

Services at the Parish Church

As part of the national and global effort to slow the spread of Coronavirus, our Prime Minister and Archbishops have advised that churches should be kept locked. On line services and Bible stories can be accessed via our **St Andrew's Church Soham** YouTube channel.

Looking ahead



‘When are you going to open that church?!’

I’ve lost count of how many people have asked me that question, and of how many times I’ve had to reply: ‘Dunno’. I’m so sorry our doors are still closed.

Some of you, like me, will have heard Grant Shapps announce a few weeks back that, all being well, the Government hopes to be able to permit places of worship to open from 4 July. As a parish church operating with the Diocese of Ely, however, we have to wait for

Diocesan permission as well. Let’s hope and pray that comes soon!

In the meantime, parts of our weekly YouTube services are now being recorded from church, as that’s in line with updated regulations. I’m doing my best to pan the camera around, so as much of the building as possible can be seen. If you’re anything like me, you’ll find strength in knowing the church is still there. ‘Seeing is believing’, as they say ...

Delivering Lodestar

Something else we want to get back to as soon as possible is delivering Lodestar. Some of you are already printing out copies to give to people who’ve not got computer access, and that is marvellous. Thank you!

We’ll restart deliveries as soon as we can. Understandably, many of our regular deliverers won’t be able to help for now, so we need some new recruits to help share the load.

If you’d be willing to jump into the breach as a stand-in deliverer, please could you let me know asap via sohamvicar@gmail.com or 01353 725948? I’d be so glad to hear from you.

If you are a regular deliverer, please could you contact Linda Palmer on 01353 721920 to let her know if you’re able to get back to delivering or need to step back for a while?

Whether you’re an existing deliverer or a potential new recruit, no one must feel obliged to help. If it’s possible, we’ll do it, and if it isn’t, we won’t. We just need to know where we are.

Thank you all – as ever! *Eleanor*

News from Wicken Fen

The National Trust is looking forward to welcoming people back to its places and is working on plans to gradually reopen. The safety of our staff, volunteers, visitors and local communities is our priority. We'll be updating our website with more information on how and when we'll be opening, so please check before trying to visit any National Trust places.

As mentioned in our last article, there is a small team currently working at Wicken Fen. We're all covering all sorts of essential jobs, from checking the boat battery to flushing all the toilets once a week! In the absence of the normal numbers of staff, volunteers and visitors, the reserve continues to thrive, and wildlife is being seen in numbers and in places not seen before. Countryside Manager, Martin Lester, was checking the livestock one morning on Burwell Fen and saw 4 hares and 30 roe deer, not far from the cycle path. Even early in the morning, it's unusual to see more than one or two hares and deer altogether. We've also seen a new badger excavation on the reserve, and birds nesting in new areas.

We featured two of our newest konik pony foals last month, so it only seems fair to put the highland calves in the spotlight this time. The photo below shows Max in the foreground (born in March), with Dovedale (born late April) behind, and Mum Raven in the background. The naming theme for calves this year is National Trust properties, so Max is named after Max Gate in Dorset, and Dovedale after Dovedale Nature Reserve in the Peak District. The calves are all doing well and join the rest of the grazing animals in helping engineer the habitats for wildlife on the reserve. It's not only the grazing itself that is beneficial, it's the movement of the animals; spreading seeds that get caught in their hooves and coats; dusty hollows where they roll, and the well-trodden paths through grass that help create a diverse landscape.



Max, Dovedale and Raven by Ajay Tegala

St Andrew's 200 Club

Winners for the 200 club for May are:

Sharon Wright £5, Carol Weyman £10

Cambridge Open Windows



Cambridge Open Studios will take part in nationwide *#OpenWindows2020* to share their *#COSart2020* this July.

Although the dreaded Covid-19 virus has seen an end to this year's annual art extravaganza we've grown to love, all is not lost. A group of budding members have stepped up to the mark and are in the middle of organising a treasure trail of art for the public to enjoy whilst out on their daily walks.

#Openwindows2020 is a national campaign that is celebrating art in its many forms, displayed in as the

name would suggest, a window or perhaps front garden. For all four weekends of July, artists will display their artwork for local residents to enjoy.

WHEN? - the original COS weekends: July 4th/5th, 11th/12th, 18th/19th, 25th/26th inclusively.

HOW? A treasure trail map will be created with spots to indicate the location of participating artists. The map will be available to download from the Cambridge Open Studios website at the beginning of June here <https://www.camopenstudios.co.uk/open-windows>

Usually, the details of each artist and their work is available in advance. However, participating artists will decorate their houses with the Cambridge Open Studios yellow flag and it will become an art treasure hunt for the local neighbourhood. Each participating artist will display their name and the Cambridge Open Studios website address alongside their art in their window (each artist has their own page on this website) so people can find out more about each artist they have visited.

If the lockdown is still in place, we will encourage people to adhere to social distancing rules and remind them to only travel locally as part of their daily exercise. We look forward to bringing you *#COSart2020* this July.

PARISH REGISTERS

Funerals

1 May

David Doak

6 May

Tot King

18 May

Eileen Jacobs

A Trip Down Memory Lane

Five years ago St Andrew's Church held a flower festival with arrangements by our own flower arrangers and by other churches and community groups. Below are some of the pictures from that event.



