



A FAITH CARVED IN STONE

Why Waltham Abbey Celebrates King Harold

As a nation, we British have an enduring affection for the underdog. History books often cruelly summarize the life of King Harold Godwinson as a brief, nine-month reign that ended abruptly with an arrow at the Battle of Hastings and a crown surrendered to a Duke from Normandy. Yet, for the parish of Waltham Abbey, Harold is no mere historical runner-up. He remains a profound and wonderfully human example of how God uses our lives to leave an enduring spiritual legacy. Long before the fateful summer of 1066, Harold was a man in desperate need of divine intervention. Struck down by a sudden, debilitating illness that left him partially paralyzed, he bypassed the limitations of medieval medicine and sought the mercy of the Holy Cross of Waltham. Tradition holds that his fervent prayers were answered with a miraculous recovery. While most of us might express our gratitude for an answered prayer with a thankful prayer and a quiet sigh of relief, Harold responded with an act of monumental stewardship. He completely rebuilt the church in Waltham in magnificent stone, ensuring that the personal blessing he received could remain a sanctuary of healing and worship for all and for

generations to come. King Harold also provides us with a beautifully relatable lesson in the power of prayer under pressure. Marching south to face the Norman threat, severely exhausted from beating off a Viking invasion at the Battle of Stamford Bridge, Harold refused to bypass the house of God. According to legend, he paused his army before the church he had built here, entered the sanctuary, and knelt before the Holy Cross of Waltham, essentially praying, "Lord, I have a mountain to climb, and it is wearing chainmail." It is a comforting reminder that when the storms of life gather, our first instinct should be to find our knees. Though he lost the earthly battle that followed, Harold's story reminds us that faith is not defined by worldly victories, but by where we turn in our hour of greatest need. Harold returned to Waltham one final time when he was laid to rest in this sacred ground. We celebrate him on the anniversary of the Battle of Hastings not because he was an invincible conqueror, but because his life proves that true devotion leaves a footprint that outlasts any earthly crown. He taught us that big blessings require big gratitude, and that even in defeat, a life anchored in faith leaves a beautiful space for others to encounter God.

The Revd. Peter Smith

Waltham Abbey Parish News from Oct 1897

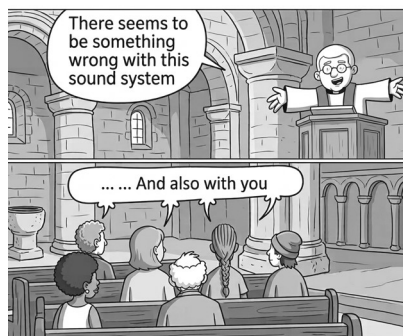
A large party from St. John the Baptist's, Islington, visited our Abbey Church on September 11th, accompanied by their Vicar, the Rev. A. Morgan, at one time a curate of this parish. On their arrival, Mr. J. Chalk played a few selections of music on the organ, which were much appreciated, and after viewing the historic building the visitors adjourned to *The Cottage*, where they were kindly entertained by Mr. and Mrs. Parnell.

About twenty members of the Reading Circle at the Polytechnic, London, also visited the Abbey on the same day, and were greatly interested in the grand old building and all the objects connected with it.

CLIMB THE TOWER Saturday 10th October

OPEN TOWER why not join us to climb to the top of the Abbey Church tower, see the bells and admire the view on Saturday 10th October, 1.30-3.45pm (weather permitting?)

The minimum age to climb the tower is five years and any children under sixteen must be accompanied by an adult. £5 in support of the Bell Fund. Tea, coffee and cake served in the church. In conjunction with the town's King Harold Day celebrations.



Trevor wasn't sure if his sermons were hitting the mark these days!



NOT QUITE A SAINT!

OCTOBER 14th marks 960 years since King Harold was killed at the Battle of Hastings. Harold (who is believed to be buried just outside the east end of our church) was the last crowned Anglo-Saxon king of England. Though he has never been formally canonized, he is regarded by some Orthodox Christians as a passion-bearer (one who faces his death in a Christ-like manner). or even a martyr . . . but not quite a saint!

Living and proclaiming the Gospel message of Jesus Christ who is the Way, the Truth and the Life

BIBLE SUNDAY 25TH OCTOBER

BIBLE SUNDAY, 25th October – “New Daylight” and “Guidelines” are Bible-reading aids produced by the Bible Reading Fellowship, designed to assist and enhance your reading of the Bible. If you would be interested in finding out more, contact: Richard Walters

VIEW FROM THE PEW

CARE FOR OUR PLANET by the Revd. Alison Caw

THE SERVICE and sermon on 6th September were focused on the imperative to care for our planet. While I am sure that many of us do everything we can to recycle, not waste, and generally be good stewards of our wonderful and glorious world, in all its beauty and diversity, there is still yet more we could do? We might consider joining support groups such as the Woodland Trust, who plant trees, which, as we know, is so important in helping to fight climate change. The RSPB also might be a good society to support as they do not simply focus on birds, but also work to improve

the environment in many different ways including creating wetland areas to help prevent coastal flooding and by developing large areas of land to improve diversity, and protect numerous species. They are a brilliant organisation, with a lot of influence. One charity I support is Tree Aid, which helps plant trees for food, land stabilisation and restoration, and water resources in the dry-lands of Africa, the Sahel. What they do is inspiring. As individuals we can only do so much, but let us make sure we each do as much as we can because “Every little helps”

INTERNATIONAL E- WASTE DAY

OCTOBER 14th is International E-Waste Day, a day which sheds light on ‘invisible’ electronic waste. This refers to those items you might not even realise you can recycle. It includes things like smoke detectors, electronic toys, e-cigarettes and cables. Even that broken remote control you’ve got in a drawer could be recycled.

The following site
<https://recycleyourelectricals.org.uk/>

can help identify drop off points for E-waste recycling. The council will collect small electrical items, batteries and textiles from Waltham Abbey/Epping Forest residents if they are put in separate small carrier bags and left on top of any of your bins that are scheduled for collection on that week. Let’s do it!



AN INTRODUCTION TO HISTORIC WALTHAM ABBEY GUIDED TOURS

*GUIDED TOURS FOR GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS.
TAILORED TO YOUR REQUIREMENTS*

CONTACT WALTHAM ABBEY TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE
FOR PRICES/ BOOKINGS AND MORE INFORMATION ON DAY/ EVENING
GUIDED TOURS

WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU

*Articles for next month’s Abbey View should reach the editor,
The Revd. Trevor Scott by **October 15th***



WHEN IS A LADY CHAPEL NOT A LADY CHAPEL?

A BRAND NEW 3rd edition of The History of the Lady Chapel and Crypt is now out!

An Historical Tour of the Lady Chapel and Crypt of the Parish Church of Waltham Holy Cross and St. Lawrence, Waltham Abbey, Essex covers the history of the chapel and its crypt in depth from the 14th century right up to 2026. Grenville Welch demonstrates that it was not built as a Lady Chapel at all.

SO WHAT WAS IT ORIGINALLY BUILT AS?

You know how to find out.

The 2nd edition has been cited in other articles and became so much in demand that Grenville has now fully revised and updated it with new research. He is also the author of several of our publications.

This book has 124 A4 pages, a wealth of pictures (including new ones), and six appendices. The 2nd edition was priced at £10 when it was launched in 2016, and amazingly you can beat ten years of inflation with us and buy the brand new 3rd edition for the same price.

