

Digging under the straw

If you're anything to do with the Church, the build up to Christmas can be spent sounding more like Scrooge than Tiny Tim. As the decorations go up in the shops at the end of October or even earlier, we grumble that it's too soon. Then, to add insult to injury, we see the Christmas cards on offer. What, we fulminate, have kittens wearing Santa hats and bucolic village scenes got to do with Christmas? And it's only a matter of time before somebody says "Put the Christ back into Christmas" - clichés are popular at this time of year, after all.

By this time we've probably worked up a head of steam, and our next move will be to insist on decent cards with nativity scenes, consigning the cute kittens and cosy cottages to the people we only remembered we owed a card to at teatime on Christmas Eve.

The trouble with taking the moral high ground though, is that the only way is down, and if we're not careful we'll be in for a fall. Nativity scenes aren't that much better than dancing kittens if we just take them at face value, and the cute Baby on his sweet bed of straw, being gazed at adoringly by his mother - wearing pristine blue and white despite having just given birth on the floor of a cowshed - needs another look. Not a whole lot of reality there either. This isn't about the insanitary conditions of the birth of Christ – after all, nobody would want to send a realistic picture with "Merry Christmas" underneath unless they had a particularly dark sense of humour – but about something much more important.

When we celebrate Christmas it's not the "Ahhh" factor we need, whether of kitsch or piety. At this time of year we're invited to celebrate with everyone in earth and heaven God's gift of his Son to the world and the Son's joyful willingness to be given in love. Christmas is about a love so raw and immediate that it burst out of heaven and came to earth because heaven itself couldn't contain God's love for creation. All the presents we give each other at this time of year are loving imitations of the greatest gift the world has ever received – God himself in human flesh. That's something for all us to remember next time we mutter "Humbug!" at the sight of capering kittens, but assume that our equally unlikely stable scene is

preferable. If we really want to explore the true meaning of Christmas we have to be prepared to dig under the fluffy straw in the pretty manger and to meet the Love which pulses under the glitzy wrappings and the pseudo-Dickensian bonhomie. It may not lend itself easily to the world of Christmas cards and calendars, but it's the only thing that can change the world. Have a wonderful Christmas!

Fr Liz

PARISH NEWS DEADLINE FOR JANUARY IS STRICTLY SATURDAY 15TH DECEMBER IN ORDER TO GET THINGS DONE BEFORE CHRISTMAS.

Civil Notices.

You'll all have spotted the Civil Notices board in the porch (with, presumably, the 'uncivil notices' opposite). It's used heavily to advertise all manner of local events and we're very happy with that.

We've noticed, though, that with there being so much going on we're getting pushed for space. We've decided, therefore, that from now on the only notices which can really go there - apart from legal ones we're obliged to display - are those advertising current events.

It does mean that the sort of permanent 'information notice' for community groups and other good causes will no longer be there: you'll find that information readily available via the Link and the Library, of course. We do apologise if it causes any inconvenience, but we're running desperately short of room.

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS DATES

Sunday 2nd Dec 6.00 pm Advent Candlelight Procession
Sunday 9th Dec 4.00 pm Lindsey Lodge Tree of Lights Service
Sunday 16th Dec 4.00 pm Christingle Service
Monday 24th Dec 6.30 pm Carol Service
11.30 pm Midnight Mass
Tuesday 25th Dec 8.00 am Said Eucharist
9.30 am Family Communion with Carols
Sunday 30th Dec 4.00 pm United Carols at St. Augustine's

The Bishop of Lincoln writes.....

During my first year as the Bishop of Lincoln, I have probably clocked up more miles in my car than in the previous five years put together. I have been travelling around the Diocese, spending time with people in churches in all the corners of the diocese. That opportunity to spend time with people is precious. It's a chance to listen, to hear first-hand about the things which matter in different places, to share in the joys and sometimes in the sorrows of life in our congregations. It's a chance to get alongside and become part of the lives of our churches, even if only for a brief spell.