Left: Pulpit decorated by Soham Methodist Church

Below left: flowers made from drink cans by the Foodbank

Below right: The uniformed organisations set up camp near the south door

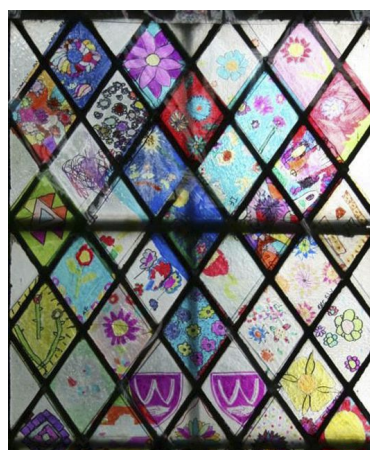


Above: Part of the church music corner.

Left: Viva arrangement

Bottom left: part of the Mothers' Union display

Bottom right: Window decorations by the primary schools



News from Hannah

Hannah Richardson, our soon-to-be curate, is nearing the end of 3 years' ordination training at Westcott House in Cambridge and is due to start with us on Sunday 5 July. She's written to introduce herself ...

Hello all! I hope that you are all doing well and I have been thinking about you all very much during these strange times.

My husband Simon and I are getting very excited to start this new adventure and are already working out logistics of packing and moving – which will include trying to get through some of the mountains of things we have both collected over the years ... ok fine, the mountain of things I've collected over the years!



Things are, of course, slightly more complicated and unsure than they were a few months ago, but my excitement to come and be with you all hasn't changed at all. It's going to be a slightly strange start as the Ordinations this year have had to be delayed, so my role will be a little different than planned with me starting as a Licensed Lay Minister and with my Ordination being possibly in September (fingers crossed).

There is, I think, something quite nice about the fact that I will have had a chance to get to know you all before the Ordination, which will make it all the more special when it does happen, as I'll already feel like I'm part of the furniture!

Things here are ticking along; Westcott meets online on a Thursday so it's been nice to still feel part of the community and I'm getting there with my last bits of essay work (only 17,000 words to go, eek!) Though, since I (like everyone else it seems) have learned how to make bread and bake cakes, I have to force myself to actually do the work rather than spending six hours in the kitchen making endless amounts of scones and chocolate chip cookies!

Little things keep happening that remind me that it isn't long to go ... I've had deliveries of clergy clothing, emails from the diocese about forms and even an email asking if I want to be in the clergy directory phone book type thing (who even knew such a thing existed?). Three years at college certainly seems to have whizzed by.

I have been keeping you all in my prayers – and avidly watching the fabulous parish YouTube videos – as we all navigate our way through this odd time. Please do pray for Simon and me as we get ready to make the move and get ready to become part of the Parish. I can't wait to be a part of St Andrew's, and I'm definitely feeling quite impatient which isn't ideal (must keep writing essays, must keep writing essays...) but it feels wonderful to know that my lovely curacy will be starting soon. I look forward to seeing you all, not long now! *Hannah*

A View from the Vicarage

Next Steps



My nephew, Syd, recently learned to walk. Here he is in his back garden: the next Alan Titchmarsh.

Last time I visited, he was cruising round the furniture. Now, three months later, the height of excitements is being chased by the vacuum cleaner. Next time you see me, I can bore you with the video. You'll hear him squealing with laughter. I'd like to say he's got more confident as time has gone on, but really he's got more sure-footed. He always knew he could do it.

These next weeks will see many a new departure for all of us: no-one can be sure what the future will hold, or what form it

will take. That's nothing new, of course, but for me at least, the truth seems more real than before.

I'm struck that 1 June, the day on which the next set of changes to lockdown restrictions comes into force, falls straight after the Feast of Pentecost. We'll celebrate Pentecost on 31 May - look up the service on YouTube if you missed it (type 'St Andrew's Church Soham' into the YouTube search box, and there it should be). Pentecost was and still is a Jewish festival: 'The Feast of Weeks' or 'The Feast of 50 days', held 50 days after Passover. In the Bible, in Acts, Luke records that pilgrims from all over the Jewish world had gathered in Jerusalem. Jesus' disciples were there too, 'all together in one place', sitting in a house, waiting, perhaps, for they didn't know quite what, but doing what Jesus had told them to do: 'stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high' (Luke 24: 49). Suddenly, as a wind and tongues of flame, the Spirit came amongst them. Jesus had kept his word.

However we imagine that event, whether we think the flames were real, or whether we see them as figurative, an image used to make a point, we can be as sure as we can be about what happened next. Peter, Luke tells, was seen 'standing up' with the other disciples; he was heard 'raising his voice' (Acts 2: 14). Cue the first of many long speeches in Acts. We've been treated to some of them during Eastertide...

Thanks to the Spirit, Peter is transformed. Physically, he moves from sitting to standing. Psychologically, this former Galilean fisherman - a man more at ease with shoals of fish than crowds of people, we might imagine - is strengthened to address the multitude. The Spirit gives him courage and teaches him what to say. It's just what Jesus promised would happen, especially when times were tough (look up Luke 12: 11-12, and you'll see what I mean).

For Peter and his friends, of course, words weren't the end. What came next was action: words became deeds; the disciples went on to practise what they preached. In the months and years that followed, most of them would leave Jerusalem. They'd set sail - literally - towards a new reality. They'd step out into the unknown, fired by the Spirit and trusting in God's power; confident in their mission to be Christ's witnesses, 'in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth' (Acts 1: 8).

2000 years on, may the Spirit strengthen us, too. *Eleanor*

