



Christmas
Greetings

St James' Church
CHRISTLETON



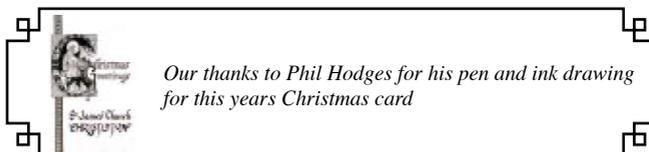
Parish Magazine
December 2006

30p

Countdown to Christmas

Fri	1	6.30 pm	Choir Practice NB: Last date for contributions to JANUARY Parish Magazine to David Bull (332234). Earlier if possible please. You can attach your Word document and e-mail to: christletonmag@hotmail.co.uk
Sun	3		Advent Sunday
		8.00 am	Holy Communion - Order 2
		10.45 am	Sunday School - Parish Hall
		10.45 am	Parish Communion - Order 1
		6.00 pm	The Crew Youth Group
		6.30 pm	Evensong - followed by refreshments Prayer Link Road: Plough Lane Neighbourhood Link: Margaret Renner, Jocelyn Platel and Janet Brown
Mon	4		10.45 am Holy Communion at Tarvin Court Nursing Home 11.20 am Holy Communion at Oaklands Nursing Home
Tues	5	7.30 pm	'Advent Hope' Christian Aid Service - Hoole URC
Wed	6	10.45 am	United Communion - followed by refreshments
Thur	7	7.30 pm	Night Prayers and Meditation for Advent
Fri	8	6.30 pm	Choir Practice
Sun	10		The Second Sunday in Advent
		8.00 am	Holy Communion - Order 1
		10.45am	Family Toy Service - followed by refreshments People are invited to bring wrapped Christmas gifts of toys (labelled with the appropriate age and sex) to be given to less fortunate children in the Chester area.
		6.00 pm	The Crew Youth Group – Parish Hall
		6.30 pm	Evensong – Order 1 Prayer Link Road: Quarry Lane and Faulkner's Lane Neighbourhood Link: Alison Kenyon
Mon	11	2.00 pm	Advent Meditation
		6.30 pm	High School Carol Service – St James
Tues	12	9.00 am	Tuesday Ramble Group leave car park for Burwardsley Bellringers' Dinner
Wed	13	10.45 am	Holy Communion - followed by refreshments
		11.30 am	Holy Communion at Birch Heath Lodge Nursing Home

Thur	14	7.30 pm	Night Prayers and Meditation
Fri	15	6.30 pm	Choir Practice
Sun	17		The Third Sunday in Advent
		8.00 am	Holy Communion - Order 1
		10.45 am	Sunday School - Parish Hall
		10.45 am	Parish Communion – Order 1
		6.30 pm	FESTIVAL OF CAROLS AND CEREMONY OF LIGHT
			Prayer Link: Moor Lane and Chapel Lane
			Neighbourhood Link: Gwen Knight
Mon	18	2.00 pm	Primary School Christmas Service
		7.00 pm	Primary School Christmas Service
Wed	20	10.45 am	Holy Communion - followed by refreshments
Thur	21	7.30 pm	Night Prayers and Meditation
Sun	24		The Fourth Sunday in Advent : CHRISTMAS EVE
		8.00 am	Holy Communion – Order 1
		10.45 am	Matins
		7.00 pm	Carols Round the Tree
			Followed by mince pies and mulled wine in the Parish Hall
		11.30 pm	Midnight Communion - Order 1
			Prayer Link Road : Pepper Street and Windmill Lane
			Neighbourhood Link : Pat Hodges
Mon	25		CHRISTMAS DAY
		8.00 am	Holy Communion - Order 2
		10.45 am	Christmas Family Service
		11.45 am	Holy Communion - Order 1
Tues	26	9.00 am	Holy Communion for ST STEPHEN
Wed	27	10.45 am	Holy Communion for ST JOHN
Sun	31		The First Sunday of Christmas
		8.00 am	Holy Communion – Order 1
		10.45 am	Matins
		6.30 pm	Evening Communion – Order 1
			Prayer Link : Those worshipping at St James from outside the Parish
			Neighbourhood Link : Leo Carroll



The Rector's Letter

Dear Friends

Footprints

This Summer Fiona and I discovered why so many people love to holiday in Switzerland. We enjoyed a walking holiday centred in Meiringen and then Zermatt from mid-August. By the end the snow had already begun to advance down the mountains and on the last day we took a cable car right up to Schwarzsee at 8,500 feet. The walk invited us to set out from there to climb to the hut which marks the start of the final ascent to the Matterhorn summit (which is a further 5,000 feet higher!). It was a brilliant day and the views were breathtaking. However there had been substantial snowfall overnight and out of the sun it was bitterly cold. We both enjoy walking, but would not pretend to be mountaineers, so we were a little concerned that the snow might have obscured the way. We set off tentatively from the cable car station to find the path, but were considerably relieved when we got there. As we looked ahead there was a clear set of footprints in the snow confirming the route of the path – we were not the first to go this way. Then, as we progressed, there were cairns and red and white paint markers on strategic rocks. It was reassuring to find others along the way and by the time we returned, the path was well trodden. The whole day was a wonderful experience and a fitting 'summit' to the holiday.

Perhaps those footprints in the snow can remind us of something of the significance of Christmas. As we look to the future in our own lives and in the life of our world, there is much which makes us fearful and we struggle to see the right path. Christmas is God's footprint on the world. The birth of the babe of Bethlehem is the coming of God into human life. Now, as we look ahead, we can see the footprint of Jesus and be assured that he will be there to help us. Whatever lies ahead we know that Jesus has been there before us: there is nowhere we can go - no height, no depth - where he has not been, and we are never without his love. But more than that: his footprints mark the way. Christmas is not just the assurance of his presence, but his life from crib to cross marks the way. Now "if we stray from the road to right or left, we shall hear a voice behind us saying: 'this is the way, follow it'." (Isaiah 30:21). Like those markers along the mountain path, the cross points the way of self-giving love. Sometimes, as we walk

that path, we may feel as though we are alone, but as we walk it we find company along the way. As we join in Christian fellowship to follow the footprints of his love in worship, work and witness, others will follow.

In this season of Advent, leading up to Christmas, we remember how John the Baptist called out his message from the wilderness to prepare the way of the Lord. It was as if he had discovered footprints, not in the snow but in the sand, and called for people to follow. We read that people flocked to him from the whole region, and were baptised in the Jordan as a symbol of repentance. It was the desire for a clean start to their life and a better way to follow. Still today people yearn for a clean start and a better way which gives new meaning to their lives. In Advent we first need to find those footprints for ourselves, and then play our part in preparing the way of the Lord, by pointing out his footprints and the way they lead. Amongst the usual services and details you find in 'Countdown to Christmas' there will also be 'Night Prayers and Meditation' each Thursday as a way to set time aside to prepare for the most important part of Christmas. Tina Lightfoot will lead us through some meditations by Archbishop Rowan Williams.

