

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

The new year.—As we stand on its threshold, and wonder what it may have in store for us, let us hope that it may bring increased happiness and prosperity to us all, both as a parish and as individuals. May it mark the beginning of the long-looked-for turn in the tide, and witness a real recovery in that great industry which so closely affects us all, namely, agriculture. Meanwhile, let us not only *wish* for, but *pray* for, a “happy new year.”

During the past year no fewer than eleven parishioners have been called to their rest. This is the largest number of deaths within one single year that your Vicar can recall. On the other hand there were but two baptisms, and two marriages.

Confirmation.—The Vicar hopes to begin the instruction and preparation by the middle of this month at the latest. The names of intending candidates should therefore be given to him as soon as possible.

The white altar frontal.—This richly-worked and elaborate frontal has recently been restored and re-mounted. In consequence of being stretched on a frame it had been become seriously damaged, but the Cambridge Tapestry School have had it for renovation, and have made it to hang loosely, as of course all frontals should. The whole of the embroidered work upon it, which was designed by the Peterborough Diocesan Embroiderers' Guild, was done by hand, and took its maker no less than fifteen years to work. Even then it was not finished, as Miss Cooper, of Cottesmore, who embroidered it, did not live to complete it. This beautiful thing formed part of the memorial to Mrs. Johnson, widow of the late General Johnson. She died in 1890, and it was decided to furnish the church with a new High Altar in her memory, Miss Cooper, an old friend of Mrs. Johnson, undertaking to provide the frontal. In addition, our handsome silver-gilt Sacred Vessels were also memorials to Mrs. Johnson. The Altar and the Sacred Vessels were consecrated by Bishop King, of Lincoln, on September 30th, 1893, but the frontal was not forthcoming until many years later, when it was used for the first time on Easter Day, 1906. Unhappily the devoted lady who made it, never lived to see it in the church.

New Schoolmistress.—Miss Margaret Bird will commence her duties as head teacher on January 8th, after the Christmas holidays. We venture, on behalf of the parish, to offer her a very hearty welcome on her coming to live among us. We understand that her mother and sister are likely to come with her.

Miss Sentance.—Miss Rebecca Sentance is, we are glad to say, making a slow but steady recovery, after her recent serious illness. Miss Sentance has lived the whole of her life in the village, and in the same house, and has endeared herself to all who know her. Few pass her door without a word of greeting, and it is the hope of all her many friends that we shall soon see her downstairs again, and once more restored to health.

Rheumatism!—We heard the other day that someone has been busy assuring the good people of Witham that they live in a rheumatic village! This is not merely grossly untrue, but a gratuitous libel. Indeed this healthy and salubrious place is singularly free from the dreaded scourge of rheumatism. We have been making enquiries before writing this, and found one case in particular of a resident, formerly a martyr to rheumatism, who, on coming to live here, is greatly benefitted. Your own Vicar's experience may also re-assure the nervous. He has lived here for far the greater part of his fairly long life, and does not even know what rheumatism feels like! We would therefore advise all sufferers to take up their residence at Witham-on-the-Hill!

The church.—As we write, the church is being garnished for the great Christmas Festival. We are to have a Christmas tree again, as in the past.

Mothers' Union.—A special service will be held on Wednesday, Jan. 10th, at 2.30, when the address will be given by the Vicar of Edenham (the Rev. A. L. Hopkins).

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The Electoral Roll which is now being revised and corrected, will be open for inspection in the church during February. "What is the Roll for?" some people ask. It is a list containing the names of all parishioners who have the right to take part in managing the affairs of the Parish Church. This they do by electing each year those who are to serve on the "Church Council." In order to secure your name on the Roll and thus become an elector, the following statement must be signed:—"I am a member of the Church of England, and do not belong to any religious body which is not in communion with the Church of England." No one under 18 years can sign this declaration. We have therefore, in the parish, this large body of self-declared Church men and women, upwards of 50 of them, professing allegiance to their Mother Church, but often doing so little to justify it. Well, the annual meeting will be called before long. It would be a great thing if everyone who is entitled to vote, that is, all those who are on the Roll, were to come to that meeting, and exercise their vote, and thus at least show some interest in the welfare of the Church of their baptism.

Christmas.—The church was beautiful beyond words in its rich decking of flowers and evergreens, and the Christmas Eve service in particular was inspiring, owing to the kind help of the Choral Society.

The offerings on Christmas Day morning, for the Waifs' and Strays' Society, amounted to £3/8/1.

Children's Party.—For this we have to thank the members of the Mothers' Union. Their best reward was the very great pleasure that it gave.

It is hoped to have a recital of music in the church, on Quinquagesima Sunday afternoon, Feb. 11th, at 3 o'clock. We understand, too, that Miss Sybil Eaton, the well-known violinist, will also give a selection of violin solos. There will be a collection for expenses.

