



PARISH OF ST JAMES

serving the communities of Christleton, Cotton Abbots,
Cotton Edmunds, Littleton and Rowton



APRIL 2018

50p

Churchwardens' Update April 2018

It's hard to believe but by the time you read this we will have already 'survived' one month of our vacancy. On the face of it, it may not seem that a great deal is happening but there is much activity below the surface. Our current PCC have shown great endurance attending more PCC meetings in the last 2 months than most PCCs attend in a year. The result of our efforts is that we have now agreed and signed off the parish profile. We can now move forward to the next step in appointing a rector. The parish profile gives an overview of our parish. It incorporates all aspects of parish life from our worship to outreach. It explains our current financial position and describes the buildings for which we are responsible. All of this helps to build a picture for potential candidates. Now the profile is complete, the wardens will meet with the Bishop of Chester and the position will be advertised. Following this, you may well see some unfamiliar faces walking around the village and joining us in worship as potential candidates come to 'check us out'. You never know, the stranger in our midst may well be our new rector in a few months' time.

Meanwhile, the work of the parish continues. With help from clergy and laity alike we managed to observe Lent and Holy week as normal and service planning for the next quarter is going ahead as usual so you should notice minimal change.

The giving initiative was a massive undertaking but the steering group have now analysed the responses as you will see in the enclosed report. We are now in the process of contacting those who have offered their time and their talents.

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) will be held on 15th April following the morning service. We would encourage anyone on the electoral roll to attend, especially during this vacancy. We not only value your support but are eager to get feedback and welcome those who would like to be more involved in the life of the church.

Preparations for Easter



P is for Preparation and this month the focus for our Messy Participants revolved around words beginning with the letter P.

The Messy activities included weaving colourful Palm leaves and constructing Peg donkeys to join a Procession. We made bread rolls to celebrate the festival of Passover. Some clever fingers constructed tomb pictures with a movable stone in the doorway! The messiest activity was a cross outline in a colourful paint surrounding. In our worship session we heard the Easter story illustrated by silhouettes representing P words such as the Prayer and Patience shown by Jesus; Pennies to remind us how the temple was used for trading; and the bread and wine of the Passover and Promise and Praise to illustrate the journey from Good Friday to Easter Sunday. The song 'We have a King who Rides a Donkey' brought the whole idea of Procession and Celebration together before the usual delicious shared Sunday tea.

Take home ideas: share the Easter story together as a family. Perhaps it would be fun to have a go at making your own silhouettes.

Messy Prayer: *Heavenly Father, as we journey together towards the joy of Easter, may we know that you are with us in all that we do and in all that may be before us. Thank you for the new life we celebrate at Easter. May our lives be lived in the light, knowledge and power of your love. Amen.*

The purpose of the journey is not to arrive: The road to Emmaus.

Luke 24:13-35

I love to walk! We are reminded constantly in the media of the health benefits of taking regular exercise and eating a nutritious diet. The account in Luke of the incident on the road to Emmaus encapsulates both these two elements of a recommended lifestyle. Victorians were often exponents of health elixirs and theories on longevity. The majority of these may now seem bogus to us. One pastime that has stood the test of time is that of the daily constitutional; one that I personally adhere to. A brisk walk after a healthy meal promotes healthy digestion, exposes us to fresh air and allows us to reflect on the day's occurrences. I recall a paperweight I once saw that contained the motto 'solvitur ambulando' or 'it will be solved in the walking'.

The rhythm of walking lends itself perfectly to the act of consideration and pondering. This is what Cleopas and his fellow disciple had plenty of opportunity to do as they were joined by their mysterious co-rambler. The seven-mile (alleged) journey from Jerusalem to Emmaus would have provided sufficient scope for an in depth theological debate. The story of this trio of travellers is relevant for the reasons of emphasis, evidence and eyewitness. Jesus provides emphasis of the Old Testament prophecies relating to him; evidence relating to an additional appearance of the risen Lord; and a connection to the many eyewitness accounts of his resurrected sightings.

The rumours and revelations that Cleopas and his companion must have been subjected to prior to them meeting Jesus would have seemed to them like the 'fake' news phenomenon of our time. Their world must have seemed to have been in turmoil. Celebration, violence, conflict and death all within the space of a week and now a martyred spiritual leader coming back to life.

