



CHRISTLETON Village Guide

The following guide provides information, contact details etc. on the many clubs, facilities, groups etc. available in the Christleton Area.

If you are involved with, or are aware of any others that have not been included I would be grateful if you could contact me to arrange for the details to be added.

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Introduction to Christleton Village

Christleton is a popular village of 2,000 or so inhabitants, two miles or so south east of the City of Chester and takes its name from its Christian origin "The township of Christ" or "The place of the Christians". The Parish of Christleton is made up of the ancient townships of Christleton, Littleton, Rowton, Cotton Abbots and Cotton Edmunds. It has always been a rural community, with food grown in the parish being taken to nearby Chester to sell. Even the water supply for the medieval abbey now Chester Cathedral, came from the Abbots well in the village. Two of the roads have Roman origins with the present A51 following the line of the Roman Road between Chester and Manchester, and the packhorse route across the "Roman Bridges" at Hockenhull Platts, was a vital thoroughfare in medieval times taking travellers from London to Chester. Celia Fiennes the Lady in the White Horse from Banbury Cross was one such traveller, and the three ancient stone bridges at Hockenhull are recorded as being maintained by "The Black Prince" in 1352.

Although it is likely that the earliest community existed around 650ad, the first written evidence of the village is contained in the Domesday Book, when Christleton was under the control of one of the Norman Earls, Robert, the Baron of Malpas. The first stone church dedicated to St James' was built in 1490, and the tower from that original building survives today. However, the nave and chancel have had to be re-built several times, the latest occasion in 1876, when it was re-designed by the famous Victorian architect William Butterfield.

Christleton suffered a great deal in February 1645 when it was almost entirely burned to the ground by soldiers of the Royalist Army. However, on 24th September 1645, a major battle took place in and around the village when the army of King Charles I, lost decisively to the soldiers of Parliament on nearby Rowton Moor.



Christleton owed its early prosperity almost entirely to agriculture, with nineteen dairy farms in the township alone, but it also became an important place to live in the early 1700s when several large houses were built for rich merchants in wool, cloth and shipping from Liverpool and Manchester. The arrival of the Chester canal in 1772 helped it become further established, and by Victorian times, Christleton was a self-contained village. Today the dairy farms have all but disappeared, and the village has expanded to provide housing and accommodation for many more people.

The village is built on a sandstone ridge overlooking Chester and the Welsh Hills, and has a small but pretty Village Green. The village pit or (pond) at Little Heath is also a very attractive local feature, and the pond and the surrounding area attracts a large number of visitors each day. The village is also served by the tranquil Shropshire Union Canal, which wends its way through attractive countryside on route from Chester to Nantwich, which can also be used as a cycle way into Chester. Christleton has a thriving community, with excellent schools, church, chapel and many successful groups and societies. It also has several hotels and inns with good quality accommodation for the visitor.

Information supplied by David Cummings 2013

1. Bowls Club

During the bowls season (from the beginning of April until the end of August) the Cheshire View Bowls Club meet on a Monday and Thursday evening from 6.30pm for anybody who might wish to join them as either a beginner or club player.

The senior section for those over 60 years, meet on a Tuesday and Friday afternoon from 1.15pm.

Clive Donovan – Manager – Cheshire View Conference & Banqueting Suites (01244 332442)

2. Cheshire View

Cheshire View Conference and Banqueting Suit is available to hire for celebrations small or large. A variety of function rooms with bar facilities (that are also Licensed for Civil Partnerships and Naming Ceremonies) are available with extensive patio areas overlooking the Cheshire Countryside.

There are menu selections for formal dinners, buffets, family celebrations and barbeques. Facilities are also available for team building exercises. All catering is provided by our in-house team. Full details and additional information can be found on our website www.cheshireview.co.uk.

3. Chester Flower Club

Chester Flower Club meets at Christleton Parish Hall on the third Wednesday of the month (except for August and December) at 1.30 pm. The club is affiliated to The Association of Flower Arrangement Societies and each month members are entertained by an Area or National Demonstrator. Beautiful floral arrangements are created by the Demonstrators who show a range of techniques and tips for members to try at home.

Tea is provided before the meeting and all the flowers are raffled at the end of the meeting. New members and visitors are always welcome.

