

Services at the Parish Church

Sundays 8:00 am Holy Communion (BCP) 10.00 am Sung Eucharist (CW)
Thursdays 10.00 am Eucharist (BCP) 3rd Sunday 10.00 am Family Service

The Rev'd Sue Simpson

We have already heard about the imminent departure of our curate, Sue Simpson. She and her family, Nigel, Charlotte and Bella will be leaving us in the middle of August. She is to become the Rector of Somesham and the three smaller parishes of Woodhurst, Old Hurst and Piddley. We all wish her well in her new post.



She will be sorely missed here in Soham and Wicken. Her energy, enthusiasm and hard work have borne much fruit here. We are very grateful to her for all that she has achieved.

It is thanks to her that we now have Messy Church once a month and our Little Fishes Group was also her idea. She has also been responsible for starting up our Creative Minds group which carries on growing from strength to strength. She will be taking with her all her many talents and we shall surely miss her. I would like to pay public tribute and thanks to her for her ministry here in Soham and Wicken and also my personal thanks for her support and enthusiasm. There will be an occasion for speeches and a public farewell in August. On Sunday 10th we shall be having a service at St Andrew's at 10.00 am followed by a bring-and-share lunch at Wicken Hall. Please do come and join us as we wish Sue and the family Godspeed.

Future Dates

As this is the final edition of Lodestar until after the summer break, I would like to give advance notice of some things that are happening in the church's calendar. First of all, may I tell you about the annual Church Barbeque. This will be on Sunday 31st August. There will be details available nearer the time, but please make a note of the date. We will be starting at 12.30 pm. This is always one of the highlights of the parish calendar. There is always a good spread.

Flower Festival

Plans are being made for a Flower Festival to be held in church next year. Part of the preparations will be a Festival of Arts and Crafts this September. Please note the date of Saturday 13th September. The next edition of Lodestar will only just be out before the Festival is on us. The intention is that the proceeds from this event will raise funds for the next year's Flower Festival.

Services

Sunday 6th 8.00 am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
10.00 am Sung Eucharist (Common Worship)
Sunday 13th 8.00 am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
10.00 am Family Eucharist (Common Worship)
Sunday 20th 8.00 am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
10.00 am Sung Eucharist (Common Worship)
Sunday 27th 8.00 am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
10.00 am Sung Eucharist (Common Worship)

SCHOOL REPORT

Richard Liddington, Headteacher of St. Andrew's School



Commemorating the start of the First World War is a big event that we wanted our pupils to remember for a long time to come. So this June, St Andrew's children have been able



to experience a tiny taste of life in the trenches.

By creating a mini Western Front on the playing field and our woodland we enabled the children to let their imaginations run wild!

Starting the week with an assembly allowed us to give the children a few

essential facts about the start of the conflict. Children were then grouped with each group having members from the youngest to the oldest. They then embarked on a day of fact finding and experiences to help them begin to understand the events of 100 years before.

The children were able to dig in our very own trenches, find out facts in our forest behind the front line, carry out basic first aid on each other and their teddies, experience drill training and complete an assault course. They even met an authentically dressed (and armed)



WWI soldier! Our library and group room have become a home front and front line museum, chock full of artefacts that we have handled and discussed



with great interest. They also looked at photographs and letters from the time and heard archived voices from the past.

Luckily for us, we had several volunteers to assist staff in providing these amazing experiences. The Red Cross sent a First Aid Trainer to teach our pupils bandaging and sling skills in

our Year 5 front line hospital. Two parents have very generously donated their time and collections of memorabilia from the era.



We even had an Army cadet on hand to give the children an authentic training experience on the parade ground and assault course!

As the week continued, the children have been acting out scenes, writing diaries and letters home from the trenches and reporting on events. Some classes have written poems and prayers while others have created information posters. A gallery of photos and work will soon be appearing on the school website.

It has been amazing to see the children begin to understand the sacrifice of a generation that seems so long ago yet is connected to all of us, a generation that continue to be remembered in our hearts to this day. We are looking forward to having a fantastic collection of imaginative and thoughtful work to display around our school and during community commemoration events.

