

Village Voices

May 2009



Village Voices is produced by the parish churches for the local community providing news and information for:
Guyhirn • Gorefield • Murrow • Parson Drove • Rings End • Tholomas Drove • Thorney Toll • Wisbech St Mary

A warm welcome to all newcomers & visitors to our villages!

'Vicar's Verbals'

With Easter over the wedding season begins: happy couples will soon be calling at the Vicarage for their final preparation visits. Marriage has never been an easy path and couples need all the help they can get with the tricky business of homebuilding, of sharing precious time and resources and, if they are so inclined or blessed, with the costly commitment of parenting. Vicars are not marriage guidance counsellors but we have an obligation to ensure, as best we can, that couples have some idea of what they are letting themselves in for; so I was especially pleased to be helped by some experienced married folk at a recent 'wedding Saturday' event for our brides and grooms. Marriages are not merely the responsibility of the individuals directly involved, but also those around them, for family units, and the associated relationships between relatives and friends, are essential to the fabric of society. If we fail to love and respect each other at the kitchen table and over the garden fence, then society itself is soured and undermined. If you know some married folk who are struggling, take time to embrace them in some little way; and if you meet a family which is making a real success of its important work, make the effort to express your appreciation.

Matthew.

+ EASTER SERVICES +

All three parish churches enjoyed increased congregations at their Easter Sunday morning services. Although the weather was dull, the beauty of each flower-filled church was uplifting as people celebrated the most important Festival in the Christian Calendar.

The Reverend Janet Phillips conducted Holy Communion at Emmanuel, Parson Drove. Father Matthew was at St Paul's Gorefield, and later presided at Sung Eucharist at Wisbech St Mary. At each church a Paschal Candle, which had been brought from Tydd St Giles, where the previous evening at the Easter Vigil, the Candles were lit to celebrate the victory of the Cross over evil, were placed near the altars and lit.

Roy Cott sent us this report from St Paul's:

"Walking to Church on Easter Sunday it was lovely to see the Churchyard in all its glory with the spring flowers in bloom.

On entering the Church we saw that the windows had been beautifully decorated with an assortment of flowers, animals, chicks etc Thank you to all the ladies who had kindly given their time to make such glorious arrangements. Over 40 people attended the service where Nathan carried the Paschal Candle. We were pleasantly surprised to be presented with Easter Eggs by Elisabeth and Rosemary as we left the Church".

The Easter Day celebration followed services of Meditation in all three churches on Good Friday. During Holy Week 24 pilgrims, walking from the East Midlands to Walsingham, called in at Wisbech St Mary church for refreshment.

HISTORIC OCCASION AT WISBECH ST MARY CHURCH

The Annunciation of Our Lord to the Blessed Virgin Mary is commemorated by a special day in the Church's calendar. This year the chosen date was March 25th, and that evening a Solemn High Mass was celebrated in Wisbech Saint Mary & Guyhirn Parish Church. The celebrant was the vicar, Father Matthew, assisted by Reverend Teresa Dixon, Deacon, and Father Richard Howells, Sub-Deacon. The Thurifer was Len Quince.

The occasion was, however, special for another reason. History was made as, for the first time in the church's long history, a woman priest assisted at the altar during a Solemn High Mass. Teresa Dixon is a member of the Society of Catholic Priests within the Anglican Communion, and is an Assistant Priest at Witchford, near Ely.

Copy deadline: 15th of every month.

Please e-mail articles to paynewsm@btinternet.com
or on paper to Anne Wallis in Guyhirn (450466)
Elaine Harvey in Gorefield (870558)
David Pearce in PD (700454)
Brian Payne in WSM (410755)

Advertising

Enquiries please email Jennie.village.voices1@btinternet.com
or phone Terry Brigden 450481

+ **REGULAR CHURCH SERVICES** +

St Mark's Methodist Church, Parson Drove

May 3rd: 10.30. Mrs J Whitfield
 May 10th: 9.30. United service in Parish Church
 May 17th: 10.30. Miss E Middleton
 May 24th: 10.30. Holy Comm: Revd N Hannah
 May 31st: 2.30. United service at Tydd St Giles.
 May 29th: 7.30pm. "Shalom" at Upwell.

