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<b>Services at the Parish Church</b>	<i>1st Sunday</i>	10.00 am	Morning Prayer
Sundays	8:00 am	Holy Communion (BCP)	10.00 am Sung Eucharist (CW)
Thursdays	10.00 am	Eucharist (BCP)	<i>3rd Sunday</i> 10.00 am Family Service

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## Singing Together

I have moved into illustrious company but I promise not to let it go to my head. As a teenager in the 1970s I was an aficionado of the folk and rock music of the time. And now I have sung and been recorded at a world-famous venue that has played host to many of my musical heroes. Ralph McTell used it as part of an album title, Ginger Baker, Jack Bruce and Eric Clapton (otherwise known as Cream) held Farewell and Reunion gigs there and according to (false) rumour, Bob Dylan was branded "Judas" there. Now I, too, have sung at the Royal Albert Hall. OK, my musical heroes were onstage whilst I was in the Circle but my efforts (along with some 5000 others) were recorded and made available to a potential audience of millions courtesy of the BBC. I was fortunate enough to be given a ticket for Songs of Praise's Big Sing and so found myself in the audience for two Songs of Praise programmes. One was broadcast very soon after the recording as part of the celebrations to honour Queen Elizabeth becoming this country's longest reigning monarch whilst the other was the Christmas special due for transmission in December. There was something odd about singing Christmas Carols in the middle of September but then these programmes do often have to be prepared quite some time in advance.

What was in no way odd, though, was the feeling that in my own small way I was contributing to a longstanding tradition. Neither The Big Sing, nor even Songs of Praise itself, may have been around for very long in the grand scheme of things, but people gathering to sing praise to God is as old as Christendom itself. From the catacombs of Rome, through Gospel Tent Revival Crusades and Evangelistic Rallies to the regular Sunday services at innumerable churches and cathedrals, geography and history bear witness to:

*"All people that on earth do dwell,  
Sing(ing) to the Lord with cheerful voice"*

Singing with thousands of others is definitely different from singing as part of a small congregation but to think that one is better than the other is to miss the point. Although I was merely one voice amongst thousands at The Albert Hall it's not the numbers involved at any one time that is the significant factor. I'm sure that many of you, like me, have known of (and maybe been part of) a Church service where only the presence of a preacher got the total attendance into double figures. The Bible tells us that "where two or three are gathered" Jesus is there in the midst. Indeed, one of the songs at my own wedding was, 'As We Are Gathered, Jesus Is Here'. Mind you, that was one service where the numbers of those attending did go beyond double figures! Although we didn't sing it at The Big Sing there's a line from another hymn that I think is relevant:

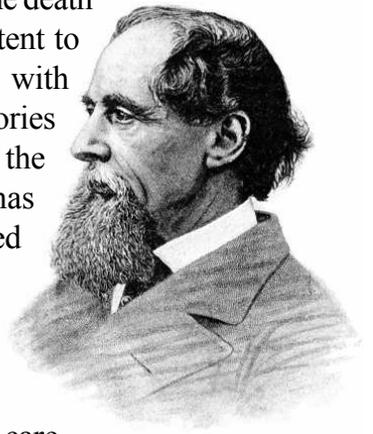
*"Ten thousand thousand are their tongues  
But all their joys are one."*

Next time you are part of a small gathering struggling to do justice to the hymn being sung remember two things. Size doesn't always matter, and you are standing on the shoulders of giants. *Phil Logan*

## A CHRISTMAS CAROL

*“Dickens dead? Then will Father Christmas die too?”*

This possibly apocryphal response by a young girl to the death of Charles Dickens in June 1870 is typical of the extent to which the nation’s favourite novelist was identified with Christmas. Even as a young writer, his novels, short stories and essays had often concentrated on the delights of the festive season. With the publication of ‘A Christmas Carol’, the popular notion began that Dickens invented the English Christmas. An exaggeration, it is true, but he was certainly influential in emphasising Christmas in the context of celebration, family gatherings and Christian charity. As a result of his own childhood experience, Dickens was acutely aware of the need to care



for those less fortunate. ‘A Christmas Carol’, in particular, resonated with its readers far more than any sermons, newspaper leaders or political speeches.

