

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

Christmas gifts.—With their usual kindness and generosity, Captain and Mrs. Fenwick remembered all their tenants and employees, who were the recipients of seasonable gifts of meat, groceries, game and presents. Mrs. Fenwick had further ordered a special gift from herself for each house, as she did last year, but the consignment had not arrived from Madeira in time for Christmas. She wishes it to be known that these will be distributed later, and greatly regrets the delay.

The children's party.—The young people had a right royal time on Dec. 18th, when a tea and party was organized for the school children. In addition to the good things provided by the Committee who gave the treat, Mrs. Fenwick sent a present for each child, as well as a bountiful supply of sweets, oranges, bananas and crackers. After nearly five hours of mirth and merriment, the singing of the National Anthem, and many rounds of cheers for Mrs. Fenwick and the committee ladies, terminated one of the jolliest evenings the children have ever had.

Captain Fenwick spent a few days at the Hall shortly before Christmas, when everyone was pleased to see him looking so much better.

The church was profusely decorated with evergreens and white flowers for the Christmas Festival, and looks very beautiful. The great day was fittingly ushered in by a joyous peal on the bells soon after 7 o'clock.

Our annual fancy-dress dance will be held on Monday, Jan. 10th, in the Hall Garage, by kind permission of the Squire and Mrs. Fenwick. This is always the most important social event of the winter here, and no doubt will again be largely attended. Lady Kesteven will be present to act as judge of the costumes, and will distribute the prizes. A very good local band will provide the music. The proceeds will be given to the Grimsthorpe Nursing Association.

The Bishop of Lincoln has arranged for a Confirmation at Bourne church, on Wednesday, March the 9th. Any who desire to be prepared for Confirmation are asked to give in their names to the Vicar as soon as possible.

The annual Parochial Meeting will be held (D.V.) on Friday, the 28th of January, for electing the Churchwardens, Sidesmen and Church Council for the ensuing year, and for receiving a statement of the Church financial accounts, and for the transaction of other business. It would be a great kindness if members of the congregation would endeavour to attend this important meeting, and thereby show their interest in the affairs of their parish church, and support and encourage the Vicar and Wardens. All whose names are on the Electoral Roll are entitled by law to attend and vote.

Almanacks.—The Vicar sent out almanacks to the magazine subscribers before Christmas, in order to convey his greetings and best wishes. If anyone has not received a copy, will they please make application. There are 3 or 4 still left.

The Magazine for 1927.—It will be a great help and kindness if subscriptions to the magazine could be paid in advance this month, as it avoids monthly payments.

Last year there was no marriage in the parish, four baptisms and only two deaths, though there were four burials, the average of ages was over 78.

A very happy new year to one and all.

Burial.—1st December, Urana Holiday, aged 77 years.

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Our oldest parishioner.—Our hearty congratulations to Mrs. Thomas Allam, who attained the great age of 96 on Dec. 27th last. A reference to the register has proved her to be a year older than she thought. Here is a copy of the entry. "Baptized on Jan. 5th, 1831, Elizabeth, daughter of John and Mary Wright, of Toft, by John Cheales, Vicar." She was thus christened 9 days after her birth, according to the Prayer Book requirements, then kept more strictly than they are now. Mrs. Allam, despite her years, can still do all her household work unaided.

Foreign Missions Sunday.—Our annual Mission Sunday is on Feb. 6th, when the address at the Morning Service will be given by the Rev. E. H. Gomes, M.A., from Sarawak. Please make a special effort to attend. The Service will, as usual, be confined to an hour. Missionary Boxes should be brought in on this Sunday, or during the week following.

The Mothers' Union.—It is hoped after all to start a branch of the M.U. in the parish. Mrs. Weekes, who has recently come to live among us, has very kindly consented to take Mrs. Cartwright's place, and act as local Superintendent. The first meeting will be held on the 21st March.