The subsequent disappearance of Jesus after their meal may have seemed to them unsettling. Christ had other work to do. God is an industrious God; is on the move sharing insights with similar pilgrims on their own Emmaus journey. So, let us keep moving; forever in motion with Jesus beside us on the road.

Yours in Christ, Martin Griffiths

"I think we're nearly there" – Leading through brokenness

Below is a short extract from a blog posted by Rev Jenny Bridgman reflecting on Exodus. Moses told this to the Israelites; but they would not listen to Moses, because of their broken spirit and their cruel slavery. Exodus 6:9

Effective leaders must be **pastors, listeners, healers, and encouragers**. If our people are broken in spirit, then the first - perhaps the only - tasks of leadership are:

To understand the brokenness..... To be ready to go back to the work of listening, hearing, understanding, when the pain crowds in and this inner work is too much. As a church, we are broken, and we have a difficult time ahead. Trust in us as an institution - as with many institutions - is at an all-time low. The narratives all too often turn to desperation, failure, regret. We must learn to lead our people through despondency, through disappointment, through brokenness. But these things must never come to define our story.

We are broken, but **our brokenness is not the end of our story**. The great story of the Exodus probably never felt like an epic tale of adventure to the broken Israelite slaves. At what point did they, as a generation, realise the extent to which their story would be told, retold and learned by heart? Probably never.

My greatest heroes, my cherished role models, are all broken people. But it is their brokenness, and their embrace of that brokenness, that makes them heroic.

We are all on a path through brokenness to wholeness. And increasingly, we need leaders who have walked that path, and who are willing to walk it again with their people; as slowly and as painstakingly as it takes. The best leaders never sprint off ahead. The best leaders stay with - and unite - the group. The best leaders **tie up shoe laces** and **wipe snotty noses** and **sit with those who have given up** and **hand out snacks** and **plasters** and **jokes** and say, "Look ahead - **I think we're nearly there**".

And there is the hope we find in brokenness. It is in the people among us who are ready to listen, to hear, to heal, to hope.

<https://jennybridgman.wordpress.com/2018/03/16/i-think-were-nearly-there-leading-through-brokenness/>

The Giving Thing

How was it for you - this Giving thing? We hope that you found the contents of the A5 envelope, that you received at the end of January, at least of interest even if you decided to do nothing about it. If you still have the booklet that was included, please have another look at it because it will remind you that St James is not just a fine building but a group of people who are trying to serve the Parish in God's name. The problem, in a nutshell, is that our desire to do this is greater than the resources we have to do it. Hence we were searching around for possible ways to deal with it and were led to a programme developed by the Chester Diocese known as The Parish Giving Initiative.

The full formal title of the Giving Initiative is "The Christian Parish Giving Initiative" and the inclusion of the word "Christian" prompts us to think about Christ's life and the sacrifice that he made for us. Thus we are led to the idea of "giving" as our thankful response to that sacrifice and, O boy, didn't that thought gel with some of you! We have had amazing and encouraging results.

The A5 envelope included two forms that you were encouraged to complete: one was about giving money and the other, time and talents. At first glance, the money one might have seemed a bit odd. Going to church and being confronted by the collection plate is as old as the hills and a fertile source of jokes. The church is rich and did not really need our small change. It would still be open, together with its kindly minister, perhaps to christen your baby or provide a dignified end for a loved one. Realistically we know that this was never true and the increasing sight of poorly maintained or even abandoned churches confirms this.

Today's congregations put much more than a few coins in the plate. Indeed those who are able give sacrificial amounts of money, but it is still not enough to maintain a church like St James with its Parish Hall and valued ministry to the whole parish. It needs more but perhaps more importantly, it needs to manage the income that it does receive to the best possible advantage. To do this, it needs to know in advance what income it is likely to receive and this is why the Giving Initiative literature introduced the concept of "Planned Giving", i.e. planning to give so much per week or month. You have recognised this by increasing your planned giving - frequently augmented by the wonder of Gift Aid - by 42%! Surely we must all be amazed and grateful for this wonderful outcome.

But our success story does not end with money. The responses to the Time and Talents forms proved to be equally exciting. The summary of those offering to contribute to all the dozens of things that make St James' community tick occupies over four sides of A4 using a smaller than normal type face. You will recall that the form listed a number of possible activities within the Church and invited you to tick the appropriate box if you were already involved and an alternative box if you would like to become involved. We can report that 17 people offered their talents in activities new to them, with some offering in more than one activity, in addition to the army of folk who recorded what they were doing already. Not content with that, there was a section labelled "What else?" These additions were particularly encouraging because they showed how much you had engaged with the whole process.

