

Witham-on-the-Hill, Manthorpe, Toft and Lound.

My dear friends and parishioners,

I am writing these notes in the afternoon of Christmas Day. During the beautiful "Christ Mass," (which gives the sacred Festival its name), and as we sang our "Adeste Fideles" (O come all ye faithful) this morning, my mind went back over the forty-one Christmas Days during which as your Vicar I have ministered here. Of that first one in 1900 I still have a vivid recollection. I can remember most of those who were present, seated as they were on the old rush-bottomed chairs. I can remember that we sang the Eucharist to *Adlam in F*, and very heartily too. I can call to mind the men and boys of the choir, and the servers, and the churchwardens, all of whom are gone now. Probably the only remaining link is the old white vestment, which was here when I came. I wore it on that far-off Christmas Day, and I wore it this morning! It is still hardly soiled, and as beautiful as ever, a remarkable testimony to our clean air. This chasuble was given by the communicants in Mr. Halland's time. Among the many who have worn it at the altar here have been some noteworthy men, and among them the great and saintly Bishop King, of Lincoln.

The Christmas Day collection for the Waifs and Strays was £3/0/6.

Hours of service.—The continuance of Summer Time throughout the winter has made it necessary to alter service hours, and our first Christmas Eucharist even as late as 8-30 was celebrated in semi-darkness, with a few screened lights. It was cheering however to see so many there. We hope to go back to our usual hours on the first Sunday in March, namely the early service at 8, and Evensong at 6, instead of 3-30. It is gratifying to see such good numbers in the afternoon, as I quite realise the inconvenience of that hour to many.

New Year wishes.—Will all our readers accept my very sincere and earnest good wishes for this new year. It will probably be a fateful year for us all. Will it bring peace and victory? Let us pray God that it may. Meanwhile let us be even still more faithful in our prayers. For "more things are wrought by prayer than the world dreams of."

In Memoriam, Eliza Pell.—Quickly following the death of Miss Rebecca Sentance, another familiar figure has now gone from our village. Mrs. Pell, who died at the ripe old age of 83, had lived here the whole of her married life, and for some years previously. Over 58 years ago she was married in this church to Matthew Pell, a native of Witham. When I came here I found them as sexton and church cleaner, which joint office they held until his death, nearly 14 years ago. For upwards of ten years Mrs. Pell occupied one of the little cottages built by Mr. Fenwick for old people. Here she led a happy and contented life, and might still have been with us but for her tragic accident on November 4th, from the shock of which she never recovered, and she died from its effects on December 7th. I visited her in the hospital that same afternoon, and was the last to see her alive. She had a great love for the church, and seldom missed a Sunday attendance. She was in her place there the day before her accident. R. I. P.

A tribute.—A short time ago a certain Cambridgeshire priest when over here remarked to one of the churchwardens, "I always consider your church to be one of the most beautiful in Lincolnshire, it is a joy and an inspiration to visit it. I never miss the opportunity of entering "it whenever I am in this district, the parishioners must be very proud of their church." The warden assured him that they were. [communicated].

A Christmas gift, consisting of 10/- and a pair of socks, has been sent to each man from the parish serving in the Forces.

The Church collections during 1940 have totalled £100/4/3. This is the highest total ever reached in one year.

The next quota Sunday is January 5th, the first in the New Year.

L. H. C.

Burial.—12th December, Eliza Pell, aged 83 years.

Witham-on-the-Hill, Manthorpe, Toft and Lound.

The Magazine.—My grateful thanks to all the subscribers for their continued support. Through your kindness our splendid circulation keeps up. The places of those who have left the parish have all been taken by the new-comers. As Editor, my endeavour is always to make these notes as interesting and informative as I can, and not just a bare record of past events, such as all can read for themselves in the local papers.

The little cottage lately vacated by the death of Mrs. Pell, has been offered by the Trustees to Miss Harding, and gratefully accepted by her. She is particularly glad to come once again to Witham, and to renew many old friendships. She will be the third occupant to live here, for Mrs. Allam was its tenant for about 20 years, and Mrs. Pell for 10 years.

These little homes were built by our late good Squire, Mr. Fenwick, 30 years ago, in response to a suggestion by myself. I showed him the plans of similar cottages for elderly people in my old Yorkshire parish, and these he carried out, with certain modifications. The site was chosen as being the most sheltered spot, in the village, and because the overflow from the Bywells spring could be utilised to supply them with water. When the Estate was sold in 1928, the late Captain Keld Fenwick most generously bought them in, and presented them to the Church Estate, for their continued use by elderly people, who should be chosen by the Trustees and himself. When Miss Harding's name was proposed, I consulted both Mrs. Fenwick, and Mr. Monty Fenwick, who gladly signified their approval.

The Village Hall chimney has in the past refused to function as a chimney whenever the wind blew, as it all too often does, from the North! So we had a meeting of the Committee about it, to see what could be done. Fortunately for us, Mr. Scotney, of Bourne, an expert, came to look at it, and at length found the trouble, which was a large cavity in the chimney, which interfered seriously with the proper draught. A new flue has now been built inside this wide space, and the trouble is at an end. The little stove in the passage is also now in good going order, so on future occasions we hope to be really warm and comfortable. Our social on Jan. 2nd, was in aid of this object, but we shall need one or two more efforts to meet the somewhat heavy cost.