I'm all too aware that when the Bishop is coming to a service, people often make a special effort to spruce up the church. The brasses get an extra rub, the altar linens are washed and starched, and the biscuits and the cakes are always especially delicious. And yet, as we approach the season of Christmas and begin to prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus, it's worth remembering that in that first Christmas, God didn't wait until everything was absolutely perfect and ready before sending his Son into the world. Instead, God came to us in the

birth of Jesus in that stable in Bethlehem, into a world which neither expected him nor was ready for him.

In the mystery of the incarnation, God becomes one of us. He enters our world in Jesus, revealing himself to us. In Jesus, God shows us his very being, and in him we have the perfect model of discipleship, of how God wants each one of us to live our lives.

So in the midst of all the busyness of getting ready, remember that this is the great joy of Christmas: that in the greatest act of love, God became one of us in the incarnation of Jesus, whose birth tells us that there is a new Kingdom of God at work – a Kingdom for us all, a Kingdom whose name is Love.

+ Christopher Lincoln:

Barton Rotary Club

Senior Citizens, including those from Barrow, Goxhill and New Holland, are again invited to a free Christmas Concert to be held in Baysgarth School Hall on Sunday December 9th at 7.00pm. Entertainment is provided by Barton and District Amateur Operatic Society and Barton Town Band. They will perform a selection of seasonal music and, at the interval supper will be served. Transport can be arranged by telephoning David Witter on 01652 632675.

On Christmas Day, Barton Rotary Club members will be cooking about 50 Christmas lunches and then delivering them to elderly people who will be spending Christmas on their own. This is a full Christmas Dinner, including Turkey with all the trimmings, followed by trifle, mince pies and fruit. This available to OAP's in Barrow, Goxhill and New Holland, as well as Barton. To arrange to have this delivered, please contact David Witter on 01652 632675. A Rotary Club member will then call round to check the delivery arrangements.

Barton Rotary Club – doing great things in Barton and the villages since 1977

December at Ropery Hall

Acclaimed West End actor James Hyland brings his unique stage adaptation of the classic Charles Dickens novel A Christmas Carol to Ropery Hall in the run up to Christmas. (Picture – centre pages)

Now in its fourth year, A Christmas Carol – As Told by Jacob Marley (Deceased), sees the experiences of miser Ebenezer Scrooge told through the eyes of his former business partner Jacob Marley.

Hyland has recently won the Best Performer in Theatre (Fringe Report Awards 2012) as well as a nomination for The London Theatre Award 2012 and was invited to a Buckingham Palace reception to mark the bi-centenary of Dickens' birth.

The production on Thursday, December 6, begins at 7.30pm and tickets costing £10 in advance or £12 on the door, can be booked online at www.roperyhall.co.uk by phone on 01652 660380 or in person at The Ropewalk's Craft Gallery. Parental discretion is advised for children under seven.

On Saturday, December 15 the New County Choir under Director Richard Mabbott with Peter Sproston on piano are in concert performing Songs and Cries of London by Bob Chilcott and Fantasia on Christmas Carols by Ralph Vaughan Williams and other season items.

Tickets cost £5 and can be booked in the same way as A Christmas Carol.

Ladies' Group 7th November - Card Making with Elsa Cox

Sue Wright welcomed and introduced Elsa to nearly 60 ladies who attended this meeting, proving how popular card making is. Elsa had spent a lot of time preparing for the evening, providing the materials to make 2 cards each. She also brought a variety of cards for us to purchase explaining that all the money she makes from the cards is donated to Childline. Over the last 3 years she has raised over £5,000

for the charity saying that each £5 only pays for 3 phone calls received. Her passion and dedication is really to be admired.

Elsa gave a brief outline of how to start making the cards and then we were off - a loud buzz ringing around the hall, with glue sticks, coloured pens, brushes paints, scissors, and ribbons all to be used in the production of the cards! The first one depicted a Christmas box and was made from red and gold card pasted onto a cream card with a bow tied onto it; it's amazing how many ladies found this difficult! The second was a choir boy which we painted; this was then pasted onto a music sheet which was also pasted onto the card.

