
Services at the Parish Church	<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

“WHEN DID WE VISIT THOSE IN PRISON?”

This month many people in Soham have been getting involved in support for “those in prison”. They haven’t been visiting them in person, but they’ve been thinking about them, praying for them, and showing concern. How? Through practical help for the forthcoming Kairos Week at HMP Whitemoor, the maximum security men’s prison at March.

Remember those words of Jesus in one of his parables about the final judgement of mankind? The one about the ‘sheep and the goats’ in Matthew 25? A king is judging the people at the end of life and he commends the ones (the ‘sheep’) who, in their lifetime, had shown practical concern for him when he’d gone through hard times. These people ask him, in astonishment, when had they done that? Here’s his reply in verses 35-40: “I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me ... Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” Meanwhile, the ‘goats’ were the ones who either didn’t notice others’ needs, or saw the need but didn’t do anything about it.

I’ve been part of three Kairos Weeks at Whitemoor in recent years, so I’ve literally ‘visited those in prison’, and it’s been a great privilege to do so. The whole experience has been moving, uplifting and encouraging and I’ve met some great people – other volunteers, the Prison Chapel staff, and most importantly the prisoners who have participated in the Kairos events. I could write pages about conversations had and lives changed, but that would break confidence and take too much space! Suffice it to say that I’ve seen people transformed, burdens lifted, behaviour changed, broken family relationships beginning to be mended ... every man I’ve seen participate has said they’ve learnt something and grown through it. Some have come to a new, deepened, or rediscovered faith, and some have even gone on to be baptised later. Others have concluded that they don’t want to subscribe to the Christian faith but still say they’ve learnt something about God through Kairos, and that they’ve experienced love and trust – these are tough and rare feelings to find or sustain in a high security prison.

Kairos realises that not many people have the free time or capacity to volunteer on a Kairos Week and actually visit, so it welcomes involvement in lots of other practical ways. Think of it as ‘virtual visiting’, perhaps!!! Churches right across East Anglia get stuck in, and this year we’ve been part of it. The most important thing we can all do is pray for the Kairos event. But we’ve also been making posters to send the men our thoughts and prayers, decorated placemats that will liven up mealtimes and may include little messages of support or faith, and decorated envelopes which will be used to present the letters of encouragement each participant receives from the team members.

And last but by no means least we are cookie baking. Kairos needs about 9,000 home-made cookies for each Week it goes into the prison, so each region offers to make a certain number. In the Ely area we’re contributing several hundred, of which 100+ will come from Soham. They’re all made to approved recipes and standard sizes, and on 2nd October are collected up and taken to a regional packing place, to make packets of 8 biscuits (three different flavours) stamped ‘hand made with love from Kairos’.

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Iron Man

I am proud to say that I am married to an Iron Man – no not Robert Downey Junior but Ivor Evans who became an Iron Man by swimming 2.4 miles, cycling 112 miles and then running a marathon in just under 15 hours!

Ivor took up long distance running in his early forties and ran his first marathon in Stockholm in 2008. He has run several marathons and half marathons since then, mostly completing his marathons in around four and a half hours. No threat to the elite runners then but gaining a sense of achievement and keeping fit. He then wanted to add some variety to his exercise regime so decided to try his hand at triathlons. Triathlons come in various distances but all involve a swim, then bike, then run. Just one problem for him was that he could only swim breast stroke but you really need to swim front crawl over a long distance. So he booked himself in for private swimming lessons and then a lesson in open water swimming with a borrowed wet suit.

In 2013 he entered his first Olympic Distance Triathlon at the Excel Centre in East London. That involved swimming 1500m (a mile) in the Royal Victoria Dock, then 25 miles on the bike into central London and back and a 10km (6 mile) run. He did a fairly slow time but the tri bug had bitten and he improved over the next few races.

Then in the autumn of last year he and a friend from work talked each other into entering an Iron Man in Maastricht in the Netherlands thinking it would be an easy one because it would be flat. Only later did they realise that the area around Maastricht where they would be cycling is actually quite hilly! They began training in earnest at the beginning of the year. Ivor was soon doing



some kind of training - swimming, cycling, running or building strength in the gym - almost every day or sometimes twice a day. Weekends disappeared as he would go for a long run or swim on Saturday followed by a bike ride on Sunday which increased in length until he was cycling over 100 miles around Cambridgeshire and Suffolk. At the beginning of the training I was worried that he would either drown or collapse with a heart attack at the end of the marathon! However I could see his fitness improving and he had at least swum just over 2 miles in a swimming event so I began to think he might just make it in one piece.