Murrow Methodist Church

All denominations welcome
 May 3rd: 10.30. Mr G Beeken
 May 10th: 10.30 Songs of Praise. Mrs J Whitfield.
 May 17th: 10.30: Revd N Hannah
 May 24th: 10.30 Local arrangement.
 May 31st: 2.30pm United service at Tydd St Giles
 May 29th: 7.30pm. "Shalom" at Upwell.

Wisbech St Mary & Guyhirn Parish Church:

11am. SUNG EUCHARIST Every Sunday exc 1st.
 8am Communion, 11am Family Service: 1st Sunday.
 Evening Prayer: 6.00pm 3rd Sunday.
 Other services as announced.

Emmanuel Church, Parson Drove:

9.30am Family service 1st Sunday in month.
 9.30am Communion 2nd & 3rd Sundays
 9.30am Communion or Morning Prayer, 5th Sun.
 United Service at St Mark's 4th Sunday 10.30am.
 Flower Rota: May 3rd, 10th, 17th May. Mrs H Rowell.

St Paul's Church, Gorefield:

10.00am: Holy Communion except 3rd Sunday.
 8.00am: Holy Communion 3rd Sunday.

A Solemn Mass, with incense, is to be held in Wisbech St Mary and Guyhirn Church on Monday June 1st to celebrate the Visit of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Elizabeth. The service starts at 7.30pm and residents from all parishes are very welcome.

MOTHERS UNION

The Lady Day service in Ely Cathedral on March 28th was conducted by Bishop David and was a wonderful afternoon. The trustees met the Worldwide President of the Mothers Union, Rosemary Kempson, at lunch before the service.

On Thursday April 2nd we met in WSM & Guyhirn church for the Wave of Prayer, when we prayed for our link diocese in Africa. The April meeting was held in the church for us to welcome, with refreshments, the followers of the Student Cross on their pilgrimage to Walsingham for Good Friday.

On Wednesday April 29th there is to be a Quiet Afternoon in St Peter's, Wisbech, conducted by the Rural Dean, Rev John Penny.

Our next meeting in WSM church house is on Tuesday May 5th at 2.15pm. Everyone is most welcome.
 Love to you all, Lilian.

GUYHIRN CHAPEL OF EASE

The first service of the 2009 season to be held in Guyhirn's 17th century chapel will be Morning Service on Sunday April 26th at 9.30am.

Parishioners from all parishes are invited to share the unique atmosphere of the chapel when in use. A keyboard has been donated.

WISBECH ST MARY TEA SERVICES

The next Methodist Church Tea Service will be on April 29th when the speaker is David Sheldrake. The May Tea Service will be led by R and P Johnson and be held on May 27th. The services start at 4.30pm and all are welcome.

In our thoughts and prayers

We welcome into the Church's family

Kera and Libby Mae Jolly, who were baptised at Gorefield, Sunday March 29th March.

James and Daniel Brighty, who were baptised at Parson Drove, on Sunday March 29th

Luke Brown who was baptised at Gorefield, Sunday April 5th.

We say goodbye to

Gordon Brown, Guyhirn, whose funeral was at Peterborough Crematorium on Monday March 16th.

Denis Sutton, WSM, whose ashes were interred in the Garden of Remembrance on Sunday March 15th.

Robert George ("Bob") Waterton, stalwart of the WSM Good Companions Club, whose funeral was at WSM & Guyhirn church on Monday March 23rd, followed by burial in Essex the next day.

Frederick George ("Bill") Bailey, Gorefield, whose funeral was at Gorefield church on Friday April 3rd, followed by burial in the churchyard.

Sarah Kerney, Murrow, whose funeral service was at Peterborough Crematorium on Tuesday April 7th.

We send our love to all the families.

ANNUAL GARDEN FETE AT SOUTHEA GRANGE

The annual Garden Fete organised by Emmanuel Church, Parson Drove, takes place on Saturday June 6th, on the lawn of Southea Grange, by kind permission of Dr and Mrs Rosier. The Fete opens at 2pm and visitors will find traditional stalls, including cakes, plants, bottles, bric-a-brac, books, etc. There will be competitions and games for all ages, and teas and refreshments will be available. Everyone is most welcome.

Church members would be pleased to receive any donations for the stalls. All proceeds are for the church funds.