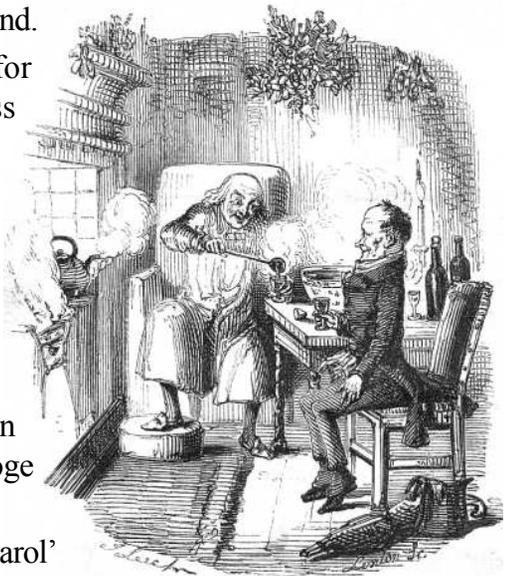


There is a forerunner to the novel in one of the stories in ‘The Pickwick Papers’. ‘The Story of the Goblins who Stole a Sexton’ tells of a disagreeable gravedigger called Gabriel Grub, who is kidnapped by goblins and shown the error of his ways in scenes similar to those shown to Scrooge by the three spirits.

‘A Christmas Carol’ was published in 1843 to enormous acclaim, and has never been out of print. With illustrations by John Leech, the characters became alive in the minds of all who read it. Ebenezer Scrooge has become an iconic character in the history of English literature, and yet, such is the richness of Dickens’ writing, the others, particularly the Cratchit family, are not overpowered. His readers were only too aware that they were living in ‘the hungry forties’, and could identify with the deprivations experienced by the Cratchits and the explicit call to help the poor and needy.

Some of the phrases have passed into folklore. If Oliver Twist’s “Please sir, I want some more” is the most memorable quotation in all Dickens, then “Bah, humbug” and “God bless us, everyone” cannot be far behind.

It is unsurprising that the story is ripe for dramatic adaptation. There are countless film versions – you will undoubtedly be familiar with at least some of those, starring Alistair Sim, Mickey Mouse, the Muppets, George C. Scott and Patrick Stewart. A film musical called ‘Scrooge!’ tried to cash in on the success of ‘Oliver!’ and even used some of the same sets, but was not as successful. (See if you can spot the London bus going past when Albert Finney as Scrooge shoos away the carol singers).



The stage has also brought ‘A Christmas Carol’ its share of adaptations, one of which has brought ‘A Christmas Carol’ to Soham. Following on from its success last year with ‘Pride and Prejudice’, Viva is bringing this timeless classic to St Andrew’s Church, complete with carol-singing and spooky special effects! Directed by Vaughan Moll, the show runs from 3rd – 5th December. Tickets, at £10 (£8 concessions), are already going fast, so contact the box office - 01353 722228, [www.wegotickets.com](http://www.wegotickets.com) or pop into the Viva office. What better way to start your Christmas!

*David Tickner*

# School Report

Weatheralls School



## The Weatheralls – a mural

During the summer term we applied to the Local Authority for a grant to run a special project with a cultural focus. We wanted to celebrate our school community by making some large pieces of art work that reflected the involvement and commitment of everyone in our school world; something that would still be there in years to come, to be a testament to our working together and something that could be enjoyed by all. We were therefore delighted to receive £5,000, after submitting our ideas, and started planning straight away.

For our project we have been working with local artists, Claire Cockayne and Corinne Blandin. They have worked with all of the children in the school to decorate over 1,200 15cm squared tiles to create 4 different murals for display in our new building; two in the Fairhurst Hall and two elsewhere in the building.



*Dr Taylor and myself, with our tiles*

the artist Julian Opie; these portraits will then be put together to create each of the murals.