Foreign Mission Sunday.—This is usually the second Sunday in February, but owing to the above-mentioned event, we shall devote the first Sunday instead, Sexagesima, Feb. 4th, to foreign Missions. The sermon at Evensong will be preached by the Rev. H. W. Snape, Rector of Greatford, and the offerings will be given to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.

Missionary Boxes.—The holders are asked to bring these in during the month.

Another new Altar Frontal.—Mrs. Edwards has now very kindly made us a purple frontal, which is most effective and beautiful. We are so grateful to the various kind workers who have thus helped to furnish the Altar with worthy and suitable hangings. Few village churches are so well equipped with rich furnishings as ours now is.

Lent.—This solemn season of penitence and renewal begins on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 14th. We earnestly ask all to make a special effort to use it profitably. We are fortunate this year in securing special preachers both on the Sunday and Wednesday evenings. Our old friend Mr. Peacock will give a course of addresses on Sundays, and the Vicar of Thurlby, the Rev. W. G. Hunt, will address us on the Wednesdays, beginning on Feb. 21st. Will you re-pay their kindness by coming regularly throughout the courses? The Vicar has only ventured to ask them because of the good attendances which he remembers during past Lents.

Mothers' Union.—The monthly meeting will be held on Wednesday, Feb. 7th, at 2.30—Speaker, Mrs. Wherry, of Bourne.

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The late Captain Fenwick, who died on the 3rd of February at the comparatively early age of 41, was little more than a name to many of us here to-day, so completely has this parish changed during the last few years. But those of us who did know him will like best to remember him for the very gallant service which he rendered to his country during the war, and for many an act of kindness to us here. We have our tangible memorial of him in the widows' cottages and the Village Green, which were his parting gifts to the place where the happiest years of his short life were spent. The Vicar had known him intimately ever since he was a little boy of 9, and occasionally had charge of him and his brothers during their parents' absence, so that few outside Captain Fenwick's own family have felt the tragedy of his death more keenly. R.I.P.

Confirmation.—Five candidates from this parish will be confirmed at Baston church on Friday, the 9th March, at 2.30. Parents or god-parents should endeavour to be present in every case. A 'bus will run from here, and those who wish to go are asked to give their names to the Vicar.

Lent.—We much regret that neither of the special preachers whom we announced last month as taking courses of addresses through Lent, have been able to come after all. In one case it was owing to a misunderstanding, in the other, to the necessary change of the week-night Service from Wednesdays to Thursdays. It is very good for us to have an occasional change, and we know that the people like it, for our numbers are always greater when a visiting preacher comes. We must not however, allow this disappointment to hinder us in any way from making the best use of this precious season of grace.

The sacred concert which was held in the church on Quinquagesima Sunday was attended by a crowded congregation. A special collection was made, and the astonishing sum of £77/6 resulted. A portion of this is to be set apart for the expenses of our church choir summer outing, the remainder going to the Stamford Male Voice choir.

Foreign Missions.—Sexagesima Sunday was set apart as our annual Mission Sunday. The collections, which were given to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, amounted to £21/2.

Missionary boxes.—Ten boxes were brought in last month, the contents of which totalled £24/7. We were able therefore to send up to the S.P.G. the sum of £45/9. The Vicar appeals to many others to ask him for a Missionary box. There are at present only 13 holders of boxes. The number should be many times greater. Surely on the house where such a box is in use there rests a special blessing.

The Annual Church Meeting will be held (D.V.) on the Wednesday in Easter Week (April 4th). Due notice will be given.

The Choral Society is making excellent progress with the music for the Uppingham Festival, which takes place on Thursday, April 19th. As this is the competition year, it is essential that we all do our best to attend every practice from now onward. The loss to the sopranos of Mrs. Shennan and Miss Doris Wallis is very regrettable, as is that of Mr. Shennan to the tenors. The choir will miss them all sadly.

Miss Eliza Smith.—Many will have heard with sorrow of Miss Smith's break-down in health, and removal to Stamford. Kind and generous, she was ever to the fore in helping every good cause. She loved the church, and until infirmity overtook her, was a regular worshipper. We trust that in time she may be sufficiently restored to be able to return to the little home where she has lived so long.

Holy Week, Good Friday and Easter.—Due notice will be given of all the services of these sacred seasons. We specially ask for help in decorating the church on Easter Eve.

Baptism.—2nd Feb., Reginald Arthur, son of William Henry and Emily Kate Spooncer.

Mothers' Union.—The monthly meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 14th, at 2-30., Speaker, Mrs. Pask Matthews, of Bourne.

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The Vicar.—It is just 34 years this month since your Vicar came here as incumbent. It is a long time to have been in one parish, some may perhaps think too long, though the new Archdeacon of Lindsey (Canon Parry) has been in one benefice for over 37 years, and there are other incumbents in this Diocese who have been in one parish for 56 and 57 years respectively! Much depends on circumstances, and it was owing to circumstances that your Vicar decided in the past that he must not leave Witham. These, it may be added, were solely in regard to the spiritual welfare of the parish. He is, on his part, deeply grateful for the kindness and support which he has never failed to receive through all the years of his incumbency.