As I recall something of the exhilaration of that day last Summer and finding those footprints in the snow, I pray we can each and all so prepare for Christmas that we find the true joy of finding the footprint of Jesus in our lives. For Christmas is the assurance that he is with us; that he shows us the way ahead and invites us all to follow. A very happy Christmas to you all.

Yours sincerely

Peter Lee

Prayer of the Month:

*O let me see thy foot-marks,
and in them plant mine own;
my hope to follow duly
is in thy strength alone:
O guide me, call me, draw me,
uphold me to the end;
and then in heaven receive me,
my Saviour and my Friend.*



St. James Church Open all day Sundays, June, July, August and September 2006

In the May issue of the Parish magazine I said I hoped that a hundred parishioners would share the duty of keeping our Church open to visitors during Sundays in June, July, August and September. In the event sixty-five people gave their time (a thirty per cent increase on last year) to cover one hundred and ten two hour shifts. Almost half these did the job twice, some three times and three made it their task to do a session every month. Thank you to everyone who made it possible to keep the Church open.

Comments in the visitor's book make it clear how much the open Church was appreciated. Again many from our local community welcomed the opportunity to see inside their village church. Some visitors came with a specific purpose such as to learn more about their family history, to revisit the place of their marriage or a former place of worship or simply out of curiosity.

The largest number of visitors in any one two hour session reported to me was ten! Probably the majority of you were not able to welcome any visitors. I



hope nevertheless that you enjoyed good company and a chat, an opportunity for quiet and reflection or a chance to learn more about our beautiful Church.

Keeping our Church open and making ourselves available is a very simple form of outreach and it takes us a little way to meet the Archbishop of Canterbury's wish "to make us a Church for others".

Next year a hundred volunteers?

David Bowden

Prepare for Christmas: the alternative way

Rather than face the hustle and bustle of late night shopping, spend some time in reflective meditation, an ideal way to help prepare for the coming of our Lord.

Each Thursday in Advent at 7.30 pm there will be a series of meditations based on the book 'Ponder these things' by Rowan Williams.

The first of these will be on November 30th within the communion service celebrating the feast of St Andrew.

St. James' Christleton Parish Magazine

Chester Cathedral's very own 2007 Calendar!

An ideal Christmas present

On sale NOW in the Cathedral Shop

Only £4.50

This calendar has been produced for The Companions of St Anselm and all proceeds will go towards the maintenance of the Cathedral.

ADVANCED NOTICE Bible Talks – Winter Series

Starting in January the pre-Lent series of Bible Talks will be looking at some of the gospel passages that only appear in the Gospel according to Luke. Book the dates now: January 17, 24 and 31 and February 7, 14 and 21 at 13.10 hours in the Cloister Room. As always all are welcome.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW REFECTORY SUPERVISOR

Hazel Fitch, well known to many of us as a member of the Cathedral congregation, has the task of ensuring that the day-to-day running of the Refectory is clean and safe. With a background of 30 years in catering

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(including working at Pastarazzi and Club Globe), she has spent many years improving school dinners and promoting healthy eating, working her way from kitchen portering to Chef-ing! Together with husband Geoff, Hazel is part of the Choir Support Group responsible for concert refreshments, and two of her three children are Cathedral choristers. Also a Cathedral Friends' Committee Member, Hazel's aim is to improve the health, safety, food & hygiene of the Refectory, and to provide good, home-made food.

Richard McVeigh

Left us during half term to take up his appointment as Organ Scholar at York Minster.

He has been an excellent organ scholar and we are delighted to hear of his promotion, which is well-deserved.



Congratulations to

*Betty Dunning
who reaches a certain
age on 3rd December*

Glenthorne

2006

Sixteen stalwarts made it to Glenthorne this year, the numbers being decimated by illness.

A lovely meal on arrival - it almost felt we were coming home!

We had a brief run through the programme that evening for the weekend, then divided into groups led by Jim Hawkes, David Cummings and Christine Abrams.

The aim, other than rambling in the rain and fellowship, was to increase spirituality. We discussed the topics of Inspiration and Aspiration, assisted by pages of selected Quotations on these subjects out of the book "Visions of Hope". After some discussion time we shared our favourites, worst hates and most relevant to us personally.

Saturday was just a bit wet, and we might have been better in wellies! A gentle route from Elterwater along the Great Langdale Beck to Skelwith Bridge, round Lochrigg tarn and, for the more energetic, over the bridleway

back to Grasmere was in fact very atmospherically beautiful despite occasion torrential downpours. Back for Glenthorne tea and cakes, then yet another beautiful meal. This was followed by further discussion, this time on the topic of Vision, with the same literature support. After brief thought on St Ignatius, and decisions bringing consolation or desolation, Volunteers were commandeered as part of the "PCC" to read out the minutes of a meeting about a youth club. This, with interpretations on the minuted comments, turned out to be hysterical and on occasion a little too close to home!

Reflecting on our day was much enriched by David showing his best Lake District slide reflections to music. This was followed by readings of the Psalms 121 and 23. Having lifted our eyes to the hills, and walked beside still waters, we then had meditations on the 2



psalms to end our evening. I was both surprised and delighted by Gillian who presented 16 daffodil bulbs for Ron and myself to plant, remembering each participant of the weekend, and then also presented each one of us with a daffodil bulb of our own to remember our time together.

Sunday turned out not so wet, but only the stalwarts walked along the coffin route to Rydal, had a picnic watching the swans on the lake, then back past Rydal cave and through the woods to Grasmere. The autumn colours were as beautiful as we had hoped – pity about the sun!

The more faithful group decided to go to the Parish church, but by the time they discovered the joint service was at the Methodist church and hurried there, then found in fact it was really at the

Catholic church on the other side of town, their enthusiasm – and time – was running out! We



wondered how it would have been if the coffin had just been carried all the way from Rydal and then this scenario came to pass!



I hope it is not presumptuous to judge that we fulfilled our aims, and all felt it to be a special weekend.

Liz McClure

History File



The pipeline from the Abbots Well to the St Werburgh's Monastery in Chester

In 1814 Thomas Harrison the famous Chester Architect, who incidentally still has family living in the Parish was employed to design a new house in Boughton called "Dee House". This was to a gentleman's residence designed in the Greek style which was his trade mark. His most famous designs being for the complex of classical Greek buildings for the County Court / Hall around The Castle in Chester. He later designed the new crossing of the River Dee, The Grosvenor Bridge, opened in 1832 by Princess Victoria. However I want to concentrate this article on his design for "Dee House" at Boughton, because in digging the foundations, workmen came across some orange earthenware pipes.

Hemmingway in his History of Chester (1831) writes, "They were

something more than half a yard in length, round in form, varying in thickness, one end being thinner than the other, as if for the purpose of insertion, and having a bore of an inch and a half in diameter. They were found from three to four feet from the surface of the ground, and lay in a position east to west. Two or three pipes were preserved, others destroyed".