THANK YOU!

Michele of the Parson Drove Linedancers would like to thank all those who came and made the Social for Marie Curie on Saturday March 21st such a success. Special thanks to the March Square Dancers for their help.

You all helped to raise £302. Well done!

MAY'S MART

The Wisbech St Mary Mart will be open once more on Saturday May 9th in the Church House, opposite the church gate, from 9am to sell-out (usually about 10am!)

Homemade cakes and other produce, along with a cup of coffee or tea and time to chat, make this a popular monthly event in the village.

GARDENS OPEN

Wisbech St Mary's Garden Open Day 2009 is on Sunday June 29th from 10am to 5pm in aid of MAGPAS.

Tickets £3 and programmes available from Popeley's Stores, WSM, or at all gardens open on the day. There will be a large wooden orange flower outside the gardens taking part.

PARSON DROVE WOMENS INSTITUTE

There is a warm welcome waiting for visitors or new members at Parson Drove W.I. They meet in St Mark's chapel on the second Tuesday of each month at 7.30pm. There is always a raffle, tea, coffee and biscuits, a trading stall, and lots of chat and laughs!

On April 14th Dr Somerville spoke about First Aid in the home. More accidents occur in the home than at work, or on the roads. (Must review my first aid box!).

On May 12th the speaker is Fiona Lucraft, whose subject is "Wartime Food".

The speaker for June 9th is well-known local historian, Brian Payne, with a talk on "The Saint of St Mary's".

ROGATION WEEKEND EXHIBITION

The bi-annual exhibition of agricultural tools and implements will be held in Wisbech St Mary church on May 16th and 17th.

We are looking for artefacts from all three parishes, preferably items that are unusual. Please would farmers and gardeners contact Brian Payne on 01945 410755 for further details. Historically, farmers often had their crops blessed by a priest at Rogationtide, which always occurs during the spring. A common feature of Rogation days in former times was the ceremony of "beating the bounds", in which a procession of parishioners, led by the minister, churchwarden, and choirboys, would proceed around the boundary of their parish and pray for its protection in the forthcoming year.

WSM WOMENS FELLOWSHIP

By the time you read this we will have had our April meeting, and we now look forward to the Spring Social on Thursday May 14th in the school hall. Tickets, from Mary McClagish, are £5. Maureen Rispin will tell us of life in Sandringham around 1919, after which we will have our fish (or chicken) and chip supper.

New members always welcome. Our meetings are usually the second Thursday of the month. *Liz Hunt*

VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED AT WSM

Collectors are urgently needed for Christian Aid Week, May 9th to 16th. Help is also required for counting on Sunday May 17th over lunch at 12/30pm at "Whizzers", Station Road. Please help if you can. Contact Caroline on 410342.

LEADING JAZZ CLARINETIST TO PLAY AT WSM

Well-known clarinetist John Crocker will be performing in one of the gardens which will be open during WSM Open Gardens Day. Crocker, born in Nottingham, was the leading clarinet and sax player for the Chris Barber jazz band for just over 30 years, retiring in February 2003, when the band permanently increased to 8 musicians. Since 'retiring' Crocker has guested with several bands including Kenny Ball and a Ken Colyer tribute band.

GOLDEN THANKS

Anne and Derek Page would like to thank everyone who attended their Golden Wedding celebration on Saturday March 28th for their gifts, cards and donations to the Starlight Foundation. A grand total of £700 was raised, which will go a long way to granting the wishes of the terminally ill, and very sick children in hospices and hospitals.

It was a wonderful night and one we will never forget!

TOM KENNEDY CONCERT

A concert by Tom Kennedy, the talented Irishman with the velvet voice, is to be held in St Mark's Methodist church, Parson Drove, on Sat May 9th at 7.30pm. Admittance £5, inc refreshments. Advance bookings on 700307.

GOREFIELD LADIES GROUP

On 25th March, Gorefield Ladies Group Members attended a Spring Fashion Show, which was held as a joint venture with the Village Hall Fund.

Light refreshments were provided, after which Sarah Symonds welcomed everybody to her "Style on Budget" Artichoke Collection. Models for the evening were all from the Ladies group and wore a collection of casual, day and evening wear.

A raffle was held before the clothing sale started. Profits from the Show all went to the upkeep of the Hall.