So was anything disappointing? Less than 10% of the original envelopes circulated produced a reply but we guess that this would be normal for any mailshot in the commercial world. For us it simply emphasises the remarkable response from those who chose to do so.

Our prayer is that God will help us to use to full advantage all that has been promised.

Steering Committee, Christian Parish Giving Initiative

Troubles of a Treasurer, April 2018.

It is wonderful to be able to report that I have been able to see the very beginning of the cavalry coming over the hill. In addition to this glimmer, I have had an extremely enjoyable time reading and interpreting all the stewardship responses, many and varied (for details see the report of the Steering committee). My greatest fun has been visiting so many people and getting to meet many who have till now been names on my



computer – what a treat. I never did like figures nor arithmetic. This report is rather interim, as it relates to the month of the campaign itself, and the excitement (I sincerely hope and trust) will be evident in the months to come. Figures for February are as follows:

Income		Expenditure	
Collections	491	Church salaries	694
Standing orders	909	Church utilities	636
Donations	1942 (gen fund) 2150 (ph refurb)	Church insurance	379
Envelopes	1980	Parish share	6385
Wedding funeral net	566		
Total	8038		8094

We have been helped out by the income of the HMRC refund of £5862 from our gift aided receipts, and of course please realise that the £2150 for the Parish Hall refurbishment is not intended for the parish share! So our happier figures are not as happy as one might at first assume.

With the stewardship initiative now coming to an end – a few pleas from me:

1. If you still would like to fill in your forms, please do, even if they are late!
2. If you are willing, and haven't done as yet, please review your giving.
3. Please do allow the use of gift aid by the church if you pay income tax.
4. If you would like to use blue envelopes for regular giving please let me know.

I am so delighted and heartened by your responses so far. I would like to express my grateful thanks on behalf of the PCC for your engagement with our efforts. We have only our hearts and hands with which to give.

Liz McClure

Fundraising News

An evening with Joyce Grenfell or “George, don’t do that...”

On the evening of Wednesday March 7th a number of expectant members of the local community joined by some friends from further afield (such far flung places as Handbridge and Tarporley) arrived at a Parish Hall transformed by some judiciously placed table lamps and, even more importantly, a working heating system! They were greeted with a glass of wine or soft drink and then dined on that famously delicious French classic, Boeuf Bourguignon, with accompanying vegetables. There were plenty of second helpings for those with larger appetites and then a choice of various cheesecakes or apple pie for dessert followed - all appreciatively consumed.

Jean Finney then took to the floor and regaled us with an outline of Joyce Grenfell’s life punctuated with short performances and monologues. Donning costume props to enhance these, she swapped a ‘Hilda Ogden’ style headscarf and pinny for a glittering ball gown in a mere instant! I’m sure everyone present was familiar with the song “Stately as a Galleon” but it gained extra significance with the context that Jean set it in. Less familiar was her rendition of Joyce’s mother teaching her daughter to declaim some of Shelley’s ‘Ode to a Skylark’ with superb timing and elocution. Jean ended with a short nursery monologue reminding the audience of what the talented Joyce was so well known for.

The fundraising group would like to thank all those who helped in so many ways to make the evening such a success. A grand total of £735 was raised and the event certainly highlighted the ‘fun’ aspect of fundraising!

The new notice board in the Parish Hall will keep you up to date with the events to come as well as how much has been raised to finance the ongoing refurbishment plans.

Future Fundraising Events for your diary:

Sat 27th April: A concert with the Kelsborrow Choir in St. James’ Church. (See page 8)

Sat 23rd June: A Jazz Evening in the Parish Hall. (See page 8)

Joce Platel

A Song for the Tomb

Ages before Jerusalem was founded
I was formed for this day.
God said, shall these sea-bones live?
I will sculpt me a tomb: a lime-white chamber
fit for a king.

I was ready when they brought him in,
bloody and broken, like a king from his
last battle. Dusk was falling. They hurried, careful,
so careful. They were brittle with pain.
They straightened him (legs, arms, head) in the niche,
stopped my mouth with a rock, and crept away.

We were quiet together.
He slept inside me. I cradled him
like an unborn child. Outside,
Earth shuddered; the sun failed; stars shot like bolts
through warring heavens.
I kept him safe

till he began to stir
like a child whose time has come.
The deep places of creation whispered,
Let there be light!
A mighty spasm shook the stone. I gaped.
He rose. For a moment
he stood facing the dawn, then he was gone.

