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

1925.—We venture to wish all our readers a very happy and prosperous new year.

Our Magazine continues to be well patronized, and we hope that all our subscribers will still extend their kind support. The greater the circulation the more space there is for the Witham notes. Last year we sold 76 copies monthly. Can we make it 80 as formerly? We should like all to know that no profit whatever is made on it. Each copy costs the Editor three half-pence, so that unless this price is charged he is the loser. There are still two or three who are in his debt. If all will pay for the year in advance, much trouble is saved. The magazine was commenced in 1903, twenty-two years ago, and your present Vicar has therefore written the monthly notes without a break for 265 months. Quite a fair record!

Mrs. Woolley, who died on the 5th of December, was a native of the parish, who spent the whole of her life in it. She was born in the village 80 years ago, and at the age of 18 married the late Mr. Edward Woolley, a representative of one of the oldest families in Witham. For many years she had lived in complete seclusion, although able and active almost to the end. Her life was clouded with sorrow through the loss of her three daughters, all in early womanhood, a triple blow such as is given to few mothers to suffer, and by reason of which, all who knew her ever felt for her a respectful sympathy. She was laid to rest beside her husband, who died in 1907, also at the age of 80. R.I.P.

The annual Church Meeting will be held on Wednesday, Jan. the 28th. It is most important for all parishioners to endeavour to attend this meeting, as it is then that the new Church Council is elected by their votes, so that each elector has a voice, if he cares to use it, in the affairs of the Church in his parish and Deanery. The names of the voters are on the "Electoral Roll," which will be posted upon the church notice board for two Sundays previous to the meeting. At the meeting also, the Church financial accounts for the past year will be submitted for approval.

A Fancy Dress dance has been arranged on Thursday, Jan. the 8th, and the proceeds will be given partly to the Nursing Association, and partly towards organizing a treat for the school children. Miss Acland-Hood-Reynardso has kindly promised to come and act as judge. Please support it liberally.

Baptism.—14th Dec., Margaret Annie Chamberlain.

Marriage.—3rd Dec., Frank Woolley and Annie Mary Watson.

Burial.—Eliza Woolley, aged 80 years.

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Christmas.—The church was decked so richly for the great Festival, that it appeared to be a bower of evergreen. Christmas is the one season when the decorations can never be overdone. Thanks to the kind helpers, and to the generous donor of the white flowers for the altar.

Various social gatherings took place last month, commencing with our fancy dress dance. This, as always, was a great success, and all praise is due to the hard-working committee. Lady Kesteven kindly gave us many prizes, and Miss Acland-Hood-Reynardson for the second time acted as judge, a difficult task when the costumes were so excellent, and the impersonators so many. Of the proceeds, £3 was sent to the Grimsthorpe Nursing Association, and the balance was spent upon a Christmas treat for the children.

Children's Treat.—This took place on Saturday, January 17th, and was splendidly carried out by the same committee. About 60 children were entertained to tea in the Village Hall, at 4 o'clock, after which each child had a dip out of a tub for a present. Games of various kinds were interspersed with music and recitations, by which time many parents and elders had arrived. Before leaving, all the children received sweets and oranges.

The choir were entertained by the Vicar last month, the elders on the 13th, and the juniors the following evening.

Further social events.—It is proposed to have a whist drive and dance at Shrovetide, in aid of the Stamford Infirmary, and one in Easter week for church objects.

Obituary.—We greatly regret to have to record the death of Miss Elizabeth Wells, after an illness of some weeks. Miss Wells who lived until recently at the toll-bar cottage, was well known to all for her cheerful and kindly disposition, and her untimely death will be deeply felt by many. After her father's death in 1921, she continued to live by herself in the old home, leaving it only about a year ago. We offer our deep sympathy to Miss Smith (her aunt), and to all her brothers and sisters, who will sadly miss her. R.I.P.

Confirmation.—The Vicar desires the names of all intending candidates *without delay*, as instructions must be commenced early in February.