Emma Thomas, Maths Specialist Teacher & Assistant Headteacher

Bishop's Mission Week 8th – 15th June

Our Deanery was the focus of the Bishop of Ely's mission week in the middle of June. There was a series of events at which he or his officers were present. For us in Soham, the first of those was on June 8th when we welcomed as our visiting preacher the diocesan Director of Mission, the Rev'd Peter Wood at our main parish Eucharist. That evening there was Festival Evensong at Isleham at 6.30 pm. The bishop himself was the preacher at this and people from all over the Deanery came to hear him; as well as to join together for worship. The bishop was unable to come to our Creative Minds group that week as planned; he has a particular concern for the issue of mental health and well-being. Due to the poor state of the Weatheralls Health Centre, the group is meeting temporarily in church until a more permanent home can be found. The bishop attended our Deanery Synod during the week and on Thursday 12th some of the diocesan officers were able to join our Men's Curry Night at Ali Taj. It was good to have Bishop Stephen with us in Fordham and Quy Deanery.

Bereavement Care Awareness

On Saturday 13th September we have invited Care for the Family to provide their course designed to give an understanding of how we can support bereaved people in our local communities. It is aimed to provide useful information to anyone who is interested in understanding bereavement and developing support work within the church setting. We meet at Wicken Parish Hall at 9.30 for 10 am start, finishing at 4pm. There is a Bring and Share lunch with tea/coffee and biscuits provided. The cost is £10 per person and there are 18 places available.

For further details and booking please contact Lynne Turner on 01353 722146 or turnerlynn7@aol.com

The Poisonous Garden



Have you ever realised that we are surrounded in our gardens and in the countryside by hundreds of poisonous plants? I had never thought about it until we visited the wonderful innovative garden surrounding Alnwick Castle in Northumberland, which includes a Poison Garden. This garden is just one section out of ten different areas and the only part under lock and key. On the gates are a skull and crossbones; you need a special ticket for a stipulated time to get in, “chaperoned “ by a qualified guide. Some of the plants within require a Home Office License to grow there they include Cannabis and the Opium Poppy.



The Alnwick gardens are extensive, initiated by Jane Percy the present Duchess of Northumberland, and incorporate such a variety of lovely, interesting areas that there is something for everyone; but the poisonous garden is something different and possibly not for everyone. It was born when the Duchess began to wonder why so many gardens around the world concentrated on the healing power of plants rather than their ability to kill. She thought that most children she knew would be more interested in hearing how a plant killed, how long it would take you to die if you ate it and how gruesome and painful the death might be!

My initial thought on visiting this area of the garden was that it might be boring; but how wrong I was ! I was fascinated and intrigued. As we were escorted from one plot to another (some of which had cages round them) and instructed about the potential latent ‘evil’ of each plant I couldn’t believe how many of them are in my own garden. Every garden is a poisonous garden to a greater or lesser degree;

but you may be reassured to know that statistics show there is little poisoning from plants in their natural state. It is when other products are made from these plants that the trouble starts. However, people take natural remedies not knowing they can be potentially poisonous and different people have different reactions. So care is needed with these potions/ remedies. e.g The Greater Periwinkle (Vinca Major), a pretty, fresh plant with blue/purple, sometimes white or pink clear flowers...good for ground cover, quite likes shady places... one of my favourites, it has many useful properties. It can be



used as a sedative, stops internal and external bleeding, is used in anxiety states and subsequent hypertension to name but a few uses. Together with the Lesser Periwinkle it has long been considered magical and medicinal. It is still used in Folk Medicine; but you can’t be too careful.

In times medieval it was thought that human moral qualities were reflected in plants and that the qualities of plants were capable of being mirrored in the soul. A harmony was achieved between what came to live within the human soul and what lived in the innocent world of plants. The setting in which the inner life of nature and the inner life of the good person could reflect each other was known as the “hortus conclusus”. The garden with its innocent, beautiful plants could teach and remind people of their spiritual life. I have a little old book given to me at my Confirmation by my Paternal Grandmother (who was also my Godmother). It is called ‘The Hidden Garden of Prayer’ and based on these thoughts and ideas. There are many examples in art of the efficacy of flowers and plants in the spiritual life and in the lives of the saints. A picture I found of the Virgin Mary depicts her in a garden surrounded with flowers which would be seen to have quite specific, symbolic meanings. The symbolism realised as belonging to each plant’s inner nature. There is the traditional white Lily of purity, this one harmless enough; but also Lily-of-the-Valley described as ‘gentle’ illustrating Mary’s meekness. This lily is deadly poisonous in all its parts!



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I wonder if the medieval mind would think differently today, knowing as much as we do about the properties of our plants.