"It was concluded by the owner of the house that these were part of the historic pipeline from "The Abbots Well" in Christleton serving the abbot & monks of St Werburgh's monastery in Chester"

In a biographical notice of 1289 of Simon de Albo Monasterio the 13th Abbot of the Monastery it is recorded that;

"Among the donations by the family of Burnel, was the grant of a fountain at Christleton, which was doubtless of high importance. A cistern twenty feet square was made at Christleton, and another formed within the cloisters, and a communication with pipes established. Which a patent from Edward I, enabled the monks to

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carry through all intervening lands, permitting even the city wall to be taken down for the purpose. Upon inquiry, I find that in a field on the right hand of the high road leading to Christleton, and a very short distance from that village, there is now an enclosed stone wall; and that it has always gone by the name of The Abbot's Well".

is not lost, and children should be encouraged to know that this is still "The Abbot's Well" whatever the name outside says. I think it should be included in future Beating of the Bounds walks so that at least the participants can share the knowledge of this historic site, and keep its ancient name alive within the community.



The sad thing for the heritage of the village, is that the name "The Abbot's Well" has been lost in the renaming of the present hotel on the site. The well is now surrounded by a copse of trees, but it would be a great shame if the name is lost for future generations. We must ensure that this small part of village heritage

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David Cummings

I am grateful to John Roberts Reader Emeritus at St James' for providing me with a copy of a newspaper article he collected many years ago, on which this article is based. The original article on Gentlemen's Residences was written by Marion Seal and published in the Chronicle in the 1980's.

World-wide Church Our Friends in Chile

Chilean born Danny & Ari Morrison and their three boys have returned to Chile after a visit to Britain. They came to St James' Church in February and told us about their work in the Resurreccion Church in Viña del Mar. They have run a very enthusiastic children's club called 'Happy even if it rains' (alegre aunque llueva) and have an interesting young people's programme arranged. There are many challenges in the church whether in Chile or Christleton and they appreciate the friendship of Ben and Lisa Bentham who also live in Vina del Mar



and have long-standing links with St. James through their family in Christleton. We decided on 'Mothering Sunday' to give the children (and others!) sunflower seeds to plant.

The aim was to encourage the sunflower to grow and get people to sponsor per centimetre of growth. There were various rates of success, some never got planted, some were blown over by the strong wind whilst others were very 'weedy' due to the cold weather. One grew to be taller than the guttering on the house and could not be brought to church, whilst the rector and his wife had a wonderful sunflower that grew to be 312cm (10'3") tall. What is more it made the journey to Church. The sponsor money was brought, with the Harvest gifts, to the Harvest Service on 8th October at Christleton Church. The theme of the Harvest Service was 'Seed for Sowing' and as we looked at the good gifts around us we could see how creatively they could be increased as the local people will receive parcels and the people in Chile will receive the sunflower sponsorship money. The image of the sunflower seed being grown in good soil, being watered and being kept from choking weeds reminds us of our creator God who cares for every single one of us. The sunflower as it grows, turns its head to the sun even though its roots are in the earth. So whether we live in Viña del Mar or in Christleton we can turn to God for strength when trouble comes to worry us, or we seem to be choked by so many awful things happening in the world around us.

Gwen Knight

CONTRIBUTORS

The best way to send contributions to St. James' Parish Magazine is to e-mail the document.

Attach your Word document and e-mail it to

christletonmag@hotmail.co.uk

This is meant tongue in cheek – but how true to life

Noah in 2006

In the year 2006, the Lord came unto Noah, who was now living in England and said, “Once again, the earth has become wicked and overpopulated, and I see the end of all flesh before me. Build another Ark and save 2 of every living thing along with a few good humans.”

He gave Noah the drawings, saying “You have 6 months to build the Ark before I will start the unending rain for 40 days and 40 nights.” Six months later, the Lord looked down and saw Noah weeping in his yard – but no Ark. “Noah!” He roared, “I’m about to start the rain! Where is the Ark?”

“Forgive me Lord,” begged Noah, “but things have changed. I needed Building Regulations Approval. I’ve been arguing with the Fire Brigade about the need for a sprinkler system.

My neighbours claim that I should have obtained planning permission for building the Ark in my garden because it is development of the site even though in my view it is a temporary structure. We had to go to appeal to the Secretary of State for a decision.

Then the Department of Transport demanded a bond be posted for the future costs of moving power lines and other overhead obstructions, to clear the passage for the Ark’s move to the sea. I told them that the sea would be coming to us, but they would hear nothing of it.

Getting the wood was another

problem. All the decent trees have Tree Preservation Orders on them and we live in a Site of Special Scientific Interest set up in order to protect the spotted owl. I tried to convince the environmentalists that I needed the wood to save the owl – but no go!

When I started gathering the animals, the RSPCA sued me. They insisted that I was confining wild animals against their will. They argued the accommodation was too restrictive, and it was cruel and inhumane to put so many animals in a confined space.

Then the County Council, the Environment Agency and the Rivers Authority ruled that I couldn’t build the Ark until they’d conducted an environmental impact study on your proposed flood.

I’m still trying to resolve a complaint with the Equal Opportunities Commission on how many BME’s I’m supposed to hire for my building team.

The trades unions say I can’t use my sons. They insist I have to hire only accredited workers with Ark-building experience.

To make matters worse, Customs and Excise seized all my assets, claiming I’m trying to leave the country illegally with endangered species.

So, forgive me, Lord, but it would take at least 10 years for me to finish this Ark. “Suddenly the skies cleared, the sun began to shine, and a rainbow stretched across the sky. Noah looked up in wonder and asked, “You mean you’re not going to destroy the world?!”

“No”, said the Lord. “The government beat me to it”.

Anon.



With the extended family about to descend on you over Christmas, bear in mind the following observations....

1. Those who fail to plan, plan to fail.
2. Her vocabulary is small, but the turnover is terrific.
3. When a man is wrong and won’t admit it, he always gets angry.
4. Some people are easily entertained. All you have to do is sit down and listen to them.
5. Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow you diet!
6. My brother got divorced. Now he’s got remarried. The divorce didn’t work out.
7. No woman ever shot her husband while he was doing the dishes.
8. My sister is living way beyond her seams.
9. A man’s character is revealed by his speech.
10. If parents want honest children, they should be honest themselves.
11. Gratitude is the most exquisite form of courtesy.
12. I’ve had a wonderful time – but this wasn’t it.