Prizes have recently been awarded to the children who attend the church on Sunday morning and afternoon. Parents are asked to encourage this attendance, which is registered by means of the stamps and albums. Those who have these collections will shortly be invited to a tea party, and later on to a summer treat.

The fancy dress dance on January 10th constituted a record, so far as attendance goes. In every way it was most enjoyable and successful. The judging was most ably done by the Hon. Mrs. Howard and her sister Miss Lubbock, who came in place of their mother, Lady Kesteven.

Plough Monday.—Witham is one of the few places where this ancient custom is still kept up. The name is given to the Monday after the Epiphany, or Twelfth Day, when the Christmas holidays being ended, the plough boys returned to their work. The old words of the play which they perform come down with but little alteration from time immemorial.

The weekly dancing classes will conclude with a "free evening" on Shrove Tuesday, March 1st. They have certainly been appreciated, and well patronized.

The choir.—The increased number of choristers is a great joy and encouragement to the Vicar, who would welcome even more, if they will join. This year we look like having quite a big party for our summer trip!

Please note.—Our annual effort for the Stamford Infirmary will take place in about a fortnight's time. There will be a qualifying whist drive, followed by a dance. Good prizes for the former, good band for the latter!

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Death of Mr. Matthew Pell.—It was a great shock to us all when we heard of Mr. Pell's passing, for none of us realized that the end was so near, but we can only be thankful that he was spared any suffering, and passed peacefully away in his sleep. We shall miss his familiar figure in church, where for 33 years he had filled the office of Sexton, and where he was on duty up to the very last Sunday of his life. He ever served us faithfully and well to the best of his powers. He never failed us, he was never late, never away unless really ill. His devotion to the church was a very real thing. It was always his first thought, and the last words that he every spoke were about the church. With his death another link with the past has been broken. For he came of a very old Witham family. His forefathers had lived here for generations. He was baptized here and married here, and spent nearly all his life in the village. We wish to express our deep sympathy with his widow and his daughters. R.I.P.

The Nursing Association.—We are sorry to have to record that this useful institution is to come to an end. Nurses can still be had by members up to July, but no further subscriptions will be collected. Meanwhile the money made from the fancy dress dance in January will be banked. It has been suggested that small grants from this might be made in cases of sickness where there is real need of nursing help.

The church.—Mr. Pell's grandson, Mr. E. Warnes has very kindly undertaken to carry on his grandfather's duties until the end of April, in order that the Church Council may have time to make new appointment. We are sorry to learn from Mrs. Pell that she wishes to give up the cleaning, and so a new church cleaner will also have to be found.

The annual Church meeting which was held on Jan. 28th was not very well attended, but it was an unusually rough and wet evening, which would prevent many from turning out. The business done consisted of the appointment of churchwardens and sidesmen, the election of the Church Council for the year, and the passing of the balance sheet of church expenses. This for the first time for 27 years showed an adverse balance, the income being £59/1/0, and the expenditure £60/3/0. As the Vicar remarked, it spoilt his record, but we trust that it will not happen again, and it will not if our people will give with greater liberality towards the expenses of their parish church.

S.P.G. Sunday.—On Feb. 6th our offerings were devoted to the support of foreign missions, and we had a special preacher in the morning, when there was a very good congregation. The collections amounted to £2/10/2, and the missionary boxes brought in added £2/6/2 more, a very gratifying increase on last year.

The Stamford Infirmary.—We greatly thank the many generous contributors to the house-to-house collection last month. Witham gave £1/9/6, Toft and Lound 19/2, and Manthorpe £1/1/2. In addition, the whist drive and dance made over £5. All the prizes and refreshments were also gifts.

Note.—The Mothers' Union meeting is postponed.

Baptism.—30th Jan., Barbara Winifred, daughter of Arthur James and Annie Barnett.

Burial.—15th Feb., Matthew Pell, aged 75 years.

