

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 All Age Eucharist

St Andrew's Restoration Appeal

Anyone who's walked through St Andrew's churchyard during these last few months can't have failed to notice the fencing round the tower. The tower's surface is crumbling and there is a risk of stones falling off and landing on the heads of people walking below. The whole surface is affected, and repairs will cost a fortune. In parallel with this, more general restoration work needs doing: the whole building needs a new roof, and we have a long-standing problem with blocked gutters and downpipes. Because water can't get out, it's seeping in, threatening yet more problems. A very significant contributory factor to these blockages is pigeons: we need to take steps to break their cycle of roosting.



Reading through 'St Andrew's Church History', I smiled at the note that in 1502, £3 was left for the tower's repair. The current estimate for the total building repair cost is £1.5 million. Oh to be back in the 1500s!

Such astronomical sums of money are, of course, entirely beyond the means of most of us parishioners, and the scale of both the restoration and fundraising efforts means professional expertise is required for us to make the necessary headway. To this end, two experienced members of Ely Diocese's Church Buildings Department are helping us put together what we hope will be the first of two bids to the Heritage Lottery Fund, and I am in near constant communication with our (excellent, thank goodness) church architect. The success of our Heritage Lottery Fund bids will depend – quite rightly – on our being able to demonstrate that the good repair of the church building will benefit the wider community of Soham rather than just church-goers, so associated conversations have begun.

Since the fencing went up, people have asked what they can do to help with the Restoration Appeal. Thank you so much for your concern and eagerness to help. Some of you have made donations – thank you so much once again – and others have sent ideas for things church members might do to help bring in funds. Grateful though we are for these ideas, you will understand, I know, that for the moment at least the limited time and energy I and the church council have available needs to be spent on preparing these Heritage Lottery Fund bids. It is certain, however, that even if the bids are successful, they will not cover the total cost of building work, so we will, in time, re-visit your ideas for fundraising.

In the meantime, whilst I personally haven't the headspace for anything else at present, donations to our Restoration Appeal and any fundraising activities any of you might like to put on in support of that Appeal would always be most welcome. A restricted fund has been set up for donations: donations will be used solely for restoration work. Cheques should be made payable to Soham PCC Development Fund, and bank details are:

Account name: Soham PCC Development Fund
Sort Code: 20-29-68
Account No.: 60786128

Thank you for your ongoing prayers and support. *Eleanor*

School Report

Dr Carin Taylor



One of my favourite images of recent weeks has been that of a Reception Class pupil from The Weatheralls applying yellow paint to the hand of a very game resident at Millbrook House. Both exhibit an air of relaxed concentration in what must have been a most unfamiliar experience! This was one of many happy activities at Millbrook House on a Friday afternoon when ten four year olds took part in an inter-generational project organised by Neighbourhood Cares and the charity, Care Network Cambridgeshire. The fun included bug hunting and parachute games too.

There are many heart-warming images and stories which have emerged as a result of this project but the yellow painted hand, in a week where the news was full of our dangerous obsession with social media, underlined for me the importance of face to face contact.

I have never been on Facebook and have actually sometimes regretted it when wider family news reaches me more slowly than it does others, but I can admit to spending much time on my phone and finding it an endless source of news, work email and bulletins from my grown up children as they go about their daily lives. The connectedness and flexibility of our mobile devices enhances our lives, but our social media can sometimes become more compelling than the human beings in the same room. Phones and Facebook cannot replace face to face speaking and listening.

There is nothing children (of any age) hate more than the feeling that no one is listening to them properly. Sometimes it is hard to leave aside distractions and general weariness to be a good listener, but it is so important we create more space in our lives actually look at our family, our colleagues and our friends as they tell stories and share news. Otherwise we might miss a vital non-verbal clue: what are they *really* trying to tell us?

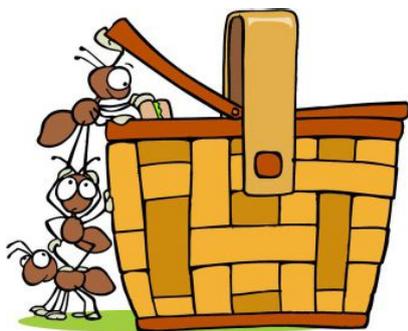
There are many children in our schools and adults in our community who very much need these opportunities. Our schools have strong provision to support good emotional well-being and the mental health of our pupils, but there is so much more we need to do to help growing numbers of children and young people who are anxious or unhappy in some way. Good listening and some dedicated personal attention time is a good start for young and old alike.