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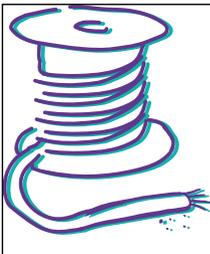
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THE FRAUENKIRCHE IN DRESDEN

6. OUTREACH IN STAFFORDSHIRE

The National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas near Lichfield is the nation's living tribute to the services of individuals, both civil and military, at times of conflict in the 20th and 21st centuries. Established in 1997 on 150 acres of former sand and gravel workings, the site is a living and lasting focus of remembrance for people from all walks of life. With all the tree-planting, and the river Tame nearby, it is fast becoming a haven for birds and wildlife as well as for human visitors from afar including Dresden and other German towns and cities, also Japan.

A series of widely-spaced gardens and coppices celebrates a variety of groups such as the Normandy and the Suez Veterans and the Far East Prisoners-of-War, as well as War Widows, the Lifeboats, and the Fire and Rescue Services. With the emphasis throughout upon peace and reconciliation, the Millennium Chapel of Peace and Forgiveness is located just inside the entrance.

The British-German Friendship Garden, officially opened by the Duke of Kent as Patron of the Dresden Trust on 23 October, was inspired especially by

the spirit of reconciliation generated by the rebuilding of the Frauenkirche in Dresden. It is a joint project between the Dresden Trust and the British German Association. The Garden consists of two circles of weeping birch trees with a third circle created out of 14 stones retrieved from the middle of the Frauenkirche in 1945.

On each stone are inscribed the names of cities damaged or destroyed in the Second World War in both the UK and Germany. So Belfast, Coventry, and Liverpool are remembered equally with Hamburg, Cologne and Nuremburg.

In the centre stands an oak tree given by the people of Dresden, marked with a bilingual tablet of Frauenkirche stone proclaiming the firm determination of British and German people to eschew the violence of the past and to live henceforth in peace and mutual understanding.....

...”may their sorrows be shared and their joys celebrated together. In the beauty of nature as in the presence of God, we are all one”.

The fishing village that established Dresden on the banks of the Elbe in 1206 developed a chequered career in times of both war and peace, but 800 years on Dresden reaches out in a spirit of forgiveness and ongoing reconciliation.

John Carruthers

Nature Notes



I think the most remarkable thing about this month's nature report is the number of butterflies still on the wing. I've seen newly emerged red admirals, peacock, tortoiseshell, comma and speckled woods, and it is now 6th November. Quite remarkable!, and a new record as far as my records go. I've also heard that a huge convolvulus hawk moth, a migrant from warmer Mediterranean Countries has been seen locally, having already reported in the magazine that humming bird hawk moths were seen earlier this autumn. Are these sightings just a one off, or are they even more signs of global warming. Three great grey shrikes, rare winter visitors to Britain were seen on a farm in Brown Heath in late October, and an oystercatcher and female tufted duck seen on the canal. Great Grey shrikes are known as butcher birds for their habit of killing their prey and placing it on spikes or thorns. They eat small animals, rodents, birds and insects. They breed in open country in heath, bog or clear fell areas, and are mainly found in Southern and Eastern Europe and Africa. They are very irregular visitors to Britain between October and April, often seen in bushy areas and heathlands. They are quite conspicuous birds which perch on

top of a bush or tree, or on telephone wires. They are coloured grey and white with a black eye stripe, wings and tails, looking perhaps like a small grey headed magpie. As far as I am aware these sightings are a first for our area.

Two of our cygnets have left the family, but the remainder are still together, giving wonderful close up flying displays along the canal. The latest reports from Martin Mere are that 510 whooper swans have arrived from Greenland and Iceland, including a large number with cygnets (many family parties with four and five young birds) making it a good year, despite the worries mentioned in the Bill Oddie "Autumn Watch" nature programme. However there are no bewick swans from Russia at Martin Mere, and only three bewicks at Slimbridge, which possibly indicates that either all the migrants are much later, and that the weather in Northern & Eastern Europe and Greenland is not yet as cold as usual for this time of year. However our regular winter thrushes, both redwings & fieldfares have arrived from Northern Scandinavia and can be seen and heard around the village and down at Hockenhull.

DC

St. James' Christleton Parish Magazine

“CAROLS ROUND THE TREE” 2005

I take my grandchildren on Christmas Eve...

Jess is six years old and bubbling with excitement as we arrive at St James. Her brother, at eleven (“been there, done that, got the T-shirt” kind of guy) is rather more restrained, as befits his elder status.

There is quite a crowd here already, so we weave our way round gravestones to get as close as possible to the front. It’s cold this evening and I’m glad we are well wrapped up. The rain during the day has cleared and now a thousand stars light up the cloudless, indigo sky.

My grandson experiments with balancing on the slippery lid of an ancient tomb, to search for familiar faces amongst the throng, until a safety warning from the Rector comes over the loudspeaker! I notice that a lot of people have torches or lanterns and curse myself for forgetting to bring one. I just hope I can remember all the words of the carols.

The Rector welcomes us and then, with great aplomb, the wheezy, portable organ bursts into life and we’re off! I can’t read my carol sheet, but my young lad has a shaft of light shining onto his and sings loudly, as I go ‘la, la, la’ in my familiar tenor/alto croak. Jess tries her best, and makes up for not knowing the words with her body rhythm.

The kids can’t believe it, but there is a real, live donkey carrying Mary. There’s huge excitement as the small creature is led up the path, carrying his precious load and closely guarded by Joseph and a couple of large-winged angels.

Hidden by the Rector’s cope, the baby Jesus is born swiftly and silently and, in the blink of an

eye, is swaddled and peacefully sleeping in the manger.

We watch shepherds and wise men arriving, all the while singing lustily. Someone in the crowd blows a stream of bubbles, which, caught in the lamplight, float slowly towards the church tower like tiny coloured balloons.

To say there is magic in the air would be an overstatement, but those present seem to



recognise the unique bond that has drawn this diverse crowd of friends and strangers together on Christmas Eve, to watch young children acting out the timeless event and celebrate with them, in song.

All too soon, the final prayer is spoken, the last carol sung and it’s over...we’re smiling and shaking hands and following one another down the path, on the promise of hot mince pies in the Parish Hall!

Now it really feels like Christmas!

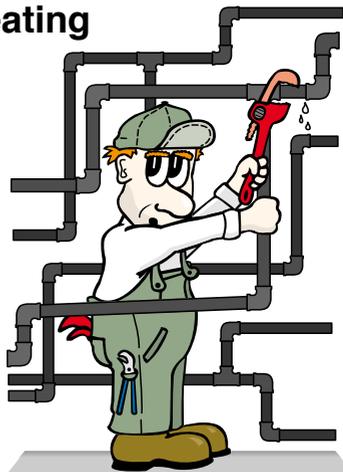
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LOCAL EVENTS DIARY

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Held in the Parish Hall from 10.30 am – 11.45 am each Sunday during term-time, except when Family Service is held at St James. For further details please contact Berenice Hogg, 336779.



CHRISTLETON W.I.

Meets on the second Wednesday of the month at 7.15 pm in the Parish Hall.