Later, there would be angels, blazing-eyed
and docile, folding linen bandages.
There would be men and women, storms of grieving
suddenly stilled.
But first, as the sun rose,
there was just light and silence. A cave, empty,
and a world full of promises fulfilled.

Teresa Morgan

Taken from 'The Journey' by John Pritchard and
reproduced with permission of the author.

Elizabeth Inall

Thank you

As you know, Malcolm left this parish on 5 March to take up his new post on the Wirral. He writes to us to say.....

Thank you for the most generous gifts and for the many cards and kind thoughts. We have not yet moved out of the Rectory so may see some of you from time to time. We send you all our very best wishes.

Joyce and Malcolm

CHURCH ANNUAL MEETINGS

In the Parish Hall, 12.15pm on

Sunday 15th April

The Meeting of the Parishioners

A short meeting to elect Churchwardens

Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)

The main meeting to elect PCC members, appoint sidespeople, receive accounts and reports and generally find out what's happening.

All church members invited. Additionally, parish residents may attend the first meeting.

Information packs now available in church.

The next

Luncheon Club

12noon (for 12.30) in the Parish Hall on

Monday 16th April

A tasty hot meal. All welcome, but please book a place if you haven't already by calling:

Liz: 409414; Janet: 325529; or Christine: 335562

No charge but donations welcome.



PARISH OF ST JAMES

CALENDAR APRIL/MAY 2018



APRIL 2018	All events are in St James' Church unless otherwise indicated.
Sunday 1st Easter Day	8.00am: Holy Communion (BCP). 'Breakfast@8' in Parish Hall. 10.45am: All Age Holy Communion for Easter. Refreshments in Parish Hall. 6.30pm: No evening service.
Wednesday 4th	10.45am: United Holy Communion (BCP). Refreshments.
Sunday 8th 2nd Sunday of Easter Low Sunday	8.00am: Holy Communion. 10.45am: Morning Worship with baptism. Refreshments in Parish Hall. 6.30pm: Holy Communion.
Wednesday 11th	10.45am: Holy Communion (BCP). Refreshments.
Saturday 14th	10.30am: Churchyard Working Party. Lunch provided.
Sunday 15th 3rd Sunday of Easter	8.00am: Holy Communion. 10.45am: Holy Communion. Refreshments in Parish Hall. Produce stall. 12.15pm: Church Annual Meetings : Parish Hall. See page 5 for details. 4.00pm: Messy Church in Parish Hall. 5.00pm: Worship with Messy Church in Parish Hall. 6.00pm: The Crew Youth Group in Parish Hall. 6.30pm: No service in church.
Monday 16th	12 noon for 12.30pm: Luncheon Club in Parish Hall. See ad on page 5.
Wednesday 18th	10.45am: Holy Communion (BCP). Refreshments.
Saturday 21st	10 am to 12 noon Christleton Parish Council Open Morning in the Parish Hall.
Sunday 22nd 4th Sunday of Easter	8.00am: Holy Communion. 10.45am: Holy Communion. Refreshments in Parish Hall. 6.30pm: Evening Prayer (BCP).
Wednesday 25th	10.45am: Holy Communion (BCP). Refreshments. 7.30pm: Churches Together in Christleton AGM. Held in Methodist Church Hall. Includes talk about the 'Rock of Joy Trust', chosen charity for the Summer Teas. Everyone welcome.
Saturday 28th	12 noon: Wedding of Sarah and James. 7.30pm: Kelsborrow Choir concert in church. See ad on page 8.
Sunday 29th 5th Sunday of Easter	8.00am: Holy Communion. 10.45am: Holy Communion. Refreshments in Parish Hall. 6.30pm: Songs of Praise.

Congratulations to.....

David & Jan Bowden who celebrate their Golden Wedding Anniversary on 22 April 2018. Congratulations and best wishes from us all!

Annie Young has been a member of Mothers' Union for 70 years on the 14th of April 2018. Annie is a member of Christleton Mothers' Union who feel privileged to have such a lovely person in our group.