Social gatherings.—No one can complain that we have not had sufficient opportunities for social recreation this winter, but whether they have been taken full advantage of is another matter. This is the more to be regretted, as almost all of them have been in aid of comforts for the fighting services. On 12 Wednesday evenings up to date the Vicarage staff have shifted tables and chairs, and worked hard to get things ready, and so far the total net result has been £4/7/8, which works out at but 7/3 an evening. It is hoped however, to carry these on until Lent; and perhaps the concluding four may have better success.

Our quota collection on Jan. 5th, reached the very satisfactory sum of £3/12/3.

Our foreign Missionary Sunday will be, as in the past, the 3rd Sunday in February, that is, the 16th (Sexagesima). In spite of the constant calls on us due to the war, we must not allow this most urgent spiritual work to suffer. Christ's last command must be obeyed. "Preach the Gospel to every creature." Missionary boxes should be sent in on or before this Sunday.

Lent.—Once again this solemn and precious season finds us at war, and passing, as the Prime Minister has said, through "a dark and deadly valley." I do urge that we use Lent this year as a time of *most* earnest prayer and intercession. This war is a spiritual conflict, and it is the prayers of us all which will turn the scale. Let yours be among them, and whenever possible, in the House of God. "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, I will grant their requests." That is God's promise.

Our old church registers.—I am taking these to Lincoln for photographic copies to be made, which will be preserved there. This is a precautionary measure, which has been strongly urged by the Bishop.

L.H.C.

Witham-on-the-Hill, Manthorpe, Toft and Lound.

A suggestion for Lent.—Last year many of us keenly felt the loss of the Lent week-day evening services. Indeed, in past years these used to be extremely well attended, often indeed better than the Sunday evening services. Well, we cannot now use the church after dark, but we can use the Village Hall. I propose then to hold a short devotional meeting here on Wednesday evenings during Lent. These will include a few prayers and hymns, with a brief address. The hour which is considered most convenient is 7 o'clock. I may perhaps be able sometimes to get a special speaker to talk to us. Please come to these little meetings, all who possibly can, so as to make them as hearty and inspiring as possible. I will guarantee that the room is warm and comfortable.

Lent offerings.—I suggest that these be given towards providing comforts for the fighting Forces, and there will be a box for this purpose in the room. I hope that in this way we may more than make up for the loss of the money raised by the recent weekly whist drives. Lent is, or should be, a time for direct giving, without the incentive of expecting a return for our money, such as is provided by a whist drive or a dance.

The Village Hall.—Once before, this room was used for services. This was in the year 1908, when we were restoring the church, and installing the oak pews. We then had the room fitted up as a temporary chapel.

Confirmation.—The Bishop has fixed Tuesday, May 20th, for administering Confirmation in this district. West Deeping is the church selected, and the hour is 6-30. I ask for the names of any further candidates as soon as possible.

Foreign Missions.—Sunday, February 16th, was set apart as our day of prayer and support on behalf of this most essential of all our Christian duties. Unfortunately the weather was somewhat inclement, as it has been on so many recent Sundays, and some of our usual worshippers were not with us. In consequence our offerings suffered. Isn't this but one more reason why we all should have a Missionary box in our home? I do ask you most earnestly to obtain one. It entails no obligation, while its presence is a constant reminder to us of our duty as Christians. 'Freely ye have received, freely give.'

Mrs. Grant's many friends are deeply thankful that her recent serious operation was successfully performed, and that she is making good progress towards recovery. It will be a joy to us when she is able once more to return home. She will receive a warm and heartfelt welcome when that day comes.

W.V.S.—Our Witham branch of this great organization, of which there are ten members, has been doing much useful work of late, and endless articles, such as shirts, nightdresses, pyjamas, sleeping bags, have been sent in. The Toft and Manthorpe branches have been equally busy.

The Vicarage whist parties have raised £5/14/8 during the season. This sum has been allocated as follows—One half to Mrs. Maitland's work party, and a quarter each to the Toft and Manthorpe parties respectively.

Alterations in the hours of Sunday services.—Please note that this month we shall go back to the former service hours on Sunday. The early Eucharist will be once more at 8, and Evensong at 6 o'clock. Meanwhile I am grateful to those who came during the winter months at 3-30, so that we always had a fair congregation in the afternoon, Sunday by Sunday.

Baptisms.—2nd Feb., Roy Humfrey, son of Arthur Hilton and Freda Fanny Metheringham.
" " Barbara Anne, daughter of Cyril Keith and Evelyn Sandall.

Witham-on-the-Hill, Manthorpe, Toft and Lound.

The National Day of Prayer was duly observed here on Sunday, March 23rd, and our offerings, which amounted to £2/12/4, were given to the Red Cross and S. John's Fund. It is wonderful and inspiring that we have a King who can say to his people "Put your trust in God as I do." Would that we all had something of his unclouded faith. England would be a better country if that were so.