For further information Tel: 01978 854454 or visit www.chesterflowerclub.co.uk.

4. Christleton Footpath Group

The Group was formed this year (2013) to help maintain the public rights of way within the parish boundary. It is hoped that the group of volunteers will, in due course, be able extend the existing network by providing at least one circular route. If you are fed up with over grown



footpaths then let us know where the problems are or better still come and join us to help keep them clear.

Malcolm (01244 335810)

5. Christleton Mothers' Union

Christleton Mothers' Union meets in the Parish Hall on the second Monday in the month at 2pm. We are a small group of ten members but we are eager to expand and would welcome new members and visitors. We are linked with other mothers Unions in the Diocese and this year we have a special link with Farndon.

We have some very interesting speakers at our meetings and services in Church during Lent and Advent. We try to be as pro-active as we can with our overseas Mothers' Unions and we get excellent support from our Deanery.

Janet Brown Group Leader (01244 335785)

6. Christleton Pre-School

Christleton Pre-School (Ofsted Reg: 305024) provides a happy, stimulating and safe environment for children aged 2½ to 4 years of age. We are based at The Scout Hut, White Lane, Christleton, CH3 6AH. Using a "Key-Worker" system and following EYFS guidelines, we aim to give our children an excellent start to their school career by developing their social, intellectual, physical and emotional skills through play, care and most importantly fun and laughter.

Carole Penney (07890 105935)
Email: enquiries@christletonpreschool.co.uk
Web: www.christletonpreschool.co.uk

7. Christleton Sports Centre

Christleton Sports Centre is situated within the grounds of Christleton High School. Facilities include a 25m swimming pool, fully equipped Fitness

Suite, fitness classes and racquet sports. A full sized all weather pitch and racquet sports courts. The centre is open to both members and non-members.

For further information Tel: 01244 336664,
www.brionaleisure.org/swimming/christleton-sports-centre

8. Christleton Sports Club

The Christleton Sports club is situated on King George IV field beyond the Pit. The club comprises both cricket and football sections. All the work is undertaken by volunteers and extra help is always welcome.

a) Cricket Section – consists of three teams playing in the Cheshire County League and a vibrant junior section with teams from under 9 through to under 18 level.

Junior coaching sessions are held from May-July for local children of all abilities from school years 3 to 10. The coaching sessions are run by qualified coaches who are all CRB checked.

For further information visit www.christleton.play-cricket.com

b) Football Section – consists of two teams playing in the West Cheshire League and an under 18 youth team in the Wallasey Sunday League.

For further information **contact Bernard (01244 335302)**

New players and supporters are needed and are welcomed for both sections.

The clubhouse is available for hire.

Contact David Marks (Chairman - 01244 335582)



9. Christleton Walking Group

The Christleton Tuesday Walking Group is a small, informal group of friends and acquaintances who meet once a month for a member-led walk. The location and length of the walks vary but usually half a day or so with a coffee stop and a pub or packed lunch.

Membership is limited and is currently full but enquiries can be made to the current organiser.

Malcolm Email: littleheathhw@gmail.com

10. Christleton Wednesday Group

The Wednesday Group is a small group of local women who meet together once a month on a Wednesday with the aim of raising money for local charities – generally child orientated.

The members meet in each others houses and throughout the year organise various fund raising events such as annual Spring and Christmas Village lunches, quiz evenings, bridge drives, fashion shows etc. The Group also always has a stall at the annual village fête.

Since its formation in 1960 the Group has raised over £85k to date (at today's values) for charity.

If you are new to the area and would like to join the Wednesday Group or would be willing to help at any of our events please let us know.

Mrs Carol Cullen (01244 332301)

11. Christleton Women's Institute

Christleton WI welcomes you to join them at their monthly meetings. These are held on the second Wednesday of each month starting at 7.15pm in Christleton Parish Hall.

We have a range of speakers, hold parties and occasional day trips to suit various interests. Please come and join us.

All enquiries to the **Secretary Ida Rogers (01244 350060)**

12. Deva Bridge Club

The Club was formed 64 years ago in Chester City. It is now 24 years since the club relocated in Christleton initially spending around £30k to renovate the Women's Institute Hall. The prestigious club is affiliated to the English Bridge Union (EBU) and is ranked amongst the top ten in the country.

