

Church Newsletter March 2007

St Wilfrid's Lent Lunch

A traditional Lent lunch will be held in the Church Hall on Friday 30th March. Drop in any time between 12 noon and 2pm and bring your friends. Soup, Bread & Cheese and tea or coffee costs £2 and all profit goes to the St Barnabas Hospice.

“An evil and wicked trade”

As Lincolnshire folk have good reason to know, the Vikings have a lot to answer for. Not least, they were the first to engage in slavery. Of course, they were not the first to capture people and deprive them of their freedom, but it was when the Vikings did this to the Slavs that the word “slavery” first came into common usage.

For a further thousand years the practice of slavery was widespread in many parts of the world, but it was John Hawkins who has the dubious privilege of being the first English slave-trader in 1562 – he was later knighted by Queen Elizabeth for his lucrative enterprise.

Almost immediately people began to challenge the morality of treating fellow human beings in this way. So in 1612 William Strachey wrote that: “we are taught to acknowledge every man that beareth the impression of God’s stamp to be not only our neighbour but our brother”.

Yet not until the 1780s, and the Trojan efforts of William Wilberforce, did a concerted campaign for abolition begin to capture the public imagination. It was a campaign the like of which had never been seen before. It was the first time a large number of people became outraged, and stayed outraged, over someone **else’s** rights. Most of the campaigners were motivated by Christian conviction, but it was in fact a broad-based alliance founded upon an ever-growing sense that such inhuman cruelty and degradation could not be tolerated in a so-called civilised society.

On 25th March 1807 the King finally signed the Abolition Bill into law, and this means that we will be marking the bi-centenary on Passion Sunday. This is particularly appropriate because one of the prayers appointed for use on that day goes as follows:

Lord Jesus Christ,

You have taught us

that what we do for the least of our brothers and sisters

we do also for You:

give us the will to be the servant of others as You were the servant of all.

In New Testament times the words “servant” and “slave” belonged together, and it is salutary to be reminded that we who still benefit from the wealth which slavery brought to these shores are now to bind ourselves to the cause of freedom for the estimated 12 million people who still undergo various forms of slavery in our world today.

There is naught for our comfort in commemorating the slave trade, and much to make us ashamed. But the primary focus must be on a future when all are at liberty to fully reflect the image of God, Whose service is perfect freedom.

+ John Lincoln

Christian Aid Week

Christian Aid Week will be from 13th May to 19th May 2007. We should aim to give everyone in Metheringham the opportunity to give. If you wish to help in any form, please see me and join the pledge.

I am willing to help with Christian Aid Week 2007, if 30 people will join me.

Malcolm Capps.

St Wilfrid's Annual Parish Meeting

This year, the Annual Parish Meeting, followed by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, will be held on **Friday 16 March** in **St. Wilfrid’s church at 7pm**. Both meetings will be chaired by the Rural Dean, the Reverend Richard Eyre, whom many of you will remember coming to take services here during our interregnum.

Please come along and hear what the church has done over the past year and take part in the election of a new churchwarden (if an election is necessary).
Coffee and biscuits will be served during the evening.
We look forward to seeing you there.
The Churchwardens.

Parish Registers

We commend to God's Mercy those who have died.

Charles Stuart Exton - Died 14th December 2006, aged 82. Service at St. Oswald's Blankney, followed by burial.

We pray for those beginning married life together.

6th January, 2007 Lydia Tipling & Simon Mears at St. Oswald's Blankney.

Dunston Parish News.

'Good Heavens' !! How many times have we heard that I wonder and how many times "have we wondered." A lot of people, irrespective of their faith, talk of 'paradise' but it is a word that has an earthly connection rather than a heavenly one. If we did a survey around the three parishes on "What is your perception of heaven" I would guess that nearly everyone would be different. What are your requisites for "Your Heaven"?

On Sunday, 4th February I was up early and took my dog for his early morning walk across the fields at Dunston. It was 7.20 a.m. and the sun hadn't raised its head at that time although the sky was tinged a light pink. Where I walk the land is slightly undulating. As I crested a slight rise the mist had formed in the hollow in front of me. I couldn't see the ground but I could see the tops of hedgerows and trees rising out of the mist. Two houses down Fen Lane were silhouetted on the horizon and I stood just admiring the scene. The sun started its climb up into the sky and gave the whole scene an aura of shimmering haze in the mist.

Two things happened, one I hadn't got my camera to record the scene and, two the actual scene lasted for only maybe five seconds before the sun had risen high enough to completely change the landscape picture. But during that five seconds the beauty of that scene brought tears to my eyes. The beauty, the serenity, and above all the calmness that descended upon me was 'heavenly'.