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Easter falls a fortnight later than it did last year, and after the change to Summer Time. May the glorious weather of last year be repeated! It is the one Festival in the year when the Church orders all her children to come to the Holy Communion. Let us all be careful to keep this rule. You will find it in the Prayer Book at the end of the Communion Service.

Easter Services.—Holy Communion at 7.30 and 9; Sung Eucharist (no sermon) at 11; Festal Evensong and address at 6.30.

The Easter decorations.—Gifts of flowers are asked for, and all who will are invited to help making the church beautiful for the great Festival.

Good Friday.—Service at 11 and 7. Last year these services were well attended, especially that the morning. However we keep this solemn day, let us not forget its deep religious character. It a shocking thing for Christian people to spend the day of Christ's Crucifixion in thoughtless amusement.

Community singing.—What is it? It means hearty singing in crowds, all joining in, and as the saying is "letting ourselves go." It is a delightful and enjoyable thing. We are going to try it church on Low Sunday evening (April 24th), and we ask all, old and young alike, to come and join in. Major Bell, the choirmaster of Bourne Abbey Church, will come and conduct for us. We shall chiefly have very well-known and favourite hymns. If the experiment is appreciated, we shall certainly repeat it.

New Sexton.—After the end of this month, Mr. Cyril Pell, who has been appointed to this post by the Church Council, will take the office rendered vacant by the death of Mr. Matthew Pell. As the Vicar recently explained in church, the term Sexton is a corruption of Sacristan, which means one who has the care and charge of holy places and holy things. In olden days every church had two lay officials, the clerk and the sexton. The clerk served the priest at the altar, read the Epistle, and led the singing and responses of the people, while the sexton had charge of the church and churchyard, and saw that all was in readiness for the services, when he then tolled the bell. In those days there was no heating or lighting, these are modern innovations, but they add considerably nowadays to the sexton's duties!

Easter social.—On Easter Monday there will be a dance in the Village Hall. Please patronize it well, as it is in aid of the children's summer outing fund. Gifts of refreshments will be a great help.

R.S.P.C.C. stands for "the Royal Society for the prevention of cruelty to children." Mrs. Metcalfe, who is the local representative of this splendid Society, has recently been soliciting sympathy and support for its aims. She has collected and sent in 25/-

Preliminary Notice.—It is proposed to have a garden fete, in aid of the church funds, in the Vicarage garden on Saturday, June the 11th.

Baptism.—March 30th, Jessie Merillian, daughter of Cecil and Hilda Emma Story.

Burial.—March 2nd, Anne Bates Burton, aged 70 years.

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Easter.—Nearly always the Easter Festival is fine and sunny, whether it fall early or late. This year, the weather was more wonderful than ever, and all Nature seemed to be in harmony with the joy and gladness which the Easter message proclaims. The services both on Good Friday and Easter Day were more than usually well attended. It was delightful to see the large congregations in the morning on both days. Our lovely church never looked more beautiful in its rich garnishing of flowers. The Easter offerings, given by custom to the Vicar, amounted to £4/17/6.

Ascension Day falls on May 26th. Let us remember its great importance, and endeavour to keep it fittingly.

Our community singing on Low Sunday proved very attractive and enjoyable. We were pleased to be told by the conductor that we really did know how to sing at Witham. The only complaint seemed to be that it was all too short. Another time (for we hope to repeat it), we might have Evensong earlier, and give the whole time from 6.30 to the singing. The unpropitious weather we fear kept some away, but even so, the church was absolutely filled from end to end.

Dance.—Our modest little Easter Monday dance was the means of adding £3 towards the children's outing fund, which now totals nearly £6.

Colonel and Mrs. Weekes are leaving us, we are sorry to say, this month. Before they go, we should like to take this opportunity of thanking them for all they have done here during their all-too-short stay, for their unbounded kindness to one and all, and for the interest they have taken in the welfare of the place.