The Bishop of Lincoln paid his first visit to Witham last month. He expressed his admiration for our beautiful church, and hopes to come again before very long. He particularly wishes to hold a Confirmation here next year if it can be arranged.

Electric light.—There now seems a more hopeful prospect that the Mid-Lincolnshire Co. are really going to supply us with electric light here during the present year. As soon therefore as we see the pylons and cables coming our way, but not before, we shall proceed to wire the church, which we are told can be done in about three weeks. The necessary funds, over £80, are already in the Bank, awaiting this long delayed occasion.

The Village Hall.—It has been suggested that this useful room might be made far more attractive if it were under-ceiled, and the lofty roof shut in. It is difficult in the winter, which of course is the time when we use it most, to heat it sufficiently, owing to its great height. A wooden ceiling however, thrown across below, and resting upon the walls, would completely overcome this. Then, when it is well and adequately lit by electricity, it would become a delightfully warm and comfortable centre for all our social gatherings and meetings.

The old Altar-book.—Until recently this was almost in pieces, which considering that it has been in regular use for some 70 years, is not surprising. So the Vicar has been trying his hand at book-binding! Now, re-covered in leather, it ought to last for many years to come. Such a book, sanctified by long use for so sacred a purpose, ought to be preserved if it is possible. We also have a fine old Lectern Bible of the same age. We should like to see this restored and re-used.

Annual Church Meeting.—We hope for a good attendance at this, which is on Thursday, April 5th, in the Village Hall, at 7. A copy of the revised Electoral Roll is hanging in the church. See that it contains your name, which entitles you to a vote.

The Mothers' Union.—The annual Festival and Corporate Communion is on Tuesday, April 9th, the date on which Lady Day is observed by the Church this year (transferred from Palm Sunday).

Changes.—April always brings its changes in the parish, and this year we hear of quite a number who are "fitting," as they say. At the time of writing we are not quite sure who they are. We must chronicle these next month.

Lent has been well kept here. We hope that this will mean for many a happy and blessed Easter.

The Rutland Musical Festival now includes a children's section, and a choir from our school has been entered. The junior competition will be held at Oakham, in May.

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Easter.—The way in which this great Festival is kept usually affords some indication of the spiritual welfare of a parish. It is therefore a cause for deep thankfulness to read of the very remarkable and significant increase almost everywhere in the observance of Easter this year. Churches up and down the country, both in town and village have been attended as never before. The newspaper reports from the parishes all have the same story to tell, namely that (as was the case here) a record figure in the number of communions made was reached. And the same seems to have been true of Good Friday, where here and there the churches were so full that in some places people were content to stand throughout the long Three Hours' devotional service.

Our church was—as it always is at Easter—very beautiful in its garnishing of spring flowers, and to mark the great day the ringers had raised the bells soon after 6 a.m., to ring a peal before the first service. The Easter offerings were given to the Vicar, according to the old custom. He would like to thank the congregations for their very kind liberality.

Easter Vestry and annual Church Meeting.—This was held on the Thursday in Easter Week. Commander C. M. Crichton-Maitland, R.N. and Mr. G. W. Wallis were re-appointed to serve as Churchwardens. For Sidesmen: Messrs. Green, Hodgkin, Sharp and Skellett were chosen. In addition, fourteen others were elected on the Council. Thus we have a new Church Council of twenty. The Church Accounts which were presented and passed, showed that the collections in church for the past year amounted to £79/13/4.

Important Meeting.—On Thursday, May 24th, Mr. E. E. Welby-Everard, the Chairman of the Lincoln Diocesan Board of Finance, has kindly accepted the Vicar's invitation to come to Witham, and talk to us on the subject of church finance, and to interest us particularly in that of this Diocese. It is hoped that as a result of his visit we may be able to form a "Free-will Offering" Scheme, with a view to the increased support of the urgent needs of the Diocese. Please note the date and endeavour to attend this meeting.

The Choral Society did extraordinarily well again in the recent competitions at Uppingham, held in connection with the Rutland Musical Festival, on April 19th, winning two firsts and two seconds out of their five entries, and failing to win the championship by a fraction of a point only. The marks they won in the open class for men's voices, were 92, the highest figure awarded throughout the competition. The adjudicator, Dr. Armstrong Gibbs, described this as an "absolutely outstanding performance" on the part of the Witham team. High praise indeed! Our heartiest congratulations to all the singers and to their talented conductor, Miss Jean Crichton-Maitland.