We travelled to Maastricht a couple of days before the event in time for registration, pre-race briefings etc and then on the day itself got up at 4am, ate a packed breakfast and set off for the starting line. They had to line up according to the time they thought they would do on the swim and then went into the water one at a time. (They all wear a timing chip on their ankle which gives them the time that they take from when they go into the water.) They had to swim just over a mile up the River Maas (Meuse) before turning and coming back. Open water swimming isn't the best spectator sport - everyone is in a black wet suit, goggles and identical swimming cap and is too far away to see their face so you have no idea who is who - but I did manage to spot him coming out.

He then ran back to the transition area to get his bike and I went off to do some sightseeing before waiting for him to come through town at the end of his first lap of 56 miles. He came past just ahead of the lead woman but she was on her second lap and would have finished her marathon before Ivor even started his! A few more hours later he finished the bike ride at about 5pm and then set off on the run while I took a short cut to my vantage point on the run course at a point where they ran past in both directions on four laps of a six and a bit mile course. There was a great atmosphere there as there was a band playing outside one of three bars and lots of people to cheer the runners on. I spotted Ivor's friend who had started his run an hour ahead of Ivor but was now half running and half walking but bent double! *[continued on next page*



☆ **200+club winners for September were:** £5 Shirley Woods; £10 Mrs. P. Day; £15 James Palmer; £25 Mr. B. Seal

☆ **Soham Phoenix Club** meets on the 2nd Wednesday of the month from 9.30-11.30 at the Causeway Community Centre, The Causeway, Soham. The speaker for our next meeting on the 12th October will be Nora Gardner with 'The Empty Vessel' and on 9th November we will be having a fashion show hosted by Edinburgh Wools. So ladies - please come along for tea /coffee, biscuits, a raffle and speaker all for £3 (we are a friendly bunch). Any queries please feel free to phone me - Kathy Clarke on 01353 725369 or 07783994246

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

Ceilidh

Soham and Wicken churches' Harvest Ceilidh will be held on Sat 15 October in Wicken Village Hall from 6.30pm. Music will be provided by folk band, The Cyriacs. During a break from dancing, there will be an Auction of Harvest Produce. A ploughman's supper is included in the ticket price. Tea and coffee will be available, and free soft drinks. There will also be a raffle. Please bring your dancin' shoes! Tickets from Jo 01353 723452, Fiona 01353 725143 or Robert 01353 720971. £10 per adult. Children under 16 free.

Soham Winter Fayre

This year's Soham Winter Fayre is on Friday 25th November in and around St Andrew's Church. Santa will be visiting and there will be entertainment, food and craft stalls. If you would like a stall inside the church, please contact: alison.evans7@btopenworld.com or ring 07738 877765. We are asking for £10 plus a donation for our raffle. For a stall or pitch outside please contact the Soham Heritage and Tourism Group via their website <http://sohamhtg.co.uk/contact-us/>



PARISH REGISTERS



FUNERALS

6th September Kenneth (Ken) Ames (92 years)

WEDDINGS

2nd September Lee Foster Maughan & Anna Rachel Ackroyd

17th September Bastiaan Alaine Nootboom & Sarah Louise Paines

WEDDING BLESSING (25 yrs)

3rd September Giles Edward Fuller & Susan Ann Fuller

[continued from previous page]

It turned out that he hadn't really done any running since injuring a knee a few years before and had been planning to power walk but had got fired up by the crowd cheering and broken into a run only to pull something in his back. He did make it round though and definitely had the sympathy vote from the crowds! As Ivor went past at the beginning of his last lap I headed back to the town centre for the finish in time to see both of them cross the line and be told "You are an Iron Man".

If you are inspired by this or by watching the Brownlee brothers and Vicky Holland and Non Stanford in the Olympics there are Tri Clubs in both Ely and Cambridge where you can get advice and encouragement and numerous short triathlons (Sprint and Supersprint) that you could try your hand at. Often the short races hold the swimming part in a pool rather than open water so you don't need a wetsuit.

Alison Evans

St Felix and the Soham connection

From LodeStar for July 1996

In the seventh century, Soham or Seham - “the home by the mere” - was a frontier settlement, right on the disputed boundary between the two Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of East Anglia and Mercia. The king of the East Angles in AD 630 was Sigbert, described by the Venerable Bede as “a devout Christian and a man of learning”. Dismayed by the paganism into which the kingdom had lapsed, he sent to Archbishop Honorius of Canterbury for help in spreading the Gospel.