The death of Mr. William Pick has removed from among us our second oldest parishioner. He was not quite sure of his age, and the Vicar, after making enquiries, found that he was baptized on Jan. 7th, 1841, at Stanton-on-the-Wolds, Notts. Thus he was certainly over 86. The death of his wife, nearly 8 years ago, was a great grief and shock, since which he gradually became feebler and more helpless. This was a great trial, to one who was formerly so active. Mrs. Osborne, alone of his many children, was with him when he died.

The village stocks.—A very excellent descriptive article recently appeared in the *Stamford News* on our stocks, with an illustration. All who take an interest in this old relic should read it. It recalls incidentally how the Vicar was instrumental in rescuing the stocks from destruction!

The cricket club.—The club opens its season with a match against Morton on May 7th. We hope that we shall again have a prosperous and successful time this year. The welfare of our cricket club is or should be of interest to us all, and enlist our generous support.

Lawn tennis.—The court at the Vicarage will soon be available for play, if the weather permits. We hope to see many members in the club this year.

Baptism.—April 17th (Easter Day), Raymond, son of Thomas Edward and Emma Butcher.

Burial.—April 27th, William Pick, aged 86 years.

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Our coming Fete.—We hope that all will come and patronize our garden fete, to be held in the Vicarage grounds on Saturday, June the 11th. There will be many attractions, including bowling for a pig, skittles and other amusements. The school children will give a performance of country dancing and singing, under the direction of Miss Darnes, while the Barrowden Boy Scouts, who will be in camp at Witham for Whitsuntide, have kindly promised to give a display of physical drill and ambulance work. For dancing, the Elysiaus' Band will play, so that there will be attractions to suit old and young alike. Come and spend a happy afternoon and evening. Teas will be provided at moderate charge, and refreshments will be obtainable throughout the evening. The fete is in aid of the church funds.

Children's outing.—It is proposed to take the school children to the fete at Casewick Park on Whit-Monday. The funds at our disposal will not, alas! be sufficient for an excursion to the sea-side, for so large a number, which cost us over £32 some few years ago, but we hope that this will prove almost equally enjoyable. We shall take the older children only, and the infants will have a treat all of their own at home.

In aid of the blind.—Last month a "geranium Day" collection was organized by the children on behalf of the National Institute for the Blind. In Witham, P. Sandall and G. Warr collected 18/-, in Manthorpe, J. Hall and C. Hind 5/-, and in Toft-with-Lound, D. Wallis and D. Bradshaw 9/-. Total £1/12/0.

Empire Day was duly observed in the school, and Mr. Hall very kindly came from Manthorpe in the morning, and gave an interesting address on our "far-flung Empire," and its greatness. At the conclusion he promised rewards for the best accounts written by the children afterwards. To further mark the day, a half-holiday was given. It is on occasions such as these that we feel the want of a flag-staff, and we hope that some day we may possess one.

The eclipse of the sun on Wednesday, June 29th, will be the first total eclipse visible in England for 200 years. To see the totality, we would have to go some 130 miles further north, but even from here the sight will be wonderful and awe-inspiring. No one should miss this great phenomenon. The time of the darkest phase is 6.24 a.m. We must all be up in time on this great day!

Cricket.—At the time of writing, Witham has won all three of the Saturday matches played so far, a splendid start. The scores were: May 7th, Witham 94, Morton 37; 14th, Witham 82, Castle Bytham 41; 21st, Witham 71, Rutland Engineers 69.

The Saturday matches for June, are: 4th, v. Clipsham, home; 11th, v. Holywell, away; 18th, v. Rutland Engineers, away; 25th, v. Thurlby, home.

Burial.—May 30th, Robert Garfield, aged 62 years.