The Club has a capacity for up to 84 players. It uses the latest technology equipment for automatic scoring and for preparing and analysing the hands of cards. Six 3-hour sessions of duplicate bridge are routinely played each week together with lessons for beginners and improvers. With a membership of 340 players the Club hosts qualifying rounds of EBU national events and also occasionally runs events to support local charities.

Email: secretary@devabridgeclub.co.uk

13. Gardening Club

The Club meets monthly from September to July on the second Monday in the Methodist Chapel at 7.30pm. We have speakers at eight of the meetings. Two garden visits are arranged each season and a Club supper is held in January. Some years we also have a plant swap.

It is a small and very friendly Club and new members are always welcome. Subscription is £12 annually.

Judith (01244 335296)



14. Hotels

a) Mercure Abbots Well Hotel, Chester

The Mercure Abbots Well is a four star hotel with a comprehensive range of well appointed rooms and facilities. The hotel is available for functions and a health club (with swimming pool) and spa facilities are available for members.

Tel: 0844 8159001 www.mercurechester.co.uk/

b) Cheshire Cat

The Innkeeper's lodge at the Cheshire Cat is a three star hotel with 14 en-suite bedrooms.

Tel: 0845 1126022, www.innkeeperslodge.com/chester-christleton/

See also section 20 relating to Pubs and Restaurants

15. Law College Facilities

The University of Law (formerly The College of Law) is a privately owned University, with seven other centres across the country. The University offers undergraduate and postgraduate degrees and courses in law and legal practice. It also offers professional development training for practising lawyers.

The University offers a number of pro bono services. Advice is given by student lawyers at the University, under the supervision of qualified solicitors. These are available during term time only and operate in strict confidence.

- Free Employment Law Helpline, offering advice on employment issues please call 01483 216044.
- Free Legal Advice Centre and letter writing service. Appointment only, please call 01483 216848.

- Contact 4 Kids - Free legal advice for those having difficulty seeing their children or grandchildren please call 01483 216066.

For more information about the University visit our website

www.law.ac.uk.

Room hire may also be available from time to time. For general enquiries, including room hire. Please call 0800 289997 or Email StudentServices-Chester@law.ac.uk

16. Local History Group

Christleton Local History Group was founded in 1976 to promote research and write about local history in the Parish. Their first book 'Christleton, The History of a Cheshire Village' was published in 1979 and is still available. The Group has since published a second book 'Christleton 2000 years of History' to coincide with the Millennium Celebrations in 2000 but this was completely sold out within three years and copies are much sought after. A DVD of Village History was produced in 2012 and copies of these containing over three and a half hours of film are still available.

The Group holds six indoor meetings a year at the Primary School in Quarry Lane when guest speakers (often experienced members of the Group) give talks about all aspects of local and national history as well as talks on various travels around the world.

The Group has an active membership of over 50 villagers and an average monthly attendance of 30. It also holds a valuable resource of thousands of photographs as well as a large number of papers and artefacts. The Group has researched archive material about the Village at the Cheshire County Record Office and has created a catalogue of over 8,000 items from the papers of the late Rector AS Guest Williams.

The Group also contributes a monthly article to the Parish Magazine, has produced a Plan of all the inscriptions on the graves in St James'



Courtyard which is a valuable resource for family historians. The Group organises heritage walks through Christleton and the five townships¹ on a regular basis for adult and children's groups. It has regularly contributed to village and other local charities and promotes history whenever possible within the community.

David Cummings Chairman (01244 332410)

17. Museum of Masonic Memorabilia/ Library

Situated at Cheshire View (see section 2) is a Museum of Masonic memorabilia and a Library. Both are open to the general public.

If interested please contact Mr Clive Donovan (01244 332442) or visit www.cheshireview.co.uk

18. Parish Council Website

This web site <http://www.christleton-pc.gov.uk/> provides copies of agenda and minutes of all meetings of the parish council and the King George's Field Trustees (since May 2012). Copies of the Community Plan (full report and summary), village directory and village directory are also available.

19. Pit Group

The care and conservation of Christleton Pit has caused anxiety for generations even from the time of the setting up of the Parish Council in 1894.