The inter-generational project was a triumph. Those of advancing years, and those of few years, learned so much from each other. The ability to sit quietly side by side, the opportunity to create, to discover and play together was precious. You don't have to go so far as to paint a hand yellow, but there is something to be said for it.

Dr Carin Taylor
Executive Headteacher
Staploe Education Trust

Churches Together Picnic

Join us on Soham Recreation Ground
on Saturday 18 Aug. 12 noon - 4pm
Bring your own picnic. Drinks provided
(in the Scout & Guide hut if wet)
Open Air Service @ 3.30pm with Brass Band
All welcome!
For info. contact Eleanor on 725948
or just turn up!



Foodbank 5th Anniversary



Ely Foodbank provides emergency food and support to people experiencing crisis in the local area. Launched in 2012 by local churches in the region, and seeded by Trussell Trust, we work in partnership with a diverse range of organisations and members of the public. We know that anyone can reach crisis point and we're here to help when that happens.

Ely Foodbank grew rapidly, adding distribution centres in neighbouring towns of March, Chatteris and Soham. Recognising that for people in crises transport can be an issue, other centres were also added in Cottenham and Haddenham.

Following the closure of the Salvation Army Hall, Ely Foodbank announced that Sanctuary Housing generously offered to accommodate our Soham distribution centre at Millbrook House within their excellent facilities on the ground floor.

The first distribution session at Millbrook House was on Thursday 3rd May 2018, with opening times remaining the same as before: 9.30am to 11.00am every Thursday morning. Millbrook House is centrally located – a 2 minute walk beyond the library in the centre of Soham. The address is Millbrook House, Lode Close, Soham, Ely CB7 5WN.

Foodbank distribution at Soham averages 30 vouchers a month, this is the equivalent of around 900 meals per month to people in crisis.

At the beginning of July Soham Distribution will be celebrating its fifth anniversary and plan to hold a small celebration at Millbrook House at their session on Thursday 12 July 2018. We are very grateful to everyone who makes donations and the agencies who provide support. We would like to extend an invitation to them to say 'Thank You' and for them to come and take the opportunity to visit our new location.

*Howard & Brenda
Soham Distribution*

Christian Aid Week

Many thanks to all those who helped, donated or came to any event for Christian Aid Week. We raised £1635.91. *Dawn and Howard*

PARISH REGISTERS

Baptisms:

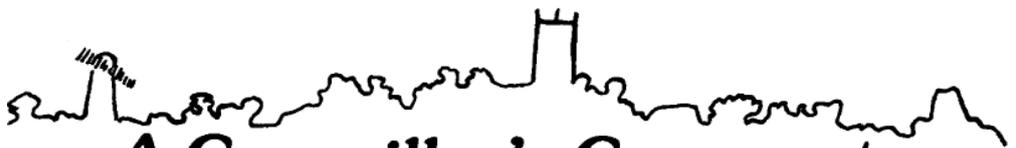
10 June	Logan Alecock
24 June	Emma Salisbury

Funerals:

26 June	Arthur 'Alec' Gibbs (interment of ashes)
28 June	Maurice Randall

Weddings:

16 June	Laura Ashley and Lee Brigden
23 June	Sarah Myhill and James Thorpe



A Councillor's Comments

Three people made use of our Public Comment Time at our June meeting. One spoke of a leading person from the group sorting the Eastern Gateway resigning. Another one was trying to set up a local radio and trying to get support.

Chairman's announcements: This was awarding a Pride of Soham certificate to Peggy Gibbon, who has served on the town council for many years and is no longer able to do so. She has also been involved in other groups especially the Over 60's. Our chairman was able to visit Peggy in the home where she now resides, to present her with this award and found her in good spirits.

Councillors' Reports: County Council: the resurfacing of the Prickwillow, Hasse road, mainly to level it up, and minor highways improvement bids for speed limits. District Council: the progress towards a possible Day Centre at Millbrook and efforts to raise funds to cover insurance liability.

