

WITHAM ON THE HILL, MANTHORPE, TOFT AND LOUND.

1924.—As we enter upon the new year, our wish is that it may be one of happiness for us all. What of the old year as regards our parish? Our registers record 15 baptisms, 7 confirmed, 1 marriage and 2 burials. But from the electoral roll no fewer than 37 names have disappeared by removal, a large total for one year. Some who have left us too are old and tried friends, whom we greatly miss from their accustomed places in church on Sunday. In a small parish like ours, each regular worshipper can do more good by his or her example than all the sermons that ever were preached. And particularly to the young, who are so quick to take notice, and follow the lead of their elders. If those whom they look up to are careless, they will tend to be so too, as they grow older. Let us therefore make new resolutions in this new year as regards our religious duties, and endeavour by God's help to keep them.

Our numbers.—The population of the parish, according to the census taken in 1921 is 382. Of these 189 were in Witham, 125 in Toft and Lound, and 68 in Manthorpe. To-day these numbers would be considerably less. It might interest our readers to see the fluctuations of the population throughout the 120 years, since the census was first taken in the year 1801: 1801-453, 1811-476, 1821-563, 1831-530, 1841-573, 1851-635, 1861-548, 1871-527, 1881-459, 1891-456, 1901-379, 1911-452. Thus the highest population was in 1851, since when there has been a gradual decline. If we go back to the year 1560, we find from the church records that the parish then contained 80 inhabited houses, as against 99 at the present time. Probably however in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the average number per household was greater than it is now.

Christmas.—As we write on Christmas Eve, kind helpers are busy garnishing the church, which promises to be beautiful as it always is for the great Festival. The decorations will remain until after the Octave of the Epiphany, Sunday, Jan. 13th.

The whist drive and dance, arranged by Messrs. S. Harmston, G. Haddon and A. Rudkin, on Nov. 28th, was extremely enjoyable and successful. From the proceeds, a sum of £2 was sent to the Butterfield Hospital. Our heartiest thanks are due to the promoters.

The next social.—Mr. Todd is organizing another social evening of a similar kind, in aid of the National Society for the Blind, on Wednesday, Jan. 16th. We hope that it will be well patronized.

The annual Parochial Church Meeting will be held (D.V.) on Tuesday, January 22nd, at 7 p.m., in the Village Hall. It is most desirable that all who are interested in the affairs of the church, young as well as old, should endeavour to attend. The new electoral roll will be posted on the church notice-board a fortnight previously, and parishioners should see that their names are duly included upon it. At this meeting the church accounts for the past year will be presented, and the new Church Council elected for the coming year.

Confirmation.—The Vicar asks for names of candidates early in January, so that he may commence the instruction classes in good time.

Baptisms.—Dec. 16th, Dorothy, daughter of Thomas William and Miriam Cousins.

„ 23rd, Peter Worthington, son of Arthur James and Annie Barnett.

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The Annual Parish Meeting was held on Tuesday, January 22nd. The very inclement evening doubtless prevented many from attending who otherwise would have been present. As we gradually become more familiar with the new provisions of the Enabling Act, which has established Church Councils in every parish, and provides for lay representation in the management of Church affairs, we shall get to look upon this annual meeting as a very important one, and will make a greater point of attending it. Held in January every year, it elects the Parochial Church Council, which now has control over Church affairs in the Parish, it appoints delegates to the Rural Deanery Conference, and elects representatives to the Diocesan Conference. Its powers therefore are very wide, and everyone whose name is on the Electoral Roll has a right to attend, and to record his or her vote. It makes no difference whether we happen to be a plough boy or a duke, as members of the Church we all have equal rights, and our votes have equal value. The little papers which we have signed, and which new-comers are asked to sign, are in order to put us on to the Electoral Roll, and to give us these privileges. It is very important that the Roll should be as large as possible.

The Church finances.—The statement of accounts for the past year, presented to the meeting, showed that the ordinary church collections amounted to £42/4/1, as against £42/18/6 for the last complete year. This is not discouraging, considering the circumstances of the times, but we ought not to be satisfied until we have attained an average of £1 per Sunday. It is the poorest who give with the greatest liberality, and if all gave in the same proportion to their means, this amount could easily be obtained. Let us try to be more systematic in our giving, and not expect our religious privileges to be provided for nothing.

Foreign Mission Sunday.—We have been asked by the Diocesan authorities to alter our Missionary Sunday from November to February, and in future the 2nd Sunday in February will be set apart for helping foreign Missionary work.

Sunday Feb. 10th will therefore be devoted to this object. A special effort should be made by us all to attend in the *morning*, when the Rev. G. T. Shetliffe, a missionary from Australia, will preach the sermon, on behalf of the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel." The Vicar will preach in the evening. Our offerings at both services will be given to foreign Missions.