There you are, I have referred to heaven from an earthly perspective. That is all we humble human beings can hope to do. God's truth is all around us in the simplest and most beautiful things and very often these go unnoticed. Spring is just around the corner and everyday beauty will be seen in the tiniest flower. In the month ahead let us look for a taste of heaven in the simplest of things; a kindly word, a gentle smile or even a fleeting glimpse of God's beautiful world.

Stuart Rogerson.

The Danger of Complacency.

I'm the fellow who goes into a restaurant, sits down and patiently waits while the waitresses finish their visiting before taking my order.

I'm the fellow who goes into the department store and stands quietly while the assistants finish their little chat. I'm the fellow who drives into the service station and never blows his horn but lets the attendant take his time. You might say that I'm the good guy. But do you know who else I am?

I'm the fellow who never came back.

It puzzles me to see business spending so much money every year to get my business- when I was there in the first place!

All they needed to keep me coming back was to give me some service and extend a little courtesy.

Anonymous: 'The Good Guy'

Dunston Village History.

I am organising an exhibition of the history of Dunston village for the week-end of June 23rd to 25th with the help of my faithful band of warriors. This is instead of St. Peter's annual flower festival. It will mainly centre on Dunston and Nocton Estate and is titled 'All Our Yesterdays'

I need help in finding old photographs of the village and people as far back as possible together with views of the surrounding area. Farming and the Nocton estate pictures would be most welcome. Has anyone got some old ladies hats for display as well as dresses tucked away in bottom drawers, that have not seen the light of day for a very long time? Newspaper cuttings with stories that will be interesting to today's villager. Either give me a ring 323183 or tell anyone from St Peters who will pass the message on. Even if you have only one old picture it all helps to build up a picture of the history of our village. PLEASE HELP.

Stuart Rogerson.

Dunston St. Peter's Church of England Primary School

First of all, thank you to all those who attended our Charity Auction on February 3rd. We raised over £1000 with half going to NCH and half to the school. All of the lots were snapped up and everyone had a very enjoyable evening.

We are now busy planning how we are going to celebrate World Book Day (March 1st). Like last year, we intend to get the whole school working together participating in drama based activities around well known fairy tales.

We will also be raising money on Red Nose Day (March 16th). We are planning to have a "Big Play Day" so that the children will have the chance to come to school in their P.E. kits and enjoy lots of indoor fun games, board games and outdoor playground games.

Graham Boyall Headteacher

SERVICES FOR MARCH IN THE THREE PARISHES

Thursday 1st	(and each Thursday)
9.00am	Holy Communion – St. Wilfrid's Metheringham
Friday 2nd	Women's World Day of Prayer
10.30am	Methodist Chapel Metheringham
Sunday 4th	2nd Sunday of Lent
8.00am	Holy Communion – St. Wilfrid's Metheringham
9.00am	Holy Communion – St. Peter's Dunston
10.30am	United Service – St. Wilfrid's Metheringham
Sunday 11th	3rd Sunday of Lent
9.00am	Holy Communion – St. Oswald's Blankney
9.00am	Morning Worship – St. Peter's Dunston
10.30am	Holy Communion – St. Wilfrid's Metheringham S.School /C.
Sunday 18th	Mothering Sunday, 4th Sunday of Lent
8.00am	Holy Communion – St. Wilfrid's Metheringham
9.00am	Holy Communion – St. Peter's Dunston
10.30am	Morning Worship – St. Wilfrid's Metheringham
Sunday 25th	5th Sunday of Lent
9.00am	Morning Prayer followed by Holy Communion – St. Oswald's Blankney
10.30am	Holy Communion – St Wilfred's Metheringham - S.School /C
April 1st	Palm Sunday Group Service
10.15am	Meet at Metheringham War Memorial for Palm Gospel and Blessing of Palm Crosses before processing to St. Wilfrid's Church

Metheringham Over 60's Club.

In spite of a very cold & frosty night 97 members turned out to listen to the Ladies Barber Shop Choir. We enjoyed a wonderful evening of song, some new, some old.

On February 21st we are off to Hodstock Priory to see the lovely display of snowdrops, aconites and hellebores - let's hope the snow doesn't return. March is the Annual General Meeting so now is the time to come along

and let us know if we are getting things right, or wrong whichever the case may be, it is your club so if you have anything to say now is the time. We have a Coffee Morning on 10th March donations for stalls will be much appreciated. Membership renewal is at the April meeting, new members will be admitted in May subject to availability.