Concert.—On Saturday evening, April 21st, the Choral Society gave a rendering of the Festival music at a special concert in the billiard room, at the Hall, so that all friends and parishoners who wished to do so, might have an opportunity of hearing them. Miss Dilys Jones also kindly contributed several songs to the programme, and Mr. Norman Greenwood gave pianoforte solos, also, in company with Miss Crichton-Maitland, a couple of pianoforte duets. Opportunity was taken after the concert to present Miss Maitland with a handsome spray of flowers from all the members, as a small token of their esteem and gratitude to her. A collection was made at the door, which realised over £3/15/0.

Good wishes.—There will be many who will wish Mr. J. Vout much happiness on the occasion of his marriage, which was celebrated on his 23rd birthday. Mr. Vout has served the church well and faithfully for over five years, as chorister, ringer and server, and we hope that he will still continue to do so, from his new home in Manthorpe.

Children's egg collection.—The school children have recently collected 272 eggs for the Bourne Hospital. Last year they were even more successful, and collected 426!

Marriage.—24th April, John William Ernest Vout, and Violet Velma Clements.

Burial.—16th April, Susan Warrenner Green, aged 65 years (at Bourne).

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Children's singing competition.—Last month we chronicled the success of our Choral Society, at Uppingham. This month we have to record that of our school-children, at Oakham. On May 5th, a competition for schools was held in connection with the Rutland Musical Festival, and Miss Bird took over a team of eighteen children to compete in the class for smaller village schools. In this there were ten entries, and out of these, Witham school was awarded first prize. We wish to congratulate the children on their success, and in particular their conductor, to whose skilled training their triumph was due. Miss Bird was the recipient of a warm letter of congratulation from H.M. Inspector-in-Chief, who doubtless saw the report of the competition in the Press.

The School.—The numbers attending our school have recently been increased by the arrival of one or two families in the parish. This is a welcome sign, for Witham seems of late to have become an almost childless village. The Vicar can remember the time when the average attendance was over 90!

The great Festivals of Ascension-tide and Whitsun-tide were both marked by beautiful floral decorations in the church. We are deeply grateful to those ladies who undertook this labour of love.

New altar Frontal.—The Vicar is providing a new green frontal for the high altar, for use during the long ferial season after Trinity. It is of rich silk brocade, with blue orphreys. We shall now have a set of altar furnishings as worthy and beautiful as those of any church in the Diocese. In addition, the Vicar's old Yorkshire church has passed on to us a green chasuble, old but still in good condition, to take the place of the one which has done yeoman service here for so long, and which was a 'cast-off' from another church over 30 years ago. It may be of interest of record that the red and white vestments, which we still use, were given by the communicants of the parish nearly 40 years ago!

The chimes.—It has been decided to have the chiming apparatus overhauled and corrected. At present, the striking is jerky and irregular, particularly when chiming the 2nd and 4th quarters. This to musical ears is extremely irritating, and we are becoming such a parish of musicians that it ought no longer to be borne! We hope that when the clock-makers have done their work, our quarters will strike with the same exact and rhythmical precision as those of St. Mary's Stamford, or indeed of Westminster, with which we are all so familiar on the wireless. The present quarter chimes were installed nearly 21 years ago, and were first set going on All Saints' Day, 1913.

Empire Day medals for the school.—Commander C. M. Crichton-Maitland again presented the children with medals to commemorate Empire Day. The distribution took place on the previous Friday morning, owing to the Whitsun-tide holidays. Some of our children now possess three bars in addition to the medal itself, thus recording three successive years at the school.

Meeting.—Mr. E. E. Welby-Everard, M.A., fulfilled his kind promise to come and speak to us about "Church finance," on May 24th. His address was most interesting and instructive, and it is to be regretted that so few came to listen to him. However, at the next meeting of the Church Council some suggestions that he made will be discussed, and it is hoped acted upon.

In Memoriam.—Miss Eliza Smith, who died on May 22nd, in Hospital, at Stamford, will chiefly be remembered for her quiet unassuming kindness of heart. She was deeply respected by all who knew her. R.I.P.

Burial.—25th May, Eliza Smith, aged 76 years.

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Sunday, July 15th.—On this Sunday, the Vicar expects to be away from home. His old friend, Canon Wilgress, Warden of Browne's Hospital, Stamford, has kindly consented to come out and take the following services:—Holy Communion at 8, and Mattins with Sermon at 11. As there will be no evening service, it is hoped that those who usually attend in the evening only, will endeavour to come on this day in the morning instead. The one essential Service of Sunday is, of course, the Holy Eucharist. This must never be omitted on Sunday, and your Vicar has always made provision for this when he is absent from the parish.

Electric light for the church.—We are still waiting for a supply of current to Witham, and seem to be no nearer getting it than before. Over a year ago we were informed that the Supply Co., who have the exclusive rights over this district, would be bringing current here 'before the winter' (i.e. last winter), but it now looks as if we should have to wait for a considerable time longer. Meanwhile we are obtaining a faculty for wiring the church.