Presentation.—Quite a goodly muster of friends assembled in the Village Hall after church on Sunday morning, Jan. 20th, when we presented Mr. Pick with a clock and a framed testimonial. The gift came from a large number of parishioners, whose names were alphabetically recorded upon the testimonial. The clock is a handsome one in an oak case, and chimes the quarters on deep tuneful gongs. A brass plate upon it bears the following inscription: "Presented to Mr. Thomas Pick by the parishioners of Witham-on-the-Hill, with Manthorpe, Toft and Lound. January, 1924." The testimonial, which was the skilful work of Mr. Metcalfe, is worded as follows:—"To Mr. Thomas Pick, churchwarden of Witham-on-the-Hill for 24 years. The parishioners, whose names are appended, request Mr. Pick's acceptance of the accompanying clock as a small token of their esteem and regard, and as an expression of gratitude for the many devoted services willingly rendered in the interests of the parish." It was a happy little ceremony, and one which neither we nor he are likely ever to forget. The Vicar has just received a letter from Mr. Pick, asking him to find space in the magazine to express his grateful thanks to all the donors. He is delighted with our choice, and says that we could not have selected anything else which would please him better. He writes that as the chimes so nearly resemble those of the old church, it will always remind him of the many happy days he has spent amongst us. Since he has resided—he says—in the parish for the greater part of his life, Witham will always appeal to him as *Home*.

The net proceeds of the whist drive and dance, organized by Mr. Todd, on behalf of the National Institution for the Blind, on Wednesday, January 16th, amounted to about £3. This we regard as highly satisfactory.

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Lent is a long, solemn, and penitential preparation for Easter, leading up in ever increasing intensity to the great climax of the Christian year, the glorious Festival of the Resurrection. So ancient is the observance of Lent that it dates from the very earliest years of the Christian Church. Of old it was kept with far greater rigour and strictness than it is to-day. But perhaps now-a-days more than ever is this holy season of restraint needed. Let us try and use it to advantage as a time of penitence, of self-denial, of fresh effort and new resolve. Let us make a Lenten rule for ourselves, and endeavour to keep it.

S.P.G. Sunday.—On Feb. 10th we had a very instructive and interesting sermon from Mr. Shetliffe, who came from Australia to tell us something about the work of Foreign Missions. In the evening, the Vicar who had intended to speak on the same subject, was obliged to forego the sermon, owing to loss of voice. It was his intention to ask if there were not some who would be willing to have a missionary box in their home. He therefore asks it now, and will gladly supply one to anybody on request; or those who wish for an S.P.G. Lent savings box can have one of these if preferred.

The Stamford Infirmary is our own special hospital, and as such claims the support of us all. Last month we made a special effort on its behalf. A house-to-house collection was made in Manthorpe, by Mrs. Ash, and in the rest of the parish by Mrs. Wilcox, which met with a most generous response. We heartily thank all the donors. In addition a whist drive and dance was organized on Feb. 20th, for which every one of the 12 prizes and the whole of the refreshments were also gifts. As a result we have been able to send £7/4/6 to the Infirmary, a considerably larger sum than in past years. We beg to thank everyone on the committee for their valuable help in this successful effort.

The Vicar's scrap-book contains newspaper cuttings and records of parish doings since he first came. Here is an extract from a report of a dance in 1901:—"A dance was held in the new school, which was agreed by all to be the most successful hitherto held here. The room was decorated with festoons of evergreen stretching from side to side. There was a numerous company, among whom were Lady Lawrance, and a party from the Hall. Messrs. T. Pick and W. Metcalfe were M.C.'s. The success was largely due to Mrs. Berry's able teaching in the dancing classes which have lately been commenced here." We wonder how many from this original company were present the other day. Certainly two, Mr. Metcalfe and the Vicar! Lady Lawrance, then resident at the Hall, and who is mentioned in the above report, lives now in London, and still takes a kindly interest in Witham.

The Vicar's car.—On Sunday mornings, when time is of value, the Vicar will most gladly give church-goers from a distance a "lift" home, if they will come to the Vicarage after service. The morning service always concludes at 12 noon, for reasons not unconnected with dinner! If a desire was expressed for an earlier hour, we might begin at 10.30 instead of 11, as is done everywhere in the north of England. We will consult the Church Council. For it is the morning worship which should ever be our chief endeavour on the Lord's Day.

Confirmation.—Our candidates will be presented for Confirmation at Bourne Abbey Church on Friday, March 28th. Will you remember them in your prayers?