Easter Day.—Holy Communion will be celebrated on the great Festival at 7, 8 and 11. Let none fail to fulfil the one and only absolute rule which the Church lays upon us as practising Christians, when she orders "every parishioner to communicate at Easter."

The Easter Vestry and annual Church Meeting will be held on Wednesday in Easter week (April 16th) in the Village Hall, at 7 p.m. Please show your interest in your Parish church by coming to this meeting, electing your wardens and your church councillors, and giving your vote as to how the money should be spent, and the work of the Church conducted. Don't leave everything in the Vicar's hands. Come forward, and take over some of his responsibilities. Last year you contributed in the collections over £100, certainly a notable achievement. Come and see how it is spent, and advise on how the balance shall be used, for I know that there will be a balance, and a considerable one.

Mr. and Mrs. Skellett.—I have just heard that we shall shortly be losing these two most kind and helpful friends, and my first thought is, how shall we be able to get on without them. For 5 years, Mr. Skellett has ably discharged the office of churchwarden, and has ever been to me as Vicar a loyal colleague and helper, while Mrs. Skellett has for a long period been one of the Magazine distributors. Indeed, she has really had the "lion's share" of the work, for she has made herself responsible for taking round 25 copies each month, and what is equally important, securing the subscribers' payments! More, the day that she receives them, out they go, so that everyone gets their copy on the first of the month, as a rule. I am very grateful to them both. We shall all wish them many years of happiness in their new home at Ketton.

The School.—One of the many privileges possessed by this parish is our Church School. I wonder how many of us realise what it means to have such a School. Thanks to the Church in the past, it was established here long before universal education became the law of the land in 1870. The "Village Hall" was built as the Church School in 1847, but for over 200 years before that our Church ran a School, and paid a teacher. Now, the question of the definite religious instruction in all Schools is coming to the fore once again. It is felt that Christian education of our children is urgent, if England is to continue to be a Christian country, and last month the President of the Board of Education stated in Parliament that religious instruction was a subject to which he attached very great importance, and that any proposals involving changes in the law relating to religious instruction would have his close attention. These are significant words.

The Church collections for the first quarter of this year have totalled £21/6/11.

The next Quota Sunday will be April 6th (Palm Sunday).

N.B.—Red Cross qualifying whist drive, April 25th.

In Memoriam Sir Walford Davies.—Many of us here heard last month, with deep sorrow and dismay, of the death of this great musician, whose name was literally a household word to millions, but to us he was something of a familiar figure. For he loved the peace of Witham, and would come here from time to time for rest and quiet, in his full and busy life. And now, that genial and kindly presence, that alert and eager mind, has gone from us, and the well-loved familiar voice is stilled. Sir Walford was much more than a skilled and gifted musician, he was a great-hearted Christian gentleman, whose whole life and work was inspired by his love to God and his fellow-men. R. I. P.

Witham-on-the-Hill, Manthorpe, Toft and Lound.

The Archdeacon of Lincoln paid us a surprise visit a few days ago. He was enchanted with our lovely church, all the more beautiful because of its rich garnishings of Easter flowers. He at once expressed a great desire to preach here, and I have now heard from him to say that he proposes, D.V., to be with us at our Harvest Thanksgiving. That is a long time ahead, but he is so busy a man that he is obliged to fix up his engagements many months in advance.

The annual Easter church meeting was duly held in Easter week. Here are a few points from what took place. The parish, as represented by the good muster of those who attended the meeting, elected Mr. F. E. Gould as their Warden. His name was proposed by Commander Crichton-Maitland, and the voting in his favour was unanimous. We are all grateful to him for his willingness to stand. The old Council continues in office, and to it were added the Rev. C. A. Peacock, Mr. J. W. E. Banks, Mr. and Mrs. Church, Mrs. Potter and Mrs. and Miss Chambers. The Council is now larger than it has ever been, consisting of 23 members. I think this is all to the good, for it must mean that more people have a direct responsibility in their church's welfare.

Our Finance.—I think that the statement of the church accounts came as an agreeable shock to the meeting, especially when they heard that our income during last year amounted to no less than £127/10/9, the highest on record, an achievement specially notable in war time.

A War Damage Fund.—A letter from the Bishop was read at the meeting, in which he appeals to every parish to contribute substantially to this Fund for assistance in restoring or rebuilding churches destroyed or damaged by aerial bombardment. He suggests at least a special collection monthly. It has occurred to me that we might have a box in church in which contributions for this object may be placed. As our own beautiful church has hitherto by God's mercy been spared, we ought to express our gratitude by giving help to less fortunate parishes.

The Electoral Roll, revised up to date, was submitted to the meeting. It contained 143 names. *What is this Roll?* It is a list of parishioners who have signified in writing that they are Church men or women, and desire to have their names recorded on the Roll, and so become Church electors, with the power to attend and vote at the annual meeting. In everyone that I have asked to sign, I have always found the utmost willingness. I have never been met with a refusal, nor have I ever been asked by anyone to have their name removed from the Roll. This surely shows that there is a real friendly spirit towards the Church by an overwhelming majority of the parishioners, and I think that I may add, the same friendly spirit towards their Vicar. For if unhappily this were absent, there might be less readiness to comply with his request. I can only add that I value and appreciate this feeling of friendliness and goodwill more than I can say.