The next meeting will be on 13 December – Christmas Meeting

CHRISTLETON LADIES GUILD

Held at the Christleton Methodist Church, commencing at 2pm, on the first Tuesday of each month, £1 admission includes refreshments. For further information contact Joan Webb, 335518.

All very welcome.

CHESTER FLOWER CLUB

Meetings are held in Christleton Parish Hall on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 1.30pm. Details of any events can be obtained from the Secretary, Mrs Edna Ellis telephone Chester 346497.

CHRISTLETON METHODIST CHURCH

We meet for Informal Prayers and a Simple Lunch on the first Thursday of each month at 12 noon. All welcome. There is no charge for the lunch but a donation to cover costs would be appreciated.

CHRISTLETON W.I. MONTHLY WHIST DRIVE

Meet in the Parish Hall on the last Wednesday of the month at 2pm.

CHRISTLETON GARDENING CLUB

The next meeting will take place on **11 December** – “Christmas Table Decorations” by Mrs Pauline Baxendale

MAGAZINE DISTRIBUTORS

The January magazine will be available for collection from Church on Sunday 17 December.

LOCAL EVENTS DIARY

CHRISTLETON RAMBLING GROUPS



St James'

"Tuesday" Walking Group Tuesday December 12th

Burwardsley and Peckforton. 6 miles
(Grade moderate).

Followed by a Christmas Lunch, at
Mitchell's Wine Bar in Tattenhall.

Depart Church Car Park at 9.00am
(Firm booking needed by 28th Novem-
ber walk)

Please contact David Cummings on
332410 for further details.

Tuesday January 30th 2007

Christleton Parish Walk 8 miles (Grade
easy).

Littleton Race Course/Roman Forts/
Green Lanes/Roman Bridges/Civil War
Battlefield.

Pub Lunch at Cheshire Cat.

Depart Church Car Park at 9.00am
Further Details from David Cummings
on 332410

MOTHERS UNION

Our Advent Meditation
at St James

Will take place at 2pm
Monday, 13th December

followed by tea and mince pies
in the Parish Hall!
All Welcome



Registered charity 1020854

Do you have a child aged between 0-3
years? Stuck for something to do on a
Tuesday morning between
10 - 11.30a.m? Why not come along
and meet the **Christleton Toddler
Group** in the Parish Hall. We meet
every week during term time. £2.00 per
session, which includes refreshments
for grown-ups and children.

MAGAZINE CONTRIBUTIONS

Please ensure all items for inclusion in the January edition are sent
to the Editor, David Bull, The Old Rectory, Plough Lane, as soon
as possible BEFORE Friday 1 December or you can e-mail this to

christletonmag@hotmail.co.uk

LOCAL EVENTS DIARY



CHESTER BACH SINGERS

Martin Bussey - conductor

CHRISTMAS MUSIC for choir and audience

Sunday 10 Dec at 7.30p.m - Parish church of St.Alban, Tattenhall and

Saturday 16 Dec at 7.30p.m - Parish church of St.Mary's, Handbridge

Tickets £9, to include festive refreshments, from CBS tickets 0151 677 3137, or from choir members or at the door.

Christleton Wednesday Group

FESTIVE LUNCH
on

Wednesday 6 December,
Christleton Parish Hall,
12.00 Noon.

Tickets £8, from members,
(includes glass of wine).

In aid of the Adolescent Unit at the Countess of Chester Hospital.

Tickets available from
Wednesday Group Members

Christmas Cards.

Packs of Village Charity Christmas Cards are now available from the back of St James' Church, or from David Cummings on 332410. This year's card is a view from the church tower looking down on the snow covered village in March 2006. The photograph by John Beckett is a delightful record of this now rare event, and an ideal Christmas card for all former residents, or anyone fond of our beautiful village. The cards are in packs of 5 and cost £2. All the proceeds are going to St James' three Christmas Charities.

DC

Christleton

Local History Group

Meetings at the Primary School in Quarry Lane.
All welcome Entrance fee £2 per meeting which includes a glass of wine/fruit juice/snacks.

Wednesday January 24th 7.30pm
At the Primary School in Quarry Lane
"Picturesque Chester"

A look at the City, through the Art Collection of the Grosvenor Museum.

Speaker; Peter Broughton. BA
FSA,FRSA, AMA.

Keeper of Art & Architecture at The Museum.

Everyone welcome.

WITNESS

During the late summer, an experiment was carried out by ITV, researching public reaction to people in difficulty or distress. Actors were employed suitably disguised and positioned in public areas eg parks, public squares, shopping malls etc., and instructed to behave in such a manner as to manifest some form of visible discomfort or distress.

Various roles were enacted – a young heavily pregnant woman, clearly agitated and in tears; a middle aged man holding a blood stained handkerchief apparently recovering from a bad fall; an older woman wondering around aimlessly, seemingly lost and bewildered. Hidden cameras recorded public reaction and the results were scrutinized.

In spite of very creditable performances by the actors, there was little or no response to their various plights at all! People ignored them, walked around them; looked the other way, guiltily hurried past with downward glances, abruptly changed direction or just blatantly pushed past. At the end of this test, some of the public were later stopped and interviewed as to their reaction to these, apparently, unfortunate people.

“We didn’t like to interfere”, was a frequent comment.

“You don’t know who you will get involved with”, was another.

Two old women, sitting on a park bench, who had clearly closely observed the “pregnant girl” for some time, said, “We are only here for the day!”

Out of all the scenarios there had only been one positive outcome, where a middle aged lady had attempted to give directions to the “lost woman”.

At the end of the item, no great comment was pronounced on the experiment, other than to reflect on how we, as a society, in the main, are wholly indifferent to our fellowmen and seem only concerned with ourselves. You almost felt a sense of profound disappointment coming through from the programme makers, as if to put the question “Why did we even do it?” and “We probably could have forecast the result!” “Why bother!”

Why bother indeed. Cast your memory back to last December, two days after Boxing Day. (If you remember, the weather immediately after Christmas Day developed into a cold snap, heralding a run of days

with very low day and night time temperatures). On that specific day, in an extremely frosty, red dawn, a poor soul was found sleeping rough in the lee of the concrete timber store at Christleton Lock. That night the temperature had plummeted to -3.4oC and earlier in the pre-dawn, a dog walker had been startled by a small dog barking at the far side of the lock and a movement of “something lying on the ground.”. The initial thought being surely who would sleep out in such conditions at this time of the year.

I got to the lock at first light, by this time the towpath had a few more dog walkers and cyclists along it. I looked across disbelievingly, hoping not to see what had been described to me, surely there had been a mistake. They were not!

Someone, clad in an old sleeping bag and fertiliser sack, was lying on the freezing ground, an icy mound alongside the timber store with a small “Heinz 57” terrier barking and scampering around keeping guard. My heart sank. I knew that this would be a test Truthfully, this was the last place I wanted to be right now.