The children's swings on the Village Green have been strengthened. The wooden supports were becoming very shaky, and in particular the central pole of the "round-about" was in a dangerous state of decay. All have now been made quite safe. These swings have for years been a source of great joy to our children, who use them constantly. We owe them to the late Capt. Fenwick, who gave the Village Green to the parish.

Litter.—May we appeal to those who use the green to help to keep it tidy. Only recently it was strewn with paper. This detestable habit of throwing litter about seems sadly widespread, but at least let us respect the Village Green!

Choral Society's Party.—A most delightful evening was spent by the members of the Choral Society at the Hall on June 14th, when Commander and Mrs. Crichton-Maitland very kindly invited all the members to supper. Games and amusements of various kinds followed, and it was past midnight when the party eventually broke up. Those who were present wish to express their hearty thanks to their host and hostess for their most kind and generous hospitality, which was deeply appreciated by all.

The school will break up for the summer holidays on Friday, July 27th, to re-assemble on Tuesday, Sept. 4th. This is the period fixed by the County Education Committee. We publish it for the information of parents.

Andrea Rose day.—The sale of roses, which was again organized by Miss Maitland, resulted as follows:—Witham, £2/13/6; Toft-with-Lound, 7/6; Manthorpe 4 5; Total, £3/5/5. This shews a slight increase on last year, when it was £3/0/1. When compared with other local village collections, ours is second only to Ketton, with £3/10/9.

Outings.—The Vicar has selected Thursday, July 26th, for the choir and ringers' trip to Skegness, and the Mothers' Union have decided to go there too on the same day, so we shall be quite a big party! If there are any friends who wish to go too, it is essential that they give in their names at least a fortnight before, if bus accommodation is to be secured.

The Sunday class are also to have their outing, to the popular Wicksteed Park, on July 19th.

Lawn tennis.—Our little club has begun well. In the only match played so far, they beat their opponents (Ryhall) by 9 sets to 7.

Cricket.—Of the seven matches played up to date, Witham has won 3 and lost 4. The following matches are arranged for July:—14th v. Greatford, home; 21st v. Miss Maitland's XI., home; 28th v. Swinstead, home.

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The children's outing to Wicksteed Park on July 19th, was greatly enjoyed, we hear, by all. The weather was perfect, and all went without a hitch. Our thanks to Miss Bird and Mrs. Edwards, who organized the trip so ably. The children were given a sumptuous tea, to which they did ample justice. Home was reached soon after 9.

The church clock is now repaired and telling us the time once more. A new chiming barrel has been provided, by means of which the quarter-chimes strike with a much greater regularity. The dial of the clock has also been newly painted and gilded, a very great improvement. To judge from the number of 'grumbles' which were heard during its absence, our clock appears to be more valued than we suspected! Indeed, it would almost seem as if there were some whose only use for the church was that it told them the time! It certainly is a great privilege for us who live within sound of its musical chimes, and let us hope that they may sometime turn our thoughts to higher things, when we remember that the bells we listen to every quarter of an hour are consecrated to the glory of God, to be used in His service, also when we look up at the clock-face, we see that it is framed in a cross, the symbol of our redemption. We wonder how many there are who notice this.

The history of the church clock.—While writing on this subject it may be of interest to record the following facts about the Witham church clock. First, this church has possessed a clock longer than almost any other parish church in the kingdom. As long ago as 1548, payments are mentioned in our old church account book, to the clerk "for keeping the clock." In those days, church clocks were exceedingly rare, and were to be found only in churches of great importance, such as cathedrals. How long this clock was in existence we do not know, but the fall of the steeple in 1736 must have destroyed it or its successor. In 1775, the sum of £29;9;0 was paid to one William Bird for a new clock, which must have been a poor affair at the price! Again in 1862, still another clock was provided by Joseph Farrin, for which he was paid £141;6;9. This struck the quarters on two bells. For some reason or other this proved unsatisfactory, and in 1870, the present clock, made by Messrs. G. & F. Cope, of Nottingham, was put in its place at a cost of £55, and the old clock taken in exchange. Lastly, in 1913, the chiming apparatus was added to this clock, by the same firm, the cost being £45;0;0. The repairs just completed are costing us £12. The clock bears the following inscription:—1870, The Rev. W. H. Johnson, Vicar. S. Smith, H. M. Ansell, Churchwardens.

During the Vicar's absence, the Rev. Canon Wilgress, took two services on Sunday, July 15th. He has since expressed his great pleasure at finding so beautiful a church, and so kindly a welcome from the wardens and the worshippers. An occasional change such as this is good for us all. It gives the priest an opportunity of worshipping in another church, and of hearing somebody else preach, while for the people a new voice in the pulpit may just succeed in bringing home the message, where the familiar voice of their own minister may fail. It would be a good thing if the clergy exchanged with one another more often.

The sick.—Mr. Ward is now happily on the way to recovery, and we hope soon to see him in his accustomed place in church once more. We have missed him much during his illness. Miss Sautance is somewhat better again, we are glad to record, and there is an improvement in Jack Vout, whose tragically sudden illness has aroused much sympathy among his many friends.