Diary Dates

7th March AGM

10th March Coffee Morning

4th April Signing on Night/Jazz-N.

Ann Crooks. Secretary

Quotes from Parish magazines

"The Fasting & Prayer Conference includes meals.

Weight Watchers will meet at 7 PM at the First Presbyterian Church, Please use large double door at the side entrance.

The sermon this morning: "Jesus Walks on the Water." The sermon tonight: "Searching for Jesus."

Our youth basketball team is back in action Wednesday at 8 PM in the Recreation hall. Come out and watch us kill Christ the King.

Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.

The peacemaking meeting scheduled for today has been cancelled due to a Conflict.

Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our community."

(thanks to Mandy of U of L) more next month - Ed.

The WI Report

The talk by Tim Hudson was entitled "Sherpa and Snowmen". The sherpas were the guides and porters who escorted Tim on his treks in Nepal. The snowmen were the Yetis, fictional animals no-one has ever seen - not even the locals !!

His trips in 1982, 1993 and 2005 showed great changes in Nepalese life. Trekking meant income resulted in more climbers and trekkers, buildings to accommodate them, also westernization - dress, internet cafes, money for schools etc.

The slides of Katmandu showed the mix of Hindu and Buddhist Temples.

The Hindu temples were dedicated to their gods and protected by fierce stone images. They also acted as market places.

The all seeing eyes of the Buddhist Stupas were decorated with flapping prayer flags, surrounded by prayer wheels and guarded by monkeys. The trek slides showed contrasts in sunrises and sunsets, shade and light in the valleys all overlooked by the snow capped Himalayas and the awesome peak of Everest. There were also slides of the many colourful festivals held in the villages.

The next meeting Wednesday 21st March. AGM & Bingo and Pass the Parcel. JS

Are embryos alive?

"An embryo is a life" say one in three Britons. New research into attitudes to fertility treatment shows that one third of people surveyed (34%) consider an embryo to be a life, another one third (32%) disagree, and the remainder neither agree or disagree. When asked what should happen to spare embryos created for IVF treatment, 41% said they should be used for medical research, 35% felt that they should be donated to other people, and 34% felt they should be discarded.

The survey also examined people's attitudes towards fertility treatment for non-traditional families, eg single women or female same-sex couples. Over two thirds, 70%, thought it was acceptable for people to donate sperm or eggs to help infertile couples but only 32% thought it was acceptable to help non-traditional families in this way. The study, which also has many other findings, was commissioned by the Progress Educational Trust and carried out by YouGov. Full details from: www.yougov.com

Mothering Sunday

There is an old Jewish saying:

God could not be everywhere,

and therefore He made mothers.

Mother Church, Mother Earth, Mother of the Gods - our human mothers - all of them have been part of the celebration of 'Mothering Sunday' - as the fourth Sunday in Lent is affectionately known. In Roman times, great festivals were held every Spring to honour Cybele, Mother of all the Gods. Other pagan festivals in honour of Mother Earth were also celebrated. With the arrival of Christianity, the festival became one honouring Mother Church.

During the Middle Ages, young people apprenticed to craftsmen or working as 'live-in' servants were allowed only one holiday a year on which to visit their families - which is how 'Mothering Sunday' got its name. This special day became a day of family rejoicing, and the Lenten fast was broken. In some places the day was called Simnel Day, because of the sweet cakes called simnel cakes traditionally eaten on that day. PP

Climate change - the size of the problem

What will be the impact of climate change? The experts tell us that what we burn now in coal, gas and oil, and the forests we cut down, will result in a hotter planet in 30 to 40 years. If this is so, then our carbon emissions now will impact on the world from 2037 onwards, and it is too late to do anything apart from estimate what the changes will be.

Which countries will shrink in size as the polar ice caps melt and the sea levels rise? Which parts of the world will become hotter, changing the environment and therefore the life sustained by it? What will happen to the food chains as the seas become warmer?

Do we throw our hands up in horror, wailing and gnashing our teeth in fear and panic? Or sit back and ignore it; after all, many of us will not be around in 30 to 40 years' time?

As Christians we must remain obedient to God's covenant with us, and that means choosing to take action now. Saint Peter in his first letter tells us that we are living stones, being built into a spiritual house.¹ So, imagine the impact of one stone dropped into a still pool - the ripples spread, then fade. But imagine thousands of stones dropped simultaneously into that pool like a torrent of hailstones - the water will be stirred up and come to life.