Lent.—The Church's annual season of penitence begins with Ash Wednesday, Feb. 25th. We appeal to all our people to try and make real use of Lent this year. The need is great. Many are growing cold and careless, many even indifferent. The Bible speaks of three spiritual states, 'hot,' 'cold,' and 'lukewarm,' and of the three the last is the most dangerous of all. And yet perhaps it is the most common. Are you 'lukewarm,' reader? Then seek to answer God's call this Lent, a call to amendment and a fresh start.

A Missionary's visit.—On the evening of Sunday, February 8th, the sermon will be preached by the Rev. A. H. Phillips, an Indian Missionary, who will speak to us of Christian work in India. Will you please make a special note of this service, and make a point of attending? N.B. "Full Moon."

Baptism.—25th Jan., Leonard, son of Thomas Edward and Emma Butcher.

Burial.—24th Jan., Sarah Elizabeth Wells, aged 48 years.

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

The annual Church meeting was held on Jan. 28th, after due notice. Unfortunately the bad weather prevented many from attending. The first business was to receive the financial statement for the past year. The church collections throughout 1924 amounted to £40/12/0, a slight decrease from the previous year. However, there remains a balance in hand of £3/8/10 to be carried forward. The Church officials were then elected for the year. Churchwardens (as from Easter next), Mr. Bradshaw and Mr. Wilcox. Lay representatives to be summoned to the Ruri-decanal Conference, the two churchwardens, Mr. Metcalfe and Mr. Brudenell. The Church Council was appointed as follows:—Mrs. Ash, Mrs. Bradshaw, Mrs. Brudenell, Miss Fisher, Mrs. Thelwell, Mrs. Wilcox; and Messrs. Bradshaw, Brudenell, Metcalfe, Redshaw, Sharp, Thelwell and Wilcox, with Mr. Metcalfe as Secretary.

The newly-elected Council held their first meeting on Feb. 9th. This was also a wet night, so that all did not attend. Various subjects were discussed, among others, the renovation of the cassocks and surplices, which the ladies of the Council kindly undertook to deal with. Repairs to the bells are also to be put in hand.

The Village Hall Committee presented the balance sheet. There was a deficit on the year's accounts of £1/2/7, owing to special expenditure on furniture and appliances. Apart from these, the lettings quite cover the expenses of cleaning, lighting and heating, and the Hall may be said to be self-supporting. But we still want more furniture, in the shape of about 50 chairs.

A dance, in aid of the Cricket Club, was held on Jan. 29th. Unfortunately the attendance at this also suffered through the wet weather. However, the net proceeds came to just over £2.

The Cricket Club.—The annual general meeting, which was held on Feb. 3rd, was well attended. Mr. Todd, the Hon. Secretary, presented a very encouraging financial statement, and the club will commence the season under favourable conditions. Mr. T. Holmes was again elected Captain, with Mr. A. Francis as Vice-Captain, and the following as general committee: Messrs. C. Birch, R. Dalby, G. Pawlett and W. Sharp. The secretary stated that he had practically completed the list of fixtures, which begin on May 2nd with a home match against Irnham. He is having fixture cards printed, which we hope will be widely purchased by all supporters of the club. We heartily wish the club as successful a season as they had last year.

S.P.G.—Sunday, Feb. 8th was our Foreign Mission Sunday. In the evening we had a special preacher, the Rev. A. H. Phillips, from India, and there was a most excellent congregation. The offerings for the day came to £2/4/7, which included the contents of a missionary box (7/5) brought to church on the day. We much hope that as a result of the appeal made by the Vicar, others will apply to him for a box. Indeed every Christian home should have such a box, to support the great work nearest to the heart of our Blessed Lord, namely, to bring the saving Gospel to all nations.

The Stamford Infirmary.—As we write for the press, an effort is on foot for this worthy object, and not only is there a whist drive and dance for Shrove Tuesday, but a house-to-house appeal is being made. Last year we raised £7/4/6 in this way. May we do as well this year.

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Good Friday.—The manner in which we keep this most solemn day in all the year is a clear test of the reality of our faith, and of our love for Christ. It is inconceivable that anyone who truly believes in His Atoning Sacrifice can spend the day on which we commemorate it in total forgetfulness of Him.

Easter Day.—In order that every communicant may as far as possible be enabled to make their communion on Easter Sunday, there will be two early celebrations, at 7 and 8.30. The Church, as we know, orders that "every parishioner shall communicate at Easter" (see the Prayer Book rule).