There are so many favourite, lovely, innocent looking plants that are fairly or extremely toxic. The snowdrop and winter aconite are mildly so. The autumn crocus, hellebore, aquilegia (seeds fatal to children) known as granny's bonnet are in all their parts very poisonous indeed. There is the foxglove, all the Ivys, white and red Bryony of which the bees love the greenish flowers, these are very toxic in all parts and can be fatal. The Ancient Chinese used deadly poison from

Monkshood/Wolfsbane on the tips of their arrows. The Egyptians used the seed oil from the Castor Oil plant (known as the Wonder Tree) as a base for unguents and lamp oil, probably not knowing that it is deadly poison...one seed can kill an adult in the most horrific way. There are also our more common trees such as the pretty, graceful Laburnum and the Yew(taxus baccata) both extremely poisonous in all parts except for the bright, soft, fleshy arils (skins) on the Yew berries which the birds love. In Norfolk, when I was a child, a cow broke through a rickety fence (belonging to the farmer!) into the Vicarage garden and had Yew fronds for lunch. It lay on its side quite dead, blown up to at least twice its normal size. I have never forgotten the horrible shock of finding the poor creature near the bottom of our very large garden.



There was a large bush for a while in St. Andrew's churchyard about two years ago with rather attractive drooping purplish -brown bell-like flowers. We took no notice at first and then realised it was Deadly Nightshade (Atropa belladonna) of which all parts are very, very poisonous, usually fatal especially the black berries if eaten. It is a very powerful sedative most likely used for sinister purposes throughout history. One of its names is solatrum mortale, hence "deadly nightshade ". Our Vicar Tim successfully despatched it, although one needs to look out for latent seeds, probably dropped by birds, resurrecting the plant. Hardly conducive to 'health and safety' !



Judith Scott



PARISH REGISTERS



Baptisms

1st June Mya Rose McFarlane
15th Molly Ellen Ada Smith
Jack Hunter

Funerals

2nd June Ina Audus
10th Thirza Harlow
11th Tina Barker

Weddings

14th June Clifford Van Heerden and Yvonne Machell
21st Benjamin Neal and Kayleigh Martin

LodeSTAR

Items for the September edition of LodeStar should be submitted by Friday, 22nd August. E-mails should be sent to peterdscott@btopenworld.com or printed copy left at 22 Sand Street, Soham CB7 5AA. Note that there is no edition in August.

Just a few words

Tim Alban Jones

Dear Friends

As I write this, towards the end of June, we are embarking upon an extended period of remembering and commemoration. It is exactly one hundred years since an Archduke and Archduchess were assassinated in the Sarejevo; an event which set in motion a complicated series of alliances and treaties which, in turn, led to the most terrible bloodshed that the world had ever seen. Never before had war been seen in such an industrial, mechanised and inhuman way. In the June and July of 1914, however, all that lay ahead and the participants on both sides blithely assumed that it would all be over in a matter of months. The Kaiser told his troops as they marched off to the bloodshed that they would be home before the leaves fell and in this county there was a popular saying that it would ‘all be over by Christmas’ as young men scrambled to enlist for King and Country.

From our vantage point over a century later, we can only try to imagine what it must have been like – both in the lead up to the outbreak of hostilities and also the actual fighting itself. Visits to the war graves, the trenches and the museums give a vivid and moving sense of what it was like, but they are not the same. The hardships of the troops and the sheer scale of the conflict are well documented.

As we come to commemorate the events of a hundred years ago we have a balance to strike. We certainly do not want to indulge ourselves in patriotic, jingoistic sabre-rattling. To do so would be to glorify what was the most appalling waste of life – the loss of almost an entire generation which was wiped out in the four years of fighting. But we must also not forget; at all costs we must remember those brave young men who gave their lives. Their sacrifice must be remembered for as long as we have memories. Every city, town and village in the country has a memorial either in the cathedral, parish church or at some prominent place. It is good, right and proper that these should be kept in the public eye and this year the annual remembrances will be all the more poignant.

The act of remembering is hugely significant, for it is deep within the inner recesses of our memories that we can make meaning of ourselves and our lives. The Christian Church has always recognised the importance of memory and remembering. At our central act of worship, the communion service, we remember our Lord’s last supper and his words “Do this in remembrance of me”.

So it is good to remember. The act of remembering fulfils a deep-seated human need on several different levels; it informs and gives shape to our present; it has important and far-reaching lessons to teach us, and it gives a sense of identity and belonging and a feeling of direction purpose. There will be a number of events on a national and local scale to mark the beginning of the First World War – or, the Great War, as it was called at the time. I hope that as we enjoy these commemorations, we will always remember the human cost of the events that we are marking. It was supposed to be the war that would end all wars, and we know all too well that this was not how it turned out, but we should never forget.

With every good wish, *Tim Alban Jones*

Thank you for your good wishes on my election as Chair of the House of Clergy in the Diocese and Vice President of the Diocesan Synod. This means that I am now a member of the Bishop’s Council.

Tim Alban Jones