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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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## An Update on the Vacancy from The Churchwardens

Many of you have been asking and wondering how long before we can welcome a new vicar, so here is an update of where we are to date and how the process proceeds.

We have completed the "Parish Profile" which gives an insight into our communities of Soham and Wicken and the churches of St Andrew and St Lawrence for anyone interested in the post.

The next step is a Section 12 meeting, which has been arranged for the middle of February. This is for the parish representatives, the Patrons, Archdeacon to clarify the job description and person specification and any other details prior to advertising the post. After this meeting the job will be advertised and the Archdeacon hopes to arrange interviews for early June. Once we have appointed someone we wait for confirmation of a date for when our new vicar can start and his/her induction by the Bishop.



*Proposed new Vicarage in The Oaks*



The length of this process is determined by the Diocese. The Diocese have decided to sell the vicarage at Cross Green and have accepted an offer for it. We understand they are in the process of buying a new vicarage which will be easier to maintain.

We are extremely grateful to everyone at St. Andrew's and St. Lawrence's for working so well together to enable the churches to run as smoothly as possible during the interregnum.

## Daily Readings for Lent

Living Lent: Who is this Jesus? (Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, 2016)

Who is this Jesus? is a set of daily reflections, from Ash Wednesday to Easter Day, on a wide variety of themes inspired by stories of Jesus. Its aim is to give the opportunity to learn more about Jesus, whose disciples we are; to meet him at different points in his life and ministry, enabling exploration of his character and priorities and, through them, to build a closer relationship with the God to whom he points. Each day contains reflection on a Bible passage and some questions to stimulate personal thought. For those who would like some further reflection, each day includes a suggested song to listen to.

The book is on sale now, for the printing cost of £2.20, from Soham Books and from Ruth Dennigan.

## An unusual specimen in the Garden of Eden

Everyone knows that an Englishman's home is his castle, and that a garden, if he is lucky enough to own one, is an important part of it. The English obsession with plants goes back many centuries, and the medieval bookshops were well stocked with books about plants and how they could be used for practical and medicinal purposes. However, it was not until the 17th century that people really started to write about plants for decorative rather than functional purposes, and one of the first in England to do so was a man called John Parkinson. Parkinson (1567-1650) was well qualified to write about plants. He was apothecary to King James I and King Charles I and Warden of the Society of Apothecaries, but his main interest was his garden in Long Acre in London, and he eventually resigned his position as warden in order to devote more time to his garden. Parkinson's gardening book was called *Paradisi in sole, paradisus terrestris*, or Park-in-sun's terrestrial paradise, a pun on his name.

Instead of explaining how to make infusions or poultices from various parts of the plants, Parkinson gave his views on how to plant up flower beds, grow vegetables or prune fruit trees. His book is beautifully illustrated with woodcuts of the different varieties of plants and trees available to the keen (and wealthy) gardener. But perhaps the most striking illustration is the full page picture on the title page showing the Garden of Eden.

According to the Book of Genesis, Adam was put into the Garden to look after it, to "dress it and to keep it" (Genesis, ch. 2, v. 15). In the Middle Ages and Renaissance, the



Garden of Eden was regarded as a symbol of the perfect garden - heaven on earth, - but it needed human intervention to keep it perfect. If the Fall had not happened, man would never have needed or wanted for anything. All would have been provided for him. Parkinson's book shows Adam and Eve in the perfect "heaven on earth" garden, tending the plants and keeping the garden in order.

For Parkinson's readers, the title page of his book portrayed the Garden of Eden as an informal English garden, full of flowers and trees which would have been familiar to them.

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☆ **Saturday 6th February** - Coffee morning, 10am – 12 noon at Soham library. Bring along your items or photos of local historical interest to share with others, or just come along for a chat and a coffee. All are warmly welcomed.