Easter decorations.—May we ask for flowers, and in particular many helpers on Easter Eve, to beautify the church for the great Festival?

April is always the month of change in our rural parish. To those who are leaving us for new homes elsewhere, we venture to offer every good wish. The Vicar likes always to know the destination of families who leave, so that he may commend them to the notice and care of the priest of the parish to which they are going.

Sickness.—It is a long time since we had so widespread a visitation of sickness as was experienced throughout the parish last month, chiefly from the dreaded Influenza. Few houses altogether escaped, and in some whole families fell victims. Happily it is now abating, and we trust that ere long all will have recovered.

Missionary boxes.—In response to the appeal last month, several boxes have been asked for. But we want to hear of further applicants.

The Stamford Infirmary.—As a result of our efforts at Shrove-tide, we were enabled to send £8 4/6 to the Infirmary, exactly one pound more than last year. We are indeed grateful to all who helped by gifts and contributions to raise this very creditable sum.

Mrs. Metcalfe's resignation.—Scholars, parents and Managers alike all greatly regret the resignation of Mrs. Metcalfe from the school, and particularly because it was due to prolonged ill-health. We shall all unite in wishing her the recovery which only complete rest can effect. We shall find her place a hard one to fill. Never was there a teacher more popular with her little scholars than was Mrs. Metcalfe with her infant pupils.

Bourne Rural District Council, and Board of Guardians.—After some seven years of service on these bodies, the Vicar is standing down to make way for a new representative for the civil parish of Witham. He feels that it is a duty more suited to a layman. With regard to these bodies, there is a very great discrepancy in the numbers of constituents which each member represents, due to the varying populations of the parishes in the Union. For instance, our *ecclesiastical* parish, with a population of 388, is represented by three members, since it comprises 3 *civil* parishes within its area, whilst Thurlby with more than twice the number of people, has only one. The town of Bourne has 5 elected Guardians, we have 3! In short, we are greatly over-represented, and it is the same with other very small parishes in the area. Naturally, we do not grumble, though we wonder that the larger parishes don't!

Mrs. Walter Fenwick, who we regret to say, has been seriously ill for the last few weeks, is now much better, and is slowly recovering.

Request.—The Vicar will be grateful to anyone who can let him have a copy of the Magazine for June, 1924.

Baptisms.—March 8th, Horace Frederick, son of Thomas and Olive Doreen Holmes.

„ 15th, Joceline & Jaqueline, twin daughters of Arthur James and Annie Barnett.

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

Easter.—The weather on Easter Day contributed in no small degree to the brightness and joy of this glorious Festival. The church was, as usual, richly decorated with flowers, and looked its best. All the services were very well attended, and in addition the ringers gave us an unwonted treat with all the six bells rung in. We are very grateful to them. We long to hear them more frequently.

The Easter offerings were, by the desire of the churchwardens, given to the Vicar. This is a revival of an ancient custom, and is now followed in almost every parish. An explanation of its origin, and of its suitability, was recently given in church.

During this month we keep the last two of the four great Festivals, namely, Holy Thursday, or Ascension Day (with its octave), on the 21st, and Whitsun Day, on the 31st.

By the special request of the Bishop, the offerings on Whitsun Day will be given to the Lincoln Cathedral Restoration Fund. We ask for generous help. This parish has not hitherto sent its due proportion, as compared with other parishes, and we ought to remove this reproach.

The Stamford Infirmary Report, recently issued, which contains a list of donations for 1924, has inadvertently omitted to record the proceeds of our local effort, which resulted in the sum of £7/4/6. The Vicar immediately wrote to the Secretaries to call their attention to this omission, and has received an apology. It is unfortunate however that this widely circulated Report should convey the impression that we, as a parish, had not taken our part in the "Hospital Week Fund."

