
Services at the Parish Church	<i>1st Sunday</i>	10.00 am	Morning Praise
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 All Age Eucharist



Lent in Soham and Wicken

Churches Together in Soham and Wicken will be running a number of special services and activities for Lent, Holy Week and Easter. Details below:

Ash Wednesday

14 February, 7.30pm Holy Communion with Imposition of Ashes. (everyone has their foreheads marked with an ash cross as a symbol and reminder of our mortality.

Lent Course

‘Come and See’: Friendly and relaxed groups will be following this course devised by the Diocese of Ely which will help us explore John’s Gospel using art and Bible readings. Groups will meet weekly for 5 weeks between 19 February and 23 March. Groups work best if their members come to all the sessions, but if you need to miss the odd week, or dip into another group once in a while, that will be fine. Here are the groups on offer:

- **Tuesdays 10am** at 5 Mill Croft, Soham, CB7 5AP
- **Wednesdays 7.30pm** at the Vicarage, 27 The Oaks, Soham, CB7 5FF (except on 14 March, which will be at The Methodist Manse, 31 Aspen Way, Soham CB7 5ZQ)
- **Wednesdays 7.30pm** at 39 High Street, Wicken CB7 5XR
- **Thursdays 11am** at St Andrew’s Church, Soham
- **Thursdays 7.30pm** at 9 Qua Fen Common, Soham, CB7 5DH

Lent Lunches

Enjoy a simple lunch of soup with bread and cheese hosted by Churches Together in Soham. Donations to Christian Aid.

From 12noon -1.30pm on Fridays: 23 February, 9, 16 and 23 March (No lunch on 2nd March) at the Methodist Church Hall, Berrycroft, Soham

Taizé Service

Thursday 1 March, 7.30pm at St Andrew’s, Soham

A quiet, reflective service including singing, readings, silences and candle-lighting.

Viva News

Viva Theatre Company Present: Bazaar and Rummage

A darkly comic play by Sue Townsend, author of *The Adrain Mole Diaries*

Gwenda, an ex-agoraphobic, leads a self-help group of three who have been unable to leave their homes for a variety of reasons. She forces them to help at a local bazaar, enlisting the support of Fliss, a trainee social-worker. While sorting through the rummage their individual fears erupt but calm is restored by the ever-sensible Fliss. As they leave the hall it is apparent their agoraphobia is not cured but they have made the effort.

Dates	8,9,10 February 2018 at 7.30pm
Venue	The Brook Entertainment Centre
Address	46 Brook St, Soham, Cambridgeshire CB7 5AD
Tickets	£12.50
Box Office	01353 722228 / vivayouth@hotmail.co.uk
Weblink	www.wegotickets.com
Age Guidance	14+. Contains some strong language and sensitive issues.

Hairspray the Musical

Music by Marc Shaiman, lyrics by Scott Wittman and Shaiman and a book by Mark O'Donnell and Thomas Meehan, based on the 1988 John Waters film Hairspray.



hairspray

7,8,9,10 March, 7.30pm at The Brook Entertainment Centre.
Tickets £12.50 and £10.50 (under 12's)
Box Office: 01353 722228 / vivayouth@hotmail.co.uk
Weblink: www.wegotickets.com

Viva Mill Project

As you may know, Viva has purchased a historic, disused saw mill in Soham (between Mereside and the railway) to create a home for Viva for evermore and establish an arts and community centre for the whole of Soham - the only one of its kind in the district!

The building would host a range of community and arts groups and activities and would be available for the whole community. The facility will be used by young and old with a wide range of activities on offer. The facility will also host school holiday activity clubs, parties and celebrations, film nights, quiz nights and regular whole-community social events.

However, more money is needed to make this dream a reality!

Please give what you can at <https://localgiving.org/appeal/vivamill> and remember to Gift Aid if you are a taxpayer!

Perhaps you or someone you know can donate time / skills / materials / equipment or professional services - if so please email vivayouth@hotmail.co.uk.

THANK YOU



☆ **Winners of the St Andrew's 200+Club** for December: £10 - Phil Logan; £15 - Nick Pope; £25 - John Laycock; £50 - Emily Sargeant; £75 - Brenda Rose; £100 - Jamie Rutter.

Thank you to everyone who supported the 200+Club in 2017. Tickets will be on Sale for 2018 from early February from Linda Palmer and Lynne Webb.

☆ **Soham Museum Coffee Mornings** – First Saturday of each month at Soham Library, 10am – 12 noon. Bring along any items or photos of local historical interest you may have, or just join us for a chat and coffee, All welcome.

☆ **Soham Museum/Soham History Group presents on 1st March at 7.30pm:** David Smith: Fen Skating – Talk & Film at the Methodist Church Hall, Berrycroft. £2.50 admission, members free.

☆ **Twilight Tuesday** are a modern WI with an emphasis on having fun and building a community for women to support each other. More cake and prosecco than Jam and Jerusalem! We meet on the 2nd Tuesday of the month in the conservatory of The Fountain Inn, Soham from 7.30pm onwards - 13th February: rock painting.