Mrs. Bradshaw's good progress towards recovery is a matter for great thankfulness. God has heard and abundantly answered our intercessions. We miss her so greatly from her accustomed place among us, and venture to wish her a complete and speedy restoration to health and strength.

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The month of April is always one of change in our rural parish; and April 6th, "old" Lady-Day, generally witnesses many removals. This year however, they are singularly few. Mrs. Gilbert with whom we deeply sympathize in her recent tragic bereavement, is leaving Manthorpe, to return to her old home at Hanthorpe. In Witham we know of one change only.

A further extract from the Vicar's scrap-book is given, which will interest many of our readers. It is headed "Impending changes," and after referring to the approaching departure from the Hall of Mr. Justice Lawrance, runs as follows: "Mr. A. C. Johnson, the Lord of the Manor of Witham, is selling the Estate to Mr. Walter Fenwick, who is purchasing the entire property. Mr. Fenwick will come into possession next month, and will at once proceed to re-model and enlarge the house, and lay out the grounds on an extensive scale. We understand that he proposes making very considerable changes and improvements on the property." This extract is a cutting from the *Grantham Journal*, and bears date Jan. 25th, 1902. How much has happened since that first coming of Mr. Fenwick! Your present Vicar was Vicar then, and looking back it seems to him to be far longer than only 22 years. To him has since fallen the sad duty of burying both Squire Johnson and Squire Fenwick, both kind and loyal friends, the former in 1910, and the latter in 1914.

Easter Day.—There will be two early celebrations of the Holy Communion on Easter Day, at 7.30 and 8.30, which we trust will meet the convenience of all the communicants. For by the rule of the Church, "every parishioner shall communicate at Easter" (see the Prayer-book). All communicants are asked also to attend a short service of instruction and preparation on the previous Wednesday evening, at 7.30 p.m.

Good Friday.—Let every one make a special endeavour to keep this most sacred of all days more as Christ our Master would approve, and let us come and watch with Him in His sufferings for us, and learn afresh the meaning of the Cross. The way in which we would spend Good Friday is a sure index of the reality of our Christianity. There will be morning service at 11, and evening service at 7.30. There will also be special services on every day in Holy Week, for which see the notice on the church door.

Easter Decorations.—We shall be most grateful for help in decorating the church on Easter Eve, and for the gift of flowers.

Easter Vestry Meeting.—A meeting will be held in the Village Hall on Easter Tuesday evening, at 7.30, to elect the churchwardens for the year. At Easter, Mr. Thos. Pick's long term of office comes to an end.

Payment for the magazine.—There are just a few people who have not yet paid for their magazine. It would be much appreciated if they will do so during the present month. In one or two cases no payment has been made for the last 3 or 4 years. Each copy printed now costs the Vicar 1½d., or 1/6 a year.

The cricket club.—A well-attended meeting in connection with the club, was held in the Vicarage Reading Room, on March 14th, when the following officers were elected: President, Captain Fenwick; Chairman, the Vicar; Vice-Chairman, Mr. Thelwell; Treasurer, Mr. T. Holmes; Secretary, Mr. G. Todd; Captain, Mr. T. Holmes; Vice-Captain, Mr. A. Francis; Committee (in addition to the above), Messrs. W. Dalby, G. Haddon, C. Birch and J. W. Redshaw. A number of gentlemen were also to be asked to allow their names to be included in the list of Vice-Presidents. It was decided to hold a whist drive and dance on Wednesday in Easter week for the benefit of the funds.

The choir.—We much regret the loss of two of our choir members, Stanley Harmston and Alfred Rudkin, who have gone from the parish. They will also be much missed in the belfry and in the cricket-field, where they both did good service. Stanley Harmston, who was baptized in the church, has been a regular choir member for many years. The Vicar would greatly welcome new recruits to take their place.

Baptism—March 2nd, Rachel Jessie, daughter of Joseph and Louisa Kettle.

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Easter.—The glorious weather added greatly to the brightness of the Easter Festival, and was a great help to its due observance. The number of communicants was above the average, and the second celebration at 8.30 was that of which most took advantage. Formerly, the highest number has always been at the first. The church as usual, looked beautiful, in its rich profusion of Easter flowers.

The Easter offerings were again given to the Vicar, in accordance with ancient custom. Last year he devoted the gift towards the purchase of the picture of St. George, this year he proposes to spend it upon the summer outing for the choir.

Election of Churchwardens.—At the Easter Vestry meeting, Mr. Bradshaw and Mr. Wilcox were chosen as the two wardens for the ensuing year. Thus Mr. Bradshaw succeeds to an office which was held by his father for the long period of 27 years. In the old records of the church, we find an entry dated 1708, which states that "one of the churchwardens is appointed by the Minister, the other by the parishioners. The Minister chooses one in Witham, and the parishioners choose one in Manthorp, or Toft or Lown." This arrangement was doubtless intended to give the hamlets a due representation in the affairs of the mother church.