Death of Mr. David Pell.—On Maunday Thursday morning, Mr. Pell passed quietly away, after a brief illness. He had been gradually failing in strength for some considerable time, but had only been confined to bed for a very few days before the end came. He had acted as organ blower for the long space of some 36 years, and was seldom absent from his post, which he filled even up to two Sundays before his death. A native of Witham, he had passed practically all his life in the village, and his death was a shock to us all. The funeral took place on Easter Eve, and Mr. Metcalfe played suitable music on the organ, as a tribute of respect to his late helper. The Vicar referred, both at the funeral and on Easter Sunday morning, to the loss which the congregation and the parish had sustained through Mr. Pell's lamented death. We offer our deep sympathy to his widow and to his eight surviving children, who have thus sustained a double bereavement, for only the previous week, his son Walter was killed through an accident at his home in Yorkshire. Possibly the shock of this news contributed in some degree towards hastening the end. R.I.P.

The sudden death of Mr. William Wells, who had just moved from Witham to Stoke Rochford, was received here with great sorrow. He was run into by a motor car on the Great North Road, on the evening of Easter Day, just over a week since he left. The Vicar has heard, through the Bishop of Grantham (Rector of Stoke), that a fund is being raised there on behalf of the distressed widow, for whom the greatest sympathy is felt.

Mrs. Williamson, who is now living at North Witham, has many friends here who will be grieved to hear of her serious illness. Recently the Vicar went over to see her, and found her suffering from much pain and weakness, though bright and cheerful. Witham was always 'home' to her, and it is a great sorrow to her to think that she may not be well enough to see it again.

Tennis Club.—Play will begin early in May. For membership, please apply to Mr. Wilcox, the Hon. Sec.

Easter Dance.—The net proceeds of this dance amounted to £1/5/4.

Baptism.—April 19th, George Raymond, son of George and Mary Jane Pell.

Burial.—April 11th, David Pell, aged 70 years.

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

Ascension Day.—The Rector of Little Bytham was kind enough to take the services here in the morning, thereby enabling the Vicar to be away in the North, where he had been asked to preach on this Festival. Holy Thursday is one of the greatest Christian Festivals in the year, for it commemorates one of the four chief events in the life of our Blessed Lord, these events being His Birth, His Death, His Resurrection and His Ascension. It was the Vicar's privilege to be present in the morning at the sung Eucharist in a tiny country parish in north Lincs., where the service was beautifully rendered by the village choir, with the Squire of the parish acting as organist. In the evening he found himself in a town parish in Yorkshire for a stately service, consisting of solemn Evensong and Procession, to the accompaniment of splendid music, and singing such as Yorkshire folk are noted for. This was the Vicar's old parish, and he received a welcome which was truly embarrassing in its warmth and kindness. After service, the ringers gave him an ovation in the form of a peal on the eight bells, a feat of change-ringing which it was a joy to listen to. Altogether, it was a day of very happy memories, which he will not soon forget.

A church flag.—Our neighbours at Little Bytham are about to erect a flag-staff in the churchyard from which to fly a Church flag. The Vicar has often wished that our church possessed a flag, to be flown on special occasions, and suggests that we try and provide one. There is something peculiarly inspiring in the sight of a flag, it seems to mark an important day even more eloquently than the bells. As we cannot fix a flag-staff upon the tower itself, owing to the position of the spire, some other place would have to be chosen, possibly the west end of the nave roof.

Invalids.—All will unite in wishing Mr. Bradshaw, our esteemed churchwarden, a speedy and complete recovery. As one of the most regular and faithful attenders, we miss him greatly from his post in church on Sundays. May he soon be with us again. Another hospital case, Phyllis Thelwell, is happily quite restored to health once more.

Concert.—Visitors from Stamford gave us a capital little musical entertainment the other day in the Village Hall, which we highly appreciated.

Cricket club.—The season has not opened as auspiciously as we could have wished, our first four matches resulting in three losses and a draw. However, we hope for better success shortly.

Tennis.—The Vicar would very gladly welcome new players who might care to practice on his court with a view to joining the club, "the more the merrier"! Our club has the lowest subscription of any we know of, and a court far better than most, and nothing pleases the Vicar better than to see it well used. Spectators as well as players, are always welcome to come whenever they like.

A garden social.—We expect shortly to have an open-air social evening in the Vicarage garden, in aid of the choir outing fund. The date is not yet fixed.

Baptism.—May 24th, Mary, daughter of Richard and Hannah Mary Sharman.