People by now were passing by; looking the other way; hurrying along concerned

with their seasonal activities; scurrying back home for breakfast and a hot drink. In truth, some did stop out of curiosity, then busily hurried on. I was alone.

Vague fleeting thoughts passed through my confused mind; the Good Samaritan; wise virgins turning their lamps always in readiness; the SOL of Man coming at the unexpected hour; stables, manger. As I stood aghast, a figure approached.

A man, striding purposefully along the towpath. He carried a large thermos flask and a small package in the other hand and quickly crossed the lock bridge and went over to the inert figure on the ground. He crouched over him and seemed to engage in conversation. An arm emerged from the ragged and ice encrusted sleeping bag and a hand took a cup of soup and a sandwich from the man. The man then stood up, left all his supplies and walked back to the lock bridge. As he crossed the lock and made his way back towards the Trooper Bridge, I fell in with him as he walked along. It seems facile now, but all I could bring myself to say at the time was,

“That was a really wonderful Christian gesture”,

thinking shamefully, that actually, I had been let off the hook.

“No one”, I continued, “should have been out sleeping rough during the night we have just had and at Christmas time too”.

In my relief I was now in danger of gushing and making a fool of myself, but before I could continue he said,

“Yes right mate, I saw the poor b earlier, before it was light, when I was along with the dog. His little dog came across to mine and then I saw him on the ground. When I got home, I thought, I bet no one will bother with him today, so I made some soup and bacon butties and came back. I’m not a churchgoer and I never give money to the wastrels you see begging in the town, they only p it up the wall, but at least doing this I hope I’ve made some difference”.

By this time we had reached the Trooper Bridge, where he had parked his car. He bade me goodbye. I was left, my eyes pricking with tears of joy and guilt, experiencing a curious mixture of relief and yet a sense of having witnessed something sacred.

When I watched that ITV social experiment in the late summer, my mind went back to that incident last Christmas. I had been let off the hook then. How would I have fared now? What about you?

L. Footer.

As the year draws to a close

*Loving Father, help me to live
one day at a time,*

*Not to be thinking of what
might have been,*

*Not to be worrying about what
may be.*

*Help me to accept the fact
That I cannot undo the past
And I cannot foresee the
future.*

*Help me to remember
That I will never be tried
Beyond what I can bear;
That a Father’s hand will
Never cause his child a need-
less tear;*

*That I can never drift
Beyond your love and care.*

William Barclay

With New Year’s Resolutions in mind, here is John Wesley’s rule of conduct:

Do all the good you can
By all the means you can
In all the ways you can
In all the places you can
At all the times you can
To all the people you can
As long as ever you can.

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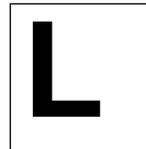
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Abracadabra

Like me I am sure that you enjoy reading the Nature Notes in our Parish Magazine each month. David Cummings expertly writes them. I am often amazed at the birds that David has managed to see. When I am out birds tend to never stand still long enough for me to identify them. As for birds in my garden, the area with the feeding cages viewable from the kitchen window has become more and more like a desert each year with little or no sign of the species of birds that visited in years gone by. The sparrows so common in the 80's have completely disappeared. Thrushes are rare. Even blackbirds are dwindling. The dunnock was an interesting replacement for the sparrow but now he has gone. Then there was the upside down nuthatch. He is now rarely seen any way up. Why a young kestrel appeared for a few minutes this summer so interested in a garden light I cannot explain. He was the highlight of my garden bird spotting this year. I will not mention the ravenous plump heron that comes before I get up in the morning to gaze into my pond because he knows I hate him. I wonder how much sage and onion it might take this Christmas. Sorry, I digress.

Please keep all I have said in mind and come with me on a walk on the 1st November this year from Christleton to Waverton following the towpath beside the canal. It is a beautiful bright sunny day with crystal clear cool air beneath a cloudless sky. No sooner have I passed where David lives with his wife Beryl beside the canal at Waverton than there is a brilliant blue flash of light from the opposite bank and then a streak as it moves along

and through the branches of the trees. Frozen to the spot I think I know what I saw. But I am not sure. It happened so quickly and unexpectedly. Slowly I start to creep forward my eyes riveted on the exact spot



where the blue light extinguished. Thinking I may have seen a kingfisher I am very soon rewarded with another view of this magnificent small bird. There now follows a period of time whilst I reflect upon why I saw this bird not a stones throw from David's home. On my return I hope I may see the brightly coloured kingfisher again

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but alas no. I confided in Brian Devenport perambulating in the opposite direction who quickly provided the answer without any hesitation. With his two arms and hands waving as if he were controlling a box kite he asked me if I saw the strings. The strings, what strings. David is a respected retired headmaster as well as an avid history and nature lover but I have never heard him express an interest in marionettes. The return journey past Croft Close got even better as it provided the view of my long lost sparrows and a long tailed tit last seen at Stoneydale ten years ago. If there are no strings then how does he do it.

The laying out and preparing of this Parish Magazine is a job that rapidly comes round for me each month. No soon as one is published than the completion date of the next magazine appears on the horizon. The material has been gathered and edited well before I see it. Each month I hope there are going to be sufficient articles and pictures to fill the 28 pages plus the 8 pages of advertisements. New contributors are eagerly wanted and will be welcomed by the editor David Bull.

I am now coming to the real reason for writing this piece. It is to say a very big and sincere thank you from the compiler of St. James' Parish Magazine to David Cummings, our most reliable and consistent contributor. It is a delight each month to receive his varied and interesting contributions whether they are prose or visual. Thankfully his work is not lost with discarded parish magazines. All St. James' Parish Magazines going back to July 2004 are downloadable on the Christleton web site in PDF format. Previous to this and going back to December 2000 are viewable extracts from each magazine.

That should have been the end of this tale but David called at Stoneydale during the afternoon of 6th November. It was only the following morning at breakfast time that a flock of excited long-tailed tits landed in the robinia frisia at Stoneydale. I know you will not believe me if I say that I also saw the upside down nuthatch. It can only be magic. Or more likely is it just one of the gifted qualities of a good teacher and lecturer. He makes you aware.

Thank you David.
Happy Christmas
from a very
amateur twitcher.



Richard Nicholson

Christmas and New Year can be a stressful time. So bear the following in mind:

If you lend someone £20 and never see that person again, it was probably worth it.
If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything.
Some days you are the bug; some days you are the windscreen.
Good judgement comes from bad experience, and a lot of that comes from bad judgement.
The quickest way to double your money is to fold it in half and put it back in your pocket.
A closed mouth gathers no foot.
There are two theories to arguing with women. Neither one works.
Generally speaking, you aren't learning much when your lips are moving.
Experience is something you don't get until just after you need it.
You feel stuck with your debt if you can't budge it.
Every calendar's days are numbered.
Once you've seen one shopping centre, you've seen a mall.