Many attempts have been made over the last century to solve the problem, primarily caused by the lack of rain and no other course of water. The Pit is made up of a series of pits, now joined together as 1 large area, caused by the extraction of marl (a type of clay used to produce local red bricks and to give body to the sandy soil in fields around the village).

In 1974 a group of children from the Primary School were second in The Daily Telegraph National Competition for 'Saving the Village Pond' and following their win and appearance on BBC Television, an active conservation effort was started. Their enthusiasm was infectious and with the support of Head teacher David Cummings and parents an active conservation group for the Pit was formed. The children would regularly work at the Pit for up to twenty sessions a year but as time progressed their efforts were thwarted by enormous weed growth covering most of the surface. The task became physically too difficult for the children all aged under 11 years and in 1987 the Christleton Pit Group was formed under the Chairmanship of John Salter with the support of the Parish Council. The first working parties met in October that year with the intention of making sure that the Pit was restored for the future enjoyment of the village community. The Parish Council provided both practical and financial support.

Plans for the long term future of the Pit were drawn up based on the limited knowledge that had been acquired over the years. Advice was sought from organisations such as the Wildlife Conservation Trusts and the Nature Conservancy Council but no-one had tackled the problems we faced with such a large area of water – over 2 acres.

Since those early days hundreds of villagers have been involved and the group has worked as and when needed. A huge variety of tasks have been undertaken including clearing vegetation, the restoration of the banks, building an overflow outlet as well as searching for new sources of water.

Building platforms for fishing and pond dipping, nest sites for swans, checking water depths and when necessary getting in additional help from Blue Boar Contractors to remove large quantities of silt through the Wren Recycling Scheme.

All this work has been accomplished by enthusiastic villagers and the area of water at The Pit together with the surrounding land remains a very attractive area for the local community to enjoy. The village swans have given a great deal of pleasure over the years but the lack

¹ Christleton, Littleton, Rowton, Cotton Abbots and Cotton Edmunds



of suitable food at the Pit means they migrate from the Pit to the canal each year causing chaos and amusement in the village for a short time each year.

The Pit Group welcomes any newcomer to help in its efforts and contact can be made through the current Secretary Don Bailey (d.bailey120@btinternet.com).

20. Pubs and Restaurants

a) Ring O' Bells

The Ring O' Bells is situated in the heart of the village. It has recently undergone a full refurbishment with the addition of The Glasshouse providing an attractive space for functions, events and private dining.

A wide range of beverages are available including local hand pulled cask ales, fine wines and freshly ground coffee and loose leaf tea. There is a varied menu created with the best of local produce. A children's menu is also available.

There is a fully decked sun lounge for al fresco dining and a lawned area complete with picnic tables and a child's play area.

The pub plans a number of regular events including coffee mornings, pizza evenings, a curry night and the pub car park hosts a country farmers market every second Saturday of the month.

For further information Tel: 01244 335422, www.ringobellschester.co.uk/

b) The Plough

The Plough is situated at the crossroads of Plough Lane and Rake Lane/ Brown Heath Road. This is a traditional country pub in a rural setting with a large well maintained apple orchard and secluded beer garden.

The family-friendly inn has disabled and baby changing facilities and a new play area. Food is available from noon with a regularly changing and varied menu using locally sourced ingredients. A menu for children is also available.

The Plough also caters for family gatherings and special events and in 2010 was awarded Regional Warm Welcome and Best Food Winner.

For further information Tel: 01244336096, www.theploughinncheshire.co.uk/

c) The Cheshire Cat, Whitchurch Road, Christleton

The Cheshire Cat is a country pub and restaurant situated adjacent to the canal tow path providing seasonal food together with a range of cask ales and wines. Originally constructed in 1891 the building was seconded by the Government as an administrative office in WW II and was left derelict until it was restored to a high standard in 1970.

For further information Tel: 01244 332200, www.vintageinn.co.uk/thecheshirecatchristleton

d) The Old Trooper Harvester, Whitchurch Road, Christleton

The Old Trooper is situated close to the Village on the A41 (close to the bypass flyover and canal bridge). This is a family friendly restaurant specialising in a good choice of fresh food, grills and a self-service salad bar. A children's menu is also available.