Glenys Grimm thanked the models, Sarah and the audience for such a good attendance.

The Ladies Group meets monthly on the 4th Wednesday at 7.30pm, with a variety of speakers

THORNEY TOLL EVENTS

On Saturday May 2nd there is a Race Night, starting at 8pm.

On Friday May 8th there is what is described as a Chinese & Cards event, starting at 8pm.

Both events held in the Village Hall

ADVANCE NOTICE: CHURCH'S GARDEN PARTY

There is to be an afternoon Garden Party in Elgood's Brewery Gardens on Sunday June 7th. This informal, pleasant Sunday afternoon occasion is for the benefit of parishioners from the three churches and their guests. The Clarkson Singers will be singing for us in the gardens. Details of admission and timing to follow in next issue of *Village Voices*. Please make a note in your diary!

PARSON DROVE ANNUAL CHARITY FAIR:

Saturday June 13th, 10am to 1pm. Light lunches available.

Offers of participation by local organisations would be warmly welcomed by Chris Coates on 700307.

This important occasion is jointly sponsored by St Mark's and Emmanuel Church. Proceeds are donated to a charity drawn by lots.

WSM LUNCHEON CLUB

The Luncheon Club at the Bridge Inn, Wisbech St Mary, will meet on May 12th and 26th at midday. If members can't make the lunch, please contact Marjorie on 410511 or the Bridge Inn on 410555.

MURROW'S SUNSHINE CLUB'S GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

The Sunshine Club has held meetings on March 25th and April 8th. Birthdays were celebrated in April by Mr Bell, Mr Benstead, Mrs Godfrey and Mrs Harvey.

The Club is now looking forward to its AGM in May when members will be celebrating the Club's 50th anniversary. Congratulations!

NEW EQUIPMENT FOR YOUTH CLUB

Over £1000 has been spent on providing additional equipment for the WSM Youth Club which meets on Thursday evenings in the Village Hall from 7 to 9pm. All 10 to 16 year old youngsters very welcome. Contact: 410986.

WORK TO BEGIN ON NEW COMMUNITY CENTRE AT WISBECH ST MARY

Congratulations to the trustees of WSM Community Centre on obtaining a substantial Lottery grant towards their new building project, and along with other funding, including a grant from WSM Parish Council, will allow work to commence shortly.

The existing Hall will be sold by Public Auction on June 17th at 7pm in the Village Hall, the proceeds going towards the new building.

CAR BOOT AND RACE NIGHT AT MURROW

The Friends of Murrow Primary School announce that a Car Boot is to be held at the school on Saturday May 2nd. £5 per pitch, gates open at 10am for stall holders and 10.30am for the public. There is no need to pre-book pitches. Refreshments and toilets available.

The Friends are also organising a Race Night in the school hall on May 9th. Tickets, which must be paid for prior to the evening, cost £4 children, £5 adults, and include a fish and chip supper. A Licensed Bar will be available. Please ring 700357 for tickets.

A PLEASANT SUNDAY AFTERNOON IN PARSON DROVE

Steve Perry will provide 40s, 50s and 60s songs and music at a Sunday Afternoon Entertainment in Parson Drove Village Hall on Sunday June 7th at 2.30pm.

Tickets £6 each include tea and biscuits, but bring your own drinks. All proceeds go towards the Annual Senior Citizens' Christmas Party.

To book your place, ring Barbara 700761, or Casey 700276.

BRIC-A-BRAC STALL

The Bric-a-Brac stall outside Murrow Methodist Chapel will be open on Saturday May 9th from 11am to 2pm.

In addition to Bric-a-Brac there will be a selection of homemade cakes, jams and marmalades. Come and browse, and support your local village!

Contact: Maureen Woolard.

PARSON DROVE LUNCHEON CLUB

Luncheon Club meets at the "Butchers Arms" alternate Thursdays at midday. For details, contact M Shelley, 01945 700729.

KEEP FIT AND HAVE FUN AT P. D!

Come line-dancing to keep fit and have fun at Parson Drove Village Hall on Tuesdays 1.30 to 4.00pm., and Wednesdays 7.30 to 9.30pm. If you are interested, ring Michelle on 701239

WSM PLAY AREA OPENED

The new play area was officially opened recently and is being well used. The new teenage equipment is in the process of being selected, and is planned for installation by July.