Town Council Vacancy: In the light of Peggy's absence from the council, the position will be filled by the council co-opting any applications presented at a full council meeting.

Play Area: Work is being completed on the children's play area, it was opened before the formal re-opening for the benefit of the carnival. Sad to report that already there has been damage to this play area and equipment which has cost a great deal of money to put in place. Extra work had to be done initially to the base of the area before it could be built upon. It's a shame that certain individuals are bent on destroying the good facilities provided for the community. The chairman thanked the three councillors who had worked hard on this project alongside interested parents in the requirements needed for this scheme.

Commons Management: Hopeful signs are emerging that this can go forward with the various groups coming together to make this work.

Eastern Gateway: There is no further progress and we await the next consultation with "This Land" and "Soundings" where they will present their answer to the many questions being asked of them. There were certain hopes based on this development and we still wait to see if they will materialise. *George Ginn*

Soham Beer and Music Festival

This year's Soham Beer Festival is on 6th - 7th July on the Rec; on the 6th from 6pm - 10pm and on the 7th from 2pm - 10pm. Lots of beer, cider, bands and dancing!

All profit goes to Arthur Rank Hospice. Free entry. Organised by Soham Staploe Rotary Club and Blue Shed Studios

Friday features: *Akimbo, Freefall, Tantris, The Machine Shed Band* and Dj Sets by Jem Howe.

On Saturday you can see: *Riff Raff, Barstool Angels, Kickin' Up Dust, Andrei Krecminski, Jukebox Money, Tom, Michael Antony, The Anecdotes, Tanisha, Recovered and Out Of The Window*

Viva: My Fair Lady

Dates: 25th - 28th July.

Venue: if the weather is good, Beechurst Green, Beechurst Hall, Soham Village College. In bad weather the performance will be moved inside Beechurst Hall.

Times: all performances begin at 7.30pm

Tickets: £12.50/ £10.50. This production carries an age guidance of 10+

Box Office: 01353 722228 / www.wegotickets.com/vivaarts



- ☆ **Winners for the St Andrew's Church 200+Club** for June are: £5 Charlotte Clark, £10 Mrs. M. Fordham
- ☆ **The Shade Primary School, Family Fun Day:** 7th July 2018. Everyone welcome!! Bouncy castles, family events, stalls, Desserts R US and much more!!
- ☆ **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's History Group** have a talk at the Methodist Hall, Berrycroft, Soham, 7.30pm on Thurs July 5th - From Zeppelins to Doodlebugs (Part 1) by Roy Williams - Friends free, Guests £2.50 - all welcome.
- ☆ **Neighbourhood Cares:** Coffee, Cake & Soham Info sessions first Wednesday of each month 10am - 12noon. Friendly Dog Café third Friday each month, 12.30pm - 1.45pm both at the library.
- ☆ **Coffee Morning at the Pavilion,** Tuesdays from 9-11am. Open to all.
- ☆ **Items for the September edition of LodeStar** should be submitted by Wednesday 22nd August. Please send material to aly-evans@hotmail.com

News from Wicken Fen

Once July arrives, the Fen is literally buzzing, as butterflies, dragonflies and other insects enjoy the diverse and beautiful plants and wild flowers. We will be offering butterfly walks in the run up to the **Big Butterfly Count** from 20 July to 12 August, and the British Dragonfly Society (BDS) volunteers will be opening the Dragonfly Centre at weekends, where they will be getting ready for **Dragonfly Week** from 21 to 29 July. If you are interested in dragonflies, the BDS is looking for volunteers to help man the Dragonfly Centre during the summer, please contact Fiona McKenna, Conservation Outreach Officer at: Fiona.mckenna@britishdragonflies.org.uk and see the Dragonfly Centre webpage <https://www.british-dragonflies.org.uk/content/volunteer-dragonfly-centre>

Our annual **BioBlitz** also takes place in July, with events starting early evening on 21st July (evening walk, bat survey and small mammal trapping) and continuing for 24 hours. We will need plenty of help to discover, identify and record the species that we find, so do come along; all ages are welcome. This year we are proud to be included in Chris Packham's UK Bioblitz, see <http://www.chrispackham.co.uk/chris-packhams-uk-bioblitz-2018>

As we reach the end of July, the school holidays begin, and we welcome families to the Fen for some fun in the outdoors. Our summer programme begins on Wednesday 25 July with **Den Building** (Age 3-10), followed by the ever-popular **Mud Glorious Mud** on Friday 27 July (Age 3+) and **Fenland Fairies and Pixies** on Monday 30 July (Age 3-7). Further fun activities are available throughout August and can be booked now via our website. Don't forget that we will still be offering **Mucky Pups** sessions for under 5s in July on Wednesday 11th and Thursday 12th from 10:15-11:45; Damsels and Dragons is this month's theme.