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Mr. Metcalfe's resignation.—The news of Mr. Metcalfe's impending retirement has been received with deep regret and sorrow by the entire parish. Although we knew that we should lose him before very long, we had hoped that he might perhaps have remained with us for another year or so. However, having secured a new home he has thought it best to leave Witham at the end of August. Mr. Metcalfe has been in charge of our school for over 35 years, and it is difficult to think of Witham without him, so closely has he been identified with everything here, not only the school, but the church and the parish generally. His place will be hard indeed to fill, and the Managers have a very responsible and difficult duty before them in selecting a successor to one who has been throughout such an ideal teacher to the children, and friend to all. We feel sure too that the wrench of parting will not be only on our side but also on his, for it is not easy to uproot oneself after the lapse of so many years, and after having had the charge of two generations of scholars, Mr. Metcalfe must feel himself to be almost a father to the parish. There is much more that we should like to say, but space forbids this month.

The fete last month proved to be very successful and enjoyable. We were fortunate indeed with our weather. Had we chosen the next Saturday (as we very nearly did), it would have been a "wash-out" in a literal sense! All thanks are due to the many kind helpers, who organized and managed everything so splendidly. The children's singing and country dancing was greatly enjoyed, and this, together with the Scouts' display, formed an unusually attractive and delightful entertainment. After paying all expenses, we have a net balance of nearly £17 towards the special church fund.

School children's treats.—From a fund raised for the purpose last winter, we were able to give the day school children a summer outing. All the scholars except the infants were taken in motor buses to the fete at Casewick Park on Whit-Monday, where they had a real good time, which included the most bounteous tea we have ever known! The infants had a party shortly afterwards all to themselves in the Vicarage garden.

Choir outing.—The choir trip will take place on July 4th, and all seem agreed in selecting Skegness as the place of our destination. This year we shall be quite a large party, if all the members are able to go.

Choir photograph.—It is 21 years since we had a photograph taken of the choir, since when the little boys who figure in the front row are now grown up men, and in some cases fathers of families. These photographic records are of exceptional interest, and we specially hope that we may have another taken this month, before Mr. Metcalfe leaves us.

Cricket fixtures for the month.—July 2nd, v. Castle Bytham, away; 9th, v. Clipsham, away; 16th, v. Morton, away; 23rd, v. Essendine, home; 30th, v. Thurlby, away.

Marriage.—June 18th, Charles Hibbins and Mary Jane Fisher.

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Our new Headmaster.—The School Managers have appointed Mr. Harold Stoddart, of Ferry Hill, County Durham, to the Headmastership of our school, in succession to Mr. Metcalfe. We feel sure that their decision will meet with hearty approval. As the local press has supplied us with all particulars regarding Mr. Stoddart's career and abilities, we need not repeat them here, but only add that by his frankness and geniality he won the hearts of the Managers the moment that he met them. We hope and believe that we shall all find a very good friend in Mr. Stoddart, and we ask for a very hearty welcome to be extended to him and Mrs. Stoddart when they come to live among us at the end of this month.

Mr. and Mrs. Metcalfe will be leaving Witham before this month is out, and will go to their new home in Lincoln. It is difficult to put into words what we feel about losing them, and we are sure, too, that Mr. Metcalfe would be the last man to desire the publication of our real sentiments about his departure. We will only say therefore that we are grateful beyond words for his long and valued work here, and wish both him and Mrs. Metcalfe many years of health and happiness in their retirement.

On Sunday, August 7th the services will be conducted and the addresses given by the Rev. H. Smith, Vicar of Ripponden, Yorkshire, who is no stranger to us here, for he is the son of Mrs. Smith, of Toft. He has very kindly offered to help the Vicar in this way, while spending his holiday with his mother. Last month the Vicar had the help of his brother, the Rev. G. B. Cooley, for two Sundays, who lately returned from Bermuda. An occasional change of this kind is a good thing both for priest and people.

Absent invalids.—Mrs. Allam, who recently went to stay with her son in Nottinghamshire, is stronger and better we hear. She bore the long journey well and without fatigue. Mrs. Clarke, of Toft, who went about the same time to her son's house at Ryhall, is also making progress. To both these old friends we wish restored health, and a return in due course to their homes.