In Memoriam.—Mrs. Margaret Andrew, widow of the late Mr. John Andrew, who died on Good Friday, was laid to rest here beside her husband, on Easter Tuesday. Mr. Andrew, who died nearly 23 years ago, was a native of Witham, he was born in the Home farm house, where he also died. Mrs. Andrew ever retained a great affection for Witham, and until recently, used to come here each Whitsuntide, and worship in the church, to which she was so attached. She is survived by one son, Mr. William Andrew. Her only daughter, who died in 1885, is also buried here.

Easter social evening.—A whist drive and dance, held on behalf of the cricket club, on April 23rd, somewhat suffered in patronage, owing to the large number of similar attractions in the neighbourhood in Easter week. We beg however to thank the ladies and gentlemen of the committee who made such complete and excellent arrangements on its behalf. Their kindness is much appreciated. At the time of writing, we do not know the amount of the takings, but hope there will be a fair balance to go towards the funds of the club.

A prize essay.—The county branch of the Royal Society for the prevention of cruelty to animals (known as R.S.P.C.A.), recently offered prizes for the best essays on the subject of kindness to animals, written by scholars of the elementary schools in the County. We are pleased to say that the 1st boys' prize in Kesteven has been won by Harold Day, and we heartily congratulate him. This method of teaching children the duty of humane treatment of God's dumb creatures is an excellent one, and should do much good. At this time of the year in particular, the cruel destruction of bird life is deplorable, and countless nests are wantonly destroyed, with the result that many of our rarer and more beautiful birds are being exterminated. The Christian child should surely be taught that our Blessed Lord Himself said, "God careth even for the birds, and not one of them falleth to the ground without the knowledge of your Heavenly Father."

The tennis club.—If there should be a sufficiency of players this year, the Vicar will again gladly lend his court for the use of the club. He would like to have the names of those willing to join, and will then call a meeting to further the matter.

Note.—The early celebration of Holy Communion on Sundays will be at 8 o'clock (not 8.30), until October.

Burial.—April 22nd, Margaret Elizabeth Andrew, aged 81 years.

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Whitsun-Day.—This great and holy Festival is the "Birthday of the Church," for on this day the Holy Spirit descended upon the waiting Apostles, filling them with His life and power, so that in them the Christian Church began, and from that little company it has extended and increased, until at last it shall spread "from pole to pole." This same Holy Spirit is with her still, and thus the Church is His perpetual abode, wherein He ever dwells. Never therefore dare we forsake the Church, the Divine Society founded by Christ, the covenanted sphere of grace, whose life is the indwelling Presence of the Holy Spirit of God. We use red as the colour for Whitsun-day, in token of the "fiery tongues" by which His Presence was first revealed. On Whitsun-day, there will be celebrations of the Eucharist both at 8 and 11.

The Whit-Monday Carnival at Stamford.—This promises to be the biggest thing in the way of Fetes that the neighbourhood has ever seen. The urgent needs of the Stamford Infirmary will, we hope, induce many to patronize it. Tickets for admission can be purchased before the day at reduced prices (adults 9d., children 6d.) These may be obtained at the Post Office.

Little Bytham Patronal Festival.—This will take place on Tuesday, June 17th. The preacher at the evening service is the Vicar of All Saints', Lincoln, one of the most gifted speakers in the Diocese.

S.P.G. Missionary Festival.—We earnestly hope that many of our people will endeavour to attend this Festival, which will be held at Thurlby, on Monday, June 23rd. It is arranged for the Deanery of Ness, to which we belong, and therefore it is in a sense our own Festival. The Bishop of Lincoln will speak to us in the Vicarage garden at 3.30, and there will be a Festal Service in the church at 6.30, when the Vicar of Spalding will give an address. In the interval between, tea will be provided. With two such speakers to listen to, there should be a great muster at this Festival.

An old parishioner, after more than 20 years absence, recently spent a Sunday at Witham. So altered was the church, that the visitor could hardly recognize it. But there was one homely and familiar touch, the old white vestment, and that brought back the past to her mind! This white chasuble was the gift of the communicants, long before your present Vicar came here. For nearly 30 years it has been in constant use, and yet it is hardly soiled. It has been worn both by the Bishop of Lincoln and the Bishop of Grantham in celebrating here, and by many priests besides the Vicar. In Mr. Fenwick's memorial window, there is a copy of it, in the little picture of the Christmas Eucharist. So that it is now quite a historic possession.

Two more of our young helpers have recently left us. Gerald Paulett was an enthusiastic ringer, as also a keen cricketer. Francis Glenn has been a choir member since he was quite a little chap. He too was a ringer. We miss them both, and wish them well in their new homes.

