

## Services at the Parish Church

Sundays 8:00 am Holy Communion (BCP) 9.30 am Sung Eucharist (ASB)  
Thursdays 10.00 am Eucharist (BCP) 3rd Sunday 9.30 am Family Service

## Christmas Service Times

### 18th December

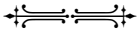
8.00am Holy Communion  
9.30 am Family Service  
6.30pm Candle-lit Carol Service

### Christmas Eve

4.00 pm Crib Service  
11.15 pm Midnight Mass

### Christmas Day

8.00 am Holy Communion  
9.30 am Family Communion



As usual we shall be celebrating Christmas at a variety of times and in different styles.

On the Sunday before Christmas we have our annual candle-lit Carol Service at 6.30 pm. This is always a wonderful occasion as we celebrate the birth of the Christ child in words and music. This year we shall also be observing the 400th anniversary of the King James translation of the Bible; all the readings will be taken from the Authorised Version.

The mood could hardly be more different for the Crib Service on Christmas Eve when the church is usually packed with children and families who want to take part in this lively re-telling of the Christmas story. As in previous years, all children are invited to come dressed as angels or shepherds in order to help us build up the tableau.

We are privileged to be able to have the Rev'd Sara Cliff, the new Methodist minister in Soham, preaching for us at our Midnight Mass. There is always a rather special feeling in going to church in the dark with the candles flickering and the familiar carols being sung.

On Christmas morning we shall be celebrating the birth of Jesus with the customary Family Communion; children often bring presents for us to admire during the course of the sermon. It is a service at which all ages are encouraged to attend.

I hope that everyone will have a chance to join us at some point over the Christmas season so that we can celebrate together the joy of God-with-us in the person of Jesus. We wish all the readers of LodeSTAR a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. *Tim Alban Jones*



# Silent Night

Christmas is coming, hopefully the geese are fattening and we shall be singing once more the familiar and much loved carols.

Austria has a national treasure in the composition of 'Silent Night', which has become "The Song Heard Round the World".



The words flowed from the imagination of a young modest Curate, 180 years ago in a village church in Oberndorf. The German words for the original six stanzas were written by Joseph Mohr in 1816. In 1818, when he visited the home of his friend, musician-schoolteacher Franz Gruber, he showed him the poem and asked him to write a melody and guitar accompaniment so that it could be sung at Midnight Mass. His reason for wanting the new carol is unknown. Some speculate that the organ was out of action. A master organ builder working on the organ in Oberndorf saw a copy of the carol and took it home with him and from there it began to spread as a Tyrolean folk song and passed from country to country. It is recorded that the carol was sung in Leipzig in 1832 and in New York in 1839 outside Trinity Church and there must have been many unrecorded performances. In 1840 the carol was already well known in Lower Saxony and a favourite of King Frederick William IV of Prussia.

For many years it was thought that the work was by Haydn, Mozart or Beethoven. The controversy was put to rest when a long lost arrangement of 'Stille Nacht' in the hand of Joseph Mohr was authenticated, with 'Melodie von Fr Xav Gruber'. Joseph Mohr is buried in a tiny Alpine ski resort, Wagrain. He was born into poverty in Salzburg in 1792 and died penniless in Wagrain in 1848 where he was Pastor. He had donated all his earnings to the care of the elderly and the education of the children in the area. So we now know that the music was composed by a musician who was not known outside his village. There was no celebrity to sing at its world premier, yet its powerful message of heavenly peace has crossed all borders and language barriers.

*Thou did'st smile on us when Thou wast born,  
Blest indeed was that happy morn ...*

*Mary Shelbourne  
November, 2010*

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## Viva Youth Theatre

Tickets are now on sale for 'Smike', the next exciting project for Soham's highly-regarded Viva Youth Theatre.

Smike is a pop musical based on 'Nicholas Nickleby' and tells the story of a group of restless school-children who go back in time to the world of Charles Dickens - and see for themselves the advantages in living in the twenty first century!

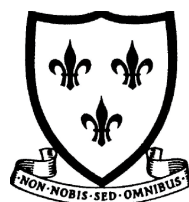
The youth theatre, under the direction of Josh Schunmann, will be performing the show at The Brook, Soham, from Thursday 2nd–Saturday 4th February 2012 at 7.30pm. There will also be a matinee performance on Saturday 4th February at 2.30pm. The venue will be transformed with stage extensions and tiered seating.