The choir trip to Skegness was a great day for all who went. To some of us it was an eventful one, owing to our prolonged "hold-up" on the way home!

The photograph taken of the choir on July 14th, has turned out well. All who may wish for copies can get them on application to the Vicar.

Scholarships.—Jack Wilson, the holder of the recently-formed Church Estate Scholarship, has won another given by the County Council, and the Trustees have now decided to divide the money at their disposal between two scholars, whose parents are willing to bear a small part of the cost of their education at Bourne Secondary School.

Cecil Hind has recently won a Kesteven Junior Scholarship, so he too is independent of our parochial one.

Cricket.—August 20th, v. Holywell, home.

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Presentation to Mr. Metcalfe.—On the 8th of August, the day before Mr. Metcalfe left his home here, he was accorded such a "send off" as it is given to few to experience. The Village Hall was crowded to its utmost capacity with friends and well-wishers, while the local press considered the occasion of such importance that two reporters were present, and long and detailed accounts were printed in the local newspapers. It is therefore quite unnecessary for us to describe what took place,

repeat all that was said. The Committee who were entrusted with the selection of a gift, endeavoured to find some article which would combine real utility with beauty, and which would harmonize with the china cabinet presented to Mrs. Metcalfe just under two years ago. Their choice seems to have been entirely successful, being a tall book-case bureau in mahogany, with ornamental glass panelled doors above, and writing desk below. The printed list of subscribers was framed in mahogany to match. (A copy of this list is on view in the church porch). And what a list it is! It represents well over 100 families, and includes almost every house in the parish, as well as many outside it. It was a thoughtful and kindly inspiration which prompted the ringers to hurry into the steeple as the meeting was closing, and the peal which they rang came as a fitting climax to the proceedings. We are sure that Mr. and Mrs. Metcalfe will long remember their last evening in Witham.

The children's presentation.—On the previous Friday afternoon, just before the school closed for the holidays, the assistant teachers and children made their presentation to Mr. Metcalfe, which took the form of a "smoker's cabinet." The subscribers to this formed another long list, and included, we believe, every child in the school. The presentation was made by Miss Darnes, on behalf of the scholars and staff.

Mr. Stoddart expects to remove to Witham on Sept. 1st. He has most kindly undertaken the duty of organist, in succession to Mr. Metcalfe, so he will be with us on Sunday, Sept. 4th. Meanwhile we have had the kind assistance of Miss Olive Walker, who has come from Bourne to play for us on the last three Sundays in August.

The school will re-open after the holidays on Monday, Sept. 12th.

The bells.—Certain necessary repairs to the framework and wheels will shortly be done, in order to strengthen the bells and enable them to be rung with greater ease and safety. A new set of bell ropes have also been ordered. All thanks to the ringers for their regular services during the Summer. We hope to see some new recruits in the steeple this winter.

Sunday mornings.—It is some time now since any members of the congregation have taken advantage of the Vicar's offer of a lift home. He would be so pleased if more would do so. The car is always available for this purpose after the Morning Service. Further, those who come from a distance to the early Service, are cordially invited to come to the Vicarage for a cup of tea before returning home.

The Harvest thanksgiving will be held in October. Due notice will be given of the date, and of the names of the special preachers.

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

The Harvest Thanksgiving Services will be held on Thursday, Oct. 6th, and Sunday, Oct. 9th. On the Thursday, Evensong will be sung at 7 p.m., when the Sermon will be preached by the Rev. J. B. White, Vicar of Ryhall with Essendine. On the Sunday, there will be Holy Communion at 8 a.m., sung Eucharist at 11, and Evensong at 6.30, at which the Sermon will be by the Rev. C. A. Payne, Vicar of Barholm. The collections at all the Services will be divided between the Stamford Infirmary and the Butterfield Hospital.