Everyone seemed to be very pleased with their efforts judging from all the noise and the looks on the ladies' faces!!

Sue thanked Elsa for all her hard work and it was nice to see a lot of her cards being sold in support of a very worthwhile cause.

J.F.

FROM THE REGISTERS:

BAPTISMS:

Nov 11 Jackson Philip BODEY-CLARK son of Patricia & Robert Philip CLARK

Amy Emma Holly CLARK daughter of Charlotte WORTH & Wayne Ashley James Ben CLARK

Nov 25 Poppy Grace HUMPHREY daughter of Victoria Leigh BARRON & Robert Samuel HUMPHREY

Noah Jacob William BRANNON son of Trudi-Louise & Daniel Paul BRANNON

FUNERALS:-

Nov 2 Kenneth BROWN

Nov 14 Audrey Atkin CRESSEY

Donations have been received for Church flowers in loving memory of:-

Walter (Bunny) Horne
Frank Milner

Mothers' Union

Christian care for families

HELP US TO GROW

Mothers' Union unites Christians of all ages across the world. Through prayer, campaigning and volunteering, members strengthen marriage and family life.

Whether you're looking for support, fellowship, or simply a place to meet with like-minded individuals, Mothers' Union is the place for you.

The lifeblood of the Mothers' Union is the commitment, faith and compassion of millions of ordinary people.

Generations of women and men have invested in MOTHERS' UNION, so that today it is healthy, alive and growing.

Many branches, are flourishing, because of the energy and generosity of previous generations. Now the future is in your hands.

(Excerpts from "Families First" Mothers' Union magazine.)

Dec 5 9.30am Corporate Communion Reader Brenda Skinner

Dec19 2pm Christmas Carols and Readings. £1 Parcel.
Seasonal Refreshments.

FLOWER ROTA

Dec 2 ADVENT SUNDAY

Dec 25 CHRISTMAS DAY Elinor Cartwright

Samaritan's Purse – Operation Christmas Child - shoe boxes

This year we were able to send 136 shoe boxes in the van with Tony Watson. Our boxes shared the van with those from St. Peter's School, the Barton Evangelical Church and the Salvation Army Citadel. The other local schools also filled boxes in collaboration with similar organisations to OCC.

In the end our boxes had to be collected a day later than planned because on the original date; Tony had been asked to take the van to Immingham Docks to collect 4,750 boxes which had been freighted, free of charge, from the Faeroe Islands (population just under 50,000)! The Islands, of course, are part of Denmark which shows you a little of how international OCC is. I imagine that their boxes like ours, will find their way to deprived children in Eastern Europe and Western Asia, having been checked and loaded alongside ours.

So well done – whether you sent your boxes via St Mary's or via one of the other collections – shall we do it again next year? – yes – of course we shall! I've heard of one or two people who have started to squirrel away some items for their next box!

On behalf of OCC and of the children who receive your gifts, many thanks for all your efforts. There is an official "thank you" posted up in Church.

Rosemary Lamert

[Again, thanks to Rosemary for her efforts in co-ordinating this].

St. Mary's Bellringers

The new learners continue to improve and have now been joined by Abbey Ward.

The bells were rung on Armistice Day not only for the 09.30 service but later in the morning leading up to the 2 minutes silence at 11.00 then again after the silence.

November 17th was the St Mary's Bellringers' outing which this year found them in York. The day started at the church of St Laurence with 8 bells and an ultra posh ringing room but sadly the sound of the bells didn't match the quality of the ringing room!

Cars were left in the church car park and we walked into the city centre to ring at St Martin le Grand, Coney Street. The building was largely destroyed in 1942 but the tower is still intact and houses 8 wonderfully sounding bells.

Lunch was taken at various venues in York before we walked through the park to ring at St Olave's church which has 6 bells.