WSM GOOD COMPANIONS CLUB

The Club's new secretary is Betty Hayden on 410708. We meet fortnightly on Thursdays at the Village Hall, with doors open at 2pm for a 2.30pm start and finishing at 4.30pm. Do come and join us; you will be very welcome.

SHORT MAT BOWLS

Parson Drove Short Mat Bowls Club meet in the Village Hall on Wednesdays and Fridays 2.00 to 4.30pm. Each session £2. New members very welcome.

MURROW 200 CLUB WINNERS

Mrs O'Sullivan, Murrow; T Brown, Parson Drove; L Godfrey, Tydd St Giles; J Wright, Wisbech; B Day, Whaplode; P Allen, Guyhirn; A Pope, Murrow; K Pell, Guyhirn. £100 Winners: H Wiseman; W Barnes.

WSM YOUTH CLUB

Meets in the Village Hall on Thursday evenings from 7 till 9pm. All 10-16 year old youngsters very welcome to join in and to bring some new ideas. Contact: 01945 410986.

THE CAGE'S FRIENDS

The historic Cage on the Green at Parson Drove is open on Sundays and Wednesdays 2 to 5pm.

If you are interested in helping, please ring Roger on 700501 or Anita on 701220.

ACTIVITIES AT ST MARK'S

Whist Drives: Third Tuesday of each month at 7.30pm.

The Fitness League: Thursdays 9.45 to 10.45am. Movement to music for all ages, young or mature. Contact: Helen 01406 330565.

JULIE'S PATCH

We welcome Pc Julie Coales who will be writing in Village Voices each month

At a recent rural panel meeting, one of the priorities that was set by the public was in relation to Inconsiderate parking, for example parking on footpaths, near junctions, on yellow lines outside schools, etc.

Please think when you park. It might be you that cannot get by on the footpath, or it may be your view that is hindered at a road junction. I will be out and about....and have plenty of tickets to give out!

Speeding in the villages is an issue that regularly comes up in conversations with residents. With other agencies, the Wisbech Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) is looking at ways to reduce speeding in rural areas. Together with SPEEDWATCH volunteers, the NPT will be carrying out checks in identified problem areas.

Have you heard of Speedwatch? Want to know more? Call me on 0845 456 4564, or email Julie.coales@cambs.pnn.police.uk

GOREFIELD PARISH PLAN

As part of the Parish Plan consultation process, residents of Gorefield were asked if they would volunteer some time to help with projects in the community. During the next few weeks the Parish Council will be contacting those who offered any such help with a view to arranging an informal session to discuss how best to use these offers to deliver any of the actions highlighted in the Plan.

Further details: 410436.

MEET THE ARTIST DAY

Public Art for new Wisbech Library

Artist Jo Chapman has recently been appointed to create newly commissioned artwork for the new Wisbech Library development which is due to be completed at the end of this year. Jo lives and works in Welney and has recently completed commissions in Cambridge for Anglia Ruskin University halls of residence, and for the development of an old warehouse in Great Yarmouth into a centre for young homeless people.

The "Meet the Artist Day" on Thursday May 7th from 2pm to 6.30pm will be an opportunity to see other examples of her work, share your thoughts and ideas for the artwork in the new library, and find out how you can contribute to the process.

The event is at the temporary library in Queens Road, Wisbech, and refreshments will be available. Everyone is welcome!

COMMUNITY PAYBACK

Each year the Cambridgeshire Probation Area delivers over 130,000 hours of unpaid work ordered by Courts in the county.

Has your community got a project you would like us to undertake? Contact Alan Moore on 01945 461451.

JOIN THE STREET PRIDE GROUP

The Parson Drove Street Pride Group is inviting new members to join in future Litter Picks, which have been arranged for the following dates: Saturday May 9th, 10am; Wednesday June 24th, 7.30pm; Saturday July 11th, 10am. Meeting at the Village Hall on each occasion.

Further information: Robert Scrimshaw 700202, or John Cook 701324. The Group Chairman's annual report showing a busy and successful year's work, is now available.

ADVANCE NOTICE: THE SCARECROWS ARE COMING!