The Reading Room at the Vicarage is once again in use. At a general meeting held on Sept. 20th, in the Village Hall, a new Committee of Management was formed, when it was decided to open the room to members on three evenings a week: Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Mr. Stoddart was appointed as Treasurer, and Mr. E. Warnes as Secretary. This room was first made available as a club-room by the Vicar as far back as 1910, when owing to the energy of the late Mr. E. Jackson, it became a very successful and flourishing institution. To him we owe the equipment of the room, and the purchase (in 1911) of the bagatelle table, which has always been so attractive a feature. The room was closed during the War, and has also been unused for the last two or three years, owing to lack of interest and absence of funds. It is hoped however that under new and better management it may once more be carried on successfully.

The weekly Dancing Class, on Tuesdays, will start on Oct. 4th. This year, Messrs. A. Francis and T. E. Butcher have kindly undertaken to share the duties of instructing and organizing.

The Choir.—A weekly practice has been commenced on Thursdays, at 6.30. We hope that members will endeavour to attend regularly.

Ringling.—It is suggested that Friday be practice night as a rule for the ringers. Now that the bells have been put into thorough ringing order and new ropes provided, we look forward to a great revival of interest in the delightful art of change-ringing. We have the privilege of possessing at Witham one of the most beautiful six-bell peals in the whole neighbourhood.

The Tennis Club.—We have had quite an enjoyable season in spite of the weather. The proposed final tournament however had to be twice postponed, owing to rain.

The Cricket season has been highly successful. Out of a total of 15 matches, we have won 9, lost 4, one was drawn and one ended in a tie. Truly a satisfactory achievement.

The church has lately undergone a thorough cleaning at the hands of our willing and capable helpers, Mr. and Mrs. C. Pell. We all greatly appreciate their kind efforts, and the interest they take in everything connected with the church.

Mrs. Allam's return.—We are delighted to welcome Mrs. Allam home again, in renewed health and vigour. After less than three months absence she has returned strong and well, and fully able once more to do her own house-work. And she will be 97 before the year is out.!

The Feast Sunday falls on Oct. 30th. This is the Festival of the Dedication of the church, and is a day of thanksgiving for spiritual blessings and privileges, bestowed upon us through the House of God in our midst.

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Confirmation.—We have just heard that the Bishop has selected Witham church as one of the centres at which Confirmation will be administered early next year. Our church is particularly suitable for the purpose, as it is unusually light and spacious, and the aisles are wide and roomy. The date fixed is Monday, February the 20th. The Bishop of Grantham will come to us, who is no stranger to Witham, for he has previously been here to dedicate the Rood in 1919, and the War Memorial in 1920. And so our candidates will have the happy privilege of being confirmed in their own church. The Vicar will be glad to have the names of all intending candidates before the end of the present month.

Armistice Sunday will be observed on Nov. 13th. The solemn memorial service for the fallen will be at 11 a.m., when all are asked to make a special effort to attend. We shall read our Roll of Honour at the altar, and commemorate those who fell in the War in the way that Christ Himself has commanded us. The collection will be for Earl Haig's British Legion Appeal Fund.

The choir.—The recent formation of an auxiliary choir of ladies has already resulted in a marked improvement in the singing of the services. We gratefully welcome the willingness of those who have joined it in such numbers, and greatly appreciate Mr. Stoddart's kindness in devoting so much time and interest to the welfare of the choir. It is for us to show our appreciation of his efforts by regular attendance at the weekly practice.

The Harvest Thanksgiving Services were very well attended. Fortunately the weather both on the Thursday and Sunday was ideal. The collections were distributed equally between the Stamford Infirmary and the Butterfield Hospital. Both of our visiting preachers said how greatly they were impressed by the beauty of the church and of the services.

The children.—It is rumoured that the school children will entertain us with a performance all their own at Christmas. This will consist of songs, plays and dances. If they do we must all give them our patronage, for they are anxious to raise funds for a wireless set and loud speaker in the school. Many schools are already thus equipped, to the great advantage of the scholars, who profit by the excellent lessons which are broadcast to the schools every afternoon.