Honorius had just the man at Canterbury - Felix, a Burgundian who had trained for the priesthood in Gaul before coming to England as a missionary. Felix was ordained Bishop of East Anglia, where he laboured for the next 17 years, “reaping a rich harvest of souls” as Bede tells us. He set up his episcopal seat at “Dommoc”, which is usually identified with Dunwich in Suffolk (although some place it at Walton Castle, near Felixstowe).

But there is a long tradition which says he established a second religious foundation at Soham. The sole source for this is the Liber Eliensis, an Ely chronicle written by monks in about 1170, which mentions a church and monastery founded by Felix at “Seham”. After the death of Sigbert, Anna became king in East Anglia. He continued to support Felix’s work. Indeed, Anna may have been fairly local to Soham, since his daughter Etheldreda was said to have been born at Exning, and very possibly she was baptised by Felix. She would certainly have had the Soham foundation in mind when, 23 years after the death of Felix, she founded the Abbey of Ely.

Felix died in AD 647, on 8 March. His body was removed from Dunwich and interred at Soham. According to a later tradition, however, as the ravages of the Danes increased a monk called Etheric removed his relics from Soham to Ramsey Abbey. As the Ramsey monks rowed across Soham Mere, it is said that they were pursued by a boatload of monks from Ely, intent on making away with the precious relics. Just as the Ely boat was closing, the brilliant sunshine suddenly changed to a dense fog, and the Ramsey party was able to elude pursuit and bring the saint’s remains safely back to the abbey, where they were solemnly reinterred by Abbot Ethelston.

It is likely that Soham, within Felix’s lifetime, became a centre of light and learning in the Fens. One of its pupils, Thomas, a native of the Gywrrwas - a name applied to the whole of the “Black Fens” - succeeded Felix as Bishop of East Anglia.

The Danes, under Inguar and Ubloa, sacked East Anglia in 870 and Soham Abbey was destroyed - indeed, not a single Saxon church in the region survived the Danish attack. Ely was also razed to the ground, but was later rebuilt. Soham never was. By the time of the Domesday Book, the town’s sole prominence was as an eel fishery.

There is no monument to St Felix in Soham.* His tomb, like so much else, was lost at the dissolution of Ramsey Abbey. Even his episcopal seat of Dunwich now lies under the waves. The true memorial to St Felix is more lasting: it lies in the continued preaching of the Gospel which he first brought to the East Anglians.

Sue Davies

* *The wall painting in the Chancel of St Andrew’s Church is of a Bishop, thought to be St Felix. Timothy Clark recently facilitated the restoration of this painting and a detailed account of St Felix is included on an accompanying poster.*

A Seaside Holiday.

by Pippa Giles

The sun pulled me out of my house,
shouting to me to come to the beach.

The ice-cream asked me out,
though I eat it.

As I swam the sea pushed me under,
and pushed me off my body board.

I wore my flip flops in the sea,
but they swam away.

The golden sand burned my feet, like lava.



School Report

Dr Carin Taylor



The school year has started again and, with an almost audible click, body clocks are restored to school-time and work routines are established in homes across the town. Soham Village College has admitted an unprecedented number of students into year 7, over three hundred, and we wish every one of them happiness and success doing their time at secondary school.

The familiarity of school timetables, of rugby and netball fixtures, rehearsals for the next school production; lessons and homework remain constant through the years. Dig a bit deeper and schools are managing quite a bit of change. New assessment systems in primary and secondary schools, revised curriculum and altered exam specifications have provided teachers with plenty to do! We hope that pupils will quickly become masters of the changes but suspect that for parents and grandparents it might appear rather more confusing, especially where older siblings or cousins have experienced a slightly different system.

Underneath the change, the essentials remain unaltered. Good attendance at school remains crucial to good results; hard work started in good time, and not the night before, is what determines outcomes. Every child benefits from encouragement, praise and high aspiration. This has to be within the home but there is no limit to the people or places where that support can be found. As the African proverb reminds us, it takes a whole village to raise a child. Children are a blessing to a community and while our young people face new challenges and changes, it is the constant and consistent support of the community around them which enable the child to grow and to thrive.