Strength through prayer.—I quote the following from a daily newspaper in an Article on St. George's Day (the day on which I am now writing). "In order to overcome the powers of evil we must call in the irresistible might of *Prayer*. Prayer is a force as real as terrestrial gravity. So let us all unite in making prayer the secret weapon of our land. Summon to our aid the mighty spiritual forces for which our heavenly Patron, St. George, stands." These are indeed words of wisdom. In these terrible and anxious days I ask you all to be "instant in prayer." God will bless and save us, if we ask Him. But we must first ask. Not just the few however, but the many. Those who read these notes, come and join us in our intercessions, within our great spiritual "Power-house," the House of God.

Witham-on-the-Hill, Manthorpe, Toft and Lound.

Death of the Rev. J. T. Halland.—My esteemed predecessor, who was Vicar here for 15 years, was called to his rest, appropriately enough, on the evening of Ascension Day. Although hardly any now remain here who knew him, many are aware of the great work which he did while Vicar of Witham. Perhaps the most outstanding was the building of the new School in 1897. On its foundation stone he inscribed the words "*To the Glory of God.*" Indeed, that was the high motive for everything that he did. In the church he effected many improvements, and installed our great nine foot altar; he also furnished the Lady chapel. Money then was scarce, but he was a skilled craftsman, and himself made many of the ornaments wherewith to adorn the Sanctuary. The standard candlesticks of his own making, are now in Carlbby church, where he wished them to go. We still, however, have an example of his clever workmanship, in the beautiful cross upon the Lady altar.

Even more important was Mr. Halland's spiritual work here. He was a diligent teacher, and at once proceeded to establish a more reverent and devotional rendering of the services. He taught his people to regard the Lord's Service of the Eucharist as the highest act of Christian worship. Eucharistic vestments were introduced as far back as 1885, and the Service was then solemnly rendered with music, according to the rubrical directions of the Prayer Book.

Mr. Halland's love for Witham remained to the end of his life. He was a diligent reader of our Parish Magazine, and I invariably consulted him on any project connected with the church. Recently he wrote to me as follows: "My dear old parish has ever been without rival in my affections. So much happened during my 15 years at Witham, that they still seem the greater part of my clerical life. The church, the school, the parish are full of memories of happy work and lasting friendships."

He was laid to rest on May 26th beside the grave of his wife and daughter in Blyborough churchyard, of which parish he was Rector from 1900 to 1939. R.I.P.

During the recent War Weapons Week our parish raised the magnificent total of £1366/6/5! So great a success exceeded our wildest dreams. This great sum was made up as follows: Witham £789/6/6, Toft £173/2/0, Lound £138/15/0, Manthorpe £209/17/0, while the School children's savings group produced £55/5/11. Altogether a wonderful effort for a parish of only some 350 inhabitants.

Mothers' Union.—The Deanery Festival will be held on Wednesday, June 25th, at Greatford, at which the Archdeacon of Lincoln will speak. It is hoped that a good contingent from our branch will be able to go, if the difficulties of transport can be overcome.

The War damage to churches Fund was described in last month's Magazine. In order to support it our Church Council have agreed upon a scheme whereby special envelopes for contributions will be distributed quarterly with the Magazines, and collected the following month. It is hoped that all our readers will place at least a small sum in the envelope. Our Bishop asks for generous help from every parish.

The new Church Council met on May 23rd. Many subjects came up for discussion, including a proposal for a thorough summer cleaning of the church, which we hope to carry out. The Vicar expressed his thanks to Mrs. Fray and Mrs. Stubbley for washing the altar linen, and to Mrs. Potter for giving a new book-marker for the great Bible. Mr. Banks generously offered help towards replacing torn and tattered choir surplices. He also presented a bucket for use in connection with the church stirrup pump. The finances both of the church and the Village Hall were considered eminently satisfactory.

The Magazine circulation continues to grow. Thank you everybody, for your splendid support. If payments too are prompt, I shall be all the more grateful.

A baptism of interest to many here was that of the infant son of Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Dearden on May 14th, at Welbourn church. As I was privileged to marry them, they kindly wished me to baptize their little son. He was given the names of Peter John James.

L. H. C.

Witham-on-the-Hill, Manthorpe, Toft and Lound.

The Red Cross fete.—In my notes this month mention must first be made of our wonderful garden fete, so ably organized by Mr. and Mrs. W. J. E. Banks in their lovely grounds. It proved quite one of the most enjoyable and successful fetes that I ever remember. It will, I know, be fully reported in the press, so that there is no need for me to describe it here in detail, even if space permitted. I should like however, to express on behalf of us all our hearty congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Banks, who with the help of a host of willing helpers, and in consequence of perfect organization, brought off an event so outstanding in its success. Everything had been thought out beforehand, and the one incalculable item which could not be fixed, namely the weather, proved to be quite perfect. I understand that the actual takings amounted to some £123, and this has now brought up our parish support to the local effort on behalf of the Red Cross and St. John Fund to £150! I wonder what other parishes of the size of ours have done so well.