**viva!**  
arts & community group

Tickets are £8 full price and £7 concessions plus there's a special group discount. To book call the Box Office on: 01353 722228, email [vivayouth@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:vivayouth@hotmail.co.uk) or pop into The Viva Centre, 7 Churchgate Street, Soham, Ely, Cambs. CB7 5DS.

# School Report

Dr Carin Taylor



We were delighted to host a special event early in November to mark the formal opening of our new Performing Arts Centre. Sadly our guest, Ian Lavender, was not well enough to join us but Dan Schumann, a former student of Soham Village College and now a West End theatre producer, was more than able to bring his informed perspective to an audience of current and former students; friends of the College and our local community.

Soham has a rich and busy cultural scene. A number of our students develop their talent for the arts, and their confidence as performers and individuals, through the inspired teaching of our music and drama departments and through the extra-curricular opportunities provided by, among others, Viva, KD Theatre Productions and a host of specialist music and dance teachers.

The Performing Arts Centre is already a focus for new creativity within school. Octagon Studios of Ely have recently started two twilight groups; we have a new orchestra which is attracting young musicians from primary schools to play alongside our students and we anticipate one of the first ever school performances of Cats in the early spring. We are hoping the wide corridors in the Performing Arts Centre will make a wonderful gallery for the visual arts and very much hope that the wider community will explore the development of a cinema and the import of other touring and local theatre groups.

At a time of some fragility, austerity and uncertainty, we hope that the Performing Arts Centre will provide a space of enjoyment and inspiration. Perhaps allowing daily cares to be set aside, I hope it is a place where young people can develop their creativity and confidence and that it will truly be a place with the power to enrich the lives of individuals and the communities in which they live. It is a pleasure to declare the Performing Arts Centre open!

Our Carol Concert is being held in Ely Cathedral on Wednesday 14 December at 7.30pm. Tickets priced at £6.50 are available either from Ely Cathedral Box office, [www.elycathedral.org](http://www.elycathedral.org) or by phone on 01353 660349. If you would like to join our orchestra or the Community Choir please contact Mr Kenna or Mrs Perry in the Music Department on 01353 724100, extension 238.

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## Christingle Boxes

Please could you look in your cupboards and on your shelves. I really need to find over 60 boxes that are out there somewhere by the end of December. Please bring to any church service or phone Dawn 723134 who will collect.

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## Simple Christmas ideas for families

- \* Make a wreath for the front door from lots of green plastic bags, cut into strips about 15cm by 5cm, and tied on to a wire coat hanger bent into a circle. Push the knotted strips close together for bushiness. Add glitter, red ribbon, etc.
- \* A Nativity scene using toys for people and animals, a cardboard box for a stable. Some angel decorations can 'hang around'. A tiny baby (perhaps a scrap of cloth wrapped with thread) must be laid in the manger on Christmas night!
- \* Look out all your Christmas story books – The Jolly Christmas Postman, etc – for bedtime reading under the glow of the Christmas tree lights.
- \* Make wrapping paper and cards from plain paper decorated with potato prints – stars and trees are easy to design from triangles.
- \* Make a lacy tablecloth for the Christmas table by folding and snipping a cheap plain paper tablecloth. Snowflakes for the windows can be made the same way.
- \* Threaded popcorn becomes a tree garland. These look good combined with homemade gingerbread decorations. *Bridget Buchan*





# A Councillor's Comments

There was no public comment time so the vice chair gave her announcements of forthcoming meetings including the committee meetings on the 31st October.

**Neighbourhood Panel:** At this meeting the police gave notice of a new phone number that the public can use for non-emergency calls. In the past using the 0845 number it took a long time to connect to our local police. The new number is 101

We had a presentation by Nicki King regarding what the young people are looking for. They are going to build a wall of wishes and they hope that youth groups in our area will each compose a wish that they would like to see happen for them in our community and write it within the brick shape on the form and send it in. These will then we gathered together to create a wall of wishes that our young people would like to see happen, and it will up to councillors and other providers to take note and respond to those wishes where they can. This is a novel way of the young people having their say.

