

FROM THE VICARAGE

Both sweet and sour this month – perhaps it's best to start with the sour –

Back in November 2018, both Kelvedon and Feering parish magazines featured our 'Churchyard Rules'. These are the rules and regulations of the Diocese of Chelmsford – in other words, general to all C of E churchyards and cemeteries, not just specific to Kelvedon. Essentially the rules state that graves should be laid to grass, or have spring flowers, bedding plants or annuals, and nothing more. There should be no kerbing or hard borders of any kind, nor gravel, chippings or artificial grass; no artificial flowers (except poppies at Remembrance and wreaths at Christmas); and no ornaments, which includes animal statues/figurines, toys, pictures, windmills, chimes, and the like.

In previous years – before I arrived in 2014 – many graves were allowed that don't match the rules; this makes enforcing them very difficult. It's as if some think the family grave is effectively their own private property or garden to be decorated in any way they wish. These rules may look quite restrictive, but they seek to safeguard two key things: one, that both burial areas retain the look of historic churchyards; and two, the sheerly practical need for easy maintenance, as our excellent cemetery volunteers are few, and most are mature in years! We're not expecting change overnight – as the 'Rules' say, we're happy to work with families over time to make the Burial Ground more as it should be. We wish to cooperate sensitively with people to ensure that both areas are well kept and regain their true character as country churchyards.

These regulations have effectively been in force for many years, but only in the last few months have we managed to put up a copy of them in both burial grounds. It's my fault it's taken so long, but now there are there for all to see; they are also on our website. In November I said that we were aware that several graves and ashes plots don't conform to the regulations, and that in time we would seek to take action to bring as many as possible in line with them.

That time has now come to put this into effect. Over the next few weeks the Churchwardens, the PCC and I will be looking at and monitoring the graves and ashes plots in our Burial Ground, and if we believe that particular graves need to be altered, we will either contact the family (if known) or leave a laminated notice on the grave drawing the family's attention to the changes that are required. We do realise that this is a very sensitive subject and we are not seeking changes overnight. Yet we are seeking permanent changes, simply because we have a duty of care for our Burial Ground, so that it keeps its historic country character, and to ensure it retains this for future generations.

If you have any issues or concerns with this then please contact me in the first instance.

And now the sweet –

ST MARY'S CHURCH FETE is on SATURDAY 6th JULY from 3.00 pm!

According to time-honoured custom, our traditional village church fete takes place in our lovely churchyard – and in the church itself, of course.

There'll be plenty of stalls for all tastes: for those with a sweet tooth, the Chocolate Tombola is a must, and there will be plenty of great prizes on the Grand Raffle and the Bottle Tombola. How about bagging yourself a bargain on the Bric-a-Brac stall, or treating yourself to something delicious and home-made from the Cake Stall? Refreshments include a BBQ and Tea & Cake, while the liquid sort will be found in our ever-popular Beer Tent – we always have some very decent brews. There'll be plenty for children, including our popular Sideshows and entertainment in church.

This year we're also celebrating the 50th anniversary of the first ever Moon landing, in 1969, with some special 'Rocket Launching' in the churchyard. The final technical specifications and trial runs are taking place as I write!

Entrance is free, as always, with donations very much appreciated. All funds will go to our major project for a servery and toilet in the church, plus also for general church upkeep.

If you're able to help in any way with this special community event, or you have donations for any of the stalls, please contact our Churchwardens Anne Hackworth or Simon Prideaux – their details are on the inside front cover.

Enjoy the Summer – and hope to see you at next month's Fete!

Simon

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The Vicarage, Church Street, Kelvedon, CO5 9AL

From the Parish Registers, May 2019

Baptisms *We welcome into our church family:*

5 May – Tom Alfred James Fish

12 May – Molly Eva Stapley

19 May – Sebastien Anthony Charles Krepper

Wedding *We send our congratulations to:*

4 May – Katharine Elizabeth Andrews & Peter James Ramsay

Burials of Ashes *We offer our prayers and condolences to the families and friends of:*

17 May – Patricia Hilliard (St Mary's Burial Ground)

18 May – Alfred Charles (Alfie) Main (St Mary's Burial Ground)

There were no funerals in the parish during May.