In addition to all the adults working in the school producing their own tile for the murals we invited all of our volunteer helpers, Home School Association members, Governors, ex pupils and other local Headteachers to come and join in the fun. Specially invited contributors were Mr and Mrs Fairhurst, parents of Liam and Callum Fairhurst, both previous pupils of the school. Our school charity this year, chosen by the children, is the Fairhurst Foundation,

The murals depict different animals representing the four seasons. Our project was to include absolutely all the children and adults, who work or help in the school, in contributing to the mural, as well as other members of our extended community. All of our younger children have produced hand prints and patterns which will create the borders of the murals whilst Year 2 – Year 6 and all adults have produced a self-portrait inspired by



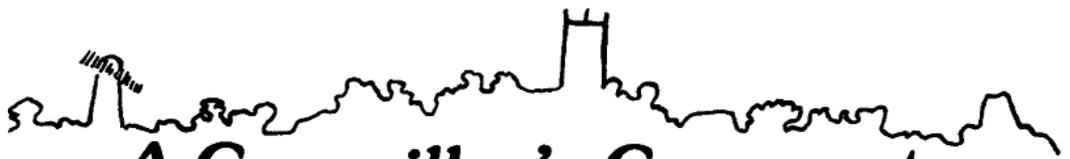
*Corrine helping to decorate one of the tiles*



*One of the murals – a squirrel, in construction*

set up in memory of Liam who sadly died of cancer in 2009. Callum, his brother, is currently on a massive fundraising cycle ride around the world and we are following his progress. Corinne and Claire have made a special additional set of tiles celebrating Callum's cycle ride which will go on display at the same time.

By the time you read this the murals will have been completed and put up on display. I can't wait to see the finished results! We hope to have a formal opening some time later on this year and to invite everyone along. *Chrissy Barclay, Headteacher, The Weatheralls*



# A Councillor's Comments

At our October meeting there were two people using Public Comment Time. Mr Ken Cranfield spoke about the need for the council to get a monthly update on the progress of the Ely Bypass. The other person mentioned a problem with a street light, but also brought to the attention of the council that the CCTV cameras in Soham and Ely have not been operating for two years.

**Planning:** In matters arising, Hopkins Homes had made a presentation of 126 homes to be built on a piece of land adjacent to the town's cemetery. Councillor Woollard was concerned that in time the cemetery would need to expand and if 126 homes were built this would prevent this expansion. It was noticed on the plans that there were open spaces and Hopkin Homes are being asked if they could plan for the open space area to be next to the cemetery.

**Community Facility Working Party:** They have met with the architect and they hope that the details of the revised scheme for the refurbishment of the Pavilion will be available in time for our November meeting, or at the latest the December meeting.

**Street Lighting:** There have been several concerns raised regarding the siting of the lights and also about those that will not be replaced. There was one that the council will adopt but the remainder will be monitored after the change to see if they need to adopt more.

**Public Toilets:** The council have put on hold the decision to take them under our control.

**Soham Rail Station – Notice of Motion by Councillor Woollard.** In the event of replacing the Rail Station he suggested that its original site has bad access to it and suggested a site out of town in the vicinity of Cherrytree Lane, but the motion was not seconded.

**Applications for financial support:** One from Soham Heritage & Tourism for funding for Winter Fayre, and the other was from Citizens Advice Bureau. Both were considered and given support.

*Councillor Ginn*

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## **Christmas CD**

Coming soon: a Christmas CD telling the story of the Nativity in words and original music. It features the church's musicians and children from local primary schools and was recorded at Blushed Studios. It will be available through the church, schools and from Soham Books. Price to be announced.



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# THE ABBOT CONSORT OF VOICES

CONDUCTED BY PETER CROMPTON

## Music and Readings for Advent

Saturday, 28th November, 2015 at 7.30 pm  
in

St Andrew's Church

Tickets £8.00 at the door

All proceeds for St Andrew's Church and The Food Bank



☆ **200+Club winners for October:** £5 Glenda Griffiths, £10 Judith Peterson.

☆ **Soham Lodge Christmas bazaar.** This will take place on Saturday 28th November from 2.30 pm to 4.00 pm at Soham Lodge Care Centre, Soham Bypass(A142), Soham, Cambs CB7 5WZ 01353 720775

We will have a range of stalls including fantastic raffle, tombolas, children's stalls, face painting, games, home made cakes, crafts, Christmas cards and Christmas items to sell.