The summer months are a great time to take a boat trip down the Wicken Lode; soak up some of the peaceful fen atmosphere and see the flora and fauna by the waterway. Boat trips are available every day until the end of October, and cost £6 for adults, £3.50 for children, and £17.50 for a family (2 adults, 2 children). At busy times it is advisable to book in advance, so please give us a call before you set off to secure your places, tel: 01353 720274.

Please check our website for further information about Wicken Fen and our events: www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wicken-fen

A View from the Vicarage



'And now for something completely different...'

A very dear friend and former colleague of mine bore many responsibilities until cancer finally took hold. One day she passed me a poem: 'From troubles of the world/I turn to ducks,/Beautiful, comical things...'. At the time, I confess, I didn't really get it. Now, with one or two responsibilities of my own, I think of it every day. I watch real ducks bring traffic



to a stand-still as they waddle (is there a connection?) across the High Street to and from The Ship. They treated me to a fly past up Pratt Street not long ago, landing, noisily, on the grass by Gunton's Close, their feet all but brushing my windscreen on the descent.

On The Oaks, where I live, I've yet to see a duck, but garden birds and hedgehogs abound. Goldfinches are pecking at feeders as I type, and the patio is strewn with what hedgehogs leave behind after an evening's feasting... I was keen on wildlife before I

came to Soham, but now I enjoy it not only for itself, but also in the spirit of the poem: 'From troubles of the world/I turn to ducks...'

There is, however, a time and a place. A few Sundays ago, as I scooted up the path almost – but not quite – late for the 10am, distracted by the sermon whose ink was still wet on the page, and by the 12.30 baptism, I ran into Ben (of Love on the Rocks fame) and his little boy. They had, Ben told me, being playing in the children's corner and had found 'a sick bat' in the process. My mind fit to burst, I enquired where the bat was now. 'We gave it to a tall man,' came the reply. Jolly good, I thought, 'the vicar you are waiting for knows you are waiting'. I'll get onto it after the baptism.

Fast-forward to 1.15pm: the bat has reached the top of the 'to do' list. Dawn Laver, who'd helped me with the baptism, located it where 'the tall man' (Geoff Fisher) had parked it, and we agreed that the best thing, given that neither of us knew much about bats, was to leave it where it was and hope for the best. I – to my shame – hurried off for some lunch, numb to my pricking conscience.

The following afternoon, in came an email: 'Hi Eleanor. The bat has been living in our house in a box under a new duster with water in a milk bottle lid. A lady from Cambridge has just examined Him and said he is fine just cold. So she is going to warm him up and release him in St Andrew's churchyard.' And it was so. Whilst I descended into oblivion, Dawn had phoned 'the Cambridgeshire Bat Line' (!).

found it unavailable, contacted, I quote, 'a lovely elderly gentleman in Essex' and acted on instruction to retrieve our hero and place him/her in a shoebox with holes in, equipped with a duster and a drink. After a night spent in Dawn's kitchen (Howard, I'm told, drew a line at the bedroom), s/he was more mobile and ready for a health check by 'a lady from Cambridge who picks up cold and injured bats' who pronounced him a) male ('apparently male bats are very laid back and lazy') and b) 'fine, just cold'. The lady took him back to church where she *warmed him up and let him go* ('He shared the car journey with a baby bat the size of your thumb nail whom she was hoping to reunite with its mum that night').



'From the troubles of the world/I turn to ducks'. Or to bats. And to one lucky bat in particular. 'Our hero', surely, should be Dawn. *Eleanor*

The Revd Eleanor Whalley, Priest in Charge of Soham and Wicken
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