MAY 2018	All events are in St James' Church unless otherwise indicated.
Wednesday 2nd	10.45am: United Holy Communion (BCP). Refreshments.
Thursday 3rd	7.30pm: Archdeacon's Visitation service at St Mary's without the Walls, Handbridge. Churchwardens and sidespeople will be sworn into office. Everyone welcome to support them. Refreshments.
Sunday 6th 6th Sunday of Easter	8.00am: Holy Communion. Followed by 'Breakfast@8' in Parish Hall. 10.45am: Holy Communion with baptism. Refreshments. 6.30pm: Evening Prayer.
Wednesday 9th	10.45am: Holy Communion (BCP). Refreshments in church.
Thursday 10th Ascension Day	"Thy Kingdom Comes" runs from today until 20/5/18 in the Cathedral. 7.00pm: Holy Communion for Ascension Day.
Saturday 12th	10.30am: Churchyard Working Party. Lunch provided.
Sunday 13th 7th Sunday of Easter Sunday after Ascension	8.00am: Holy Communion. 10.45am: Morning Worship. Refreshments in Parish Hall. 6.30pm: Holy Communion.
Wednesday 16th	10.45am: Holy Communion (BCP). Refreshments in church.
Sunday 20th Pentecost	8.00am: Holy Communion. 10.45am: Holy Communion. Refreshments in Parish Hall. Produce stall. 4.00pm: Messy Church in Parish Hall followed by: 5.00pm: Worship with Messy Church in Parish Hall. 6.00pm: The Crew Youth Group in the Parish Hall. 6.30pm: Cathedral: "Thy Kingdom Come" Beacon event. Get free entry tickets on-line via Diocesan website. 6.30pm: No service in Church. Please come to worship in the Parish Hall at 5pm or to the Cathedral at 6.30pm.
Monday 21st	12 noon for 12.30pm: Luncheon Club In Parish Hall. See page 5.
Wednesday 23rd	10.45am: Holy Communion (BCP). Refreshments.
Sunday 27th Trinity Sunday	8.00am: Holy Communion. 10.45am: Morning Prayer. Refreshments afterwards in Parish Hall. 6.30pm: Holy Communion.
Wednesday 30th	10.45am: Holy Communion (BCP). Refreshments in church.

CONTACTS	
Churchwardens	Bettie Gilliatt 01244 335645 Tina Lightfoot 07557 352592 For either warden email: thechurchwardens@gmail.com
Parish Administrator	Janet Milton 01244 325529 For Weekly Notice sheet, PCC enquiries and initial enquiries about weddings, funerals and baptisms email: pa.saintjames@gmail.com For Parish Hall bookings email: christletonhall@gmail.com
Clergy available to assist	Rev'd Gill Hibbert 01244 336544 email: gillianhibbert582@btinternet.com Rev'd Elizabeth Inall 01244 336500 email: elizabeth@inall.co.uk
Verger	John Milton 01244 325529
PCC Treasurer:	Liz McClure 01244 409414 email: elizabeth.mcclure070@gmail.com

THE PARISH OF
ST JAMES,
CHRISTLETON

presents:

A JAZZ NIGHT

with JIG SAW JAZZ live

7.30pm Sat 23rd June '18

in Christleton Parish Hall

Watch out for ticket information nearer to the date.

For the Parish Hall Refurbishment Fund




KELSBORROW CHOIR

THE PARISH OF
ST JAMES,
CHRISTLETON

KELSBORROW CHOIR

The return of the CHOIR and SOLOISTS for a CONCERT in St James' Church on Sat 28th April 2018 7pm for 7.30pm start

A delightful programme of music with refreshments including wine & soft drinks.

All inclusive tickets from Christine Abrams (335562) or from PCC members. £10 each, under 14s free.

All proceeds go to the Christleton Parish Hall Refurbishment Fund.

Raffle!



Churchyard Maintenance

Once a month we hold a working party to help maintain our church yard. Quite often we work alongside the community payback team who then join us for a simple lunch of soup, bread and cheese. The working party is made up of church members and the wider village community who enjoy helping us keep our much loved church grounds neat and tidy.

The next working parties will be on:

**Saturday 14th April from 10:30 am
& Saturday 12th May from 10:30 am**

If you would like to join us just come along in old clothes with gloves and basic gardening tools (not essential). For further information please contact:

Mike Lightfoot - Tel: 07787 421357

The Crew St James' Youth Group

Are you aged between 10-16?

If so, why not come and join us. We meet in the parish hall on the first Sunday of each month between 6pm and 7.15

We cook, eat, make things, play table tennis and badminton and generally chill out - it's a 'parent-free' zone!!