Gorefield will be holding its second annual Scarecrow Competition in August. The organisers are hoping to build on the success of last year when 35 wonderful exhibits were displayed around the village and parish. Judging will take place during the week of 22nd to 29th August, and the results and presentation of trophies will be at the annual Show which is to be held on September 5th.

Details: Marie 410436 or David 870059.

MOBILE LIBRARY TIMETABLE

During the next three months, the mobile Library will be calling on : May 1st, 18th and 29th; and June 12th and 26th. Mobile libraries do not visit on Bank Holidays. The locations, stops and arrival times are.

Rings End	March Road,	10.00
Guyhirn	Selwyn Corner	10.25
Bunkers Hill.	Lay-bye	10.45
WSM	Cannon Close	11.05
WSM	Church Road	11.30
WSM	Blundell Terr	11.55
Lev Common	Pear Tree Cres	12.15
Guyhirn	Chapelfield Av	15.20

Enquiries: 0345 045 5225, or online at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/library

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF GOREFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Calor Village of the Year Competition

"Does Gorefield relish a challenge?

Is Gorefield open to new ideas?

Is Gorefield thriving, or does it need a boost?

If the answer is yes to any of these questions then our village should consider entering the Cambs & Peterborough Calor Village of the Year competition this year. Gorefield has had a lot of success in the past, as the signs outside the school prove. Previously, the Parish Council has submitted an entry, but lack of support has meant no entry for about three years now.

Cambridgeshire ACRE organises the competition in the county and encourages all communities to enter. Entrants not only have a great deal of fun preparing an entry, but also reap real benefits from working together to engender a sense of community spirit. Scenic beauty is not important, what matters is care and achievement.

There is an abundance of good community activity going on in the county's villages. From clubs and societies to fundraising events and fetes, local people are working together to enhance and improve village life for themselves and others.

If you are able to help, please contact me on 01945 410644

Michael Humphrey

<p align="center">WSM SOCIAL CLUB</p> <p>Tuesday May 5th: Tea Dance 2.00 to 4.30pm. Saturday May 9th: Karaoke. Come and sing along! Saturday May 16th: Entertainment. Artists to be announced. Every Tuesday: Line Dancing Tuition 7.30-9pm Every Thursday: Slimming World from 7.30pm</p>	<p align="center">MURROW BOOK CAFÉ</p> <p>The Book Café is situated at the rear of Murrow chapel and is open on Thursdays from 2 to 4pm, and the 2nd and 4th Saturdays from 12 to 2, for internet access, book loans, and chat over cups of tea or coffee. Membership is free. On April 28th, and May 12th and 26th, there is to be a Computer Drop-in from 6.30 to 7.30pm when Andrew will offer IT support. Details: Chris 700792, Diana 700213</p>	<p align="center">Gorefield Ladies Group</p> <p>Wed 27th May at 7.30pm Everyone welcome Don't miss "A History of Cromer Lifeboats" A talk by Julian Kirk Gorefield Village Hall Entry fee £2 to include refreshments. Enquiries tel no. 870276</p>
<p align="center">GOREFIELD PLAYING FIELD</p> <p>The Annual General Meeting of the Gorefield Playing Field Association will be held in the Playing Field Pavilion, Wolf Lane, at 7.30pm on Monday May 11th 2009. All welcome.</p>	<p align="center">PARSON DROVE PARISH COUNCIL</p> <p>Notice is hereby given that the Annual Parish Assembly Meeting will be held on Wednesday May 13th 2009 at 7.00pm in St Mark's Church, Parson Drove, followed by a Parish Council Meeting at 8.00pm.</p>	<p align="center">MURROW VILLAGE HALL AGM Advance Notice</p> <p>The Murrow Village Hall AGM will be held in the Hall on Wednesday May 27th at 7pm. Please attend and support your local amenity. The committee are looking for additional members to bring forward new ideas for the community.</p>
<p align="center">PARSON DROVE AMENITIES COMMITTEE</p> <p>The Parson Drove Amenities Committee Annual General Meeting will be held on Friday May 15th in the Village Hall, commencing at 7.30pm. Nomination papers will be on display at the usual village sites, and new members will be most welcome. Come along and have your say in the running of the village hall, playing field and pavilion.</p>	<p align="center">CAR BOOT SALES</p> <p>In aid of the Parent Teacher Association at Wisbech St Mary Church of England School, will be held on the following Saturdays: April 25, May 23, June 20, July 18 and September 12.</p> <p>Gorefield Sports and Amenity Car Boot Sales on Saturday 9th May and Saturday 23rd May - On the playing field in Wolf Lane - Booters 07.30 - ring 01945 870387 or 07918122217</p>	<p align="center">GARDEN FETE DATES</p> <p>Please make a note in your diary of the following church garden fetes: Emmanuel Parson Drove: June 6th (see separate details) Wisbech St Mary: July 11th. The organisers of each event would be pleased to hear from anyone willing to help on the day.</p>
<p align="center">WOULD YOU CARE FOR A CUPPA?</p> <p>Friday May 15th, 9.30 to 11.30am at WSM Church House Please come and join us for tea and cakes to mark Diabetes UK's 75th Anniversary. All money raised will make such a difference.</p>	<p align="center">CITIZENS' ADVICE BUREAU</p> <p>Will be in attendance at the Pavilion, Parson Drove sports field, from 1.30 to 3.30pm on Tuesdays May 26th and June 23rd.</p>	<p align="center">WSM SHORT MAT BOWLS CLUB</p> <p>The Short Mat Bowls Club meets in Wisbech St Mary Village Hall each Monday evening from 7pm to 9.30pm. New members welcome. Contact 01945 410452 for details.</p>