For further information Tel: 01244 335784, www.harvester.co.uk/theoldtrooperchristleton/

21. St James' Church/ Church Choir

Recent investigations suggest that a church has existed on this site since the 7th Century. The people living around the area were so distinct that the village itself was called Christleton, "The place of the Christians". The first church building was a wooden one, with the first stone building being erected in 1484/5, from which the tower remains. A new nave and chancel were built in 1736, with money coming from a variety of sources including a "Parliamentary Brief", a means of



obtaining money from a wider source than the village. However the building was completed with a great deal of local labour, which included men transporting the stone, from quarries in Waverton and Delamere.

This building had several chapels for the Townsend, Cotton, Brereton and Cholmondeley families, which included fireplaces to keep them warm during the services, and had seats for their servants. The villagers had to pay for their pews, and some sat up in a gallery, at the west end of the nave, entered from a passage in the Tower. The church bells still used every week to call the village to prayer, date from this period.

In 1876 snow fell onto the congregation during an evening service, and Canon Garnett decided that a new church was needed. He engaged William Butterfield one of the most eminent Victorian Architects to carry out the necessary work, and the building we see today is his church. It contains a great deal of his distinctive style, the geometric patterns in the red and cream sandstone walls, the foliated wood work in the roof, the use of highly coloured floor tiles, and the use of marble and mosaics in the sanctuary. He designed most artefacts himself including the font, pulpit, lectern and seating, but he involved both A Gibbs and Charles Kempe two of the most famous Victorian glass artists to design the stained glass windows.

The church was once under the patronage of Robert, the Norman Baron of Malpas, appointed by Hugh Lupus the first Earl of Chester. It later became part of the Abbey, and the Abbot obtained water from what became known as the Abbots Well in Christleton.

The church later became part of the Diocese of Chester, and the figure of St Werburgh holding the cathedral church, is included in the wonderful east window opposite the figure of St James' the fisherman. They can be seen supporting the central figure of Christ himself.

More recent patrons of the church have included the Egertons in the 16th Century, the Townsends from the 17th Century, with Mrs Lucy Anne Townsend-Ince providing substantial funds from her legacy, as a descendant of Sir Francis Drake. She was the driving force behind the present church building, with support from the Dixons of Littleton, Ship Owners and Bankers. The Sellers Family of Littleton was also prominent in the construction of the

Church and Schools, the first of which was in the present churchyard. One member of the family, the Reverend A A Guest Williams, was a very influential figure during the 20th Century, serving the church for almost 50 years.

Canon Lionel Garnett himself was a wonderful Minister and keen sportsman, much loved and revered by everyone, who served the church and village between 1868 and 1911. However, it is the people of Christleton who have made the village the place it is today, and who have been baptised, married and buried here at St James', in this central place of worship, for well over a thousand years.

St James Church Choir is a four-part harmony group of about 20 Members who help lead and accompany the services at St James' Church. This includes two services each Sunday with additional support given for special occasions in the church's year including weddings and festivals. The choir occasionally sings or assists in services at other churches as well as joining choirs at Chester Diocesan or other festival occasions in the Chester area. New members are always welcome and choir practices are held at 6.30pm on Friday evenings in the church.

The Musical Director and Organist is Steve Roberts (01244 815277).

Information provided by David Cummings 2013

22. Travelling Library

A travelling library currently visits the village every 2 weeks stopping in The Square and Quarry Lane. For up-to-date information check with the Cheshire West and Cheshire Web site at www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/libraries/find_a_library/mobile_libraries.aspx



23. Village Fête

It is not everyday that a minor disaster, in a small church, in a small village, barely three miles south of Chester, starts a tradition that has been going strong now for 138 years.

On Sunday January 1873 part of the roof of the brick building of the 1736 church in Christleton collapsed and some of the congregation were covered with snow. Canon Garnett used the opportunity and his influence to have a substantial rebuild of the nave and chancel. He instigated many fund raising and social activities in the village and by 1875 held the first Fête in the large gardens of the Old Rectory. Money raised was to fund the repair of the church and whatever other good 'cause' he thought fit – and so the Fête started.