Cricket matches in August.—4th, v. Irnham, away; 11th, v. Ryhall, home; 18th, v. Greatford, away; 25th, v. Irnham, home.

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Harvest Thanksgiving.—Our services of thanksgiving will be held on Thursday, Sept. 6th, and the Sunday following. They will be as follows:—On Thursday, Holy Eucharist at 9, Evensong at 7.30, when the Rev. L. R. L. Donaldson, Vicar of Ketton, will preach. On Sunday, Holy Communion at 8, Sung Eucharist with sermon at 11, Evensong at 6.30.

Thank-offerings.—Our gifts in money will be divided between the Bourne and Stamford Hospitals, and those in kind will be given—as last year—to the Butterfield Hospital, at Bourne. A long table will be placed in the church, and we hope that it will be filled as well as it was last year. Commodities of all kinds, groceries, provisions, &c., are earnestly asked for. Please bring an offering with you for this gift table.

The drought.—With the passing of this second exceptionally dry summer, the water shortage is more serious here than the writer ever remembers. The watering of stock is causing acute anxiety to the farmers. And yet our wonderful Bywells spring does not fail. Indeed, it has never done so within living memory. The Vicar remembers that in 1921 its flow was considerably less than it is now, and he provided a large zinc bath to catch the precious water, which saved long waits in filling buckets! Surely we ought to include water among the gifts for which we specially thank God. In some parishes the wells are decorated with flowers on Holy Thursday, and a service of thanksgiving held at them. A very right a proper custom.

Change-ringing.—On the 28th of July, a team of ringers visited the steeple, and rang a peal of 5040 changes, the time taken being exactly three hours. It is a long time since a similar peal was rung, we believe that the last occasion was in 1904. In the Vicar's notes for that year appears an entry to the effect that a peal of 5040 changes was rung on Feb. 13th, in 2 hours and 49 minutes. And these are the names of the team: C. Neaverson, treble; A. J. Holmes, 2; N. Moxon, 3; T. Bainbridge, 4; C. Newham, 5; and T. Murray, tenor. Mr. Newham is still happily with us, and no doubt well remembers the occasion. The ringers of last month's peal, were: H. Gibbard, treble; C. Wood, 2; W. H. Waldron, 3; T. A. Cooper, 4; C. T. A. Bradley, 5; and H. M. Day (conductor), tenor.

Choir and ringers' outing to Skegness.—This took place on July 26th, too late to report in last month's issue. They were accompanied by the members of the M.U. with other friends, making up a party of nearly 60. On the return home, little Claude Markham's accident was the one unfortunate incident of an otherwise delightful outing. Mercifully he was not very seriously injured, and is now quite well again, we are thankful to state.

A meeting of the "Federation of South Lincolnshire Clergy," of which the Vicar is a member, will take place at Witham on Tuesday, Sept. 16th. The Holy Eucharist will be sung at 11.15, and the sermon will be preached by the Sub-Dean of Lincoln, Canon Greaves (late Archdeacon of Oakham). It is hoped that as many as can do so will attend this service, and help us with the singing.

Mrs. Sharp, who has had the sympathy and prayers of many of us recently, is making a slow though satisfactory recovery. We earnestly hope now to see her home again before long, quite well and strong once more.

Tree-planting.—To plant a tree yourself, and watch over it as it grows, is ever a joy and interest. In time it almost seems as if the well-being of the tree was bound up with your own. It is proposed to allow the school-children each to plant a tree or shrub, for which they will be individually responsible. They will be labelled with the planters' names. A piece of ground adjoining the school gardens is being prepared for this purpose. Mrs. Crichton-Maitland, to whom this delightful idea is due, has kindly promised to provide the necessary trees and shrubs.

Codex Sinaiticus.—Half the collections of Sunday, Aug. 19th, which amounted to £11/14/0, has been devoted to the purchase fund.

Marriage.—21st August, William Henry Payne and Emma Eleanor Wells.

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

Our Harvest Thanksgiving, kept on the first Thursday in September, was among the earliest held in the neighbourhood. This was partly due to the fact that we could not have secured the Vicar of Ketton as our special preacher on a later date. We are grateful to him for giving us so interesting and excellent an address. It was not possible to get another priest to preach on the Sunday evening, so the Vicar took that service himself, for the first time for many years. He would like to take this opportunity of saying how greatly touched he has been at the wonderful spirit of kindness and generosity which was so abundantly shown at this festival. The gifts which poured in for the hospital, from one and all, over and above the liberal offerings in money, chiefly from those whose gifts meant real self-sacrifice, were marvellous. As he took the parcels and packages to the Hospital, in a car loaded to capacity, and the heavy bags of money to the Bank, he felt it to be a privilege indeed to minister in a parish where such kindness prevails. And then there were those who adorned the church so richly and beautifully, spending hours in this labour of love. He has no need to thank them, for such work brings its own rich reward.