The late Mr. Halland.—When paying my tribute last month to the memory of the former Vicar, there was much that I had to leave out through lack of space, but which ought to be recorded, of all that he did here. One of these was the extension of the churchyard in 1893. Another was the re-casting of our great 4th bell, the cost of which was borne by subscriptions collected by him in the parish. I have before me as I write, a card which he had printed, in 1887, on which appears the following composition from his own pen.

THE PLAINT OF THE 4TH BELL.

Cracked is my side, uncertain are my sounds,
I spoil the Peal, my note falls flat in Rounds;
To Loughborough, therefore, I do beg you'll
send me,
That Taylor, by his art renowned, may mend me.
I know a "pretty penny" this will need,
But "many a mickle makes a muckle" heed.

When I am *raised*, 'tis done by many a pull,
And many shillings will this card make full.
Now, if you quickly send me on my way,
I'll ring, in tune, on next Accession Day,
(When in the melting-pot I first have been)
Your right good wishes for a well loved Queen.

This versatile Vicar, not content with writing these verses, also composed a "Chronogram" to be recorded on the bell when it was re-cast, which anyone may read for themselves if they ascend into the belfry. For the benefit of others, I give it here. It is in Latin. EGO RENOVATA IN ANNO IVBILÆI BONÆ REGINÆ VICTORIÆ IN TVA ECCLESIA GLORIAS REGNI TVI IN LÆTO CONCENTV SONO SVAVITER O REX VNICE IESV ET NVNTIO HORAS OPERVM. *Now what is a Chronogram?* It is a sentence in which all the letters which stand for numerals, when added together, give the number of a particular year. Count up all such letters (M. C. L. X. V. I.) which you can find in Mr. Halland's inscription and you will get 1887. (Of course in Latin I and J are the same letter, as are also U and V). There are:—one M = 1000; six C's = 600, four L's = 200, one X = 10, twelve V's = 60, and seventeen I's = 17. Total 1887. The man who composed this Chronogram was not merely a good Latin scholar, but he was also a particularly clever genius. That man was the Rev. J. T. Halland, one time Vicar of Witham.

The War damage to churches fund.—With this copy of the Magazine you will find an envelope, into which I hope that you will put a small subscription towards this urgent fund. Please give a trifle, so that we may have a gift from each reader. The envelopes will be collected next month, or if you prefer, you can send yours direct to me at the Vicarage.

Eggs for the Hospital.—Our school children last month brought in for the Butterfield Hospital 151 eggs, together with 23/- in money. This was a very noteworthy contribution. Thank you, children.

Church collections for the last quarter.—April, £13/12/8; May, £5/16/7; June, £5/13/4. Total (omitting 29th June) £25/2/7.

Baptism.—31st May. Susan Elizabeth, daughter of Frank Eric and Elizabeth Agnes Gould.

Witham-on-the-Hill, Manthorpe, Toft and Lound.

Our school is to close for the summer holidays on July 31st, and will re-assemble on Monday, Sept. 8th. Owing to the great increase in the number of our children, and consequently those who have the care of them, this notice may be useful to many readers.

Double Summer Time is to end this month on Sunday, August 10th, when the clock will be put *back* an hour. In all probability ordinary Summer Time will remain in force throughout the winter, as it did last year. Meanwhile this summer of unusually radiant weather will have mitigated largely the inconvenience, felt by some, of the added hour of daylight. We have breakfasted at six o'clock (or even earlier) in gorgeous sunshine, and I am sure have been all the better for it.

The cleaning of the church.—Last month the church underwent a thorough and systematic cleaning. The whole of the floor was scrubbed, the walls and windows brushed clear of dust and cobwebs; carpets, seating and kneelers were taken outside and thoroughly beaten. The result must be gratifying to all. Strangely enough, on the very day that it was finished, a swarm of bees invaded the church! However they did not seem to like their surroundings, and departed after a day or so, though they left many casualties behind, and shovelfuls of dead bees had to be swept up.

The chronogram on our 4th bell, which I quoted last month, has led several people to enquire what it means in English. I had not then sufficient space to give the translation, so I am printing it this month. It is as follows: "I, renewed in the year of the Jubilee of good Queen Victoria, sweetly sound in Thy Church, in joyful melody, the glories of Thy Kingdom, O Jesus, our only King. I also announce the hours of work." The last sentence refers to the former custom of ringing this particular bell three times daily. This is the bell which, until the present war, was always rung at one o'clock. As the quarter chimes do not strike on the 4th bell, we now alas! never hear its beautiful tone. However, please God, it may not be long before it can ring out once again, to celebrate the great day of Victory.