Useful contacts			
Churches		Schools	
Revd Matthew Bradbury	410814	Gorefield School	870321
Lilian Brigden (Reader)	450481	Gorefield Pre-school	870439
Revd Nigel Hannah [Methodist]	466426	Guyhirn School	450247
Village Halls (bookings)		Murrow School	700357
Gorefield	870829	Murrow Pre School	07952573973
Guyhirn	450835	Payne School Parson Drove	700275
Murrow	700212	Parson Drove Pre-School	07880 606450
Parson Drove	700729	WSM School	410312
Thorney Toll	07887754869	WSM Play Group	07944 719586
WSM Village Hall	or 07961957878 410539	Health & Security	
Parish Council Clerks		Parson Drove Surgery	700223
Gorefield	870454	North Cambs Hospital	585781
Parson Drove	700501	Queen Elizabeth Hospital	01553 613613
Wisbech St Mary	474191	Social Services	481100
		P. Drove Surgery Car Service	07766534280
		WSM Community Car Scheme	07592407283
		Gorefield Social Car Scheme	870539
		Police (non-emergency)	0845 456 4564

Churchyards and Gravestones

A message from the Vicar, Revd Matthew Bradbury.

Recently there have been some misunderstandings regarding headstones and memorials in the church graveyards and ashes plots, so I would like to offer some brief guidance. The Church of England is responsible for four graveyards in the Parishes where *Village Voices* is delivered: the churchyard and ashes plot at Emmanuel, Southea; the graveyard at Gorefield; the churchyard and ashes plot at the Chapel of Ease, Guyhirn; and the ashes plot at Wisbech St Mary. I should explain that the area which remains open for burials at St Mary's is a council run cemetery as the old churchyard (around and behind the church itself) is now closed save for the burial of ashes.

As Vicar I am given some rather limited powers which are delegated to me by the Diocese (the Bishop's area of authority). For instance I am allowed to decide whether someone who dies outside the parish can be buried in the graveyard. I am also allowed to permit a limited range of headstones and memorials. Some people may be surprised to learn that I am not permitted to allow certain types of stone which are currently very popular such as black marble or dark grey granite. Neither am I permitted to allow (for instance) heart-shaped headstones or kerbs around graves. There are similar constraints upon the kind of tablets I can permit to mark the interment of ashes. This does not mean that any memorial which I cannot authorise would never be allowed, but whenever the regulations prohibit me from saying 'yes' this probably means the Diocese would also be reluctant to agree. If anyone wants a headstone or memorial which I am not allowed to permit, they can apply to the Diocese either by seeking some general advice (sometimes the Diocese is willing to agree slight variations to the usual permitted styles) or by making a formal application for a Faculty (which is like a grant of Planning Permission on church property).