A visitors' book has been placed in the church, in accordance with the decision of the Church Council. When parishioners are taking their friends to show them their church, as they so often do, will they ask them to sign their names in the book? We ought to have had one years ago, for such a list of names forms an interesting record. During the summer, hardly a day passes without visitors to the church, and with the increase of motoring they are becoming ever more numerous. In a fortnights' time two pages were already filled with names!

Clerical meeting.—The Federation of South Lincolnshire Clergy held their half-yearly meeting at Witham on Sept. 18th. We had a really beautiful service in the morning, and it was pleasing to see so many of our own people present at it. The Sub-dean of Lincoln, Canon Greaves, gave a most thrilling and inspiring address at the end of the Liturgy. It was a pity that the lay people did not stay for this, but perhaps it was thought that the sermon was for the clergy only. Canon Greaves has since written to the Vicar, stating:—"I greatly enjoyed my visit to Witham, especially the beautiful service in your most beautiful and well-tended church." Further, Canon Hutchinson, Vicar of Holbeach, who was among the clergy present, paid a high tribute to the children who came in to help with the singing. He said that he had never seen children more reverent or better-behaved in any church that he knew. This is a gratifying tribute, especially coming from a stranger.

Bourne church tower.—We are giving our church collections on Sunday, Sept. 30th, to the restoration fund for which the Church Council of Bourne are appealing. It is a neighbourly gesture towards a neighbouring parish. Bourne's greatest possession is its grand old Norman church, alas! much defaced and mutilated, but in the days when it was the Minster church of Bourne Abbey, it must have been one of great glory and grandeur, with its three Towers and spacious Transepts. The sole remaining Tower has recently been found to be in a dangerous condition, and immediate restoration is urgently necessary.

The Archdeacon of Lincoln paid his first visit to Witham last month. He made a careful inspection of the church, and expressed himself as delighted with all that he saw. In the vestry book he has recorded his visit to "this beautiful church."

The Choral Society.—Practises will commence again this month. The chief work on which we shall be engaged is Elgar's "The Music Makers." New recruits to the choir will be heartily welcomed. These weekly evenings of singing are such a joy that we want others to share it with us. Due notice will be given of the first meeting.

Mothers' Union.—The winter session will commence on Wednesday, Oct. 10th, when a service will be held in church at 2.30, with a short address. To this special service we would invite others besides the members, and hope that there will be a large muster.

Baptism.—Sept. 23rd, John Robert, son of George Robert and Florence Brudenell.

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

Armistice Day.—This solemn anniversary falls this year on Sunday. As in former years, we invite all who would keep the two minutes' silence in church, to assemble by 10.45, and listen to the ceremony from London by wireless. This has usually come through with great distinctness, and this method of joining ourselves in spirit with those around the Cenotaph is a moving and impressive one. Our usual service will then commence at 11.15, when, as in the past, the names of the fallen will be read and commemorated at the altar. Our offerings on this Sunday, (Nov. 11th), will be given to the "Lord Haigh" fund, together with the sale of Flanders' poppies. We appeal to all to give generously to this most deserving fund for disabled ex-service men. Last year we sent £6/19/1.

The church ceiling.—The nave of our church has, as we all know, a flat plaster ceiling. Recently it was the fashion to remove such ceilings from the interiors of churches, and but few now remain. It may not be beautiful, but it certainly serves a useful purpose. For one thing it adds considerably to the light of the building, and for another, it conserves the heat in winter, which would be much dissipated in an open timber roof, particularly in a church as lofty as ours. Whatever may have been the reason, Mr. Gilbert Scott, the eminent architect, who so thoroughly (perhaps rather too thoroughly!) restored the church in 1874, deliberately retained the ceiling of plaster in the nave, while providing an open oak roof in the chancel. We refer to this because the time has come when the ceiling greatly needs a new coat of white-wash. It is hoped that the church trustees may be able to have this done before the electric light is installed.

Too many Sermons?—At the Diocesan Conference last month the subject of "congregational worship" was discussed, and the principal speaker for the laity was Mr. W. T. Phipps, the Chief Education Officer for Kesteven. He declared with emphasis that the tradition of two sermons every Sunday had quite out-lived its usefulness. Another layman said that the addition of a sermon often rendered church worship tedious, and that there would be more worshippers if there were fewer sermons. It is significant that the Prayer Book contemplates one sermon only on Sunday, to be preached after the Creed at the Holy Eucharist. No other is ordered. Some years ago, we used to omit the sermon at the morning service on one Sunday in the month. We propose to revive this custom, and read the Litany in its place. The Litany is one of the most beautiful and devotional offices which the Prayer Book contains, and ought to be included in our Sunday services more often than it is.

The Bishop of Lincoln has most kindly promised to come to Witham to hold a Confirmation in the spring. It will be his first official visit to our church. It is 7 years since the last Confirmation was held here.