The cushions in the chancel. These badly need re-covering, and I had hoped that I might have had them done, as my usual Easter contribution to the church. However, the necessary material seems to be unprocurable, and furnishers cannot undertake the job. So they must wait a bit longer in their unsightly condition. When the church was first restored, these two chancel seats were allotted respectively to the Hall and the Vicarage, and soft cushions were provided to render them more comfortable to their distinguished occupants during the then long sermons. But there was a subtle difference! The Hall pew on the South side had cushions stuffed with hair, while the Vicar's lady opposite had only a flock-filled cushion to sit upon! It was Mr. Halland who first put these chancel seats to their proper use, namely to accommodate the surpliced choir, which has been in existence now for 56 years. It is hardly surprising then that the cushion covers are worn out. They have seen good service!

The village jam-making centre has made a good start under the able management of Mrs. Banks, who has taken very great trouble and pains in organizing it. We are all most grateful to her. The quantity of fruit provided locally has not been so great as was hoped, but even so, nearly three hundredweight of jam has already been made, and more to come! We thank the kind friends who have given us so many jars. We shall need still more.

Mr. Griffin's accident.—We all, I know, will sympathise with Mr. Griffin of Manthorpe, in his recent terrible experience. Happily he is making slow but good recovery, though very extensively burnt, chiefly on face and arms. It was only by a merciful Providence that he escaped with his life, and that the cottage too was saved with the ready help of the neighbours.

A good word for Witham!—A few days ago the following remark was made to me. "I have seldom come across a village where the people seem so friendly, sociable and neighbourly as are the inhabitants of Witham." Whether this tribute was entirely deserved or not, it was delightful to me to hear it said, and not from a mere visitor. The speaker will forgive me, I hope, for quoting it. I do so in order that perhaps we may all try the harder to live up to so kindly a description.

Burial.—28th July. Harry Fallodown, aged 74 years.

L. H. C.

Witham-on-the-Hill, Manthorpe, Toft and Lound.

The month of September contains certain very important days, to which I would draw your particular attention. I refer to each of them below.

Sunday, Sept. 7th. Our King has expressed a wish that all his subjects shall keep this day as one of *National Prayer*. The date is significant. It follows the completion of the Second anniversary of the outbreak of War. And as we enter upon the third year of this Titanic struggle, his Majesty desires us to begin it with fervent prayer for the Divine guidance and blessing, and bids us all to join in one great stream of intercession, which may go up from every place of worship in the Empire on this day. I therefore bid you, one and all, to our special services. They will be at the usual hours, Holy Communion (the great act of intercession) at 8, Mattins at 11, and Evensong at 6.30.

Sunday, Sept. 21st, is set apart as a day of *National Thanksgiving* for the great deliverance wrought by the amazing valour of the Royal Air Force just a year ago. How specially thankful *we* ought to be in our peaceful country-side, spared, as we have been, the horrors and devastation to which thousands of others have been exposed. We shall now have an opportunity of giving expression to our thankfulness, for on that day our offerings will again be given to the R. A. F. Benevolent Fund, as we did last September. We then sent £3/10/0. This year please give even more, and if you are not present in church, send your gift, to be added to what is given in the collections.

Sunday, Sept. 28th. This is to be our *Harvest Thanksgiving* Sunday. The date was chosen months back by the Archdeacon of Lincoln, who expressed his desire to preach here on that Sunday evening. This year our usual week-night service must be omitted, owing to "black-out" restrictions. For the same reason the evening service on the Sunday will be at 6 o'clock (not 6.30). This will enable us all to get home before dark. Please make a special note of this.

Our Harvest Offerings will be given, as always, to the Hospitals, and don't omit to bring a gift in kind to place upon the table near the door in church. In these days of rationing, such gifts will of course present a greater difficulty, but for the same reason, they will be all the more acceptable to the Hospital.

War damage to churches Fund. Two months ago a small envelope was attached to each copy of the Magazine for contributions to this Fund. The response was wide-spread and very gratifying. I am more than grateful to all who sent contributions. These amounted to £4/5/6. Later on, another similar appeal will be made, for this fund, our Bishop tells us, must have continuous support until all danger is over. Meanwhile, a white box in the church can be used by those who prefer to give anonymously.

Alexandra Rose Day gifts. Particulars were received too late for the July issue, and, so are given now. They are as follows:—Witham, £2/14/7, Manthorpe 10/4, Toft with Lound 9/0. Total £3/13/11. This is 15/- more than was raised last year.

Air Raid distress Fund. The W.V.S. collected no less than £2/6/0 last month in Witham, in response to the appeal put out by the Lord Mayor of London. There were also collections in the Hamlets by Mrs. Muscutt and Mrs. Allen.

Our unsightly dumps are gone at last! Mr. Banks, keen to preserve the beauty of the village, most kindly removed them himself.

Our jam centre. The jam made recently was inspected by the County Inspector, and the whole of it passed the somewhat severe test. Not every centre has been so fortunate.

The Village Hall.—We have now provided moveable shutters for all the windows in this room, so that blacking-out is now merely a matter of minutes.

The choir.—I am delighted to welcome into the choir the large number of new recruits among the boys. The resources of our cassocks and surplices are now strained to the uttermost!