We regret to hear of the resignation of the Rector of Swayfield. For over 17 years he has joined with us in this magazine, and we have read his parish notes every month. We venture to wish him health and happiness in his retirement.

The Cricket Club.—The club is to be congratulated upon a brilliant opening to the season, in which three handsome victories stand to our credit. May the good work continue. Below we give the fixtures for the present month. *Saturday Matches*:—7th, Creeton, home; 14th, Essendine, away; 21st, Thurlby, away; 28th, Creeton, away. *Thursday Evening Matches*:—5th, Braceborough, home; 26th, Essendine, home.

Marriage.—3rd May, Cecil Story and Hilda Emma Pell.

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The Missionary Festival at Thurlby on June 23rd was well attended, and a good contingent from our parish was present. In perfect weather we sat under the trees to hear a most excellent address from the Bishop of Lincoln, and after an *al fresco* tea admirably served, the parish church was crowded for Evensong, when the Vicar of Spalding gave us an address which was truly inspiring. We hope that as a result, our interest in the work of Foreign Missions may be greatly strengthened, and that we may learn that it is the duty of us *all* to help in spreading the Gospel. "Go ye" is the command of Christ to *everyone*. The preacher suggested three ways in which we can help to carry out that command, by our prayers, by our interest, and by our alms, and also urged the need of a Missionary box in the Christian home. The Vicar will gladly supply boxes on request.

Forthcoming garden social.—On Saturday, July 19th, there will be a whist drive and dance in the Vicarage garden, on behalf of the choir outing fund. We hope that it will be widely patronized. The admission both for whist and dancing will be 6d. In addition, a tennis tournament will be arranged for "mixed doubles." Intending players should send their names to Mr. R. Brudenell, Witham-on-the-Hill, not later than July 16th.

Wembley.—Mr. and Mrs. Metcalfe kindly took a party of the older school-girls to see this wonderful exhibition on June 24th. We hear that they had a thoroughly enjoyable time, and the weather was ideal. The older members of the choir hope to follow their example in the near future.

Children's tea.—On July 21st (weather permitting), the Vicar invites all the children who attend church on Sundays, to tea and games. He takes this opportunity to appeal to the parents to encourage regular attendance, both morning and afternoon.

The Vicar would like his people to know that twice during the past month he has had to face the question either of leaving Witham or remaining, by the offers of benefices in Norfolk and North Lincolnshire, the latter offer being from the Bishop, and therefore all the harder to decline. However, after much thought, he has decided to stay here a bit longer. Few who read this can realize the difficulty of deciding what is right to do when such proposals come. After 24 years here, the Vicar as become so deeply attached to this parish and its beautiful church, that a severance seems heart-breaking. Possibly the time will come when it must be made, but he hopes that it may not be just yet.

The tennis club would welcome new members. In a neighbouring village, smaller than ours, there are 30 adult members, and more applications which had to be refused. In addition there is a flourishing juvenile branch, consisting of children of school age, who play after school, under the tutelage of the teachers. They have only a rough court in a field, which they maintain at their own expense. How they would envy a court like ours!

Mr. M. Fenwick's Wedding Gift.—Mr. Monty has had the silver bowl inscribed, and has left it with the Vicar. Those who would like to see it are asked to call at the Vicarage.

Cricket fixtures for July.—Saturdays: 5th, Holywell, home; 12th, Holywell, away; 19th, Greatford, home. Thursday evenings: 3rd, Braceborough, away; 10th, Greatford, home; 17th, Essendine, away; 31st, Greatford, away.

Baptism.—1st June, John Thomas, son of Arthur and Annie Francis.

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Note.—The Vicar expects to be away from home for two Sundays in August, the 10th and the 17th. He has arranged for *Evening* service on each of these Sundays as follows:—on August 10th, at 7.15 p.m. (not 6.30), which will be taken by the Revd. Lancelot Smith, assistant priest of Spalding, and on August 17th at the usual hour, 6.30, by Mr. Reade, of Bourne, a commissioned Lay Reader. Will our people be so kind as to put up with this expedient for these two Sundays, and carefully note that on the 10th the service will begin at 7.15. Any who desire to attend the Holy Communion on either Sunday are asked to give due notice at the Vicarage, and a car will convey them to some neighbouring church. An occasional change on Sunday is very desirable for the clergy, and your Vicar has not had such a change for 3 years, nor has he deprived the parish of one single service during all that time. Those therefore who habitually attend the morning service will be doing him a great kindness if they forego their privilege just for these two Sundays.