**Community Facilities Working Party:** The vice chair gave a brief report saying that plans are progressing and they are appointing a quantity surveyor.

**Soham Town Forum:** We heard a report about the meeting where the public had a chance to meet and put questions to their councillors. It was a good meeting but they would have liked more members of the public present.

**Soham – Wicken Circular Walk:** The County Council received grant funding from the European Union Fens Adventurers Rural Development Programme to carry out improvements on public rights of way in a specified area (The Green Fen Way). The funding brief was to provide a circular walk rather than a network, taking in the main attractions of the area linking in to local services and businesses.

They asked our council for any comments that it may have about this walk and also whether we would like to add any words to the text that would be included in the leaflet they were going to produce for the walk.

A map of the walk was included in the agenda's that were sent out and I managed to fit the walk in on the Sunday afternoon before our Monday meeting. The walk itself is a joining up of two walks to Wicken with which I was familiar, but I was greatly surprised by the work that had been done to clear the paths to make the walk a delight and the paths themselves were free of the ruts of past years. I can fully recommend this walk to anyone, and keeping up a steady pace I was able complete it in two hours nine minutes. The walk passes both the Maids Head and the Fountain, which could be useful refreshment points.

At our November meeting there was no Public Comment time, so the chairman's announcement was to comment on the opening of the Performing Arts Centre at the College. Our councillors had been invited to this opening ceremony and found the building very impressive and the performance of the children exceptional.

**Meetings of Standing Committees:** These gave notice of the various budgets for the coming year. The Communities Amenities Committee are still working on the improvements to the Pavilion, but before work can begin preliminary work needs to be done before we can start on the Pavilion itself. The Cemetery and Allotments Committee are considering fencing the Berrycroft Allotments and quotes have been obtained which will be considered at our next meeting.

**Ross Peers Sports Centre:** They have requested support to replace their heating system, and the council have agreed to give their support in principle, and respond more fully when the cost is known.

**Council Christmas Arrangements:** The Council Office will close at lunch time on the 22nd December and re-open on Tuesday 3rd January 2012.

**Correspondence:** Amongst other things there was a letter from a Soham resident whose home and family were subjected to violent anti social behaviour on the 31st October. This incident was fully discussed at our meeting and steps will be taken in order to prevent this happening again. Councillors were upset that this should have happened and questioned why the CCTV did not trigger a police response.



- ☆ **The Fordham Charity Group** presents a Christmas Concert starring the Wicken Coronation Band with songs from Janet Scott & Bridget Hickish and carols for the audience on Saturday 17th December in Victoria Hall, Fordham at 7.30 pm. Tickets are £6 each available from: D.N.Jenkins TV, Fordham, or call 01638 720674. All proceeds to Staploe Medical Centre Transport Fund.
- ☆ **200+Club winners** for November were Sheila Roach - £5 and Dorothy Clark - £10
- ☆ **Soham Salvation Army Carol Service** with Soham Comrades Band will be on Sunday, 18th December, 2011 at 2.30 pm in the Salvation Army Hall. Everyone will be welcome.
- ☆ **Eat@Viva** - the newly opened Viva Centre cafe in Churchgate Street, Soham - is pleased to announce a new 'Grab and Go' service. Choose from a wide selection of sandwiches, soups, jacket potatoes, cakes, hot and cold drinks then simply call Sylvia on 0779 680 6020, say what time you want to collect, 'grab' and 'go'! See [www.viva-group.org.uk](http://www.viva-group.org.uk) and click on 'about the cafe' for a full menu.
- ☆ **Items for the February, 2012 edition of LodeStar** should be submitted by Friday, 20th January, 2012. E-mails should be sent to [peterdscott@btopenworld.com](mailto:peterdscott@btopenworld.com) or printed copy left at 22 Sand Street, Soham CB7 5AA.

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## How much do we take technology for granted?

We live surrounded by and dependent on technology. 2011 saw the fiftieth anniversary of the first human spaceflight in 1961, when cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin in the Russian spacecraft Vostok 1, entered outer space and orbited the Earth. Seeing a TV news item about this anniversary of such a major technological milestone for the human race, caused me to think about how much technology has advanced since then, in particular software and electronics, and how much we all too easily take it for granted.