If you are interested and would like to know more contact Tina at

tina.lightfoot@googlemail.com

tel: 07557352592

St James' Church has information on the Christleton Village Website:

www.christleton.org.uk

St James' Church has a Twitter account. Follow us on:



@StJChristleton

***Spotlight on* An introduction to the Headteacher at Christleton High School**

I began working at the school as Deputy Headteacher in 2004 and was delighted to accept my current post as Headteacher, in 2015. The school opened in 1958 as a Secondary Technical School and will be 60 this year.

Today, Christleton High School is a Secondary Comprehensive, with 1350 students on roll, serving local villages and the east side of the city of Chester. The school has a large Sixth Form and offers over 30 subjects at Advanced Level. To deliver the subjects at all key stages, we employ around 85 teachers and a support team of 40 members.

Christleton High School is an Academy which, together with Queen's Park High School and Christleton International School, forms the Christleton Learning Trust. The schools work closely to support each other, sharing resources and expertise.

I enjoy my job immensely. A typical day begins around 08:00, often involving meetings with parents, staff and governors. I love getting out into the school, visiting and observing lessons and as a teacher of Physics, having some quality time with students. Together with my colleagues on the Senior Leadership Team, I spend break and lunchtimes out with students and I often walk into the village at the end of the school day.

The school's maxim is "Bringing Aspirations to Life.....in a Hardworking and Caring Community." Many would agree that Christleton High School is and has always been a caring community.

I am proud of our links with the community, although I fully understand that for residents, having such a large school based in this small and picturesque village does bring concerns in terms of traffic congestion and other disruptions. The school meets regularly with the Parish Council and students and staff enjoy entertaining senior members of the community at our special events.

Christleton High School is a special place to be. If you would like to arrange a visit, please do not hesitate to contact me via Mrs Wendy Edwards (01244 335843 or edwardsw@christletonhigh.co.uk). Further information about our school can be found on the website www.christletonhigh.co.uk

Damian Stenhouse

***Spotlight on* Christleton Parish Council**

What does the Parish Council do? This is a phrase used on a number of occasions by the community.

To give a brief overview the Council currently has eight Councillors, who give of their time voluntarily to serve Christleton Village. They are also the Trustees of King George's Field, which incorporates Little Heath Play Area, and the Bike Track. This play area is a hugely popular feature of the village with children coming from far and wide to use this facility.

The Council has regular liaison meetings with Christleton High School and one Councillor is a Governor of the Christleton Primary School.

The council are custodians of Birch Heath Common, Little Heath Common and The Pit. The Christleton Pit Group, made up of volunteers, works tirelessly to maintain and improve this village asset. Without their dedication Christleton would be a poorer place. The Village Green, which is also the responsibility of the council and a great asset to the village, is kept in bloom by the tireless efforts of Cllr Janet Brown.

One of the biggest issues currently being tackled by the Parish Council is the traffic congestion and parking problems within the village. This is a huge issue which Cllr Simon Kent, on behalf of the Council and village, has been working on with all the relevant agencies to find a solution. We were hoping to have had the results of a traffic survey carried out by CWAC Highways for our January meeting so that we can move to the next stage, but this information will not be available until later in the year. However work is continuing to find ways to alleviate the parking issues.

(continued over)

The Annual Parish Council Open Morning is taking place on **SATURDAY 21st APRIL** from 10.00 am to 12 noon in the Parish Hall – ALL WELCOME – PLEASE COME ALONG AND SUPPORT YOUR COUNCILLORS.

There are currently **TWO** vacancies on the Parish Council. If you would like to help shape your community's future, then come along to the Open Morning or one of the monthly meetings. It might be just what you are looking for!!

Spotlight on..... Wildlife seen in St James Churchyard March 2018

"Surprise visitors from the east".

Birdwatching is always interesting in St James' Churchyard if you have time to take a look, but the strong easterly winds that brought chaos to most of the country in early March, brought fifteen or more very rare winged visitors called **hawfinches**. These are large finches with a thick silvery grey bill, a rufous coloured head, brown back and black wings with buff under parts. They have thick set bodies and often sit perched on tree tops for long periods. These extremely rare visitors have spent most of their time in the churchyard in the tops of the trees on the Littleton side of the churchyard, often disappearing into the tops of yew trees, or flying to the trees at the back of Christleton Hall and the Morris Oak near the Mill mound. I also saw them on trees along Brickly Lane at the north side of The Pit. They have a robin like call and can be very elusive. These delightful birds were lifetime firsts for me.