Report of the Diocesan Inspector.—The annual religious inspection of the school took place on June 6th, and last month the Inspector issued his report. The religious education as a whole is classed as "excellent," and the report states as follows: "The knowledge of the subjects shown by the scholars and the religious tone of the school do very great credit to Mr. Metcalfe and his assistants. Also the singing of the scholars is much to be commended."

Vicarage garden social.—Many thanks to all the kind helpers who contributed to the success of this little affair on July 19th. From the money taken at the gate, there must have been an attendance of over 80. The net proceeds, after meeting all expenses were £4. Everything went well, and all agreed that it was a most enjoyable gathering. So successful did it prove to be, that there is a talk of having another before the summer is over.

The choir outing.—The older members of the choir made a trip to the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley, on Wednesday, July 23rd, which was much enjoyed by all. A reserved coach was put at our disposal by the Railway Company, which rendered the long journey a most comfortable one. King's Cross was reached at 10 o'clock, and the return journey started at midnight, so giving us 14 hours in London.

Children's treat.—The Vicar entertained all the Church children to tea on Tuesday, July 22nd. This treat was originally fixed for the previous day, but the wet weather decided us to put it off, a decision which was amply justified, as the following day was one of glorious sunshine. After tea, various kind helpers organized all manner of games and amusements, so that the children had a right royal time. The gathering thunder clouds about 7.30 warned us that we must break up the party, which we did only just in time, for by 8 o'clock the storm broke with tropical intensity. We trust that all got safely home before the down-pour.

Road tarring.—The Bourne Rural District Council, some time ago, undertook at the Vicar's suggestion to tar the road through Witham village, in order to mitigate the dust nuisance. So we hope that this will be done in due course.

Baptism.—July 6th, Gwendolen Anne, daughter of Edgar and Marjorie May Pick.

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During the Vicar's absence on two Sundays in August, the evening services were taken respectively by the Rev. Lancelot Smith (Vicar-designate of S. John's, Spalding), and Mr. Reade, of Bourne, a commissioned lay-reader. On both occasions there were good congregations, and also, we hear, excellent sermons. The Vicar takes this opportunity of expressing his thanks to those who were willing to forego their Sunday morning privilege on these two Sundays, in order that he might get away for a change.

A country parish in Cornwall.—In this parish (where the Vicar spent his Sundays), stand two little ancient churches, dedicated respectively to local saints, St. Winnow and St. Nectan. Four houses only stand near them, there are no others within two miles of either church. On Sunday however, although a wet day, both these little shrines were filled with a large congregation of worshippers, who come for miles from all directions, and apparently in all weathers. Your Vicar celebrated at 8, in the parish church, and found nearly a score of communicants, and the parish priest sang the Eucharist at 11 in the other church, which was filled to overflowing. A large choir rendered the service most beautifully, and six ringers raised the bells, the striking being almost faultless. It was all a wonderful revelation of the strength and vigour of the Church in that far-off corner of England.

Harvest Thanksgiving.—It is proposed to have the services of thanksgiving for the Harvest, on Sunday, October 5th, and an effort will be made to secure a special preacher. The 1st Sunday in October has generally been the date for our harvest thanksgiving; although occasionally it has been held on the Feast Sunday, the last Sunday in October. This however is somewhat late, and it also tends to confuse the distinct significance of the two festivals.

The choir.—Additional members of the choir would be greatly welcomed. Why should we not try and re-form the "mixed" choir which was so successful a few years ago? Everyone ought to have some definite work to do in connection with the church, and surely there are many who could help to lead the singing by joining the choir, and making that their special work for God.

The Parochial Church Council.—Members of the Council are asked to meet at the Vicarage, on Monday, September 15th, at 7 p.m.

Clerical changes.—Our neighbour, Mr. Crathorne, the Rector of Creton, is moving shortly to Swayfield, so that he will still be associated with us in this magazine. Mr. Bone, the late Rector, has gone to live in retirement, at Clifton, near Bristol, where we earnestly trust that he may ere long be restored to health. Another resignation is that of the venerable and well-loved Rector of South Witham, who through infirmity has been compelled to give up his work after a residence of 28 years.

August is usually the chief holiday month, and Witham has seemed more than usually full of visitors this August. We have had many strangers at our services, and one Sunday morning, the Spalding scouts, who were in camp at Grimsthorpe, came to our church, in order to attend the Sung Eucharist.

The cricket club.—The success of the club this year has been extremely gratifying. Out of the 19 matches played, 13 have been won, 2 drawn and 4 lost. It is a splendid record. Our heartiest congratulations to the players, and not least to our energetic and capable secretary, Mr. Todd.

WITHAM ON-THE-HILL, MANTHORPE, TOFT AND LOUND.