Our world today is very much a digital one, dominated by the internet. Imagine if you could go back in time and tell someone in 1961, about the internet, the PC and mobile phones. To them you would be describing science fiction, not science fact. Compared to 50 years ago most working environments have become much more automated, with the technology which enables this not given a second thought. Barriers to communication formerly constrained by geography or cost have been eliminated. For example, my work regularly involves me taking part in telephone conference calls with colleagues located in different parts of the world.

When things go badly wrong with technology we are often all too quick to complain – I know I do. It is much rarer for us to praise technology for the increases in productivity and convenience of communication it has given us. Very quickly the benefits of the “new ways” are accepted as the new norm and we forget about the laborious “old ways”.

Members of the younger generation, including my children, have grown up in a digital world, so not only do they take technology for granted, they don't even know otherwise. They have nothing to compare this digital world to. To them the relative ease of being able to compile school, college and university projects using their laptop PCs is normal. I can remember a time though, when such tasks had to be written out in longhand, and research could only be done in libraries. I spent hours sifting through card indexes and squinting at blurry microfilm. Furthermore if it was a very important piece of work which needed to be typed, then I would have to find and pay a copy typist. Proficiency in the use that mechanical marvel the typewriter was beyond me.

None of us know with any certainty what major technological advances will happen in the next 50 years. What we do know is there are many challenges which we should seek to meet, including those related to sustainability and the needs of a growing global population. In future, I will try not to take the technology I use each day so much for granted. *Mark Campbell*

# Just a few words

*Tim Alban Jones*

## **The (Service) times, they are a-changing ...**

Since the merger of the parishes of Soham and Wicken in 2000 we have held services at 8.00 and 9.30 in Soham, and at 11.00 at Wicken. This replaced the previous pattern of 8.00 and 10.00 in Soham, and 10.00 in Wicken. We are shortly to be changing back again.

In 2000 I felt that it was important for the two congregations to get to know me and that I should have a chance to get to know them. I was grateful that both congregations and PCCs were willing to move their service times in order to accommodate this wish. I think it fair to say that we all know each other by now! The great benefit of the present system is that it enables all the services to be taken by a single priest on any Sunday.

There are, however, some disadvantages to the present situation: I usually arrive with barely minutes to spare before starting the service at St Laurence's (not ideal). I rarely get to stay behind at the end of the 9.30 for those informal but important pastoral chats that often take place ("Can I have a quick word please, Tim?") because I have to leap into the car for the 'Wicken dash'. There are fewer opportunities for me to preach (you may not find that a disadvantage!) given that we have several others to fit into the rota, all of whom need a fair turn.

After a period of consultation, both PCCs have agreed that we shall revert to the previous service pattern in January. The plan is that I shall take the main service twice a month at Wicken and three times a month at Soham (for those of you who worry about how this will work, the service in Wicken on the third Sunday in every month is at 8.00). Four times a year there are five services in the month, and on those Sundays we shall continue our present pattern of joining with St Laurence's at Wicken.

So, please note from January 8th the service times at St Andrew's will be 8.00am and 10.00am every Sunday. I hope that no-one gets caught out by arriving half an hour too early! And I do hope that the new pattern does not inconvenience too many people. There may be one or two (or possibly even a few more!) who might enjoy an extra half-an-hour in bed on a Sunday morning. With every good wish for Christmas and the New Year from *Tim Alban Jones*

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## **A date for next year's calendar**

At the 5.30 pm Service of Evensong in Ely Cathedral on Saturday, 28th January, 2012 Tim is to be licensed and installed as an Honorary Canon of the Cathedral. You will all be very welcome to join him at this Service.

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# PARISH REGISTERS

## **Baptisms**

23rd Oct	Thomas Peter James Hills
30th	Emerson Frederick Hillier
20th Nov	Gabriella Cabral
	Oscar Summer

## **Funerals**

14th Nov	Bernard Charles Cocksedge (88)
16th	Jean Joyce Badcock (81)
18th	Alfred William Hitch (82)
22nd	Dorothy Bailey (95)