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

Our garden fete, on June the 20th, was in every way an unqualified success, thanks to the untiring efforts of the members of the Church Council, and the many other helpers, who worked and organized everything so well. Quite hastily got up, and with no thought of making more than a few pounds for a choir outing, we were astonished to find that at the end of the evening we had taken more than £23. The weather was ideal, and we hear that the event was greatly enjoyed by all. Such kind support will encourage us in getting up similar summer gatherings in the future, which break the monotony of our village life, and afford occasions for all to meet together.

A treat to the children who attend the church followed on the Monday, while the tables and forms were still in the Vicarage garden. This too was much enjoyed by all our little guests, who had a right good time. A bountiful tea was followed by games and contests of every sort, organized by our lady helpers, who were ably assisted by Miss Darnes. Mrs. Fenwick also kindly came to help us, and contributed a bountiful supply of sweets, which were distributed at the close.

Red Cross Society.—A sale of flowers, in aid of the British Red Cross Society, was recently undertaken in the Parish by some of our school children, who have thus collected the very creditable sum of £2. The collectors were the following children: In Witham, O. Rudkin and G. Butcher, £1/7/10; In Manthorpe, M. Hind and V. Clements, 5/8; In Toft and Lound, C. Bradshaw, D. Wallis and E. Haddon, 8/6.

The church clock which has been "on strike" for over a fortnight will, we hope, be repaired and set going before the issue of this magazine. The stopping of the clock has at least brought home to us how greatly we depend upon it, and what a privilege and boon it is to us all. It may be interesting in this connection to record the fact that our church has possessed a clock for nearly 400 years. Indeed Witham is one of the earliest instances on record of a church having a public clock. A clock is mentioned in our old church books as early as the year 1548, and possibly it was in existence much earlier. The present clock was made in 1870, and is a magnificent piece of mechanism. Its cost was over £300.

Children's tennis.—Miss Darnes has very kindly undertaken to give an hour's instruction in the game to some of the school children after school. Her kindness is greatly appreciated.

The Rutland Archæological Society is visiting Witham on Tuesday, July the 7th. After inspecting Carlby church and the Great Oak at Bowthorpe, the party will reach Witham church about 4 o'clock or earlier. The architectural features of our beautiful and interesting church will be fully described, together with its history, and there may be many parishioners who would like to take advantage of this visit, to learn more about their parish church. All who care to come will be welcome, and they should be at the church quite by 4 o'clock. Afterwards the party will be entertained to tea in the Vicarage garden, if the day be fine. Any coming from a distance are welcome to tea, on payment of 6d.

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

Our old church in old days.—Could we be taken back a hundred years, not only would the whole village look an entirely different place, but a visit to the church would surprise us most of all. We should find the interior crowded up with a jumble of "horse-box" pews, facing in all directions, and covering every available inch of space, and so high that the occupants would be quite invisible. No altar would be seen, because the chancel was shut off from the nave, and the little door which gave entry to it was hidden behind the immense "three-decker" pulpit. A gallery stretched across the west end, and another in the south transept where the organ now stands. There was of course then no organ, and the music was supplied by a number of singers in the west gallery, who were accompanied by players of strange and old-fashioned instruments, such as bassoons and hautboys. The children sat together in the south-east gallery. At the door stood a man with a whip, to eject the dogs, who might follow their masters into church. Birds too, often found their way in through the gaps in the walls (for the church was then in a serious state of disrepair), and these were shot down with guns! Rain dripped in through the leaking roofs, and altogether the old church was in such a condition that we of to-day would find it hard to recognise with the building as it is now, restored and beautified as befits the House of God.

Here are a few extracts from the church account books of the period: "Pd. for 7 men Learning to sing sames" (psalms). "Pd. for learning to play with Bassoon and Hautboys." "Pd. for Reeds for the Bassoon." "Pd. for Beef at the singers' feast." "Pd. for dog whipping." "Pd. for Powder and shot to shoot birds in ye Church." An old Bassoon, once used in the church, is still preserved by the Vicar.