The Harvest Thanksgiving will, as previously announced, be on Sunday, October the 5th. The services will be at the usual hours, viz:—Holy Communion at 8, Mattins at 10.15, Sung Eucharist at 11, Children's Service at 3, and Evensong at 6.30. The sermon in the evening will be preached by the Rev. C. W. E. Cleaver, M.A., Rector of Careby. Gifts of corn and flowers are specially asked for, and friends are earnestly requested to help us with the decoration of the church.

The Feast Sunday.—This year the Dedication Festival, familiarly known as "Feast Sunday," falls upon October the 26th, for it is always the Sunday following next after October the 25th. The origin of this rule is quite unknown, but in all probability the date of the Festival was fixed by the Bishop in mediæval times for some special reason, or possibly it marks the actual time of year when the church was first dedicated. In days gone by, the Dedication Festival of each parish ranked as the most important Sunday in the whole year, except Easter itself, and was kept with the greatest solemnity and rejoicing, as a day of thanksgiving to God for the blessings of our holy religion. We ought to try once more and regard our Feast Sunday in this way, and make it our chief annual thanksgiving "for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory," just as we thank God at the Harvest Festival for the lesser gift of our bodily food.

Accidents.—We greatly sympathize with Mr. John Waddington in his recent motor-cycle mishap, resulting in a fractured arm and severe bruises, also with our young friend Jack Cross, who sustained injury whilst playing football, and wish them both a speedy recovery.

Summer Time has ended earlier this year, and with it the wettest and most unpleasant summer that we have had for some years. Certain weather prophets foretell that next summer will be worse, (if that is possible!) Let us hope they may be mistaken, for everybody's sake, and not least for that of the farmers, for whom this year has been an anxious and difficult one indeed.

What is the chief service on Sunday?—This question has recently been well answered by our Bishop, who writes in last month's Lincoln Diocesan magazine, as follows: "The Holy Communion is clearly meant to be the chief Sunday morning service, at which the chief congregation may be expected to be present. It is the one Service at which the Prayer Book appoints that a sermon shall be preached, alms offered, and notices given out. There is no rubrical provision for sermon, alms or notices at Mattins or Evensong. If we go behind the Prayer Book to that Catholic order which it is the plain purpose of the Book of Common Prayer to continue and maintain, the implication is equally clear. The Holy Communion without doubt or question has always been treated as the chief Christian Service. It is the Service which our Lord Himself appointed, and the Lord's Service for the Lord's Day is a plain and simple rule which the Church has always observed. So far, therefore, the duty of the faithful priest seems to be unquestionable. He will earnestly desire so to train and so to win his people that the Lord's Service may take the position which is due to it in the life and worship of his parish. He can do no other. The parish priest who loves his people and desires above all their spiritual welfare, will not lack the spiritual tact, and the patient strength and wisdom to win his people to that fuller worship which indeed is only possible when the Lord's people meet together in the Lord's Service on the Lord's Day."

This clear and concise statement by our Father in God may be helpful to those who may not yet understand why the Holy Eucharist is the chief and normal act of worship on Sunday morning which all should attend.

A whist drive and dance, on behalf of the funds of the Cricket Club, will take place on Wednesday, October 15th, in the Village Hall (see bills). Please note the date.

Baptism.—31st August, Robert Frederick, son of Frederick and Rosetta Croft.

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The General Election.—Between the issues of this and last month's magazine, Parliament has been dissolved, and a new Parliament elected. Never before has so rapid an election been known.

Armistice Sunday will this year be the Sunday before Armistice day, namely November the 9th. On this Sunday, as in past years, we shall have our solemn service of commemoration at 11 a.m., when we shall remember before God our glorious dead. The roll of honour will be read out. We specially bid all relatives and friends who suffered bereavement in the great war to be present at this service.

Armistice day.—Once more we are bidden by the King to observe the two minutes' silence at 11 o'clock on November 11th. Let us all remember to fulfil this brief act of homage to those who gave their lives for us.

A whist drive and dance will be held in the Village Hall on Thursday, November the 6th, in aid of the Butterfield Hospital, at Bourne. We owe much to this splendid institution, and it is only right that we should endeavour to support it. We ask therefore for a generous patronage, and those who cannot attend the social evening are urged to contribute some little gift towards the fund.

Obituary.—The many friends who knew Mr. A. H. Lawley, during his residence here as head gardener at the Hall, were shocked and dismayed by the news of his death on October 12th, under such sad and tragic circumstances. It is a little over two years since Mr. Lawley left us, to take up a market garden in Derbyshire, in company with Mr. Armstrong and his family. We shall prefer to remember him as we knew him when he was here, a man who took a more than ordinary interest in the affairs of the village, and devoted himself particularly to the Reading Room, which flourished as it never did before or since, under his assiduous and able management.