☆ **200+Club** Thank you to everyone who supported us in 2015. The winners for December were:- £10 Glenda Griffiths; £15 Lee Clark; £25 Ben Edwards; £50 Peter Sargeant; £75 David Pope; £100 Jamie Palmer.

Tickets will be on sale for this year in February from Linda Palmer and Lynne Webb. The first draw takes place on the 22nd March.

☆ **Items for the March edition of LodeStar** should be submitted by Saturday, 19th February. E-mails should be sent to peterdscott@btopenworld.com or printed copy left at 22 Sand Street, Soham CB7 5AA.

## PARISH REGISTERS

### Funerals

27th November. Margaret 'Minnie' Betty Harrison (61 years)

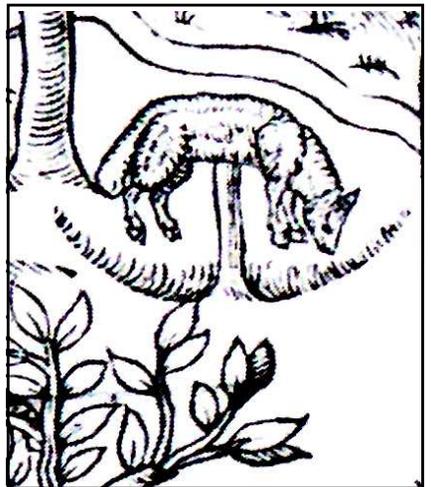
22nd December Bryan George Gooch (86 years)

14th January, 2016 Shirley Josephine Whittleton (81 years)

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It is possible to recognise lilies, daisies, tulips and other well known plants as well as vines and pineapples which the wealthy would have grown in their glasshouses. But in the middle of the picture you can spot a very strange creature. What is that sheep doing on a stem, in the centre of the garden?

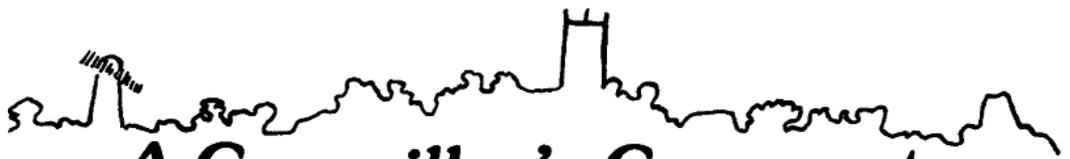
The “vegetable lamb of Tartary” was a legendary plant from Central Asia, once thought to grow sheep from its root. The lamb was believed to have blood, bones and flesh like that of a normal one, but it was connected to the earth by a stem, similar to an umbilical cord. The cord could flex downwards, allowing the creature to feed on the grass around it. However, once that grass had all been eaten, the plant and the sheep died. Once dead, its flesh could be eaten and its blood was said to taste as sweet as honey. There are many versions of the legend and its origins, and it is possible that it derived from a fern with a woolly root, called *Polypodium Barometz*,



whose woolly rhizome, when inverted, might be said to resemble a lamb. The vegetable lamb inspired many writers. The French poet Guillaume de Salluste Du Bartas writing in 1587, summed up its strange and fascinating nature in this poem:

*Oh! Wondrous nature of God only good,  
The beast hath root, the plant hath flesh and blood.  
The nimble plant can turn it to and fro.  
The nummed beast can neither stir nor goe,  
The plant is leafless, branchless, void of fruit,  
The beast is lustless, sexless, fireless, mute:  
The plant with plants his hungry paunch doth feede,  
Th' admired beast is sowed a tender seed.*

No doubt every gardener will have his or her own idea what plants they would like to see (or not see!) in Paradise when they get there. *Christine Gascoigne*



# A Councillor's Comments

At our December Meeting there was no one to take up public comment time.

The District and County Councillors gave us updates on various issues.

Looking at minutes of the November meeting, the chairman referred to the Soham Wicken cycle route, explaining that the Wicken end had been cleared but that the difficulty lies with the 400 metres at the Soham end which is badly rutted and will take a lot of work to make it level.