Whilst searching for these exciting birds, first spotted by Clive Jones from Church Walks, I stood in the churchyard grounds for about an hour at the beginning of the month and recorded the following species: hawfinches, great blue and long tailed tits, dunnoek and house sparrows, blackbirds, redwing, fieldfare, song and mistle thrushes, goldcrests and goldfinches, chaffinch, siskin and greenfinches, robins, wrens, jackdaws, jays, several rooks and a great spotted woodpecker.

On the same day I spotted a lesser spotted woodpecker in an area of the village not far away, the second sighting of this rare woodpecker species in the village in the last six months. Several friends have also seen brambling and blackcaps, but there were none in the churchyard that morning.

Several of the visitors mentioned, notably fieldfare and red wing will be flying back to Scandinavia or northern Europe in the next few weeks. However, many others mentioned will be nesting in and around our church grounds to be joined in a few weeks' time by our summer visitors e.g. chiff chaff and possibly willow warbler. During summer months swifts, swallows and house martins can often be seen feeding on the insects in the air above the church whilst buzzards, kestrels and sparrow hawks can regularly be seen flying over. I spotted three buzzards during my visit to the churchyard!

During winter months gaggles of exciting and exited Icelandic pink footed geese have been heard and seen flying over the church and village, and a red kite was a welcome and an even rarer visitor recently.

Reports have just come in that sand martins have already been seen flying north along the Gowy. This is a sure indication that spring is well on its way despite the latest setback of the second strong winds from the east and the accompanying fall of snow.

David Cummings



Hawfinch - photo by Joe O'Hanlon

LOCAL SERVICES

When contacting these local services please mention that you saw their advertisement in the St James' Parish Magazine



The Ring O' Bells is a welcoming Cheshire pub combining high class food with the finest wines and beers. Venue is available for christenings, weddings and funerals.

Regular events & offers...

Coffee AM

Monday to Saturday from 9am, pop in and enjoy our fabulous coffee or loose leaf tea and some delicious sweet treats or something more substantial from our brunch menu. **2 for 1 Burgers** Every Monday enjoy 2 for 1 Burgers, buy one of our mouth-watering burgers and get another one free of charge! **2 for 1 Pizzas** Every Wednesday enjoy 2 for 1 Pizza, buy one of our fabulous homemade hand stretched stone baked pizzas & get another one free of charge! **Saturday Breakfast Club** Every Saturday from 9am serving our Breakfast/Brunch menu alongside tea, coffee & cakes.

Tel: 01244 335422 Email: info@ringobellscheshire.co.uk
Address: Village Rd, Christleton, CH3 7AS

Jennie's Catering OF CHRISTLETON

Every Occasion Catered For:

Canapes
Buffets
Finger Buffets
Afternoon Teas
Dinner Menus
Freezer Orders

Waiter Service as Required

**For Help and Friendly Advice
Contact**

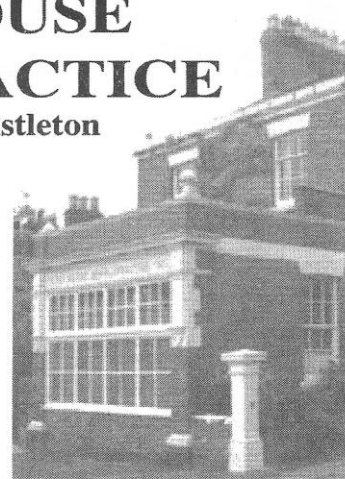
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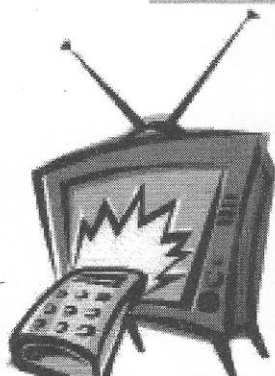
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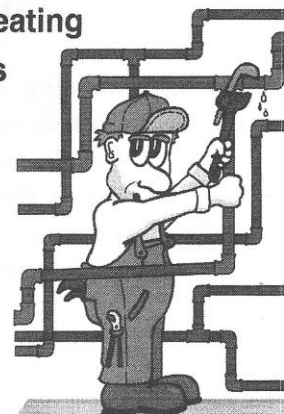
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