FAIR TRADE TEA IN CHINA Dazhangshan Organic Tea Farmers' Association, Jiangxi, PRC

“We need a better education for our children and more know-how on organic tea production”.

Background

For more than 1,200 years, high quality tea has been grown in the Wuyuan district of China's south-eastern Jiangxi province. Situated around the lush green Dazhang Mountain (Dazhangshan), the tea gardens are surrounded by dense forest, clear springs and innumerable waterfalls. The humid climate, rich soil, clean water and the perfect altitude of between 600 and 1,600 meters, all contribute to the cultivation of the highest quality tea. The green tea from Wuyuan is said to have been among the favourite beverages of the emperors in the Tang, Ming and Qing dynasties and until today, some packs of each year's best harvest are reserved for the Politburo in Beijing.

Since the foundation of the Peoples Republic of China in 1949, tea cultivation in Wuyuan has undergone some abrupt changes. The collectivisation of all land and belongings starting in 1953 and the re-privatisation at the beginning of the 1980's hampered the development of cultivation methods and a careful quality management for some time. In the 1980's, all cultivated land was divided into small allotments for the cultivation of tea, vegetables or rice and their worth was judged in terms of soil quality,

the amount of sunlight and the distance from the village. Each farming family was then left in charge of several of these tiny parcels of land to manage privately. For most of them this has been fruitful in terms of income, but, daily, it means long and tiring walks, as the allotments may be randomly distributed around the villages up to a distance of 10 km often without proper streets or even levelled footpaths leading to them. The harvest is carried home in heavy baskets.

Most of the vegetable and rice crops are for the consumption of the farmers and their families; only a few people harvest more than they need and sell the surplus. In turn, almost none of the families has to buy additional rice or vegetables. Some of the families earn money in the swiftly developing local tourist industry, which profits from the beautiful landscape and clean environment and mainly attracts city dwellers who need rest from the noise, dirt and the hectic pace of their homes. Others earn some additional income with forest products or, for instance, with a fishpond. Still, for many families, tea remains the major source of income needed to pay for their children's education, the rare visit to the doctor and a few day-to-day items.

Development through Fairtrade
In the year of its foundation, the Dazhangshan Farmers' Association applied to the international certifier "Fairtrade Labelling Organisations International" (FLO) for certification and it was Fairtrade certified after detailed inspections in 2001. Starting with small quantities, but with increasing sales year on year,

Dazhangshan tea products, which have the Fairtrade label, are now marketed in Europe (mainly Germany, France and the UK), Japan and North America.

Depending on quality and variety, buyers of Fairtrade tea have to pay a price that covers all production costs and an additional Fairtrade premium of 0.5 to 1 Euro per kilogram for projects of the association. Altogether, 57,000 Euros in additional income had thus been collected by 2005. Elected delegates of the members decided on the use of the money and in 2006 all members were additionally asked to hand in further ideas for projects.

From the start, delegates and members were unified in their decision to appropriate a large part of the money to the education of the farmers' children. Education has always enjoyed a very high esteem in Chinese society and opens the door to a better life. Meanwhile, the competition between millions of Chinese children to get into the better universities and subsequently to have the chance of a good job has become fiercer over the years. Children from urban areas have a great advantage in this rivalry because almost all of them attend extra private classes in the evenings and at weekends, be it English language, computer classes, or even art and music which are supposed to further development of the child. In the standardized national exams to get into high school and university, children from poorer regions and the countryside very often lag behind. The Association therefore decided to spend 20,000 Euros on building an annex to a central middle boarding

school in the Dazhangshan area in which the school offers additional classes, a computer room and a library to give children the opportunity to raise their educational level. The school is attended by 600 pupils, many of whom are farmers' children.

Farmer couple Zhang Jianyou, 68 and Yu Xiyang, 61: "Without the money from the Fairtrade fund our daughter would not have gone to university".

Mr Zhang Jianyou 68 and Mrs Yu Xiyang 61, number among the poorest tea farmers in the village Loukeng. Their 2 mu of tea yield approximately 150 to 200 kg a year and earn them an income of about 300 RMB (30 Euros). For an additional income they raise a pig every year and sell it with a profit of about 100 RMB (10 Euros). Including government support of 300 RMB they have thus an annual income of about 700 RMB or 70 Euros. Both work hard for this tiny sum of money. They get up at 5 am every morning to work in their small fields that lie around the village, the furthest at a distance of 3 km. Only heavy rain is used as an excuse for a day's rest. "We eat meat only once a year for the celebration of New Year and live off our own vegetables and rice. Sometimes one of our chickens lays an egg. Most of our money goes on seeds and the occasional repairing or buying of tools. When our daughter still went to school here the remains were just enough to buy some pens and books." Zhand Jianyou has never bought a piece of clothing in all his life and his wife Yu Xiyang almost cannot remember the last time she did. "Our neighbours give us old clothes, so we do not have to freeze," she

explains. Their house is connected to electricity, but so far they have not been able to afford any electrical devices, they do not even own a telephone. And of course have not been able to save any money for sickness or old age.

Farmer Hong Sixi 62: "We need better paths to the fields."

Farmer Mr Hong Sixi 62, and his wife Hong Gengying 57, live in a small village called after the mountain ie Dazhangshan village. They farm several small tea gardens with a cumulated size of roughly 3 mu (0.2 ha) and some tiny vegetable and rice fields making up 0.4 mus. They grow pumpkins, beans, sweet potatoes, cabbages, chilli peppers, peanuts and rice. "Not enough to sell any, but enough to fill our own stomachs," explains Mr Hong.

The two work hard. They get up with the sun at 5.30 am and go for a first inspection of the closer fields, doing some weeding, sowing, harvesting and checking on the intricate irrigation system of the rice fields that is fed by the nearby river. Between 7 and 8 am they have rice soup for breakfast and then continue the fieldwork. Lunch at noon usually contains their own rice and vegetables, a small piece of meat once a week and fish once a month. After doing more fieldwork and other tasks, they return home at around 4.30 pm in winter and 6.30 pm in summer. After having eaten the remains of their lunch and sometimes some noodles purchased for dinner, they mostly watch television or occasionally meet with neighbours for a chat. At 9 pm at the latest, they both go to sleep.

Wang Peixiang owns the primary tea processing facility of the village and is in constant touch with all the tea farmers of Loukeng. His opinion on Fairtrade: "I think the long-term contracts are what is most important for us. Even I cannot save anything for old age or a possible disease, because we are not poor enough to qualify for the tuition credits and I have to spend all my savings on the university fees of my son, but in comparison to some of the other farmers I'm still very well off. That there is a promise at the beginning of the season on how much tea we will be able to sell and at which price makes a huge difference to all of us, it is the first time that our income can really be planned. Fairtrade also gives us better market access and increased market opportunities. For many of the farmers tea is the only source of income, the more they can sell the better." If more Fairtrade premium could be earned in the future he wishes mostly for more training: "Many of the poorer families could greatly improve quality and yield of their tea gardens and thereby earn a higher income. We still do not have enough know-how on organic cultivation."