Death of Mrs. Garner.—On June 30th, Mrs. Sarah Ann Garner, passed to her rest, after a long and painful illness. For many years she had resided in the parish, first at Toft, and later at Manthorpe and Witham. Some 2 years ago, she went, after her husband's death, to live with her daughter, Mrs. Barsby, at Casewick, where she died. Mrs. Garner was brought up as a Baptist, and only in later life was she baptized and confirmed. Her simple faith was an inspiration to all who knew her, and her knowledge of Holy Scripture was wonderful in one who was not a fluent reader. She was passionately fond of flowers, and gardening was her greatest delight. Wherever she lived, her garden was tidy and beautiful beyond compare. With her death we have lost on earth one of God's "hidden saints." R.I.P.

Death of Mrs. Williamson.—After a long illness and great suffering, Mrs. Sarah Jane Williamson, died on July 18th, at North Witham, and was buried there. A native of this village, and sister of Mr. Matthew Pell, she will be remembered for her devotion to her widowed mother, whom she tended and nursed with such loving care. Mrs. Williamson never lost touch with Witham, but after she left was a regular subscriber to the parish magazine, and was deeply interested in all our doings. Her husband was for many years a faithful member of our choir. We tender to him and his son our deep sympathy. R.I.P.

The school.—*Religious Inspector's Report.*—"Both the answers of the children and the general tone of the school, show that the children have been carefully taught. Their singing, too, is remarkable. It is always a pleasure to examine this school."

(Signed), A. L. RICHARDS,

DIOCESAN INSPECTOR.

The school breaks up for the summer holidays on July 31st.

Burials.—July 4th, Sarah Ann Garner, aged 83 years.

„ 21st (At North Witham), Sarah Jane Williamson, aged 62 years.

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

Choir outing.—On July 30th the members of the choir had their annual summer outing, when a long and happy day was spent at Skegness. The weather was gloriously fine, and the journey was undertaken by road. At Boston, the party visited the wonderful church on the outward journey.

In Memoriam.—The untimely death of Francis Glenn, who was so widely known and beloved here, came as a shock to us all. Few of us even realized how ill he was until shortly before the end came. We had known him ever since he was a little lad of about three, when his parents first came to live here, and we had watched him grow into the fine sturdy young fellow that he became. For a number of years he was in the choir, when quite a lad he became one of our altar servers, and later he took up ringing with keen interest, so that he contributed in every way that he could towards the glory of God. He was confirmed in our own church when he was twelve, and was a regular communicant. In 1919 he was bereaved of his devoted mother, and not long after, of his father. This double loss was a grievous blow to one of his affectionate disposition. For 15 weeks he was in Mansfield hospital, where he passed away on Sunday afternoon, Aug. 9th. On the following Tuesday the body of our young friend was brought back to Witham, where it rested during the night in the church, surrounded by the mortuary tapers, and covered with the pall, and a profusion of flowers. On the Wednesday we laid it to rest beside those of his parents, in the presence of a large number of mourners and sorrowing friends. On the following Sunday a muffled peal was rung. *Requiescat in pace.*

Accidents.—Mrs. Worthington was somewhat seriously injured in a motor accident on Aug. 7th, which necessitated her removal to Stamford Infirmary. Happily she is now making a good recovery, and we must be thankful for her escape from injury of a far graver nature. Another road accident, though of a different kind, befell Mrs. William Sharp, of Manthorpe, on Sunday, August 16th. She was returning from church on Sunday morning with her husband and a friend, when the horse stumbled on crossing the main road at the Toll bar. Mrs. Sharp was thrown out, and sustained a broken collar-bone, in addition to being somewhat severely cut and bruised. She too, we are thankful to say, is progressing favourably. We venture to express our deep sympathy both with her and Mrs. Worthington, and our thankfulness at their providential escape. Both accidents might so easily have been far more serious in their results.

Harvest Thanksgiving.—It is our usual custom to set aside the first Sunday in October as our thanksgiving day for the harvest, and we will probably do so again this year. The Church Council however will decide this at their next meeting, when due notice will be given.

Renovations.—The ladies' committee who are being kindly assisted by Mrs. Fenwick, have undertaken to overhaul the choir outfits and vestments, with a view to much-needed repairs and renewals. Eventually all worn-out cassocks and surplices will be replaced.