From Matters Arising a question was raised in the light of all the proposed development whether there was sufficient sewerage capacity. The answer was that we do not know; the local council relies entirely on the higher authorities. So the County Council will be asked to give us an answer.

The main item on the agenda was the decision to be made regarding the Pavilion. The approved plan of the refurbishment had to be reduced because there was not the total amount of money in hand to complete the project. If the Eastern Gateway development had gone ahead there would have been no problem. A revised plan was drawn up and costings made which were presented at this meeting for full council approval. After a period of discussion it was put to the vote and the councillors approved with one against. This plan will now go out to tender.

In our last meeting we discussed the updating of the Commons Byelaws which originally came from the Newmarket Rural District Council. I mentioned that the Lord of the Manor owns all the rights of the commons, and I added that he does not own the land. This was wrong and I apologise for my mistake. *Councillor Ginn*

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## Soham Foodbank Report for 2015

Through the door we had 143 clients who represented 232 adults and 172 children. 547 vouchers were redeemed (566 in 2014).

Of the clients visiting 98 came less than three times of which 58 came only once, there were 14 who came more than ten times and we are aware that they are being dealt with by social services.

We averaged about 10 clients per week with a maximum of 20.

It is difficult to see a pattern in the numbers per week apart from the end of January, the last week of the summer holidays and the two weeks before Christmas. In comparison with 2014 there is not really a predictable pattern to the number of visits. The surrounding villages represent about half the clients with people from as far away as Littleport and Sutton.

We have done a number of home deliveries and also get social workers picking up on behalf of clients.

No particular logistics issues and we have enough volunteers to handle most weeks although twenty clients in one session can make it a bit "busy". There is however a problem with adults without children. Although vouchers are issued by schools and children's centres there is no local support for childless adults in Soham and the surrounding villages and the cost of getting to Ely or accessing support agencies can often be prohibitive.

Donations from the various local Churches, schools and local supermarkets have been very good and Scampers have been exceedingly generous supplying pet food. We did a number of presentations to Rotary Club, Trefoil Guild, School Harvest festivals etc. which may have helped get the message across but there is still quite a lot of misunderstanding about foodbanks. Most of the press and media report urban issues, rural poverty is quite different and does not get much publicity.

We are most grateful to all who have made donations and supported us.

If you would like more details about these issues please ask.

*Howard Laver & Brenda Francis*  
01353 468 626      21 Jan 2016

## SINGING THE GOOD NEWS

Over Christmas we were in good voice in both Soham and Wicken, singing the good news to residents through some enthusiastic carolling. It was great fun for the singers, and those we sang to seemed to enjoy it too.

In Soham, a random but tuneful assortment of people from St Andrew's and the Methodist Churches took carols to Millbrook House, Soham Lodge and Fairhaven residential homes. Thanks to John for organising all these visits, and also to Eric from the Baptist Chapel for playing the organ at Millbrook. We were offered refreshments at all the venues, which was much appreciated, and it was lovely to be welcomed so warmly. There was lots of joining in by residents too, which was great.

Also in Soham, St Andrew's Youth4Life young people went out carol singing round the town one evening. Well done to those who sang, and to Claudia for organising it. And of course we sang carols at St Andrew's at our Christingle service and the traditional candlelit evening of carols and readings.

Meanwhile in Wicken, a temporary choir sang in the carol service at St Laurence's, and then next evening went around the village carolling outside the homes of our older residents, and finally the next evening in the Maid's Head pub. The WILD Choir (Wicken Ill-Disciplined Choir) really enjoyed it and managed to come up with some pretty good three-part harmonies much to its own surprise and pleasure! Thanks to David for having the idea and for organising us.