On Sunday, October 21st we were delighted to welcome among our worshippers, Mrs. Nugent Hicks, the wife of our Bishop, who came over from Lincoln purposely to attend our service here. It was a singularly kind and gracious act, (for Lincoln is 40 miles away!) and one which we deeply appreciated.

In Memoriam.—The passing of Mrs. Robert Smith removes yet one more link with the past. She died at her younger son's house at Coningsby, and her body was brought here to be laid to rest beside that of her husband, whom she had outlived for 30 years. It is difficult to think of Toft without the kindly presence of Mrs. Smith in her pleasant little home with its trim garden, the home which had been hers for nearly 60 years. Deeply respected and beloved by all who knew her, she will be much missed. Her elder son, the Vicar of Ripponden, Yorks., has, on several occasions helped at our church, both by celebrating and preaching. We offer our sympathy to both her sons. R.I.P.

Burial.—24th Oct., Maria Smith, aged 86 years.

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

Confirmation.—The Bishop of Lincoln has now notified the Vicar that he will come here for the Parish Confirmation on Tuesday, April 2nd, which is in the week following the Fourth Sunday in Lent. We are fortunate indeed to secure the Bishop of the Diocese, a privilege which Witham has not enjoyed for 31 years, when the saintly Bishop King administered Confirmation here on February 29th, 1904. Neither Bishop Edward Hicks nor Bishop Swayne ever chose our church for this purpose. Of those then confirmed by Bishop King, only one remains in the parish,—Mr. Cyril Pell. The Vicar hopes that many candidates, both young and old, may present themselves for preparation, and asks for their names by the New Year, or even earlier.

Armistice Day.—Once again we listened in church to the solemn ceremonies in London, by means of the broadcast transmission. The reception was beautifully clear and distinct. This year, it came through with double strength, owing to the kindness of Mr. Miller, in bringing his portable radio set to augment the Vicar's. We see that quite a number of churches followed our example this year, and broadcast the Cenotaph ceremonies. We were pleased to see so large a number at our Remembrance service, but we missed some of our ex-service men, who surely ought to have been with us to commemorate their fallen comrades.

A record.—Our Armistice Day contributions to the Fund for the relief of ex-service men (Lord Haig's Fund), were the highest ever reached. They amounted to the goodly total of £7/18/3, which was made up as follows:—Sale of poppies, Witham £3/18/6; Manthorpe 9/4; Toft-with-Lound 18/2, and church collection on Armistice Day, £2/12/3. In previous years the totals were: 1931, £7/10/6; 1932, £7/3/9; 1933, £6/19/1.

Christmas Day falling as it does this year, on Tuesday, we suggest that the evergreens, which always so lavishly adorn the church, be arranged during the previous week. The Holy Communion will be celebrated at 8, followed by the Parish Eucharist at 11. This is known as the "Christ Mass," and gives its name to the day itself. Evensong will not be sung on Christmas Day. The offerings will be given to the Church of England Waifs and Strays' Society.

Calendars.—The Vicar intends to send to all the Magazine subscribers a copy of the Parish Calendar, as an expression of his best wishes to them for Christmas and the New Year.

Carols.—On the Sunday evening after Christmas, we hope to have the "Service of the Nine Lessons," with carols. Strictly speaking, each lesson should be read by a different reader, beginning with a choir boy, and ending with the Priest, but this would present a serious difficulty in so small a parish as ours.

Miss Doris Bird is making good progress after her operation for appendicitis, and we are thankful to know that there is little cause for any further anxiety.

"Where there's a will, &c."—The Bishop of Winchester relates the following little story. When he was Bishop of Southwark, he was attending a Church social in an industrial parish in South London. Happening to talk to the wife of a coster-monger, he said that he feared she could not get to church very often. Her answer astonished him. "Me and my man," she said, "we've never missed the early service on Sunday for 18 years, and what's more, we always go to the choral celebration at 11 too, and that's worth all the hot dinners. You take it from me, Sir, you can always do these things when you try!"

Postscript.—The news of the death of the Rev. E. H. Smith, which occurred with such tragic suddenness on Nov. 23rd, has deeply shocked us, more especially as he was here with us only a month ago, at the funeral of his mother, when he appeared to be in his usual health. It is a strange coincidence that he died at almost exactly the same age as his father, whose death was equally sudden. Mr. Smith was born at Toft in 1873, and after some years service in the Wesleyan ministry, was ordained deacon, and later priest, by the Bishop of Wakefield. Of recent years, he was Proctor in Convocation for that Diocese, and just a month ago was appointed as Vicar of the important parish of Illingworth, Yorkshire. He was a regular contributor to the Press, chiefly as a reviewer of books, also a lecturer of some note. A man of marked ability, the Church is the poorer by his untimely death. Our deep sympathy goes out to his two daughters, now bereaved of both parents. R.I.P.