☆ **Items for the March edition of LodeStar** should be submitted by Wednesday 14th February. Please send material to alison.evans7@btopenworld.com.

Neighbourhood Cares

Neighbourhood Cares is a project which aims to help people over 18 to find the support they need locally to help them live independently.

Starting in Feb, every first Wednesday of the month, we're inviting all local residents to come along for Coffee & Cake at the Library 10am - 12pm. Please join us for a chat, a cuppa & to find out local info. Partners include; Library, Scams Awareness, Police (Crime Reduction), Let's Get Moving, Royal British Legion, Alzheimer's Society and of course, Neighbourhood Cares!

We will continue to hold our regular weekly Drop in sessions on Wednesdays 10am - 2pm (with just our Neighbourhood Cares Team hosting)

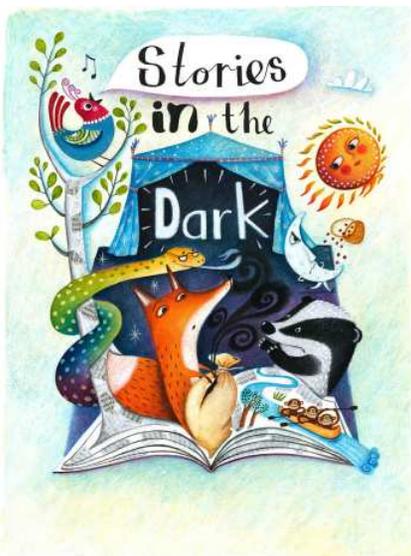
Soham Library

Stories in the Dark: Thursday 15th February
Performance times - 10am, 12pm and 2pm
Soham Library, 7 Clay Street, Soham, CB7 5HJ
Tickets: £4 per person (refreshments inclusive in the price) Recommended for children aged 2-5yrs and their family. Running time: 50 minutes.

Dive inside the magical story tent and find out who stole the darkness, and why the sun and the moon are high in the sky. With twinkling lights, vibrant colours and just an exciting touch of darkness, the story tent provides the perfect storytelling adventure for 2- 5 year olds. Explore the magic of the dark in a delightfully safe place. One of the smallest theatres in the world! Only 15 people at any one time (including adults), young children will have the chance to join in with the story, to talk and to play. A charmingly unforgettable family experience.

Purchase tickets from Soham Library or online at:

<https://www.cambridgelivetrust.co.uk/tickets/events/library-presents-stories-dark>



PARISH REGISTERS

Funerals

29 November	Hubert Stuart Palmer (aged 91 years)
12 December	Joan Botting (aged 88 years)
21 December	Geoffrey Moore (aged 70 years)
5 January	Herbert 'John' O'Dell (aged 81 years)
11 January	Doris Mary 'Dot' Palmer (aged 91 years)
19 January	Clifford Jaggard (aged 81 years)

Weddings and Baptisms at St Andrew's

We are always happy to receive enquiries concerning Weddings and Baptisms (Baptisms are also known as Christenings). Please contact Revd Eleanor Whalley, our vicar, in the first instance. The vicarage number is 01353 725948 and the email sohamwickenvicar@gmail.com.

You can find more information about Weddings and Baptisms in St Andrew's on our website <http://www.sohamandwicken.org.uk/weddings-and-baptisms>

It is also well worth visiting these Church of England websites, which have lots of useful information on them:

For weddings go to <https://www.yourchurchwedding.org/>

For baptisms go to <https://www.churchofenglandchristenings.org/>

Bread Basket

The next monthly breakfast cafe at St Andrew's Church is on Saturday 17th February from 10am – 12noon.

All are welcome for a continental style breakfast washed down with a hot drink for just £1.50.



Messy Church and Little Fishes

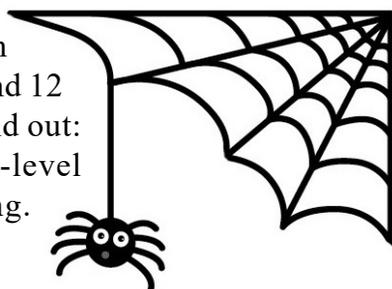


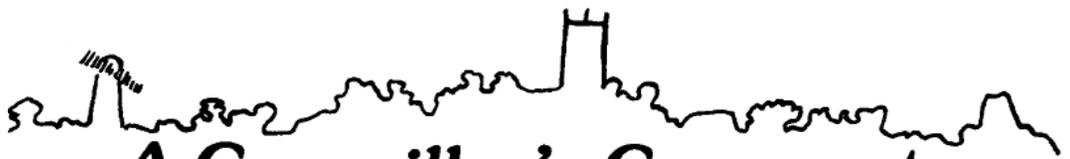
Messy Church dates for this term are Tuesday 6th February and 6th March from 3.15 – 5pm. Messy Church sessions include craft activities for children, a Bible story and a hot meal. Adults accompany their children. Everyone is welcome and it's free!

Little Fishes meets in church every Tuesday in term-time from 1.00pm until 2.30pm. All babies & preschool children are welcome (with their grown-ups). Singing, sticking, snacks & chat ...

Church Clean-up!