The final tower was at Market Weighton (picture centre pages) where we enjoyed ringing the 8 bells before going on to Walkington and the much anticipated pleasure of eating at the Ferguson Fawsitt Arms to round off a splendid day.

Everyone was most grateful to George Thompson who had made all the arrangements, well done George!

The bells will be rung for the usual Christmas services and also to welcome the New Year when we shall start to ring at 23.30. Please feel free to join us to welcome 2013!

The ringers send good wishes for Christmas and the New Year to everyone in the Parish.

Joan Barton



The Magical Memories of School

A packed house enjoyed a terrific trip down memory lane in November at our School Dinners Evening which rounded off our 2012 events programme at the Wilderspin National School Museum.

People are still talking about it and, like Oliver Twist, asking for "more!"

A HUGE thank you to the EW1 Team: Marion, Jenny, Amanda, Joanne and Steve – and to St. Mary's for the hire of equipment. It was a major logistical operation preparing a choice of dishes and puddings in a kitchen not big enough for the proverbial swinging cat! But it worked a treat and clean plates testified to the much improved culinary quality compared to bygone times. The semolina was smooth as velvet, the vegetables were hot and tender, and frog spawn pudding was nowhere to be seen. The meal followed an Assembly with the Headmaster involving communal singing and a very public admonishment of miscreants caught smoking and graffiti daubing. The evening was rounded off with schooldays reminiscence quizzes testing the grey matter.

Over 50,000 people have visited or used the School since opening in 2009 as a museum and community space. 2012 has been our busiest year – the site has been hired for a record number of activities during – just under 300 sessions. Over 5,000 adults visited during the year, and over 1,200 children have visited with families or came to the theatre performances organised by the Barton & District Drama Club. Two thousand school pupils took part in formal school sessions led by Wilderspin staff, and this autumn term has been our busiest ever as we are now seeing repeat visits by schools.

Until April our winter opening times are Thursday – Sunday 11am - 3pm, but the Scholars Coffee Shop is open between 10.30am and

3.30pm. The School Museum will be closed from the 23rd December until the 3rd January.

Thank you for all your support during the year – and all our best wishes for 2013.

Ian Wolseley,
www.wilderspainschool.org.uk

Over to you.....

I expect you will be surprised to know that one of my passions is dry stone walls!!! It was a known fact with our three children that Mum had to have her 'dry stone wall fix' in the summer which meant a visit to the Dales, Moors or Derbyshire!! So, a few weeks ago I went on a dry stone walling course with Shân, Vanessa and Jackie to a picturesque spot just outside Sheffield. There we met up with John (our tutor) plus dog and Clare and Gary who were also on the course.

We trudged up a steep boggy, wooded hillside alongside the wall carrying spades, buckets, rope, hammers, spirit levels and protective kneepads and gloves.

Our task to rebuild a two metre section of Roman wall knocked down by 'walkers'.

So we finished taking down the wall, piling all the stones into size order and then began. Heavy stones in the lower part of the wall, verticals checked at all times with the spirit level, no running joints from back to front and packing done at all times, Did you know that there are two sides to each wall with a gap down the middle which is filled with rubble as you go? Even the Romans had cavity walls!!! 'Toppers' completed the task and you can see the end result on the photos in the centre pages.

None of this would have been possible without each others' help - we all worked as a team. We all worked together each taking on a particular 'role'.

This is how it should be in our church or any other organisation.

As you know – 'There is no 'I' in team!!!!'

Have a good December!

S.W.

Amusing exam answers:

Q1. In which battle did Napoleon die?

* **his last battle**

Q2. Where was the Declaration of Independence signed?

* **at the bottom of the page**

Q3. River Ravi flows in which state?

* **liquid**

Q4. What is the main reason for divorce?

* **marriage**

Q5. What is the main reason for failure?

* **exams**

Q6. What can you never eat for breakfast?

* **Lunch & dinner**

Q7. What looks like half an apple?

* **The other half**

Q8. If you throw a red stone into the blue sea what it will become?