Held almost every year since, the basic formula has barely been tampered with. The Parade from the Village Green has started at 1pm on the last Saturday in June for as long as anybody can remember. Villagers of all ages walk dressed in a fine array of fancy dress, to the Primary School Playing Fields. This year's theme (2013) is '50 years of Dr Who' and lots of intergalactic outfits are expected.

Virtually every local organisation and voluntary group in the area man a series of gazeboes encircling the central arena with a stage at one end for those acts that cannot work on grass!

The Rose Queen is crowned, the Fête opens and the fun begins. Burgers, beer, ice cream, sweets, arts and crafts, tug of war, music, games, book stalls, raffles, donkey rides, local displays; exotic foods, there's almost too much to mention. The arena holds a series of events, alternating with those on the stage and it all builds to a final crescendo when the multi prize raffle is drawn at 4-30 pm.

Money raised is ploughed straight back into the community. Over twenty local groups receive sums ranging from £50 to over £300 every year. Playgroups have built shelters, Scouts have bought tents, Brownies have been sent camping, tools have been purchased to make the village look

neater, the Pit Group (it's a big pond) have turned the pit's unsightly wild area into a haven of peace and tranquillity, a children's' playground has been built, kit for footballers and cricketers have all been purchased, and countless other projects have benefited.

Dawn Sturgess (01244 336943)

24. Village Institute

Christleton Institute is an established social club which provides a wide range of facilities and activities for both young and old alike. Members of all ages are welcome to join and enjoy a comfortable and informal social setting in which several beers (including real ale and lagers) are served at competitive prices.

Facilities available include two full size snooker tables, a pool table, darts area or just enjoy relaxing and watching Sky TV (including sports channels) in both the lounge and games areas.

Regular activities include weekly bingo sessions for the older members and monthly quiz nights. Regular musical events including acoustic sessions are also being planned. Organised events and trips include:

- Local horse racing meetings,
- Christmas parties for both younger and older members and
- Fundraising for the Hospice of the Good Shepherd.

Christleton Institute was set up to serve the needs of the local community and hopes to continue to do so with your support.

David Hassall (01244 335389)



25. Village Show

The village show was instigated by Rector Canon Lionel Garnett, and first held on The Rectory Fields, now the site of Christleton High School, in 1871. It was primarily a Fruit and Flower Show but in 1876 it became a Show of Roses to raise funds for the rebuilding of the Church.

Subsequently it became a popular agricultural show including heavy horse, cattle and cheese. The show then broadened out to include displays of arts and crafts, baking and produce, and floral art. The shows naturally ceased during the war years but were revived in 1947 after World War II

The emphasis became agricultural again for several years and attracted lots of interest throughout the County. It soon expanded to become a huge event with many circus type attractions in the big ring, flying displays, rides, show jumping and sports. The organisation of such a huge event took its toll and it became too big for the village and ceased.

However, in 1992 the Village Show was revived in its present form by the Parish Council and in 1995 the organisation handed over to a local committee. Since then the Show has grown from strength to strength through the hard working committee and the support of the community.

The emphasis is given to the whole range of the creative arts as well as the display of locally grown flowers, floral displays, fruit and vegetables, baking and home-made produce. School children have their own section and today there is an emphasis on them 'growing things', either individually or as a class.

A hanging basket/ container competition was started to try to improve the 'look' of the village during the summer months. The Show is held annually in the Parish Hall on the second or third Saturday in July and is a very popular village attraction with more than 300 entrants each year. There are trophies for 26 classes across the shows 80 adult, 30 young people's categories. The success of the show has also enabled it to donate over £3k to a variety of charities between 2007- 2012.

Information provided by David Cummings 2013

26. Village Website

The church website (www.christleton.org.uk) contains almost all you would want to know about the church and the village. It is organised and maintained by Richard Nicholson and he values any input by individuals and by any village organisation.

There is a wide comprehensive list of activities, together with links to most village organisations. There is also a historic value to the site with Parish Magazines dating back to the 1990s as well as illustrated pages on village events and activities going back many years including church occasions, fêtes, village shows, Jubilee activities and street parties as well as links to Primary and High Schools.

The website also provides a link with the Parish Magazine which as well as being an informative booklet produced monthly contains interesting articles about the village past and present as well as details of the Church and Village Events.

Contact richard@earlymaps.com or christletonmag@hotmail.com