The cricket club are to be congratulated on a thoroughly successful season. Out of a total of 20 matches played, nine have been won, six lost, and five resulted in a draw. During this wonderful summer not one match, so far as we can recollect, was stopped by wet weather. The tennis club too has had an unusually good season, owing to the lovely spell of beautiful weather.

Burial.—August 12th, Francis Glenn, aged 21 years.

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

The Harvest Thanksgiving which we stated last month would probably be on the 1st Sunday in October, has since been fixed by the Church Council for September 27th, and the Council further requested the Vicar to invite Mr. Clowes, the Rector of Little Bytham, to preach in the evening, as owing to his approaching removal from our neighbourhood, it would be the last opportunity of having him with us.

The Rev. G. K. Clowes, Rector of Little Bytham, who has accepted the benefice of Croyland, has been a friendly and helpful neighbour to us during his comparatively short stay at Little Bytham, and we shall miss him very much. A great organizer, and zealous worker, the larger parish of Croyland will give even greater scope for his singular abilities, and we heartily congratulate it upon its good fortune in having him appointed as Rector. In accepting this change, Mr. Clowes is relinquishing a home among very pleasant surroundings for one of comparative isolation and—— but no, Croyland people might read this! We will therefore only add that we wish him much blessing and happiness in the new sphere of work to which he has been called.

Presentation to Mrs. Metcalfe.—On Tuesday, Sept. 22nd, a very pleasing ceremony took place in the Village Hall, when Mrs. Metcalfe was presented with a handsome china cabinet, in recognition of her long services as Infant Mistress in our school. It is now six months since Mrs. Metcalfe's resignation, but for some considerable time many of us have felt that she must not be allowed to lay down her work without some tangible expression of gratitude from the parish, and chiefly from parents of scholars under her charge. And so, thanks mainly to Mrs. Bradshaw, Mrs. Wallis and Mrs. Ash, who organized the fund, and chose the gift, the presentation was duly made to her in the presence of a large and representative gathering. The object chosen was one which it was known Mrs. Metcalfe would like to have, although the fact of the presentation was kept a secret until the very day that it came off. If anything were required to prove to Mrs. Metcalfe the esteem and respect which are so widely felt towards her, this friendly gathering would sufficiently do so. All her past little pupils have cherished the happiest memories of her kindly and affectionate tuition, and the ready manner in which all responded to the suggestion of giving her a present, shows how greatly her kindness has been appreciated. Miss Metcalfe, who had been secretly consulted on the matter, executed a handsomely illuminated list of the subscribers' names, which is suitably framed, and accompanies the gift. It gave to everyone the greater pleasure in that Mrs. Fenwick was present and made the presentation on behalf of the subscribers.

A gift to Miss Darnes.—The members of the school-children's tennis club, as a small recognition of Miss Darnes' kindness in coaching them during the summer, have presented her with a silver-mounted ebony box, subscribed for entirely by themselves.

A Halloween party.—Mrs. Fenwick, in conjunction with the ladies' committee, is organizing a social evening on original lines, to be held in the Garage at the Hall. There will be whist and dancing among other novel attractions. We hope that all will support it. The eve of All Saints' Day, called All Hallows' Eve, or "Hallowéen," was in past days a great occasion for convivial gatherings. The date is not yet finally fixed, but it will be just before or after November 1st.

The Feast Sunday, or Dedication Festival, with all its helpful teaching and association, falls this year on Sunday, Nov. 1st (the Festival of All Saints).

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

The Harvest Thanksgiving services were extremely well attended, and the offerings, which amounted to £4/6/3, were sent to the Stamford Infirmary. The church was decorated with great taste, and we are grateful to the ladies who adorned it so beautifully, as well as to those who supplied corn and flowers in such abundance.

The Feast Sunday, which falls this year on Nov. 1st, is always the Sunday following Oct. 25th. The reason for this is obscure, but it has been so kept for hundreds of years. Probably the actual dedication of the church in the Norman times took place during this week, when the Bishop of Lincoln (perhaps the great St. Hugh himself) came to Witham to hallow the new-built church, which replaced an earlier one, built before the Conquest. The "Feast week" was, even in the present Vicar's recollection, marked by stalls and "roundabouts" and cocoa-nut shies, and was altogether a merry time in the village. This is now unfortunately but a memory. But the church is with us still, and the Feast Sunday must ever be a day of thanksgiving to God for the blessings of our holy religion, of which our old church is a witness and a symbol.