The Reading Room is proving immensely successful this season. We have nearly 30 members. It is proposed to hold a whist drive in the room on the last Saturday of every month, in aid of the funds. In past years these gatherings were particularly jolly little events, in spite of the terrific crush (or partly perhaps, because of it!). If more people attend than can be crowded in, extra tables will be put in the Vicarage kitchen.

The weekly dancing class is also better attended than ever. We are extremely grateful to Mrs. Fenwick for her generous gift of drums, which are an invaluable assistance to the player as well as to the dancers. The role of pianist is now shared between the Vicar and Mr. Stoddart, the latter having very kindly undertaken to give his assistance whenever possible.

The Parish Feast used to be marked among other things with a big Parish Tea. Willing as we are to organize another, the last one that we had was such a dismal failure that we have not ventured to repeat it. We suggest instead, that another year we should try a Harvest Tea, as is done with great success in some other villages, and so revive the idea of the old "Harvest Home" celebration, which was the fore-runner of the "Harvest Festival."

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

On Christmas Day, there will be Holy Communion at 8, and the Choral Eucharist at 11. As the day falls this year on Sunday, Festal Evensong will be sung, with carols in place of the sermon. After the chief morning Service, the Christmas charities will be distributed in church.

An entertainment will be given by the school children in the Village Hall, on Friday, Dec. 23rd. Judging by what we have overheard, this will be something that will surprise and delight us all. Let no one miss it.

The school--Parents of children who come from a distance will much appreciate the arrangements made by the Headmaster for providing tea in the school during the dinner hour. For this boon, the modest sum of 1½d. a week is charged. Mr. Stoddart is also forming a school lending library, and will be very grateful for the gift of any suitable books. If you have any old prizes or other good story books which you no longer need, please send them along.

Armistice Sunday.—Our collection in church on Remembrance Sunday for Earl Haig's fund, amounted to £1/8/6, and the sale of poppies in the parish came to £2/11/0 (Witham £1/6/2, Toft and Lound 18/5, and Manthorpe 7/3), total £3/19/6. But our congregation at this solemn annual memorial of our heroes ought to have been larger. It is especially unaccountable that any relatives of the fallen should absent themselves on such an occasion.

The Village Hall with its bare walls and curtainless windows is as plain and ugly a room as we could find. So we are furnishing it with red curtains which will break the monotony of the walls. A number of good and well-framed pictures in addition would transform its appearance. We hope that we may some day acquire these.

Dancing—Is it wrong?—The present universal love of dancing is reflected here by the great and ever-increasing popularity of our weekly dancing classes. Now there are a few people who think that such classes should not be held, indeed that dancing is an evil thing. The Vicar has been criticized for lending his sanction and encouragement to dancing, and in particular for playing the accompanying music. May he take this opportunity of saying to any such objectors who may read this magazine, that while he shrinks from giving offence to anyone (they surely know him well enough for that, after all these years), yet he is unable to denounce that which he believes is not wrong in itself, but is on the contrary a healthy and innocent form of recreation. And so he has consistently encouraged it, and all the years that he has been here has organized opportunities for the young people to dance under proper conditions and surroundings, and it has always given him much pleasure to be with them and play for them. Those who see evil in dancing must remember that the Bible which often refers to it, nowhere condemns it, but most significant of all, our Blessed Lord Himself has given to it His explicit approval. When describing, in the beautiful parable of the Prodigal Son, a scene of domestic joy, in which nothing unbecoming or unseemly could possibly find a place, He says that that joy found expression in "music and dancing" (S. Luke xv. 25.) Who are we to condemn where Christ has not condemned?

There are still a few subscribers who have not yet paid for the Magazine this year. Will they please do so on receipt of this copy. Next month calendars will be given to all subscribers.

Marriage.—21st Nov. Rowland Scotney and Grace Holmes.