One of us alone cannot make a difference, but together as the body of Christ in the world we can show others how to take care of this precious planet, just as God told us to when he created us and saw that it was good. This is our calling and we need to respond before it is too late. PP

THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

A Bi-centenary Remembrance

Sunday 25 March this year marks a very important date in British history. On this date in 1807 a Bill was enacted in the House of Common in London that outlawed the transport of slaves in British ships anywhere on the high seas. It was an important legal milestone on the road that led to the final and total abolition of slavery in the British Empire 26 years later in 1833. In this series of three articles we are marking this anniversary and noting the leading part played in the anti-slavery campaign by evangelical Christians.

Origins of the British Slave Trade:

Britain and her empire became joined in the slave trade in the 16th century. This involved taking black African men and women from their homeland against their will and selling them to work on sugar plantations in the Caribbean and cotton plantations in America. Most of these slaves were stolen from their villages, often by their own chiefs, and then sold to the captains of British ships. The journeys to the West Indies and America were horrifying ordeals for the slaves. Herded like cattle in stifling conditions in the over-filled holds of the ships, they were subject to indescribable squalor and prey to typhoid, dysentery and other killing diseases. Not only were the many corpses dumped overboard like unwanted rubbish, but there was certified evidence that many captains dumped the sick overboard without waiting for them to die.

In this 21st century we may find these facts difficult to handle but the evidence for Britain's slave traffic is detailed and terrible. Two of our great national heroes, Sir Francis Drake and his cousin, Sir John Howard, have an honoured place in British history because they defeated Spanish attacks on Britain. But Drake and Howard were among the first British sea captains to carry slaves across the oceans and sell them as chattels. The arithmetic of this traffic is truly horrific. It has been calculated that in the two hundred years from 1600 to 1800, no fewer than twelve million black men, women and children were forcibly taken from Africa and sold as slaves. What cannot be computed is how many of these 12 million died at sea and were unceremoniously tossed overboard. Many merchants in Bristol, Liverpool and Glasgow grew very rich because they bought, owned and sold slaves.

The first legal action in Britain against the slave trade was taken in 1772. At that time many of those who owned plantations in the Caribbean and America continued to live in Britain. They brought many slaves to work in their homes and estates and by the 1770s there were as many as 12,000 slaves employed by these plantation owners in England and Scotland. In the famous Somerset Case, heard before Lord Mansfield, the Lord Chief Justice, in London in 1772, it was ruled that owning and employing slaves in Britain was illegal. Lord Mansfield delivered a landmark verdict. 'Let justice be done though the heavens may fall.' This ruling put an end to the employment of slaves in Britain but not in her colonies. That legal and humanitarian battle was yet to come. In the next two articles we will see the part played in that decisive victory by evangelical Christians. PP

Signs & Symbols : Trees in the Churchyard

Trees are beautiful, but they are not always a blessing! In churchyards they hide the view, make it difficult to grow anything underneath them, encourage moss in the lawn, need looking after, can cause harm by their roots, can lean or fall and damage buildings or people.

As for the ones with those lovely red berries? They may be beautiful for flower arrangers – but can cause misery to brides who step on them and stain their designer dresses!

Or how about the product of all those birds that enjoy eating blackberries and other such juicy items and then sit in the branches?

Or how about the drifts of leaves to clear up each autumn?

If clergy were honest, many of them might just vote to delete trees from their churchyards! And yet, and yet....

This month have a look at some trees in churchyards near you. What is it about them that makes them attractive and encourages us to keep and look after them? How much must God look at us and wonder ...and yet he, in the final line, didn't just want to not remove us but rather actively seeks us out to be with us. Rev Dr Jo White

Amazing Grace – the life of William Wilberforce

A major new Hollywood film, Amazing Grace, is released on March 23 – based on the life of anti-slavery campaigner William Wilberforce.

Royal Mail issues First Class William Wilberforce stamp, 22nd March 2007. Royal Mint will issue Bicentenary commemorative coin.

Wilberforce was elected to the House of Commons when only 21 and dedicated his life to the Reformation of Manners in order to build a just and fair society. He advocated prison reform, better hospital care, improving conditions of the poor and other areas of social reform but his passion was to abolish slavery in all its forms. In 1807 the Commons voted to abolish the slave trade throughout the British Empire, but it took until 1833 for total abolition to be achieved. Three days after this latter event, in July 1833, Wilberforce died.

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The hymn "Amazing Grace" from which the movie derives its title, stands as the personal testimony of John Newton, a former slave trader who had a dramatic conversion to Christianity. Wilberforce and Newton met on several occasions and Wilberforce used the words of Newton's hymn to prick the conscience of influential members of the Commons and the Lords to support the Anti-Slavery Bill. John Newton died the same year as the bill passed into law – 1807. PP