I have been asked why there are already so many black and dark grey stones in the churchyard. I struggle to answer this. Doubtless many pre-date the 2004 Regulations (which were clarified in 2007), others may have been granted in ignorance of the regulations or by mistake during *interregna* (gaps between Vicars) and before I was made Vicar last autumn. I suspect some may even have been placed without permission, but the local records do not help me and I have been advised by the Archdeacon (who has local responsibility for enforcing church regulations) to rule a line under what happened before I arrived. Stonemasons have a duty to keep up to date with the regulations and should give clear advice before taking an order for any monument. I need to make it clear however that the Diocese may order the removal of a gravestone or memorial erected without permission.

Lastly there are very strict rules about what can be placed on or around graves. I will try to be sensitive to people's feelings in this regard but there will be some notices going up in the churchyards shortly reminding people that they cannot leave tributes or indeed anything other than fresh flowers on graves and setting out the date by which any objects must be removed. This is to ensure that the graveyards and ashes plots do not become cluttered and can be kept respectfully tidy by our gardeners.

I hope the above is fairly clear. If you would like to have a copy of the Regulations I will be happy to provide one or to offer any other advice or assistance I can. I am also very happy to come and say prayers with you at the grave of a loved one on or near important anniversaries.

Matthew

Voices Past

THE PARISH CLERK AND HIS CHEST

The Parish Clerk was indispensable. In 1603 he was required to be "at least 20 years old, known to the parson as a man of honest conversation, and sufficient for his reading and writing with competent skill in singing". The Clerk, Parson and schoolmaster were often the only educated persons in rural parishes.

The Clerk's functions included reading the lessons and psalms, singing in the choir, announcing the hymns and leading the responses. He served at the altar and assisted the priest by ensuring that all the holy artefacts needed for the services were to hand. He was responsible for opening the church, collecting fees and ringing the bells. If there was no sexton appointed he would help to dig graves and clean the church and its yard! When researching marriage registers, one finds that, as he was always on hand, the Parish Clerk was the principal witness to all the weddings in his church.

Whilst the Parish Clerk was usually a man, there are records of female Clerks in some areas of England. In the early nineteenth century, the Clerk at Wisbech St Mary was a schoolmaster with the splendid name of John Bull!

One of the Clerk's most important duties would be to look after the Parish Chest and its contents. The chest was usually made of the finest oak with iron security bands and two substantial locks. Although the Clerk would account for the presence of the chest, he wasn't given a key. The parson kept one key and the churchwardens had custody of the second key.

The chest was principally used to keep the church registers secure. Up to the middle of the sixteenth century the registers would be written on loose pieces of paper or parchment. In 1538 Thomas Cromwell ruled that formal records should be kept in every parish. The reason for this was threefold; to provide evidence for inheritance purposes; to calculate the population (probably for tax purposes) and to prevent incestuous marriages and other unlawful unions

At the end of the sixteenth century it was ordered that the records be transcribed into

parchment books, and a copy of the transcriptions be sent to the Bishop of the Diocese. This would, no doubt, be another job for the Parish Clerk to add to his list.

In addition to the registers recording baptisms, marriages and burials, a number of other more secular records were deposited in the parish chest. These included the Overseers of the Poor accounts. These men administered the Poor Laws, and had the responsibility for providing work for the able bodied, and sick relief for disadvantaged persons. They maintained the poor house, and, in some cases, the house of correction. All the records of their meetings and countless other documents which passed through their hands went into the chest.

The actions of the Parish Constable were also recorded in the form of accounts and vouchers, and these, together with the papers of the Surveyor of the Highway were deposited.

Each year at Easter two men in each parish were appointed to be Churchwardens. Their main responsibility was the upkeep of the fabric of the church building, and were accountable to the Diocese. They kept detailed account books and vouchers. Together with the priest and curate they produced Glebe Terriers and other documents relating to the benefice such as the Tithe Map.

A large number of parish chests have survived and remain in the parish church. However, in many cases, the majority of the papers and documents have been lost. Where they do exist they make very interesting reading for local historians and genealogists. The parish registers were saved and are now safely held in designated depositories throughout the country.

Wisbech & Fenland Museum holds the registers for 28 parishes in and around Wisbech, both in Cambridgeshire and West Norfolk. Many of these parishes have also deposited such material that remains from their parish chest.