Doubtless there was lots of other singing going on that I'm not able to report here. I hope that wherever you were you managed to sing some carols and hear the reminder of God's completely unexpected and mind-blowing choice to come and live with us - to get down and dirty with us. Emmanuel, God-With-Us. It really is good news, and a breath of light, hope and fresh air in our often frantic world. *Helen Randall*

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### LodeStar Deliverer

We are looking for someone who would be willing to deliver LodeStar in Hall Street and Gimbert Close. This would entail delivery of sixteen copies for the ten months of February to July and September to December. Please contact Sylvia Hobbs on 01353 720968 if you can help us in this way, or would like further details.

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#### Churches Together in Soham

Lent Groups 2016

# Living Honestly with the Psalms

**Beginning week commencing 15 February**

**Mondays: 7.30pm at 31 Aspen Way**

**Thursdays: 10.45am in St Andrew's  
Church meeting room**

**Thursdays: 7.30pm at 42 Gimbert Road**

For more details contact:

Colin Watkins  
01353 720347

Ruth Dennigan  
01353 725152

[colin.watkins@methodist.org.uk](mailto:colin.watkins@methodist.org.uk) [ruthdennigan@talktalk.net](mailto:ruthdennigan@talktalk.net)

# Just a few words

Ruth Dennigan

Dear friends,

Although Christmas doesn't seem that long ago, 10 February brings us into the forty-day season of Lent. Forty days is a period of time used on several occasions in the Bible when people prepared for a significant event, and Lent commemorates the forty days spent by Jesus in the wilderness after his baptism as he prepared for his ministry.

At one time Lent was widely observed within the Christian Church. Traditionally it was marked by prayer, fasting and Bible study, and was used as a period of preparation before a new Christian was baptised. It was a time to reflect, to take stock of one's life, to repent (as in, to turn around, to make changes to the direction of one's life). Over time the observance of Lent has diminished, but where it is marked this 'taking stock' has become a custom for all Christians, not just those preparing for baptism. For many, the practice of 'giving something up for Lent' has been replaced by the intention to 'do something different' which will help to develop their faith and grow their relationship with God.

This 'doing something different' can take many forms. Committing to daily reflective readings for the duration of Lent, reading the Archbishop's recommended Lent book (this year's is 'I am with you', by Kathryn Greene-McCreight, Bloomsbury Continuum 2015), going on a retreat or quiet day, giving time to volunteer to a project in the local community, donating to a local foodbank, taking action towards lifestyle changes to combat climate change (<http://www.christianecology.org.uk/nine-ways.pdf>)... all are ways of growing as disciples. The 'Do Lent Generously' campaign (<http://www.40acts.org.uk/>) gives daily challenges to enable participants to live differently during Lent; it is possible to dip in and out of this, or to sign up to the challenges, either as an individual or as a group. All-age resources related to this are provided by <http://godventure.co.uk> in their 'Exploring Generosity' resource.

Another possibility is to attend a Lent course as part of a small group. This year Churches Together in Soham are running three groups studying 'Living Honestly with the Psalms'. Historically the psalms have been a central part of worship, but now they are often forgotten, or used on a cycle without really considering what they are saying. But the psalms are written out of the extremes of human emotion, providing a rich language to help us to express our joys and sorrows, desires and pain, in the context of our relationship with God. This year's course will give us the opportunity to reflect on the range of human emotions found in the psalms. For more information contact me (01353 725152 or [ruthdennigan@talktalk.net](mailto:ruthdennigan@talktalk.net)) or Colin Watkins (01353 720347 or [colin.watkins@methodist.org.uk](mailto:colin.watkins@methodist.org.uk)), or see the poster in Church.

Forty days to 'do something different' ....  
So, what will you do this Lent?

*Ruth Dennigan,  
Licensed Lay Minister, Soham & Wicken*  
Book Review: "I Am With You" by Kathryn Greene-McCreight (Bloomsbury Continuum, London 2015)

Designated as the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent Book for 2016, this book primarily reflects on God's presence in the world as light. Portraying a God who is different from any other concept of God, the author reflects on God's desire for personal relationship with his creation, and on what this means for us.