* **It will simply become wet**

Q9. How can a man go eight days without sleeping?

* **No problem, he sleeps at night.**

Q10. How can you lift an elephant with one hand?

* **You will never find an elephant that has only one hand.**

Q11. If you had three apples and four oranges in one hand and four apples and three oranges in other hand, what would you have?

* **Very large hands**

Q12. If it took eight men ten hours to build a wall, how long would it take four men to build it?

* **No time at all, the wall is already built.**

Q13. How can you drop a raw egg onto a concrete floor without cracking it?

* **Any way you want, concrete floors are very hard to crack.**

With those amusing thoughts – a Happy Christmas to all our readers!



St Mary's Ringers at Market Weighton



West End actor James Hyland



Dry Stone Walling – before and after.



Sat 1 st Dec	11.00 am		Lectio divina
	7.00 pm		St. Andrew's Day meal
Sunday 2nd Dec		Advent Sunday	
	8.00 am		Said Eucharist
	9.30 am		Parish Eucharist
	2.30 pm		Service at The Willows
	6.00 pm		Advent Procession
Mon 3 rd	9.30 am		Toddler Time
	10.00 am		Diary meeting (Birchdale)
Wed 5 th	9.30 am		Said Eucharist (MU Corporate)
	7.00 pm		Quiet evening at Worlaby
	7.30 pm		Ladies' Group
Fri 7 th	5.00 pm		E1W
	6.00 pm		Prayers before the Blessed Sacrament
Sat 8 th	11.00 am		Lectio Divina
Sunday 9th Dec		Advent 2	
	8.00 am		Said Eucharist
	9.30 am		Parish Eucharist
	4.00 pm		Lindsey Lodge Tree of Lights
Mon 10 th	9.30 am		Toddler Time
Wed 12 th	9.30 am		Said Eucharist
	2.00 pm		Carols at Eagle House
	7.15 pm		Ministry meeting (vicarage)
Thurs 13 th	1.00 pm - evening		St. Peter's School in Church
	2.00 pm		Carols at Tofts Road
Fri 14 th	7.30 am		Said Eucharist
	5.00 pm		E1W
Sat 15 th	11.00 am		Lectio divina
	Parish	News Deadline	
Sunday 16th Dec		Advent 3	
	8.00 am		Said Eucharist
	9.30 am		Parish Eucharist
	4.00 pm		Said Evening Prayer
Mon 17 th	am		Home Communion at St. Peter's Court & Victoria House
	9.30 am		Toddler Time

	2.00 pm		Carols at Westbridge House
	7.00 pm		Carols at Victoria House
Tues 18 th	6.30 pm		Carols at The Willows
	7.00 pm		Said Eucharist
Wed 19 th	9.30 am		Said Eucharist
	2.00 pm		Mothers' Union
	2.00 pm		Carols at Beech House
	pm		Ladies' Group outing
Thurs 20 th	am		Home Communion
Fri 21 st	10.00 am		Castledyke School service
	2.00 pm		St. Peter's School service
	5.00 pm		E1W
Sat 22 nd	11.00 am		Lectio Divina
Sunday 23rd Dec		Advent 4	
	8.00 am		Said Eucharist
	9.30 am		Parish Eucharist
	11.30 am		Baptisms
	4.00 pm		Christingle service
Mon 24 th	6.30 pm		Carol Service
	11.30 pm		Midnight Mass
Tues 25 th	8.00 am		Said Eucharist
	9.30 am		Family Communion with Carols
Wed 26 th	9.30 am	Stephen, Martyr	Said Eucharist
Thurs 27 th	9.30 am	John, Apostle & Evangelist	Said Eucharist
Fri 28 th	9.30 am	Holy Innocents	Said Eucharist
Sunday 30th Dec		Christmas 1	
	8.00 am		Said Eucharist
	9.30 am		Parish Eucharist with Carols
	4.00 pm		Carols at St. Augustine's
Wed 2 nd Jan	9.30 am		Said Eucharist