Just a month ago Wang Peixiang persuaded the village mayor to build a small bridge over the stream next to the processing facility – a big improvement for the tea farmers of the surrounding area who now save on long detours.

*Margaret Croston
with permission of
Bettina von Reden*

Mark Smith
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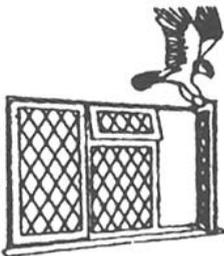
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PAMPER NIGHT



You will know by now that the very successful

“Pamper Night” held on 3 November last in the Methodist Church Hall raised a total of £400 which will go to the 3 charities nominated by the PCC – Middle East Crisis (International), Mental Health Foundation (National), Dial House (Local), and as well as saying a very big “thank-you” to everyone who supported this event, I thought it would be a good idea to say here just what happened during the evening so that, if we have another one in a couple of year’s time, those who didn’t come along this time, hopefully will do so next time!

As well as making money for charity, the idea was to give the ladies of the village and surrounding areas a pleasant, relaxing evening away from the stresses of work, screaming children, cooking meals etc. Sarah from DIAMONDS Beauty Salon in Boughton (next to the Pram Shop) agreed to bring along 3 of her highly trained beauticians who would do manicures, pedicures or head massages for a very small fee, and she also offered discount on all appointments booked at her salon on the next visit. This all proved to be very popular with the ladies booking in with Christine for their appointments on arrival, right through the evening until 9.30 pm.

Wendy, of Shoe-be-Doo fame brought along her Italian and Spanish shoes and handbags and the ladies had great fun trying on the shoes & deciding which pair to buy, together with a matching handbag.

Then we had Sylvia from the House of Colour in Littleton with her cosmetics and colours explaining how wearing the right colour clothes to tone with skin colour can make a huge difference when choosing an outfit for a wedding or family celebration, or when just going shopping.

Linda and Kate from Phoenix Cards brought along a wonderful selection of greeting cards for every occasion, together with wrapping paper and Christmas Cards, all at very reasonable prices.

Maxine was “Fripperies” host presenting her handbags, belts, scarves, amazing costume jewellery and ornamental hair slides.

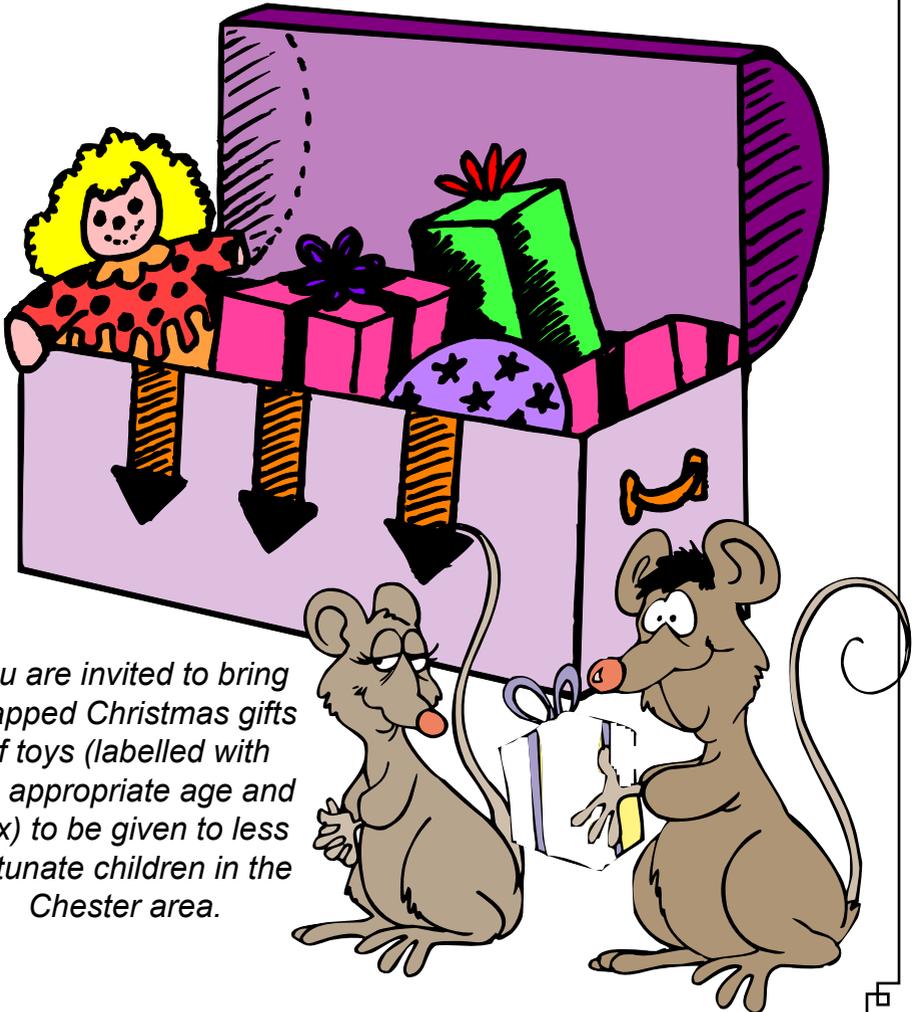
Refreshments of tea or coffee and home made chocolate brownies were served by Gillian and Janet (Brown) and I was responsible for selling raffle tickets. We had a very good selection of prizes, some donated by local hostellers who were extremely generous to us, and all the sales ladies also donated a prize from their stock. Guess who won the first prize in the raffle – it was me, very embarrassing, but I was persuaded to take it – although I didn’t take much persuading as it was a meal for 4 at The Harvester (Old Trooper)!!

I think approximately 60 people came along and spent a relaxing evening, chatting to friends and enjoying themselves and even doing some Christmas shopping at the same time. So there you have it, a resume of what happened and a big thank you for helping to raise a fantastic amount of money. A final thanks must go to the Methodist Church for their generosity with the hire of the hall.

Janet Milton

Family 'Toy' Service at St. James'

Sunday 10th December
at 10.45 am



You are invited to bring wrapped Christmas gifts of toys (labelled with the appropriate age and sex) to be given to less fortunate children in the Chester area.

Parish Registers for October 2006

The Funeral Service

11th Irish Ryder Florence Grogan House Blacon (Burial of Ashes)
16th Emily Peters Oaklands Nursing Home, Littleton.

"Grant them eternal rest"

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<i>8th</i>	<i>370-49</i>	<i>818-00</i>	<i>1,188-49</i>	<i>1,240-82</i>
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<i>22nd</i>	<i>158-45</i>	<i>440-65</i>	<i>599-10</i>	<i>718-35</i>
<i>29th</i>	<i>148-61</i>	<i>592-20</i>	<i>740-81</i>	<i>795-58</i>
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