Church Collections. —				£	s.	d.					£	s.	d.
July 6th	(Quota Sunday)			3	10	8	August 3rd	...	...		1	8	7
„ 13th	...	...		1	10	7	„ 10th	...	...		1	12	3
„ 20th	...	...		1	9	10	„ 17th	...	...		1	17	10
„ 27th	...	...		1	7	2	„ 24th	...	...		1	10	11

L. H. C.

Witham-on-the-Hill, Manthorpe, Toft and Lound.

The Church Quota.—The last of the four Sundays in the year on which contributions to this payment will be made, is Sunday, October the 20th. Please give generously on this day so that our Parish may—as in past years—once again exceed the sum asked for. If every Parish aimed at doing this, the Diocesan Funds would be greatly helped.

The National Day of Prayer on Sept. 7th, was marked here by considerably increased numbers at the services. We gave our offerings on that day to the Red Cross and St. John's Fund, the amount collected being £4/9/5. The following letter of thanks from the Earl of Lytton, Chairman of the Fund, has been received. "I am desired by His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester to acknowledge your kind contribution, and to beg that you will accept the grateful thanks of the Red Cross and St. John, and convey the appreciation of His Royal Highness to all those whose generosity made this gift possible."

The National Day of Thanksgiving followed two Sundays later. Though the numbers in church were fewer, their generosity was on an even greater scale. I never remember an appeal which has touched us all so deeply as that made by the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund on this Sunday. It was amazing. The Prime Minister spoke truly when he said that never before had "so great a debt of gratitude been owed by so many to so few." But for the magnificent skill and undaunted courage of those "few" intrepid young men who fought and won the great air battle a year ago, our lot to-day would have been different indeed. So felt those thankful hearts who gave so liberally on this Sunday. If any one who was not with us on that day desires to join in this great thankoffering, I will most gladly accept and send on whatever they can give towards this splendid fund. So far, I have sent £21/10/7.

The hour of Evensong.—Beginning on October the 5th, Evening Service on Sundays will be at 3.30. This has been made necessary owing to the "black-out" restrictions.

A historical note.—By far the two oldest houses in the parish are the "Palace Farm" at Witham and Bowthorpe Park. Both these houses date back to the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and both at one time were considerably larger. The Witham house was originally built in the shape of the letter "E," in honour of the Queen. Some 80 years ago it was in a dilapidated condition, and was restored by the then owner, Sir Philip Duncombe, who pulled down the west wing, and much reduced its size. The late Lady Duncombe told me years ago that at Brickhill Manor, their home in Buckinghamshire, they had a picture of the old house as it originally was, though I never was able to go and see it. It must have been a fine place once. The court-yard between the two wings faced north, with the main entrance in the centre. It was probably at one time the chief house of the village, and was, I believe, the home of the Harington family. In the chancel of the church there is a brass tablet in memory of "Sir Robert Harington, and Dame Alice his wife," who are buried in the vault beneath the high altar.

The story that King John once stayed here is of course a myth, for the house was not built for hundreds of years after King John had died!

This historical note will be followed by others dealing with past events connected with our parish, when space permits. I hope in this way to add to the interest of the Magazine.

Two Church Army sisters will be visiting our parish at the end of October. We must all pray for God's Blessing on their work amongst us.

Mrs. James Holmes is lying gravely ill as I write. We all trust however that she may yet be spared to us a little longer.

L.H.C.

Witham-on-the-Hill, Manthorpe, Toft and Lound.

The Harvest Thanksgiving services were exceptionally well attended, and the church particularly beautiful, thanks to a great many kind helpers. It was a great pleasure and privilege to welcome our good Archdeacon, and to hear his most helpful address.

Our gift tables appeared to be more loaded than ever, there could have been few who did not bring some offering. Even rationed commodities, such as tea, eggs, etc., were among the numerous gifts, while the money collection was as generous as ever, notwithstanding the fact that our Thanksgiving was confined to the Sunday only. Here are some acknowledgments which I have received. From the Butterfield Hospital House Committee:—they express their very sincere thanks for the many and generous gifts, and say “your annual kindnesses are always most acceptable, and of course this year more than ever.” And from the Hon. Treasurer:—“We must express “our very high appreciation of the splendid gifts of groceries, provisions, eggs, fruit and vegetables “sent by you. The practical interest of the people of Witham in our Hospital is very gratifying “and is very much appreciated.” For other letters of thanks see the church Notice Board.

Our Parish Apportionment, commonly known as the “Quota,” has been more than met by the four special days set apart for this purpose during the year, in January, April, July and October. The amount contributed is £14/7/1, which is £2/14/9 more than our assessment. I have received a very grateful letter from Lincoln in acknowledgment, which speaks of it as a splendid example to other parishes.

Two Sisters of the Church Army hope to visit our parish this month. They propose to go first to Toft and Manthorpe, and to come later to Witham. I most earnestly hope that their presence among us may be greatly blessed, and be the means of much spiritual good. May I ask that you will give them a warm and hearty welcome when they visit you in your home? Further than this, they will hold and address meetings, some in the Village Hall, and some in the church, and will illustrate these with lantern slides. With this Magazine you will get a yellow leaflet, which will explain more fully the object of this visit. It may be added that the Sisters come with the full sanction and approval of the Bishop of Lincoln, in whose Diocese we live.