To whom does the church belong?—The parish church belongs to the parishioners, not to the parson, or the churchwardens. They are merely custodians. The people have a right of entrance to the church at all times. That is why it is—or should be—always open. Locked churches are happily rare now-a-days. Ours has not been locked for over 40 years. The door of the House of God should be the "ever open door."

Armistice Sunday, which, by direction of the Archbishops, is to be observed on Nov. 8th, will be kept as in former years. There will be a requiem Eucharist at 11, when we shall commemorate our dead by name, and there will be a suitable address. Those therefore who would join in this solemn commemoration should come in the morning.

Mr. William Smart, an old Witham resident, of whom we had quite lost sight, died, we find, about four years ago. The Vicar recently made inquiries, and has ascertained that his death took place on October 11th, 1921.

Confirmation.—The Vicar will soon be wanting names of candidates for Confirmation, and will be glad to have notice before long of any who are to be prepared.

Purchase of chairs.—As an opportunity occurred of obtaining some good and strong chairs for the Village Hall, at a low figure, the Vicar, on the advice of the managing committee, has purchased fifty, at the rate of 2/6 apiece. These will prove a very useful addition to the room.

Sunday mornings.—The 11 o'clock service is always concluded by 12 noon, so as to permit those who have home duties to attend it. All who come from a distance are most welcome to a lift home, as far as accommodation in the Vicar's car allows. Those who desire this should come to the Vicarage immediately after service.

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

Christmas Day is rightly the most dearly-loved day in the year, for it is Jesus Christ's birthday. We give greetings and presents one to another. Let us bring a gift to Him too, the gift He would like the best of all, our love and our worship. Bring that gift to Him in His Holy House, where He comes to meet us on His Birthday morning.

Evensong on the Sundays in December and the first Sunday in January will be at 7 o'clock instead of 6.30, so that the Vicar may take a service at Little Bytham, at 5.30. We therefore ask the kind indulgence of our congregation on these Sundays. The service will be over about 8 o'clock.

Next year's Magazine will contain a new "inside" part, called the "Church Monthly;" which we hope may prove more interesting than the "Sign." We venture to ask for continued support in keeping up our circulation, not for the sake of profit, for we make none whatever, but because the more subscribers we have, the larger is the space allotted to us for our own parish notes. The Vicar has always endeavoured to make these as interesting as possible, apparently with some occasional success, as his notes are not infrequently reproduced in the local Press.

The Social evening, held last month in the Hall Garage, proved so great an attraction that we were almost crowded out! We have to thank Mrs. Fenwick most heartily for the kind and generous manner in which she organized everything, and provided the band, the prizes, and the refreshments at her own expense. In spite of the small charge made for entrance, the net profits exceeded £11, which were given to the church improvement fund.

The dancing classes are proving very attractive and enjoyable, and it is proposed to hold them weekly until Lent.

Other fixtures of a social and seasonable nature, which we hope to arrange ere long, are a fancy dress dance in the new year, a whist drive, in connection with the Stamford Infirmary Competition, and a "Social" for the Cricket club, but dates are not yet fixed.

The bells.—We are having sundry minor repairs done in the belfry, and soon we hope to hear our beautiful bells rung once more. Certain defects have recently made this impossible. The fine set of handbells, presented some time ago to the church by Capt. Fenwick, are to be placed in a glass-fronted cupboard in the ringing chamber. We hope that some day we may form a team of hand-bell ringers as well as steeple ringers.

Queen Alexandra.—Our tribute of respect to her Majesty's memory was paid on Friday, Nov. 27th, when we held our Memorial Service at 11.30, the hour of the Royal Funeral in Westminster Abbey. The altar was vested in black, and the mortuary tapers were lighted. The little service was very affecting and beautiful, and will doubtless live long in the memories of the children, who, at the express desire of the Education Authorities, were in attendance.

Marriage.—25th November, Tom Crosby Cropley and Winifred Sarah Haddon.