name, phone number and what you would like help with and someone will get back to you the same day. *For example you may like help to get shopping, or a prescription, or just to have a friendly chat with someone!*

Spring into action

So you've been putting off getting into the garden because it's too cold, too wet or there's too much *Bridgerton* to binge on Netflix? All valid reasons, but now you're massively behind if you're going to be ready for a relaxing Pimm's on the lawn by summer. No pressure, but it's spring, so time to get going.

March, with the spring equinox on 20 March and the clocks springing forward a week later (and a long Easter bank holiday the week after that) really marks the start of the gardening season and there's plenty to do as things get growing.

It's out with the old first: *Narcissus* (daffodils) will be going over, so deadhead by snapping off just behind the swelling seedpod at the top of the stem. Allow the foliage to die down naturally to feed the bulb for next year's display. Take your shears to winter-flowering heathers, taking off the flowers and a little of the top growth so the plants don't get leggy but bush out instead.

And then in with the new: as well as the catkins of hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and goat or pussy willow (*Salix caprea*), blossom will be on my *Amelanchier lamarckii* which usually looks incredible by the end of the month and the *Aubrieta* 'Purple Cascade' will be doing its stuff too. The bees appreciate the early bounty, and everything is starting to leaf up again.



Amelanchier in late March



Aubrieta in late March

With all this exuberance, get supports into the border now to encourage plants to grow up through them rather than try and force everything into better behaviour in the middle of summer. In one of my borders, I use a system of 6mm mild steel rods which rust beautifully (yes, they are a hazard, but what's life without a little bit of risk

while weeding the beds?) and weave a layer of string every 15-20cm up the rod. Plants then grow up through the strings.

Protect new-rising shoots from slugs and snails. Is anyone out in the dark picking them off by hand in torchlight? Not me, I chuck a few handfuls of grit around the plants I most want to save (usually my delphiniums and hostas) and leave everything else to fend for itself.

Divide clumps of perennials that are too large or those that spread outwards leaving a less productive centre. A couple of hostas are congested in their pots, so I tip them out, take a sharp spade and just slice through their tough roots to make plants the size of a side plate and replant. If the roots are fleshy and looser, you can probably prise them apart by hand. I've got wild primrose (*Primula vulgaris*) scattered throughout the garden and large clumps can be divided and replanted where they will continue to spread and push their soft yellow flowers up each spring.

Top-dress your pots by scraping out the top 2-3 inches of old compost and replace with fresh to revitalise with nutrients and fork it in with a handful of slow-release fertiliser too.

As you feed your containers, you can also feed trees, shrubs and hedges with a balanced fertiliser: scatter it over the root area and hoe or fork it into the soil. It's particularly good for young, weak, damaged or heavily pruned plants, giving them a strengthening boost as we

go into the season. Roses should be given a granular rose fertiliser now too: give shrub roses a prune as you do by taking off about a third. Hybrid teas can go back even further to about 4-6 buds from the base. Mulch with some well-rotted manure or compost but keep this away from the stems. Your roses will reward you for the trouble with fantastic flowers this summer.

Finally, I'm told a tidy lawn sets everything else off better and, while I hate lawncare, if the weather is dry enough, I'll give the grass its first cut this month with the blades raised high. There are a few gaps that need reseeding and, as the seed needs moisture and temperatures of at least 7-8 degrees Celsius, spring is a good time to sow as doubtless there will still be plenty of rain. Rake off any leaves and scarify so seeds will make contact with the soil. Ideally sow after the lawn is good and wet after rainfall.

Of course, all this activity means the weeds will be growing just as fast as the things you actually want in the garden, so don't lose track of that hoe. Enjoy!

Elliott Frisby
Dedham Horticultural Society

Although our usual events programme continues to be interrupted by Covid-19, we are hoping to run some online speaker events this year. Once confirmed, you can find out more, as well as other updates and how to join the society, on our website, www.dedhamgardening.wordpress.com.

Dedham Parish Council

Elections

No apologies for mentioning this again! This year's local elections, which were originally scheduled for May 2020, are still expected to go ahead in May. A number of current councillors will be standing down, most having served for nearly nine years.

It is vitally important that enough local people stand for election. There are a total of nine seats on DPC. Without a minimum of six elected Councillors the continuing work of the Parish Council will be in jeopardy. Please, please take a moment to consider whether you could serve your community as a parish councillor. Parish Council work is voluntary, rewarding and wide ranging. Under normal circumstances we would hold an open session at which we would hope to meet interested residents. Clearly this is not possible at present, so anyone interested in standing for election is encouraged to get in touch with either the Clerk or any of the Councillors (contact details may be found on our website). If there are insufficient nominees then Colchester Borough Council could be asked to step in!

The Drift

At its meeting on 8 February DPC voted to install bollard lighting along the Drift from the Sports Club to the toilet block and also to re-surface the Drift. We now have a preferred contractor and it expected that the work will be completed in the Spring. This project has been the subject of much discussion, with strongly held

views both for and against. DPC has obtained all necessary consents and has researched extensively to ensure that the lights we have chosen will have minimal environmental impact. We hope that the lights will make those people needing to access the village centre on foot after dark feel safer. The lights will have passive infrared sensors so that they only come on when pedestrians approach and will be on a timer so that they are not activated during the night. Full reports are available on the DPC website.

Highways

We are still trying to make some progress on the inconsiderate and sometimes dangerous parking on Lamb Corner and are asking the North Essex Parking Partnership to consider parking restrictions here.

We continue to monitor the progress of the installation of additional yellow lines along the B1029 and have recently heard that more lines on the Suffolk side are expected soon. Hopefully this will be in good time for the forthcoming summer season.

A recent flooding problem down Shoebridge Hill is proving tricky to resolve, but our Clerk and our Essex County Councillor are doing their best to get to grips with the problem, which involves a number of agencies and landowners.

Remote meetings

We will continue to meet remotely using 'Zoom' for the foreseeable future. Meetings are normally held at 7pm on the first Monday of each month.

Full details are on our website and we welcome any member of the public who would like to attend.

Peter Gibbins

Councillors were very sorry to hear of the death of former Parish Councillor Peter Gibbins. He undertook a number of tasks around the village, including building the octagonal flower troughs which adorn our war memorial.

March to pursue other opportunities. Emma has been with us for the past nine years and many of you will have come into contact with her about the village. We all send Emma and her family our best wishes for her new project.

We will be recruiting a new Clerk and are seeking someone with experience of parish council work.

Nicola Baker

Clerk

And finally, Councillors are sorry to note that our Clerk, Emma Cansdale, will be leaving us towards the end of

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