W.V.S. activities.—The ladies working at the jam preservation centre have again been busy, this time with blackberry, apple and other jellies, also chutney and pickles. These, I understand, can be sold retail. Mrs. Banks, who is in charge of the centre, will be able to give all information on the subject. The Women's Voluntary Services are also in charge of the book and paper collection now being made, and will make a return of all willing blood donors in the parish, of whom, I understand, there are quite a number. In addition to this, many scores of garments for evacuees have been made and distributed by the members.

Whist drives are now being arranged with a view to sending Christmas gifts to all parishioners serving in the Forces, and for a children's Christmas party. Please give your liberal support, either by your presence, or by contribution.

In Memoriam, Rachel Holmes.—It is with a sense of deep personal loss that I have to write about the death of Mrs. James Holmes. For she was a true and intimate friend to me all the years that I have been here. I used to go and see her practically every week, while Sunday after Sunday, almost without fail, until her last illness, the little bowed figure might be seen slowly climbing the hill to take her place in the church she loved so dearly, and in which she was married over 60 years ago. Mrs. Holmes was liberal and kind-hearted to a degree. Her missionary box was always a specially full one. Whenever she went into Bourne she would return with some little gift for the children or for a neighbour. No one ever sought her help in vain if help was needed. She proved a wise and loving mother to her eleven children, eight of whom remain to mourn her loss. A native of Barrowden, she was in service at the Hall, when at 22, she met and married James Holmes. He died thirteen years ago, and ever since his death, she had lived in the little cottage, which was her home until just before the end, which occurred in Hospital on Oct. 22nd. R.I.P.

Burial.—October 27th. Rachel Holmes, aged 82 years.

L. H. C.

Witham-on-the-Hill, Manthorpe, Toft and Lound.

A smaller Magazine.—The present very acute shortage of paper will make it necessary next month to reduce the size of this Magazine. For nearly 40 years it has remained its present size, but the January number will be considerably smaller. The familiar picture and list of parishes on the front page will be cut out, and the space thus secured will be allotted to the local notes from the various parishes. It may be possible also for these notes to be printed in smaller type, and if so, there will be nearly as much reading matter as before. I am grateful for the wide support given to the Magazine, and hope that all our present subscribers will continue to take it in. If there should be anyone who now receives it by post, and does not desire to have it next year, please let me know *this* month. Still, I hope that all of you will continue your kind support, as it is of the utmost importance to keep up our circulation.

Warships week.—The amount raised in this small parish during this special week last month far surpassed our most sanguine hopes. When we were asked to aim at £3,000, few of us thought that we should ever approach that figure. But we were wrong, and by the end of the week we had reached the truly gigantic sum of £3237/13/8! Of this, £34 came from our school savings group, and £5/6/0 from the doll. Its correct age was 4 years, 5 months and 1 week, which was accurately guessed by Miss G. Wilson, of Rippingale.

Poppy day results.—The sale of poppies on November 11th resulted in raising £7 14/5 (Witham £5/4/6, Manthorpe £1/0/3 and Toft-with-Lound £1/9/8). To this must be added the church collection on Remembrance Sunday, which was £2/16/7, making a total of £10/11/0.

The Village Hall.—A new Committee has recently been elected in order to arrange for frequent social gatherings during the winter. I am delighted to think that they propose to run something in the nature of a young people's club, and I earnestly hope that it may be well patronised. When I first came here, I organised something of the same kind, which included classes of various kinds, a night school, a dancing class, a lads' club, etc. It was called a Reading room, though about the only thing the members *didn't* do, was to read! Later in 1911, we transferred it to the Vicarage club room, which was far more cosy and comfortable than the old school. There for many years it had a successful and flourishing career, until at last, owing to lack of support, it had to be closed down. There are very few left now, who will remember those jolly evenings in the old "Reading Room." My best wish for the new effort is that it may be as greatly appreciated and patronised as was this one.

Christmas gifts.—The 17 men and 2 women from this parish who are now in the Forces are each to receive 10/- in money, and a pair of socks (the women gloves). The cost has been raised by two whist drives, augmented by a few very generous contributions.

Christmas party for the children.—This is now assured, and all who are helping to provide it are anxious that it shall be a really great success, if only to make up for the failure to provide one last Christmas.

Christmas Day.—Unless there is some relaxation of the lighting restrictions, we shall be unable to have the first service earlier than 8-30, and even that will have to begin a few minutes before the end of black-out time. The other two services will be at 9-30 and 11. As your parish priest I earnestly invite you to come and keep the great Festival as Christ would have us, when we celebrate His Sacred Birthday.

The tragically sudden death of Mr. Green on November 20th at the Racer Farm, came as a great shock to us all, but specially to his bereaved widow and children, with whom we all will feel the very deepest sympathy. R.I.P. L. H. C.

Baptism.—November 23rd. Alan William, son of George Henry and Doris Fountain.

Burial.—November 24th. Charles William Green, aged 53 years.