[continued from front page]

These are given to every prisoner and member of staff at the jail, and any spares are used for coffee breaks during the Kairos week. Back at the time of Kairos #1 we found that people were initially sceptical, especially the staff, but now we're recognised as 'the cookie people' and welcomed in! The men are especially touched. A moving moment one Kairos Week was seeing a prisoner drop his cookie packet as he queued up to be 'patted down' and exit the Chapel to return to his cell at the end of the day – the biscuits broke and he was understandably crestfallen. But the other prisoners around him in the queue rallied round and all offered him some of their own so that he could still take away a packet of cookies. That's not the kind of caring and sharing you'd normally find in this kind of place... Love in action. The men playing their own part in seeing a need and meeting it – as per the sheep and goats parable.

So a huge thank you to all of you who've been involved, especially Jan Frost for co-ordinating it in Soham, and to Mothers' Union, Youth4Life, Creative Minds, the Scouts and anyone else I've missed mentioning. I hope you've enjoyed getting involved.

And what does Kairos mean, you may be wondering? It's an international Christian organisation which grew out of the Cursillo method of discipleship, and is designed specially for prison. It encourages prisoners to make friends with God then nurture that friendship through prayer, study and action, and gives opportunities for developing forgiveness and church fellowship. Kairos is a Greek word, roughly meaning 'the right time for something', so Kairos trusts that its encounters with prisoners will bring a touch of faith, love and new beginnings, all in God's timing. If you want to know more there's a website: kairosprisonministry.org.uk. There's also an international Kairos website (same web address but without the '.uk' on the end) which has some videos of personal stories.

Please do pray for Kairos #6 at Whitemoor on Mon 10th to Fri 14th Oct 2016. Prayers welcome for: the preparation beforehand; the volunteer team and the 18 men who attend as participants; and Whitemoor Prison Chapel and its staff (who compile the participant list, stay mostly in the background during the Kairos Week, but then take on the follow-up support). *Helen Randall*

Just a few words

Ruth Dennigan

Dear friends,

My favourite place to be is by the sea – given the choice, by the sea on the Gower in south Wales – but really any sea will do, especially if there are decent waves to watch, and no land in sight on the horizon. I love the “bigness” of it; somehow it seems to help put everything into perspective.

*There's a wideness in God's mercy like the wideness of the sea;
there's a kindness in His justice which is more than liberty.* (F.W.Faber)

This is one of my favourite hymns. Frederick Faber, who wrote it, was an Anglican priest who converted to Roman Catholicism in 1845 and then wrote many hymns as a way of rectifying the lack of English language hymns in the Roman Catholic Church at that time. We often think of “mercy” as “leniency”, as not being as harsh as is deserved. The biblical idea of mercy, however, is of the compassion and loving-kindness that brings healing and wholeness. What an amazing picture, then, to think of the wideness of God's mercy as being like the wideness of the sea: a healing compassion that is far-reaching and abundant. How often do we picture God in this way? How can doing so change our perspective on God, the world, life and ourselves?

*For the love of God is broader than the measure of our mind;
and the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind.*

*But we make His love too narrow by false limits of our own;
and we magnify His strictness with a zeal He will not own.*

Concepts of God often focus on rules rather than on God's loving nature. However, Jesus taught and demonstrated an all-embracing love which often conflicted with the accepted religious rules of the day, and could be said to do the same today. Could it be that all too often people's encounters with “the Church” are characterised by a run-in with a strict morality that comes from us rather than God?

*If our love were but more simple, we should take Him at His word,
and our lives would be all gladness in the joy of Christ our Lord.*

Perhaps this is a good time to stop and recall that God loves us, and simply calls us to love Him back. No catch.

Ruth Dennigan, Licensed Lay Minister, Soham and Wicken

Instead of a book review, this month an advert for an up-coming lecture series at Wesley Church, Christ's Pieces, Cambridge, CB1 1LG:

“Science Meets Faith”

7.15 for 7.45pm on the second Monday of each month from October – June.

Monday 10 October 2016: Evolution and Ethics: Is There a Conflict?

Dr. Peter Woodford (Templeton World Charity Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow in Theology, Philosophy of Religion, and the Sciences, University of Cambridge)

Many discussions of evolution assume that there is a deep conflict between moral judgments and the view that humans originated out of a process of evolution by natural selection. The talk will challenge this conception and show that both developments in the sciences and arguments from philosophy pose strong challenges to the “selfish gene” conception of evolution. The talk will discuss major achievements of the evolutionary view of life, as well as challenges that lie ahead—one of which continues to be the explanation of morality.