All money raised is for the residents fund which we use to pay for trips out, entertainments and activities for the residents.

☆ **Soham Winter Fayre**

This year's Soham Winter Fayre is on Friday 27th November from 6.00pm to 8.30pm arranged by St Andrew's Church & Soham Heritage and Tourism. It will feature hot food and drinks and entertainment outside the church and crafts and gifts inside. Santa will of course be in his grotto and we expect a visit from Fitz and Will, the Cambridge Cats.



☆ **The Bread Basket**



You are warmly invited to join us at our new monthly Continental style café, The Bread Basket, on Saturday 14th November from 10.00 am to 12.00 noon at St Andrew's Church Soham! Continental Breakfast with tea/coffee £1.50; Hot drink 50p.

☆ **Items for the December edition of LodeStar** should be submitted by Friday, 20th November. E-mails should be sent to peterdscott@btopenworld.com or printed copy left at 22 Sand Street, Soham CB7 5AA.

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## PARISH REGISTERS

### Funerals

14th October	Norah Fuller
19th October	Ron Thorby
20th October	Eunice Jarvis
28th October	Roger Barker
30th October	Geoffrey Mann

# Just a few words

Ruth Dennigan

Dear friends,

I recently heard a friend bemoaning the demise of traditional cameras: now that so many people have digital cameras, or cameras as part of their phone or tablet, whilst the taking and storing of photos is much easier, the sharing of these pictures is done electronically and the days of browsing through photo albums seem to be gone. The capturing and sharing of memories is far more instantaneous; but poring over a screen with my godchildren isn't quite the same as curling up together with a book! Partly for that reason I have started to create a 'memory box' in which I can put not only prints of significant photos, but also postcards with briefly-written memories of significant events and occasions, and important keepsakes such as the ticket from my first ever time in the crowd at a live football match (last year!).

November is a month which focuses particularly on remembering, with the All Souls service on 1st November at which we remember lost loved ones, and the Remembrance Sunday services on 8th November. Finding ways to remember is important. From beginning to end the love story of the Bible – the story of God's love for the people he made, and his desire to find ways to make it easy for us to know and experience and respond to that love – is written as a book of memories. The writers of the Bible passed on their memories of the stories, events, traditions and interactions with God which were important to them and shaped their faith. Some of these are celebrated in the cycle of Jewish and Christian festivals: the weekly observance of Shabbat as a day of rest and remembering; the yearly celebration of the Passover as the great freedom festival; Christmas as God's all-out attempt to communicate his love to his people; the weekly celebration of the Eucharist and the yearly observance of Good Friday and Easter as the climax in ending the separation between God and his people; Pentecost as the ultimate in God living with his people. As well as participating in these ways of remembering for the whole Christian community, it's vital to find ways for us as a church community, and for us as individuals, to remember the stories, events, traditions and interactions with God which are important to us and shape our faith. Interactions with God didn't stop at the end of the Bible; there have been another 1900 years of memories being created since then! As we sing the hymns our ancestors have sung and we add our own songs to them out of our own experiences, and as we read the stories of people's experiences of God over the centuries and we share our own stories, we grow in our identity as a people of God.

Perhaps, in this month of remembering, we could consider how we can create opportunities for sharing and celebrating our own faith stories.

*Ruth Dennigan. Licensed Lay Minister, Soham and Wicken*

Advent Resource: Living Advent by Ruth Dennigan and Linda Logan (Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, 2015)

If you are looking for something a little different to help your preparation for Christmas this year then 'Living Advent' may be just what you need. Written by two members of St Andrew's Church, Soham, Living Advent is a set of twentyfive daily reflections on a wide variety of themes inspired by images of a collection of nativity sets. Beginning the Advent journey with thoughts inspired by St Andrew's own Posada, the book goes on to consider a range of perspectives, emotions, traditions and activities that form part of our faith.

The book will be on sale throughout November, for the printing cost of £2.35, from the Traidcraft stall after the 10am service, and from Linda Logan and Ruth Dennigan.