What better way to focus the mind and soul for Lent than to join in our 'all hands on deck' church clean-up on Saturday 3 March between 10am and 12 noon? There's lots to get on with both inside and out: scraping moss off masonry, clearing ground-level gullies, dusting, polishing and decobwebbing. Something for everyone! Pop the date in your diaries now. Thank you! *Eleanor*





A Councillor's Comments

December

I was not able to be present at the December meeting of the council, but I was able to gather the main points from the meeting. As you will recall the council had a vacancy to fill, and this came up before this meeting and Cian Horman was elected as councillor.

The Eastern Gateway was on the agenda for an update, and the answer was given that the project is suspended for at least six months.

The District Councillors are looking at setting up a day centre at Millbrooke House.

And the final point was that two of the trees on the Recreation Ground are diseased and require removal. But plans are being put in place to replace them.

George Ginn

January

Due to technical issues we don't have George Ginn's comments for the January meeting but have taken the following from the Soham Town Council Facebook page:

At the full Council meeting on Monday the precept for 2018-19 was agreed. We agreed to increase the Town Council's part of the Council Tax by 3.5%. This amounts to an annual payment for a Band D house of £82.44 or an increase of 5.4p a week. We decided to increase this by this amount because we have a lot of projects to pay for in the coming year in addition to the usual day to day work which we need to carry out.

N.B. This only refers to the Town Council part of the Council Tax and doesn't include the amounts for the County Council, District Council, Fire Service and Police.

Love on the Rocks, Soham

Have you seen painted pebbles around the town lately and wondered what they are? I'm not sure if you've heard of the Kindness Rocks project, but it's the reason why people are painting rocks in the first place (besides the fact that it's just fun to do). The idea behind the painted rocks is that you will decorate them and place them in locations for others to find as a "random act of kindness."

Many places are doing this now. So if you find one in Soham you are welcome to keep it or you can log your find on the Love on the Rocks Soham page on Facebook and then re-hide your find or even make some of your own to find. Just be careful not to place them somewhere that would be dangerous for children; small children should of course be accompanied by adults.



A View from the Vicarage



Taking a break

Imagine the scene: exhausted vicar staggers to the shops three days after Christmas (there's a limit to how long you can survive on beans on toast...). The reduced-price tinsel and Santas have long gone, but set out in ranks in their place are... horror of horrors... CHOCOLATE BUNNIES!!

Contrary to what the High Street might suggest, there is – thank goodness – a built-in space between Christmas and Easter; a space we church-goers call Lent. This year, Lent begins on 14 February; there'll be a Communion service at St Andrew's at 7.30 on Ash Wednesday evening. Lent isn't usually seen as a time to take a break, and yet, in one sense, it is. At the end of a school assembly last Wednesday, a child came up to me and asked 'Why do Christians not eat meat for 40 days before Easter?' She was talking about some Christians, not all Christians, of course, but the equally important point to be explained was that, traditionally, Lent is a time of going without. Going without not as an end in itself – there's no sense in self-denial for its own sake – but rather as training in self-discipline, and also to make the celebration of Easter that much more profound when, eventually, it comes.

For some of us, space will be something we long for; for others, taking – or making – a break will need courage. Once we clear a space, who knows what might attempt to fill the void? In the New Testament accounts of Jesus' time in the wilderness, the '40 days' which give Lent its shape, Jesus is 'driven' there by the Spirit (cf. Mark 1: 12). Once he's arrived, both temptations and angels come his way. When the extraneous trappings of life have been removed, what's left appears in its true colours: good things and bad things are revealed for what they are.

In Old Testament times, according to a tradition maintained by the Bedouin to this day, newly married couples in the near East were packed off to the desert as a necessary corollary to their nuptials, their camels laden with all they would need for time spent as just the two of them, otherwise alone in the wilderness. This break, this removal, this abstention from all that was familiar was a time not of threat but of intimacy; a time when heart could speak to heart; a time when what lay in the depths of in the heart had the space to be voiced and to be heard. This is the custom which lies behind God's words to the prophet Hosea. God tells Hosea his plans for Israel: 'I am going to lure her, and lead her out into the wilderness, and speak to her heart' (Hosea 2: 16). Israel has been unfaithful, but the desert is a place where relationships can be restored and renewed.

Our budget won't stretch to trips to the desert, but at St Andrew's and as Churches Together more widely, we are offering what opportunities we can for space and a break with routine this Lent. Lent groups give a chance for reflection with others; there'll be a Taizé service in St Andrew's on Thursday 1 March at 7.30pm, a simple service comprising singing, silence, readings and candle-lighting – come and join in, or sit in on it and let it all wash over you. If nothing else, feel free to drop into St Andrew's any time in the week. We aim to keep the church open from about 9.15am until dusk every day: the latch is a bit stiff, but once you're through the door, the stillness – when nothing else is going on – is palpable. And there won't be a chocolate bunny in sight (at least not until Easter Sunday). With my faithful prayers for you all, *Eleanor*

*The Revd. Eleanor Whalley, Priest in Charge of Soham and Wicken
sohamwickenvicar@gmail.com 01353 725948*