Wet Sundays.—Three out of the four Sundays in October have been ushered in with rain, which was the more unfortunate, as one was our day of Harvest Thanksgiving, and another our Dedication Festival. However the evening of the Harvest Sunday was fine, and a very large congregation was present at the service, which was conducted by the Rector of Careby. On the Feast Sunday the rain continued throughout the day, sadly diminishing our numbers on this important and helpful Festival.

The church spire.—The Vicar recently called an architect's attention to the condition of the upper part of the spire, which seemed to show some signs of decay. His report is re-assuring. There is no danger, and no need of re-building, though he advises that the open joints be re-pointed, to prevent to entry of water.

The tower and spire, which are the least beautiful parts of our church, were rebuilt in the year 1738, and their position is extremely curious. As far as we know there is only one other church in the County (Whaplode) where the tower stands at the end of a transept. The usual position is of course at the west end of the nave, or less frequently, in the centre, between nave and chancel, but the position of ours is almost unique, and is a feature of very great interest. Quite unique however is the inscription upon our treble bell, which is unmatched in the whole of England, and might have been composed by the Communists of to-day! For the sake of newcomers in the parish we quote it.

'Twas not to prosper pride or hate
William Augustus Johnson gave me;
But peace and joy to celebrate
And call to prayer to Heav'n to save ye;
Then keep the terms and e'er remember
May 29 ye must not ring:
Nor yet the 5th of each November,
Nor on the crowning of a King.

This extraordinary inscription was put upon the bell in 1831, just after the death of King George IV, when loyalty to the throne was at its weakest. Evidently the Squire who gave the bell was not enamoured of his Majesty!

WITHAM-ON-THE-HILL, MANTHORPE, TOFT AND LOUND.

Christmas.—What is the origin of this loved and familiar name? The dictionary says:—it was originally "Criste's Masse," Mass being a term for the Holy Eucharist, see the English reformed Prayer Book of 1549, "the Holy Communion, commonly called the Mass." So then, Christmas Day by its very name, bids us to the Altar. The Holy Communion is the first and chiefest end of this beautiful and happy Festival. Without that, however we may keep it, it is not "Christmas" in the true sense of the word. There will be an early celebration of the Holy Communion at 8 (not 8.30), and a sung service at 11. At 12 noon the Christmas Charities will be dispensed in the church. The recipients are expected to attend in person, unless hindered by infirmity.

The recent whist drive and dance on Nov. 6th was a great success in every way, and we beg to thank the many friends who helped with gifts in money or in kind. As a result the Committee sent £5 to the Butterfield Hospital, the largest sum we have ever given. Last year it was £2, and the previous year £4. This has been gratefully acknowledged by the Treasurer, Mr. Ingoldby.

The Village Hall is gradually being supplied with necessary furniture. Recently we obtained all the needed brushes and brooms and buckets, and now have purchased twelve small tables for use at whist drives, so that we can dispense with the long cumbersome tables, which always caused so much inconvenience in the room. Our next need is about 50 chairs, to displace the forms, or most of them. But this will be an expensive item.

On Thursday, Dec. the 11th another whist drive and dance is to be held, in aid of the Witham sick and dividing club.

General Johnson, of Witham Hall.—Last month we quoted the strange inscription upon our treble bell, which has aroused much interest, and a note about the celebrated donor may be acceptable. Lieut.-General William Augustus Johnson was born in 1777, and succeeded to the Witham Estate on the death of his uncle, in 1814. General Johnson must have been in every way a remarkable man, a splendid pattern of an old-time country squire, known far and wide, universally respected and honoured during his long and active life, in the course of which he filled many prominent positions. He was a Magistrate and deputy-Lieutenant for the Counties of Lincolnshire and Northants, and Sheriff of Lincoln in 1830. For the long space of 32 years he was chairman of the Kesteven Quarter Sessions. In 1821 he entered Parliament, where he sat, first as Member for Boston, and later for Oldham, in the Liberal interest.

The General remained unmarried until his 58th year, when he wooed and wedded Miss Lucy Foster, the eldest daughter of the Rector of Dowsby, who was still in her "teens." He died in 1863, at the ripe age of 86. His body rests in the family vault beneath the chancel of the church, and the East window is his memorial. There are several parishioners living who still remember him, and speak in the highest terms of respect both for him, and his most charming and gracious wife. Three of General Johnson's nine children are still living, a remarkable fact when one remembers that he was born 60 years before Queen Victoria began to reign! He was succeeded by our well-known and honoured late Squire, Mr. Augustus Charles Johnson, his eldest surviving son, who died in 1910, and in whose memory stands our beautiful Screen and Rood.